

THE
COMING OF MESSIAH
IN
GLORY AND MAJESTY
BY
JUAN JOSAFAT BEN-EZRA,
A CONVERTED JEW

TRANSLATED FROM THE SPANISH, WITH A PRELIMINARY DISCOURSE,
BY THE REV. EDWARD IRVING, A.M.

Volume I

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“For he put on righteousness as a breast-plate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloke. According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay, fury to his adversaries, recompense to his enemies; to the islands he will repay recompense. So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him. And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord. As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord.” Isa. 59.¹⁷⁻²¹

Dedicated to Tricia Tillin

A watchman for the Lord

Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people. Is. 62.¹⁰

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PREFACE TO THIS EDITION

The restoration of God's chosen people at the close of this age was a truth obscured by a Church that had appropriated those promises for its own purposes. Around the start of the nineteenth century the Lord was gracious enough to begin to open the eyes of a few to the literal significance of the prophecies set forth in His Word. The Church was perhaps entering the Laodician age and needed to prepare for the things to come. The Roman church had, certainly since the fifth century A.D. preached a gospel of replacement; that is the Church taking on the mantle of Israel and inheriting the promises once given to that bride.

In 1812, under the very noses of some who would stifle the blessed hope of the Jews, 'Ben Ezra' published 'The Coming of Messiah in Glory and Majesty' during a brief period of respite from the Roman Catholic Inquisition. By some miracle the work reached Britain, and was taken up and translated by Edward Irving, a minister of the Church of Scotland. Published in England in 1827 the work has been oft quoted and represented (though not always accurately). It has proven difficult to place the original in the hands of modern readers due to the lack of printed copies.

'Ben Ezra' is the pseudonym for a Roman Jesuit priest named Manuel de Lacunza. This information will occasion many Protestants to read no further, but bear with us a while before shutting the book. I would avow this before you the reader: if Luther was correct in demanding 'Sola Scriptura' (and would we dare to deny that) then Lacunza may be taken as a model of those that would follow Luther's clarion call. If ever a Christian author was to insist absolutely on the veracity and primacy of the Word of God these pages show such a one. Indeed, one of the prime reasons for his work was to rebut the centuries old claims of the 'doctors of the Church' who sought to put the Church in the position of the Jews both now and during the end times. Lacunza takes us back again and again to the inerrant word of God and sweeps away 12 centuries of replacement theology to show again the teaching of the early church and the scriptures. For these reasons, and despite the support of his peers who read the work, the Catholic Church banned the book.

None-the-less, we have to recognise the Lacunza was a Roman Catholic; there are a few doctrinal views in the work that will cause concern. But, as Irving says, the few Roman doctrines that do appear are far outweighed by the light of the gospel. And who are we to strain at those few gnats when the Protestant Church has swallowed so many camels! In any case, did the reformers themselves all fully come out from some of those pervasive doctrines of the Roman Church? So, no more on this topic; the volumes herein contain so much sweetness and truth that we say let the intelligent readers of any denomination decide for themselves *after* studying this work.

Why produce this version? Lacunza's contribution to present day evangelicalism was to reassert the restoration of the Jews in the end-times, the two-fold coming of the Lord; the millennial reign; the setting up of the temple sacrifice once again; and the restoration of the earth following the yet future and final defeat of Satan. His position has been described technically as 'futurist posttribulational', he offers some explanations of scripture that seem unacceptable to us today (for example the concept of Antichrist as a moral body rather than a person), but always he relies on the Word as his authority. Actually he has more to say on the end-times than those few points but why repeat here what he himself so eloquently discusses.

There is a second reason for republishing the work and that is to make available to serious students of church history a work published at a time when our understanding of 'the Church' and the rapture of the saints was beginning to be discussed with renewed fervor amongst Christians. It is not the purpose of this preface to discuss the relative significance of J. N. Darby, Edward Irving or Emmanuel Lacunza: others have given that fuller attention that I might ever hope to do. I simply offer this to the present Church as a servant of the Most High, giving my bretheren the opportunity to read this work at their leisure; to see what Lacunza does, and does not say. We will not agree with everything he says, indeed we may agree with nothing; but then all Lacunza ever asks of us is that we read and consider.

The copying and transcribing work that this version represents would not have been possible to me without the aid of modern electronic techniques and the peace of God during its long gestation. I have undertaken the work with the diligence due to the product of a brother in Christ: this edition is intended to be a facsimile of the original and therefore no editing has taken place. Any inconsistencies with the original publication are the unwitting fault of the present 'scribe'; none have been intended. However, to make the flow of the work a little more restful to the modern eye a few technical amendments have been made. Obvious typographical errors have been corrected (though I may have inadvertently created some of my own in such a large undertaking).

Should you desire a taste of Lacunza's writing then read this snippet below, and then perhaps you will see the worth of his labour:

These things which I have pointed out, and others of the same kind, are doubtless the things upon which they (the doctors) have their eye, when they set forth and exaggerate the great danger we are in from reading the scriptures without the light and help of their commentaries. It may not be, that as we believe without difficulty everything we read in the scriptures against the Jews and in favour of the Christianized Gentiles, we should likewise believe with simplicity what we find in the same scriptures to be written against, and in disparagement of the Christian nations, and in favour of the Jews. It may not be, that we should fall into the error of thinking, or suspecting, that the great affliction which befell the people of God, and his first spouse, may likewise befall the new people and the second spouse, likewise so much beloved by God. It may not be, finally, That we should open our eyes and regard even as possible, that the first spouse of God, or the house of Jacob, may one day return to the favour of her husband; may one day with great honours be recalled to her antient dignity; may one day occupy the place now filled by her who succeeded; —when she also shall have become faithless and ungrateful as the former, and when she shall have surpassed her in malice, and make her appear just, by the abundance of her own iniquity. All these things which I have pointed out as it were merely in the sketch, will, as we proceed, open out by little and little; for it is not possible to explain in a few words such great, and at the same time such delicate mysteries.

Part II PH V.

The reader may note that text unique to this edition has been presented in a sans-serif font to distinguish it from the original.

Even so, Come Lord Jesus...

Jonathan Tillin
Belper
December 2000

DEDICATION.

To the CHURCH OF CHRIST of all denominations who Worship God in the English tongue, and believe that Jesus Christ, who came heretofore in suffering flesh, shall come hereafter in glory.

DEARLY BELOVED IN THE LORD.

My soul is greatly afflicted because of the present unawakened and even dead condition of all the churches, with respect to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, which draweth nigh, and which, as I believe, is, close at hand: and having, by God's especial providence, been brought to the knowledge of a book, written in the Spanish tongue, which clearly sets forth, and demonstrates from Holy Scripture, the erroneous-ness of the opinion, almost universally entertained amongst us, that He is not to come till the end of the millennium, and what you call the *last day*, meaning thereby the instant or very small period preceding the conflagration and annihilation of this earth; I have thought it my duty to translate the same into the English tongue for your sake, that you may be able to disabuse yourselves of that great error, which hath become the inlet to many false hopes, and will, I fear, if not speedily corrected, prove the inlet to many worldly principles and confederacies, and hasten the ruin and downfall of the present churches. And now, forasmuch as it is to those who *look for him* that he is to appear without sin unto salvation, and to those *who love his appearing* that the crown of glory remaineth, I do exhort you, dearly beloved in the Lord, and as a friend and brother I do entreat you, yea, as a ambassador of the great God our Saviour, whose servants you are, I do command you, in that High and Holy name at which every knee shall bow, that you take leisure from your several avocations, lay aside your several speculations, and diligently apply yourselves to the Holy Scriptures and to the throne of the Heavenly Majesty, that by the Holy Spirit, whose office it is to show you things to come, you may come to some light of divine knowledge, and determination of holy purpose, upon this subject of Messiah's advent, which until now hath ever been wont to be cherished as the great and darling hope of the believer's soul. Whereby we know that it is the last time, because it is written (2 Pet. i.3.), there shall come in the last days scoffers, saying, Where is the hope of his coming.

From your brother in the common faith, and servant in the Ministry of the Gospel, a
Presbyter of the Church of Scotland.

EDWARD IRVING.

PRELIMINARY DISCOURSE.

PART I.

GIVING SOME ACCOUNT OF THE MATTERS CONTAINED IN
THIS BOOK: WHAT THE TRANSLATOR KNOWS OF IT AND ITS
AUTHOR, AND THE VERY REMARKABLE PROVIDENCE BY
WHICH HE WAS BROUGHT AQUAINTED WITH IT.

PRELIMINARY DISCOURSE BY THE TRANSLATOR.

I have always deemed it an honour to be instructed by good and wise men in any portion of divine truth, and felt it to be, of all others the most proper subject of thanksgiving unto God, and open acknowledgment in the sight of men; but when this instruction hath proceeded without any mediation or instrumentality of man's teaching, I have felt that in a still higher degree my acknowledgments are due unto the Holy Spirit, and that the praise belongeth unto God. Which having been remarkably the case with respect to the great truths of the second advent contained in this book, I do now solemnly pay my vows, and offer my thanksgivings unto the Lord in the presence of his church, for whom I have undertaken this labour.

I desire to thank and praise my God exceedingly, that though like many others, I had heretofore paid little respect to the promise of his coming, and in my ignorance done my part to set forth and justify the erroneous idea which prevailed of judgment to come, He did deliver me from my darkness, and open my eyes to the knowledge and my heart to the desire of his personal advent and reign, as it is written in the Holy Scriptures; enabling me to cast aside the traditions upon this subject which I had received from the fathers. When I obtained this light, I did not make haste to communicate it to any one, but pondered the matter for several months in my own heart, until there was not the shadow of a doubt left upon my mind that I had been in error, if the word of God was in the right. And perceiving upon the grounds laid down in a discourse which I have published under the title of "Babylon and Infidelity foredoomed," that the time was near at hand, and the series of thick-coming judgments and fearful perplexities was just about to open, I felt it as an immediate and overpowering duty which I owed to the Lord and to his unawakened church, to make known that sure conviction to which I had attained. But still my fears withheld me, and I know not how long these unfaithful fears would have withheld me from entering with good earnest on the warfare, when the Lord himself, as oft his manner is, plunged me into the fight whether I would or not. Last Christmas, which fell upon a Sabbath, purposing to warn my flock against the several indulgences to which at that season we are all exposed, I chose for my text the 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th verses of the fifth chapter of 1 Thessalonians, and beginning my discourse by an exposition of the preceding context, found that I had insensibly wandered too far into that subject which was near my heart, to return again; which feeling as the admonition of the spirit, I feared to shun any longer to declare the whole counsel of God, and so it came to pass that upon the day set apart for the commemoration of the *first advent*, I was found maintaining the doctrine of the *second advent*. It was this day twelve-months, a day to be remembered in the history of my ministry; for which, not I only, but many souls now walking in the hope of thine appearing have reason to bless thee, oh thou great Head of thy Church!

The doctrine which I maintained, was, that “the coming of the Lord in judgment, from the time of Enoch, the *first* of inspired preachers, until the time of John, the last of them, had been upheld before the elect church as the great object of their hope and desire; and for these three great reasons. —1st. That then the number of the elect is accomplished; 2nd. That then their warfare is ended; and 3rd. That their kingdom is come: while on the other hand, it had been equally upheld before the reprobate and unbelieving; as the great object of fear and argument of repentance; 1st. because then their kingdom is ended, 2^{ndly}. their day of grace concluded; and 3^{rdly}. their judgment, i.e. of the quick is accomplished, and the fate of all their generations sealed until the judgment of the dead, which cometh not till after the reign of the saints and the elect, designated in scripture, “a thousand years,” and among divines, “*the millennium.*”

Having broken ground in this great controversy, I found it necessary to maintain myself, and to that end took up certain great and strong positions, which seemed to me the keys of the whole debatable land; of which positions these three were the chief.

First; That the present visible church of the Gentiles, which hath been the depository of the oracles and the sacraments, and the ordinances, since the Jewish state was dissolved, I mean the mixed multitude who are baptized in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, under that seal including Protestants, Roman Catholics, Greek church, Armenians, &c. and all the sects of each, as Scottish, English, Irish, Lutheran and Calvinistic churches, with the dissenters and seceders from each, that this body of baptized men, which I call the Gentile church, who should every one of them have been a saint; being “by baptism ingrafted into Christ Jesus to be made partakers of his justice, whereby our sins are covered and remitted;”¹ standeth threatened in the Holy Scriptures because of its hypocrisies, idolatries, superstitions, infidelity, and enormous wickedness, “because it hath transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, and broken the everlasting covenant” (Isaiah xxiv.) with such a terrible judgement as hath not been, nor ever shall again be seen upon the earth; in the which deluge of wrath she shall be clean dissolved, as the synagogue was heretofore in the destruction of Jerusalem, when she in like manner had filled up the measure of her iniquity: —which fearful consummation I judge to be close at hand, both by the signs of the times, and from the prophetic numbers expressly given to guide us in the anticipation of these great Gentile judgments, which are mentioned in scripture wherever and whenever the coming of the Lord is mentioned.

Secondly; When the Lord shall have finished the taking of witness against the Gentiles, and summed up the present dispensation of testimony in this great verdict of judgment, and while the execution is proceeding, he will begin to prepare another ark of testimony, or rather to make the whole earth an ark of testimony; and to that end will turn his Holy Spirit unto his ancient people the Jews, and bring unto them those days of refreshing spoken of by all the holy prophets since the world began: in the which work of conveying to them his Spirit by the preaching of the word, he may, and it is likely will use the election according to grace, who still are faithful amongst the Gentiles; though I believe it will chiefly be by the sending of Elias who is promised before the dreadful and terrible day of the Lord, and by other mighty and miraculous signs. This outpouring of the Spirit, is known in scripture by “the latter rain,” of which I deem the religious revivals of the last thirty years to be as the first droppings of the shower, and our religious works and societies to be a sickly uncertain hue of verdure which the withered stump by the scent of the waters

¹ Confession of faith of the Kirk of Scotland, ratified and established A.D 1587. And I may refer to all of the Articles, and catechisms, from the Augsburg to the Westminster.

hath put forth, and like all God's gifts, it will be given to those who will receive it, both Gentiles and Jews, and will prove the touchstone of both; —amongst the Gentile church awakening those persecutions of the last Antichrist which the faithful are taught to expect immediately before the coming of the Lord, and of which they have already had a foretaste in several of the Protestant churches abroad; in the Jewish church accomplishing that refining and passing through the fire which is spoken of immediately on their restoration. (Mal. iii. 3. Zech. xiii. 9.) Which Antichristian spirit among the Gentiles, and enraged infidel spirit among the Jews, may amalgamate with one another, to produce a spurious restoration of the nations to their own land, and occasion that great warfare in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, when Antichrist shall fall, and his powers be broken in the battle of Armageddon. But the faithful among the Jews now brought to believe on him whom they have pierced, shall in the mean time be prepared by much sorrow, and distress, and supplication, for the coming of the Lord to settle and establish them surely and for ever in their own land; and the faithful among the Gentiles shall be expecting the Lord to deliver them, according to the promises which he hath made to his elect church of being raised from the dead, or changed among the living at his coming, and all gathered to him in that day. It was my second proposition that in this way the Lord will be preparing for himself an ark of testimony in the Jewish nation, through whom to make the whole world one great and universal ark of faithful testimony.

Thirdly. That these judgments upon the Gentile nations and all the earth, he will finish by his own personal appearance in flaming fire, taking vengeance on those who know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; raising those who sleep in Jesus, and changing those of the Gentile church who still abide in life; and preserving the mourning Jewish church, as Goshen was preserved in the plagues of Egypt: and when the promised land shall have been cleared of all intruders, and they themselves by suffering perfected for the habitation of it, he shall lead them into it with a mighty and outstretched arm; and sit upon the throne of David, judging and seeking judgment, and hastening righteousness; and send forth the law from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem; and rule among the nations, and be the Prince of universal peace; using in this judgment and government of the earth his risen saints, who shall be his ministers to execute what ever his pleasure is. And thus, Satan being cast out, and the Prince of light, and the heavenly Jerusalem, the dwelling place of his elect church being present, the Jerusalem on earth, with the house of Jacob, and all the nations shall enjoy that fullness of peace and joy, that millennial reign of righteousness, for which we all hope and pray, and diligently labour.

These three points of doctrine concerning the Gentile church, the future Jewish and universal church, and the personal advent of the Lord to destroy the one and to build up the other, I opened and defended out of the Scriptures from sabbath to sabbath, with all boldness, so far as the integrity of my own conscience was concerned, yet with fear and trembling, so far as the sweet harmony and communion of saints, in which I delight, was concerned; for at that time I did not know of one brother in the ministry who held with me in these matters; and of those to whom I broke the subject, I could not get the ear even for preliminaries. So novel and strange a doctrine, with respect especially to the outward visible churches, those great idols of Christendom, of which every one of us dreameth his own to be modelled after perfection, and to have in it the seed of eternity, and the power of universal application, if not the promise of universal conquest; such uncivil and implacable language, concerning overwhelming judgments upon the very eve of the millennial blessedness; above all, such low and derogatory ideas of the risen and exalted Saviour, as

that he should ever again come to visit earth, and be visibly present in it for any length of time, could not fail, and certainly did not fail, to call down upon my head all possible forms and degrees of angry and intemperate abuse, of disappointed and sorely-afflicted expostulation. But the more I examined, the more I was convinced, and resolved, though alone and single-handed, to maintain these three great heads of doctrine from the holy Scriptures, against all who should undertake to uphold the commonly received notion, that the present Gentile dispensation was about to burst forth with great verdure and fruitfulness, and fill the whole earth with the millenia blessedness, after which, to wind up and consume all, the Lord would come in the latter end, and depart with the same expedition with which he came.

And, further, I maintained, that such ideas concerning the glorious efflorescence of this present dispensation into a universal fullness, is not only inconsistent with all the scriptures, but with the very nature and intention of the dispensation itself, as it hath been understood and is expressed by all orthodox divines; who have agreed in holding that the idea of election, that is, of a chosen seed in the midst of a wicked and adulterous world, is the fundamental idea and very definition of the present church; yea, and its very name, ἡ ἐκκλησία, ‘the election,’ of which no one can be a member, but by renouncing the devil, the world, and the flesh. Doth not our Lord set this inveterate opposition of his church and the world forth, under all possible aspects in his last discourse with his disciples, (John xiv. xv. xvi.) and especially in his last prayer for them, (xvii.) when he will not so much as pray for the world, well knowing that it is not to be converted, but destroyed? Doth he not launch his church forth as into a boisterous and fatal sea, which should ever beat hard against her course, or by false currents carry her upon the rocks? And now, behold, when the ship is a wreck, and the only hope is to undergird her and keep her swimming for a little space, they doat and dream that she is about to possess the whole ocean! Doth not our Lord promise the Holy Spirit for the very end of enabling us to keep this perilous course and wage the warfare unto the end; and for that reason is he not called THE COMFORTER? Doth our Lord in this his farewell discourse and last charge unto his church, give any promise or any ground of expectation what-ever, that this strife between the world and his church should ever come to parley, or to treaty, or to hearty coalition? Doth he not declare that it shall ‘last during the whole of that “little while” during which he saith that he was to be absent? After which, indeed, that is, when he cometh again, “their sorrow should be turned into joy.” This, the constitution of the present church, the Arminian heresy hath continually sought to abrogate, and to bring the church and the world into a good understanding with one another: and to withstand such an unnatural and monstrous coalition our fathers laid down their lives. But now it hath gotten the full mastery of all men’s hopes. The millennium is the *beau ideal* of triumphant Arminianism. Satan could not sap these churches while they had all their eyes upon the word of God, and drew up their standards from the word of God. But now that men have presumed to hope and speculate concerning a millennium, by well chosen expedients and well made calculations, Satan hath closed with us and overthrown us: and now our churches, which in their standards abhor all communion of the old man with the new man, all league of the world with the church, do now expect that by the measures which are now taking the beautiful sight will yet be seen of a world at one with the church, of righteousness and peace harmonized, and goodness reigning universally. Fye, oh, fye upon it! ye Christians have fathered upon the scriptures the optimism of the German and French infidels!

While I continued to maintain these great heads of sound doctrine, and to defend the church from the invasion of Arminian incoherencies on the side of expectations, as our Fathers had defended her from the same on the side of principles, I sought very diligently to define from the scriptures what was the precise place and purpose of the present spiritual dispensation, which God hath interposed between a dispensation of a local and typical character upon the one hand, and a dispensation yet to be, of a universal and real character upon the other; both centering in and radiating out from the Jewish people.' And this appeared to me to be written in these the last words which our Lord spake upon the earth, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Acts i. 7,8. Having studied this passage; in connexion with the four chapters of John's gospel referred to above, and in connexion with the eleventh chapter of the Romans; it appeared to me that the church of the Gentiles was designed to serve the same purposes to the nations which the Jewish church served to the Jewish nation, both being for the one end, of bearing witness to the righteousness which is by faith, against the righteousness which is by works; the one upon the limited scale of a particular nation, the other upon the enlarged scale of the whole world; and both concluding in the same consummation, the one of condemning that nation, the other of condemning the whole world; in order that all being concluded under sin, the Lord might come and have mercy upon all. That since Abraham's call, until this time, the Lord had been proving to the world, under all its possible forms, that same lesson of its intrinsic and inerradicable sinfulness, which he proveth to every man in the first stage of his conversion; and for the same end, of honouring his own Son in the complete and undivided salvation of it. That as the Spirit first convinceth a soul of sin, before he can convince it of the righteousness of Christ, so hath He been convincing the world of sin before he can convince it of the righteousness of Christ; and that as Christ cometh not, neither can come in his glory and kingdom into any soul which hath not previously been judged and condemned in its own self, so neither can he come into the world in his glory and kingdom, till the Spirit shall have convinced the world in all its forms of policy and philosophy and refinement of utter worthlessness, and reduced it to the humility of sackcloth and ashes. But it may be said, And what availeth it to the world to be thus converted by a process which endeth in its judgement and destruction? Much it availeth every way; chiefly to demonstrate God's longsuffering and forbearance during all these ages of his perverted truth and persecuted Church, and his mercy afterwards, his glorious mercy and forgiveness to the world, with which he had so long forborne; to show the glory of his power in casting out Satan from his usurped dominion; and in the enduring unchangeableness of hell, to construct an everlasting monument unto all creation, of the terrible consequence of sin; and in the enduring unchangeableness of this glorious earth, to construct an everlasting monument unto all creation of the most blessed consequences of faith and fealty to the Highest, through all temptation and tribulation. "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God." Eph. iii. 10.

This idea being clearly demonstrated to my mind as the root and germ of the dispensations both Jewish and Gentile, or of "the earthly things" as distinguished from "the heavenly things," or the things of the kingdom, (John iii.) it was a very easy matter to derive and set forth the wisdom and adaptation of those particular forms which the purpose assumed, under the one and the other of these great preparatory institutions of God. To

make such a testimony for righteousness before one nation or all nations, it was necessary to raise up a succession of chosen and endowed men, who holding the truth and maintaining the righteousness, should from age to age be God's mouths unto men, and his faithful witnesses in the midst of men, to suffer and endure whatever might be laid upon them; according to whose treatment less or more afflictive, he might dispense his blessings or his curses upon men; in the event of whose utter rejection and extermination, he might bring down the judgment upon men. This succession of witnesses in the midst of the days is THE CHURCH. Besides these living tongues and patient witnesses who were removed by death, it was necessary moreover to have a standing record which should contain the sum and substance of that to which every man was to testify, and in the midst of all change of time and space, and fluctuations of mortal things, preserve the unity, the continuity and perpetuity of the Church, in the midst of the variety and infinite perplexity of the devil, the world, and the flesh: this standing record, this food for the spirit of these men, this bridle upon their tongue, we have in THE HOLY SCRIPTURES. It was necessary furthermore, to have a visible representation or unchanging body of that truth, which was to be testified to, that is, "the incarnation of the Son of God," for the declaration of the righteousness which is by faith; in order that the mystery might come full before the observation of men, and be a witness against them, whether they would read the written word or not: this they had in the temple and sacrifice and levitical priesthood of the former dispensation, and this we have now in the two sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and the Communion of Saints, who are partakers of Christ's sufferings, and "fill up that which is wanting of these sufferings for his body's sake, that is the church."

These three great parts are necessary to express and embody that idea of witness and testimony for the conviction of the world, which we believe to be the germinating principle of this preparatory dispensation. For the rest, the choosing of a particular family, in which to begin the great work of contradiction, gave form and demonstration to that principle of election or free and sovereign mercy which is the beginning and ending of the whole scheme of grace. And the giving unto this family an inalienable right of precedency, even when the world should all be brought in, and the gift become universal, was necessary to express the unchangeableness of God's grace, which is another fundamental principle of the whole scheme, or as St. Paul expresseth it, "that the gifts and callings of God are without repentance." The casting away of this nation when they had refused the succession of spiritual witnesses, and crucified THE FAITHFUL AND TRUE WITNESS, whom all others do but represent, and rejected the HOLY SPIRIT of witness poured out in their chief city and upon their countrymen; their rejection for these enormities, and their present dispersion and unequalled degradation and misery, is necessary to express the free-will and responsibility and retribution for all God's gifts, which is another fundamental principle of the scheme. The calling thereupon of a church out of the Gentiles, that is, the taking away the Jewish garb from the church, and the Jewish locality, and constituting it for all places and conditions, by making it spiritual, with just so much of form as would express the great doctrine of "the incarnation and resurrection of the Son of God, for the declaration of the righteousness which is by faith," this was necessary in order to show that God is no respecter of persons, or of nations, in his gifts, but designeth them for all living, which is another great fundamental principle of the scheme. The casting out of those nations, when they likewise shall have filled up the measure of their iniquity in persecuting the true and faithful servants and witnesses of the Lord, and both kings and people shall be confederates against the Lord and his anointed, to break their bands and cast their cords away from them,

that is, wholly to extirpate his Church and the testimony of his righteousness from the face of the earth, this also is most necessary, both for the ends of justice and retribution mentioned above, and to the end that the great scheme which contemplateth universality and eternity may not be cut short in its progress, and require to be begun anew.

The restoration of the Jewish nation, to be again the Church of God, and their re-establishment in their own land, to be the head of nations, and the centre of the earth's unity, and the going forth from them of that Spirit of righteousness which is to bring in all nations to the Church, and bind the whole world in one great community of Christians, acknowledging the Son of God, as the Lord of all, and practising the righteousness which is by faith, to constitute a worship and service which shall have in it the universality of the spiritual, combined in some way with the locality of Jerusalem as a centre, and the supremacy of the seed of Abraham as an example, and of David their king, as the head of all; this is only the fulfilling of that glory of Christ and blessedness of the whole earth, for which the whole dispensation and witness that hath been since Abraham, and now is present in the world, is but preparatory. We have had the variety of the wicked earth, we wait for the unity of the saved earth; we have had the humility of the suffering Church, we wait for the glory of the triumphant Church.

Such is the skeleton of that body which God hath given to his great purpose of saving the world, by that one truth "the Incarnation of his Son, for the salvation of man, through the righteousness which is by faith. This is the progress of the growth of the visible church, from a family to the whole world. But here two questions present themselves. First: If, as you have argued, the world be of such rebellious stuff, that in the face of this dispensation of witness and testimony, sustained all the while by an active Providence, it will not amend its obstinate ways, but persevere in them to the end; yea, and wax bolder and bolder against God and his chosen ones; until it is necessary to take measures that the cause of righteousness perish not utterly, by coming upon the confident world with a series of judgments, which shall make it reel to and fro like a drunkard, and consume its inhabitants, till hardly "a gleaning as of the vintage grapes is left;" how all at once shall it come to pass that the most obstinate of the nations shall at once be converted, and the whole world follow in its train, and persevere in a state of peace and blessedness? This is precisely the question to which I desire the attention of the church. How, indeed, will that great revolution be effected? I have a means most effectual in the casting out of Satan with all his angels from the possession of the earth and the heavens, in the destruction of all his works of despotism and superstition, infidelity and radicalism from the face of the whole earth. He who was the beginner of the declension, and of all the mischief which the earth has endured, must be cast out by the seed of the woman, before the warfare will end which the seed of the woman in his church hath maintained till this hour against the serpent and his generation of vipers. This is the great work behind the scenes in the spiritual world, out of the observation of the sense of man, which will prepare the way for the great work of peace and blessedness, which will then follow, almost as of course, behind the scenes, that is in the intercourse and conduct of men. I say almost of course, yet not altogether of course; because though Satan shall then be cast out of the world, and his active temptations wholly at an end, men will still be in the flesh and heirs of death, during the whole period of the millennial kingdom. And therefore they will need government, both civil and ecclesiastical, a law and a religion, or rather a law in a religion; that is, the same law of righteousness which we now possess, administered according to the wisdom of Christ and his reigning church without any

opposition or strife of Satan. Power shall then be holy; and the creation shall then be pure; and the bondage of Satan shall have ceased.

There is not only this negative, but also another provision of a positive kind, which answers to the second question that might be started froth the premises: viz. And what is to become of those spiritual witnesses, who since the calling of Abraham have been raised up in the likeness of Christ Jesus, to preserve the testimony of the righteousness which is by faith in his blood? What is to become of this elect church that have suffered, before his incarnation and since his incarnation, by the same eternal Spirit and for the same end of the Father's glory for which he suffered? To this I answer, that the whole scripture, from the beginning to the ending of it, doth testify that they shall come with Christ to be partakers of his glory, that he may be glorified in them in whom also he was dishonoured; and that they may be the sharers of that throne, and kingdom, and power, whereof he hath the promise from the Father, and is now expecting the fulfilment. These are the dead who shall hear the voice of the Son of God and live. These are they who shall be changed. These are they who shall meet the Lord in the air, and reign with him on the earth, and be forever with the Lord, in that new Jerusalem which cometh down from heaven. This new Jerusalem that which flesh and blood cannot inherit, where they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like the angels of God. And this is that of which the pillar of fire was the emblem in the wandering church; and the Shechinah, or glory between the cherubim, was the emblem in the resting church. There shall be to the whole earth such a glory beyond the light of the sun, as there was in the Holy of Holies, in the temple of Jerusalem; in which shall dwell the shining ones, the companions of the Lord, the true priesthood after the order of Melchisedek, who shall undertake the government of the whole earth, and carry it on under the great King; by whose active ministry, by whose speedy obedience, passing to and fro at will with angelic freedom and readiness, they shall preserve and maintain that peace and blessedness amongst the sojourners of the earth, in which the millennium will consist. And thus, without going into further particulars, it is that the change in the world's temper and condition will be accomplished; and thus that the elect church will be rewarded by being made the spouse, the sister of the King, the joint-heirs, the fellow-judges, and governors, and possessors of the kingdom.

Such, in few words, is the form of doctrine concerning the second advent of our blessed Lord, which was made known to me in the much study of the Holy Scriptures; and which, after several months of secret meditation, I began last Christmas, with all discretion and with fear and trembling, to break up and deal out to the church which God hath committed to my charge, resting and grounding the substance of it all upon the very words of our Lord himself, and using the Old Testament only when the language manifestly carried me thither, and the other books of the New Testament for further exposition and unfolding of those seeds of truth which are all contained in our Lord's own recorded discourses. For I hold it to be a great principle, which may almost be laid down as a canon of exposition, that every fundamental truth of faith should be shown to be present under some form or other, in every part, or rather I should say in every period, of divine revelation, unfolding itself more and more onwards to the end.

I have begun the preliminary discourse by giving an exposition of the doctrine which I have been teaching; first, to justify myself before the church of Christ in general, and especially before the church of Scotland, which ordained me to the ministerial and pastoral office, against the crude misapprehensions which in a day of such theological ignorance, and the malicious misrepresentations which in a day of such sectarian bigotry and

bitterness, have gone forth on all hands against me, as if I were propounding speculative notions, or propagating heretical errors. Secondly; to show the wonderful coincidence of the doctrine, which I had taught in ignorance at it was taught by any other, with the doctrine contained in this book which I now present to the churches using the English tongue, and I may say with the doctrine which is now in all quarters beginning to take root and bear fruit in these parts. And here I must not be silent concerning the very wonderful and providential way by which this train of discoursing brought me acquainted with the work which I now offer to The English churches. But here I must go a step or two backwards, and narrate how the original work found its way first into this country; and next how it was brought by God's grace into my hands, and so into the hands of the English reader; which particularity he will excuse, and thank me for, if he value the gift as I did value it.

This book entitled "La Venida del Mesias en Gloria y Majestad," i.e. "The Coming of Messiah in Glory and Majesty," was, so far as I can learn, first printed in Spain in the year 1812, in three volumes, during the short period of the Cortez, from which edition our translation is made. The manuscript must have been prepared by the author, as we find him complaining of and disavowing certain spurious and imperfect manuscripts, which had crept into circulation, both at home and on the other side of the ocean, that is, I suppose, in the Spanish colonies of South America. The government of the Cortez was no sooner dissolved, and the old order of things re-established, than this book among others was suppressed, and as much as possible withdrawn from circulation. And here I cannot deny myself the pleasure of introducing a very instructive anecdote, related to me by a Spanish refugee of great honour and worth, with whom I have oft conversed concerning this work and the author of it. When the inquiring mind of the Spanish youth was hindered from the food which it desired and had been entertained with during the Cortez, they formed secret societies, of which the object was to procure and read those books expressly which were prohibited by the Inquisition. In the number of which finding this work of Ben-Ezra, the society to which he belonged obtained it, and read it with much delight. And perceiving in its style and sentiment certain traits of resemblance to that of one of the clergy with whom they could hold confidential intercourse, my friend and informant asked him in great confidence if he was the author of it; to which he replied that he was not, but knew the book, and agreed with its doctrine.

It made its way into France, I know not when, in the form of an abridgment of extracts, and has been much read by the members of the Gallican church; amongst certain of whom, I am informed it is a common thing under the term of the "Apostate Gentility" to express the first of those three positions which have laid down above. In the year 1816, it came to England by the circuitous route of the Spanish colonies; being sent hither to the diplomatic or commercial agent of the Buenos Ayres government to be printed, and an edition of 1500 copies was actually printed for the use of the Spanish colonies. But though I have had the assistance of the very kind and honourable gentleman who was employed in this service, I have not been able to procure one single copy of that edition, and have reason to believe that it scattered no seeds of knowledge in this country by that visit, for I cannot hear of one man who had perused it, or become at all acquainted with its doctrines.

About three or four years ago, a clergyman of the church of England, whose name, if I might mention it, would prove that he was worthy to be employed by God in this ministry and whose labours for the consolation temporal and spiritual of suffering Spaniards and suffering Spain, perhaps commended him to God as worthy to bring to Britain this Spanish

prize, more precious than any galleon which was ever carried into a British port; this parish priest received from a Catholic friend on the continent, whose name I may not mention, but whose labours in the Lord are well known, that copy of the Spanish edition of 1812, from which this translation is made, and brought it with him to England. He was not a stranger to its value, and the truth of its doctrine did not long lie hid from him; but he had not yet given any publicity to it, beyond the circle of his immediate friends and visitors, of whom one, and at that time only one, was a very dear and honoured friend of mine. That friend hearing him speak much during a visit in his neighbourhood, of the Spanish work, and having in former days become acquainted with the Spanish language, thought well, or rather was directed of God, to request the loan of Ben-Ezra to peruse during this visit, and subsequently to bring it to London. Deeply impressed with the truth and the importance of the doctrines contained in it, concerning the glorious advent of the Lord; long thought and much consideration were exercised, how others might be made partakers of the benefit. And taking counsel with some friends, they meditated in their hearts to prepare portions of it, one to translate and another to revise, and to lay them as specimens of the work, before such members of the church as might be thought competent to decide on the best manner of its publication, and so wait the openings of Divine Providence. When the Lord hath a work to do, he soon findeth instruments, and he bringeth help from all quarters until it is accomplished. So it happened in this case by a very wonderful providence, as I shall now tell.

While this was in progress, I was obeying the call of God's Spirit to set forth from the pulpit those truths whereof I have given an abstract above; and it began to be noised abroad, as every thing is in this city and age of news-mongers, and was brought to the ears of a dear brother in the ministry of Christ, now most dear, though then unknown to me, save by his report which was in all the churches, for his labours of love and munificence in behalf of the dispersion of Judah. He had been standing in his watch-tower, in the capital of another country, and crying aloud those very truths which I had begun to proclaim, and of which indeed he had been long convinced, and had written very ably, though as yet I had not read any thing of his writing. But God who ordereth all things to accomplish his many ends, had brought him over to England, in one of the maritime towns of which he was residing for the recovery of his health, when he heard the report of the doctrine which I was maintaining. And being very desirous to know the exact purport thereof, and not able to hear it for himself, he requested one of his friends in town, who was at that time attending my ministry, and taking down the substance of my discourses, to continue to do so, and transmit them regularly for his perusal. And who should this be, but one of the friends who had been consulted respecting the publication of Ben Ezra, and in whose house the translations were revising, in order to prepare them for the press? And thus it came to pass, that the pages of Ben Ezra and the substance of my discourses met together upon the same table in London, on their passage to two different destinations. The truth which he had been taught in the midst of Catholic superstition, and had written with fear and trembling under the walls of the Vatican, met with the truth which God's Spirit had, during a season of affliction, taught me, in the midst of the intellectual pride of my native country; and which I was preaching in the midst of the contemptuous derision of the church in these parts, their scoffs, their insinuations, their magazine raillery, and their news paper abuse. To this very providential meeting of our mutual thoughts it was, that I was indebted for the great edification which I have derived from this book: to the same cause the church is indebted for the edification, which I trust she may derive from this attempt to translate it.

For when it was perceived that the substance of what he had written and I was preaching was the same, and the feelings which we expressed the same, and even the expressions sometimes the same, they thought it good to bring the book to me for my perusal. Four months previous to this it would have been a sealed book to me, by reason of my ignorance of the language, but during that short time having taken a few lessons, and practised a little the reading of the scriptures and some other books, I durst venture upon the perusal of it, and permitted it to lie upon my table. For several days I suffered it to lie untouched, little dreaming of the treasure and edification to my mind, which was contained in these leaves. But when I had read a very small portion of it, yea, before I had done with reading the Dedication, the hand of a master was made manifest to me; and ever as I proceeded the chief work of a master's hand appeared most clear. Then I pondered the purpose of God, in sending to me at such a time such a master-piece of reasoning upon scripture premises, and such a confirmation to my soul, distressed for want of brotherly countenance and help. And I took courage and gave thanks, and resolved to weigh well how I might turn the gift to the profit of his whole church; well assured that it was for the love of his church, which he hath purchased with his blood, that he had sent it at such a critical time to me. The first thought which occurred was, that it should go forth entire, and not piecemeal, as had been suggested by one or two persons who considered so voluminous a work on the subject might find fewer readers than an abridgement of it would do. And glad to have my counsel and help in any way, and willing to resign the whole charge of it to me, the friends readily gave way to this advice. But the question was, who should undertake the complete translation; for at that time I never dreamt of such a thing, and can only now wonder how I ever came to consent to it, though God knows I do not regret it, whoever may. The brother who had brought it over was withheld by diffidence, and I was withheld by disability; so we resolved that the two friends should proceed as before to complete the work, and that I should charge myself with the superintendence of its publication. And thus matters stood, at the time when the Prospectus of the translation was issued.

But here I take leave to introduce an anecdote which is curious in itself, and casts light upon the value in which the work is held in other lands. In order to prepare a proper prospectus of that which we has in contemplation, and to inform the church who this Hebrew-Christian or converted Jew, Juan Josafat Ben-Ezra actually was, and what was known concerning him, I caused the minister and good servant of the Lord who had brought us acquainted with his work to be written to. To which application, before we had received any answer, it pleased the Lord to bring up to this city that benefactor of Israel, who had taken such pains to become acquainted with the substance of my doctrine. He is the man in the English church who has been most forward in maintaining these views, both from the pulpit and the press, who being arrived here, and having taken the first opportunity of hearing me, (when it was so ordered that I should preach upon our Lord's interview with Nicodemus, and maintain that the present dispensation of water and the Spirit was but the latter half of the earthly things of which Moses had delivered the former half; and that the heavenly things were still to come;) he came forward after public worship and gave me the right hand of fellowship. The Lord bless him, and the very few ministers from whom I have heartily received it! For it has been my hard lot to have found few brethren in the ministry of Christ; the more do I love those whom I have found. This was the beginning of a brotherly communion, which I hope will never end; in the course of which I asked him, among other things, what works had been written upon these subjects; for, as yet, I had read none. Having named several, he added, But the great work upon the subject is by one

Lacunza a Jesuit; I have often heard of it upon the continent, but have never been able to see more of it than is contained in a French abridgment. Upon which I explained to him the remarkable way in which a Spanish work upon the subject, written by One Ben-Ezra had come into my hands, and the purpose which I had conceived of seeing it translated into English. Of that work, said he, I have never heard, but my impression is that the great work of Lacunza was written in Latin. Next day, or a few days after, an answer arrived from our friend to whom we had written in view of the Prospectus, informing us that the name of Juan Josafat Ben-Ezra was taken for a covert or disguise, and that the true name of the author of the Spanish work was Lacunza, a Jesuit; who, along with the rest of his order, had been exiled from the Spanish colonies of South America, whereof he was a native, and had taken refuge in Italy. Also, that, the character of converted Jew was assumed for the same reason; but of this I confess that I am still sceptical.

So that it appeared that the great work among the divines on the continent, written by one Lacunza a Jesuit, was the same work which was laid upon my table without any information concerning it, except that it was written by Juan Josafat Ben-Ezra; but of which God had given me the discernment to perceive that it was the master work of one of his most gifted servants. Now let this book be read as a voice from the Roman Catholic Church, and let the Palingenesia and Basilicus' Letters of my friend be read as a voice from the Church of England, and let the substance of my discourses for the last year, as given above, be read as a voice from the Kirk of Scotland; and when the coincidence of sentiment and doctrine is perceived in the diversity of personal character and particular interpretations, let any one if he dare, reject the whole matter as the ravings and dreamings of fanciful men.

About this time it pleased the Lord to stir up the greater part of my flock to exhort me by all means, as I valued my own health and their well-being, to remove a little from the bustle and intrusion of this great city, and abide in the country during some of the summer months; and two of the brethren, who love me much, engaged, unknown to me, a place in the country, where, without forsaking my charge, I might reside in peace and quietness amidst the beauty and bounty with which God hath covered the earth. This occurring so unexpectedly, at the time when all concerned were soliciting me to undertake the whole care and responsibility of the translation, and perceiving that the work was likely to suffer from a divided labour, without being at all hastened, I resolved at length, insufficient as was my knowledge of the language at that time, to conquer all difficulties, and heartily to give myself to the Lord and to his church during these weeks of retirement. For I was well convinced that the health which I most needed was the healing water of the Holy Spirit, which I thus made bold to solicit by devoting myself to his service. And certainly the labourer was not disappointed of his hire. I prevented the dawning of the morning, and I envied the setting in of the shades of evening, to labour in my work: and when my hands and my eyes failed me, because of weakness, the helper whom God hath given meet for me, served me with hers, and so we laboured to bring this labour of love to completion, purposing to offer it to the Church as our Christmas Offering, which was only hindered by a very remarkable occurrence, which I shall relate in its place, as most worthy the attention of the Church. Oh that my brethren in Christ might have the same divine satisfaction and unwearied delight in reading, that I had in translating this wonderful work!

When I had brought the work almost to a conclusion and wanted but a few sheets to complete it, it came to my knowledge for the first time, that another edition, in the Spanish tongue, had been proceeding in London, and was just finished. Which I immediately procured, and, upon collating it with our original Spanish edition, I find it to be fuller in

some parts, and in others expressed with a greater freedom, than that from which I was translating. But that it may be seen there is no essential difference in the matter or method of the work, I have added to my work the *Indice razonado* or digested index of the London edition. Nevertheless, when I shall have sufficiently inquired into the authenticity of the MSS. and editions upon which they wrought, and over which Lacunza's Preface had cast a shade of suspicion in my mind, I shall complete the collation of the two editions, and publish in an Appendix whatever additional matter or various readings may appear to me of any moment, that it may be had separately. But I did not think this a matter of sufficient importance to delay the publication; and I count it well that it has been so ordered, because the members of the Roman Catholic church, for whose sake I undertake this labour, as for all others who believe in the two advents of Christ, would have ill brooked that an edition prepared in London, under the eyes of those they know not, should have been preferred to the edition published under the authority of the Spanish church, at a time when the press of that country was known to be free. But if it should appear that from any cause, a portion of the life-blood of this master spirit should have been drained off, I promise it to my love for the integrity of his work, and the honour of his memory, that it shall fully appear in the Appendix which I propose to this edition, and in the body of another edition, if it shall be required: from which we shall possess a curious and valuable document of the fears of the Romish Church, from the work of one of her most gifted and most dutiful Sons.

During the progress of the work, the more I discovered its great weight and value, as an all-sufficient argument for the orthodoxy of the ancient system, and the heterodoxy of the commonly received one, the more desirous did I become that it should have a fair and free introduction to the Church: and, perceiving that it bore hard against the stream of common opinion, I thought within myself, how I might best defend from the storm which would be raised against it on all hands by the British inquisition, whose ignorance of truth I knew to be equalled only by their malice against every thing which touched the infallibility of their idol, PUBLIC OPINION. I mean by the British Inquisition, that court whose ministers and agents carry on their operations in secret; who drag every man's most private affairs before the sight of thousands and seek to mangle and destroy his life as an instructor trying him without a witness, condemning him without hearing, nor suffering him to speak for himself; intermeddling in things of which they have no knowledge, and cannot on any principle have a jurisdiction; and defacing and deforming the finest beauty and the profoundest wisdom by the rancour of their malice. I mean those who set principle, who set truth, who set feeling, who set justice; who set every thing sacred up to sale. I mean the ignorant unprincipled, unhallowed spirit of criticism, which in this Protestant country is producing as foul effects against truth, and by as dishonest means, as ever did the Inquisition of Rome. Perceiving well that my worthy master Ben-Ezra had in his own right nothing to expect but the most vehement abuse and ridicule of his opinions, and, in my company, still more I weighed well how I might obtain for him a fair hearing from the Church which has become review-ridden to a most alarming degree: and, having well meditated this matter and besought the guidance of the Lord, I was directed to send a goodly portion of the work, when printed, to the ministers and members of the Church of Christ, who should seem to me the most honourable, simple-minded, and single-eyed before the Lord; in order that the blasphemers of fair and honest truth might be prevented from prejudicing the easy, drowsy, luke-warm Church against the best gift which hath been offered to her in these latter times. And I requested of those reverend and worthy men that they would send me any observations which might occur to them as likely to improve the work, that I might embody them in the

notes, which at that time I purposed to append to the work. And the result was, that, though they were taken from all denominations of the Church, I received nothing but the highest approbation of the spirit of the writer and the power of his argument. This ought to be known and spread abroad as some covert, the only one which I could construct, against the evil report which a thousand ignorant and sectarian pens will, in the plenitude of their all-comprehending ignorance, immediately set abroad against him. Oh, but I do rejoice that from the moment I began to use a pen for the instruction of my countrymen, I did, without any compromise; expose the character of the Protestant Inquisition, and make war against it!

It was the opinion of many friends, that in notes I should go into an explanation of the points in which the text of the book varied from our Protestant doctrine. But after calm consideration, I declined this, upon the following grounds, —The doctrines of the Romish Church which now and then appear, are brought forward with so much simplicity and sincerity of faith, and so little in the spirit of obtrusion or controversy, that it seemed to me like taking an advantage of the honest, well-meaning man, to enter the lists against him, unaccounted as he was. Besides, I was so pleased with the light of Holy Scripture which he cast into my mind in almost every page, that I was in no humour to be angry with the Romish fashion in which some of his opinions were cut. They were never principal but only accessory; never substantial, but only accidental to the question. And, I believe, no Protestant living could write so long with so little of the spirit of sectarianism, as this worthy old Jesuit has contrived to do. And I am very certain that with all our boasted liberality, there is not one amongst us who durst have spoken such free truths of the evils and errors of his communion, as this honest Catholic hath of the Papal Church. Oh no! I had no heart to catch him tripping or to expose the weakness of so dear a teacher, concerning whom I was continually exclaiming to the companion of my solitary labour, 'I hope yet, in some of my future pilgrimages, to meet this grey-headed saint in the flesh, and receive his blessing, while I tell him how much I love him, and have profited from his instructions.'

For I did not then know that he was now no more, which I have since learned through the means of that Spanish officer whom I have mentioned above. The picture is altogether so innocent and so sweet, and so entirely justifies the sentiment which I have just expressed, that I make no apology for introducing it in this place.

“EMANUEL LACUNZA was born at Saint Iago, of Chili, in South America, on the 13th of July, 1731. He was the son of noble, though not very rich parents, who, however, did all they could to give him a good education: they sent him to the college of the Jesuits, of which society he became a member on the 7th of September, 1747. The silence, retirement, and many other troubles attending a Jesuit's life, soon tired him; and the vivacity of his temper brought upon him many a reprimand by his superiors. He was appointed to the superintendence of the noviciates, in which situation, he showed his zeal for the spiritual good of the young people under his care. But this employment having proved burdensome to him, he left it, to dedicate himself exclusively to geography and astronomy; in which sciences he could not make great progress, for want of the necessary instruments. Exiled from his native land at the time of the expulsion of his order, Lacunza came over to Europe, and established his residence at Imolo, in Italy, where he lived in retirement avoiding society, conversing only with his books. He used to take a walk alone, in the fields every afternoon by the side of the river near the town. On the 17th of June, 1801, in the morning, he was found dead by the river side, where probably he dropped in his walk the afternoon before: The only work which he has left behind is, his ‘Venida del Mesias en Gloria y

Magestad;’ an abridgment of which was published at the Isle of Leon, in two small octavo volumes. In 1816, a complete edition of this work was published in London, in four volumes, octavo, by the diplomatic agent of the republic of Buenos Ayres. “I forgot to say, that he had exercised preaching in America; and, though his style was not the best, he acquired a reputation as a preacher.”

So far from entering into controversy with such a man, I have, ever since my dream of meeting him in this life was dissolved, been meditating of the joy with which I shall meet him in “the New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from our God,” if we should be judged worthy. And this I say, with the full perception of the capital and fundamental points on which we differ, and amongst which are transubstantiation, the sacrifice of the mass, the seven sacraments, the hierarchy, and the central unity of the church in Rome. But though no one more abhorreth, or will more steadily contend against these and other deadly errors of the Romish church, I am not ignorant, nay I am sure, from the very invocations of Scripture, that God hath a people in the midst of her, of whom I believe that my Ben-Ezra was one and I confess the talismanic virtue of that word protestantism is departed from me, by my looking upon the prostrate, the rebellious, the antichristian condition of most. I had almost said all, the Protestant churches abroad. But I love the Reformers only the more, and cherish their memory the more dearly, that I perceive their successors have so trodden down and trampled upon their work. And oh! I love them very greatly as my only shield at this time, while endeavouring to maintain their spiritual doctrines. Were it not for the standards of the reformation behind which I can rally myself, I durst not open my mouth upon the subject of the sacraments, or the church, in an age when baptism and the Lord’s supper are regarded as mere signs by the spiritual, and the church as nothing but a political establishment. Yes, I would rather, if I had no other choice, hold with a church that believed in transubstantiation, than with another which believed the supper of the Lord to be but a commemorative sign. Thanks be to my God that our church abhorreth and detesteth such a thought, “We utterly abhor and detest the doctrine that the sacraments are but naked signs.”²

Holding with these a position half way between the pious people with whom I am surrounded, and the papal church, I had the less disposition to doubt that Ben-Ezra and many pious Catholics, might without peril of salvation though to the prejudice of their spiritual perfection, hold such offensive and erroneous notions. But why not do so in the way of caution and safety to the Protestant reader, who might drink in those errors the more easily, for being found in the bosom of so excellent and kindly a teacher? I answer, that if I had found them introduced with any art or insinuation, I would have done so; but on the other hand, finding them stated with no sort of equivocation, and with no sort of argumentation, as matter of every-day belief, as the household words of the papal church, I deemed it utterly beside the office of a translator to take upon himself any such duty, which belongs to the every day duty of the Protestant preacher. I can well believe, indeed, that in the present day of liberal forbearance to all sorts of error, especially to those of the much-injured Catholics of Ireland (as they say), many, aye by far the most part of our flocks, will be found utterly unable to state the points in dispute between us and the Catholics, much less to maintain them. It is not the fashion, it is illiberal, it is uncharitable: Oh, I could almost wish that this book which I am publishing might fetch a back-stroke against the smooth check-bone of such oily talkers, though it were in this very way of shaking their unrooted disciples; and forcing them to take regular arms against an opinion which will be strong and struggling to the very death. But not purposing to supplement the deficiencies of

² Confession of the Kirk of Scotland, above referred to. Art. Of the Sacrament.

either them or their disciples, and having no fear for any Protestant who knows the Mother's Catechism, I resolved that I would resist the importunities of my friends, and let the book go forth, a simple and faithful translation, like those of the work of Thomas à Kempis, Pascal, Boussuet, Fenelon, and others.

I confess, however, I am tempted to break a spear with my master upon the subject of Prophetic Interpretation, because here, the case is completely altered, for as much as he appears directly as an antagonist. In the main here also I confess myself indebted to him beyond the power of acknowledgement in all that respects those prophecies which may be called discursive, in contradistinction, to those of Daniel and the Apocalypse, which are historical, he is to my mind altogether unrivalled. I do not find him so strong perhaps in the analogies of scripture and Providence, as the author of Basilicus and Palingenesia, but in the interpretation of the various texts and contexts of the prophetic Scriptures, (and to him all Scripture is prophetic), there is no Protestant writer whom I know of, to be at all compared to him. His book is the finest demonstration of the orthodoxy of the ancient system of the millenarians which can be imagined; indeed I may say perfect and irrefragable. I never expect to see an answer to it nor do I believe an answer will ever be attempted. Likewise with his view of the present state of Christendom I perfectly coincide, and that infidelity is fast breeding out of the serpent's egg of superstition and will speedily lay violent hands upon its mother; and confederate all nations against the Lord and his anointed, persecuting the Christian church, circumventing the conversion of the Jews with every snare, and otherwise perverting the faith and hope of the world. With all the substance of his argument I most heartily coincide, and in his impressions of the nearness of the great crisis, I do most heartily sympathize. Nevertheless there are several points connected with his interpretation of the exact or historical prophecies, upon which I will say a few words, as also upon the perverted use which is made by our adversaries of these disagreements among interpreters.

First of the prophecies of Daniel. I see no sufficient reason to depart from the commonly received interpretation of the great statue, and subdivision of the four monarchies; while I can easily perceive the clue which has led our author into his interpretation, that the Babylonian and Persian do together compose but one of the kingdoms, and that the fourth is the Gothic kingdom, or system of power which hath obtained in Europe since the sixth century, and obtaineth unto this day. That which drove him into this interpretation which he hath so ingeniously maintained, was doubtless the attempt of his church, and indeed of many of the Protestants, to make the kingdom of the stone begin with the former advent of Christ and so avoid the second advent altogether, as an event in the history of the earth's amelioration. But this is sufficiently answered by observing that though the fourth kingdom was come into being at the former advent of the Lord, it was not in the divided condition of the legs of the statue, and still less of the toes partly iron and partly clay upon which the stone impingeth. If the toes were not then in existence how could the stone fall upon them at the time of the former advent? And how can it be said to have broken then while the whole operation of the Christian religion has been to support the authority of the powers that be? This I say, of Christianity truly so called, and of the apostasy I may add, that it has been the cement instead of being the destruction of the last four of the kingdoms, which hath hung together for the last 1300 years by no principle of union but that derived from the common profession of the Christian faith. For the rest, what our author says concerning the oneness of the Babylonian and Persian kingdom may be true politically considered but is not so prophetically considered, forasmuch as all the prophets from Isaiah to John do regard the taking of Babylon by Cyrus,

and the events which followed upon it, as the greatest and most remarkable retribution and revelation of God, which hath happened to the church and nations since the destruction of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

This is further manifest from the vision of the eighth chapter of Daniel, where the Persian power comes upon the prophetic stage with its proper emblem, acting in its own separate nationality. And it is further manifest from the narration of the tenth and eleventh chapters into which our limits will not allow me to enter at present. Finally, in what he says concerning the character of the fourth kingdom, as being so appropriate to the spirit and acts of the Gothic kingdoms, I heartily concur; observing merely, that when we attribute this to the Roman kingdom, we include the Gothic period as one of the integral parts of it, and that which is the most frequently regarded in prophecy; being the period of the ten horns, and also of the little horn.

Nevertheless, though I hold to the common interpretation of the whole vision and agree with my author in looking for the smiting of the stone and the consumption of the whole Statue at the second advent of the Lord, I must confess that my author casts a very strong and steady light upon it, and in the argument derived from it for the second advent, he has my entire concurrence and great admiration, as I am sure he will have of all who give themselves to these studies. The principle of a territorial respect in this prophecy, as in all of them, is also beautifully illustrated by this interpretation of Ben-Ezra. Upon which territorial aspect of the prophecies I may here observe in passing, lest it should escape me in another place, that I know not how it is possible for those prophecies which respect the latter times of Egypt, and Moab, and Ammon, &c. to be accomplished if you make them to respect the races of the inhabitants who are all intermingled and lost; but if you make them to respect the territories of these people, with such of the antient descendants as are there found, they are capable of an exact accomplishment. I refer for further remarks upon this subject, to "Frere's Combined View."

With respect to our author's interpretation of the vision of the four beasts contained in the seventh of Daniel, I cannot but admire the ingenuity of the whole, and the great value of the particular observations which are contained in it. But I cannot agree with it for several reasons which I will introduce by previously rebutting one or two of his objections; whereof the first is Daniel's exceeding terror and affright on account of a vision which he had already seen. This our author argues was not to be expected if he had seen but the repetition of a former vision, which had then caused to him no such overpowering horror. But the spirit of the former vision is the subversion of the four empires by the saints, the spirit of this vision is the oppression of the saints by the fourth of the kingdoms; the former an occasion of joy, the latter an occasion of horror to a prophet of the Lord. For though the saints in the one as in the other are to possess the kingdom, here it is not till after a long long period of oppression and persecution. This was what occasioned the prophet's abject sorrow and great astonishment. To the second of his objections, that the Babylonian monarchy was then past, I have nothing to say except that it is not unusual for the spirit of prophecy to take a retrospective view of the conditions of the church, in order to make the whole complete. Whereof we have a notable example in the first and second chapters of Zechariah, under the emblem of the four horns. It is a thing quite usual in the discursive prophecies to derive the history of the sufferings of the church from so high a source even as the bondage of Egypt. And what wonder then if in this prophecy, whose object, as I judge, is to set forth the captivity of the saints, and the duration of the militant suffering church, the terrors of the bestial reign until the reign of the Son of man shall come and put

them under his feet, according to the promise of the eighth Psalm, prefigured by the creation of man upon the eve of the sixth day, before the sabbath of rest; what wonder, I say, if such a revelation of the mystery of iniquity whereof the last of the four periods was to endure, no less than "a time, times, and half a time," should have smitten the prophet's spirit unto the very earth. That this is the scope of the vision, nay, that the "time, times, and half a time" of the little horn's blasphemous usurpation, and the great deliverance therefrom, is the one object of the vision I have no doubt, from its being so much dwelt upon, and from its being the object of the prophet's interrogatory, and of the angel's interpretation; but more particularly from the reference made to this vision in the twelfth chapter, by this very characteristic mark of "time, times, and half a time."

Now it was this very thing, —that our author perceived not the symbolical meaning of this period "time, times, and half a time," but interpreted it literally, to mean three years and a half; or forty and two months, or 1260 days, —which led him into his whole theory of this vision, or as he modestly proposeth it, his conjecture. Having fallen into this error, which I can only account for from his total unacquaintance with any of our protestant interpreters, it was quite natural for him to find infidelity represented in this beast of ten horns which is to consummate the wickedness of the last times, and bring in the glorious advent of the Lord. Because he is too shrewd an observer of the spirit and aspects of human society to doubt that it is infidelity which is to play the last desperate game of wickedness; yea, not to perceive that it is already doing its work masterfully, and hath been for the last thirty years. I am perfectly amazed at his insight into this mystery; the concurrence of such a man to the opinions which I have expressed in 'Babylon and Infidelity foredoomed,' concerning the imminent peril of infidelity, may, I think, open the eyes of those who dream that religion is making great and mighty progress upon the earth. Being fully convinced of this point, and perceiving that this ten horned beast was to consummate the mystery of iniquity, and not perceiving the emblematical character of its period, it was most natural, and as it were necessary for him to conclude that this ten-horned seven-headed beast must be an emblem of infidelity; and having arrived at this conclusion, it was most natural, and as it were necessary, to infer that the other three must likewise represent false religions, and so we have the clue to this interpretation also.

Now I am not ignorant that there are amongst ourselves men who doubt and disbelieve the interpretation which almost all protestants give to this period, as containing a term of 1260 years; and that of late a pamphlet has been written by a very worthy clergyman of the Church of England to this effect: but really I have thought this matter so completely set at rest by Mede, and Henry More, and the common consent of those who have written since, as not to need any demonstration. And it is manifest that, if in emblematical visions, such as those of Daniel and the Apocalypse, you will interpret the periods literally, you may as well interpret the other parts literally; and insist upon literal beasts of the character there set forth, and a literal throne, and so of the rest, which no one will be so foolish as to require. And why require it in one part and not in another? The word time, rather than year; and times, rather than two years; and the dividing of time, rather than half a year; were evidence to me that there was a mystery under it: but when I find it in the midst of an emblematical vision I can have no doubt thereof, according to all rules and canons of interpretation.

This indeed is the point in which our author falls short of himself, viz: in all that respects the chronology which is intermingled with the prophecy, whereof he makes not the slightest use in guiding himself with respect to our present place in the prophetic chart, but

simply looks upon all the numbers 1260, 1290, and 1335 days, as determining the duration of the great and awful era which precedes the coming of the Lord. And I confess that upon this system he hath made out such a very strong case, derived and deduced from all the scriptures, that though he hath not shaken me in the least out of our interpretation of these numbers, he hath sometimes awakened in my mind the suspicion of a possibility, that when the time of that last great antichristian trouble shall arrive, these numbers may be found to have a literal application without prejudice to that symbolical one which they have already had; even as this symbolical answers, as I conceive, to a former literal period given in the three years and a half famine in the time of Ahab, which closed in the destruction of the priests of Baal, and the coming of rain, after seven successive messages to look out for it from Elias the true prophet of God. And I have sometimes had a suspicion, moreover, that the three years and a half duration of the Lord's suffering ministry, may be a type of the duration of the sufferings of the Jewish church when it shall be again called; for I continually find the suffering Messiah, and the suffering Jewish church, interwoven in the prophecies of the Old Testament, especially in the Psalms, of which the one hundred and fifty-first may be taken as an example. Now it may be as Ben-Ezra argueth, that while the Israel of the apostate Gentile church is enduring the three years and a half famine and sore suffering in the days of king Ahab, or the personal infidel Antichrist, the Jewish church may be suffering the same three years and a half trial and persecution, which Messiah endured for them, ending in that agony of sorrow described in the twelfth chapter of Zechariah, and in their apparent death preparatory to their great resurrection. I know not what there may be in this, and I do but throw it out as a conjecture and suspicion which hath oft been forcibly awakened in my own mind. And thus it may be, that both we Protestants, and Ben-Ezra, may be in the right.

However this may be, I consider our disparity on this point (for it is not a disagreement, inasmuch as he seemeth not to have known our opinion, and I am sure we knew not his) to be more providential than our concurrence, and more demonstrative of the truth, inasmuch as notwithstanding this diversity of education and method, we both discern the great lineaments of the truth, he from the one side, we from the other side of heaven, perceiving the manifest sign of the day of the Son of man. We agree in perceiving that the papacy hath furnished, is furnishing, and will furnish the great strength and supply of the infidel power, that the infidel power will carry along with it the papal hierarchy and kingdom, that it will be supported by these in the persecution of the true church of Christ; that it will stand up against the Lord and his anointed, and not be destroyed but by the brightness of his coming. I may add, moreover, that his interpretation of the actings of this future infidel beast of ten horns, so exactly concurs with our interpretation of the actings of the past papal beast, that I oft fancied he was describing rather than anticipating; and a friend of mine in whose sound judgment I have much reliance, remarked to me that it confirmed him in the protestant interpretations, more than any thing which he had ever read in their own works. Now how much additional evidence is brought to these things, which we agree are now in the world, or to be immediately anticipated, is brought by our disagreement in the minor points of interpretation. It shows that we are not misled by the spirit of system, it shows that we do not, as our gainsayers, follow each other like a flock of sheep, it shows that we are not betrayed into our opinion by protestant or catholic prejudices; but are forced, notwithstanding our different positions and different methods of observation, to conclude the same thing from the very manifest signs which will not suffer themselves to be read wrong. This is an observation of very wide application.

Next with respect to the Apocalypse, for the above mentioned are the only two visions of Daniel which he treateth at large, I must begin by observing that I perfectly concur with his idea that the title of this book "The Revelation, of Jesus Christ," is to be understood in an active, not in a passive sense, to signify as it doth in all the epistles "the revealing of Jesus Christ," or the manifestation of his promised coming. And it may be some confirmation of this idea to state that I had been convinced of this several months before I saw the work, and had suggested it to a friend, who is conversant in these matters. But though concurring with my author in this the germ of his system of interpreting the Apocalypse, I do by no means concur in his inference, that therefore it must wait for and immediately precede the day of the Lord's coming, and be all evolved with a rapidity of succession which will not fill many years; and that no part of the book from the fourth chapter to the end, has yet been accomplished. In this inference I do not concur, though I concur in the idea that the book is nothing but the manifestation of the Lord's coming, revealed for the teaching and consolation of his church. But such a manifestation as will comfort and sustain the church during the whole period of his absence, being to her what the succession of prophets was to the former church.

As at every hard passage in the Church's history, under Pharaoh, under Ahab, on the eve of the Assyrian, and, anon, of the Babylonish captivity, in the duration of the same, in the hard times which followed thereupon, and, finally, for the seventy years which preceded the destruction and downfall of Jerusalem, there were raised up prophets who should direct the eye of the Church to her great redemption and restoration at the coming of Messiah; by one of whom was given also the times and seasons thereof, exactly numbered and set off; so it is analogous to believe that the Lord would do the same by the Christian Church, in that book which was added for the interpretation of all the other books of revelation, and for the express manifestation of that coming kingdom, whereof the expectation of the Church had been defeated at the time of the former advent. If such a book was to be given, to conclude the canon and serve the part of a prophecy to the Gentile Church, leading in and pointing directly, like all prophecy, to the grand restoration, by the coming of the Lord; it is, I say, according to the analogy of all God's dealings, that it should be so disposed as to open now one part and now another, according to the successive judgments of his providence and hidings of his countenance, with which it might please him to visit his beloved Church, for her chastisement and perfection by suffering. And it is not according to the analogy of God's dealings with his Church, that this book should lie a long while without any bearing upon, or application unto the conditions of the Church during that long period of her distress. So that while Ben-Ezra has most triumphantly refuted those who would make all the Apocalypse to run out or terminate long ere this, he has laid himself open to the same sort of triumphant refutation by confining it to a short period towards the end of time, which is not yet arrived.

Still I go hand in hand with him in the idea, that it is to the *revelation or manifestation of Jesus Christ*, that every part should be shown to have respect. And if this idea be true, and the question of its truth must be determined on other grounds besides analogy, we have the best reason to assign why there should be so much disputation and disagreement among the interpreters of this book. For as it would have been bad husbandry to have given to Moses what fitted the times of Isaiah, or to Isaiah what suited the times of Daniel, or to Daniel what suited the times of the Baptist; so, would it have been equally bad husbandry to have opened the prophecy which respecteth the downfall of the Papacy to the Church while suffering under Paganism, or that which respecteth the downfall of Infidelity

to the Church while suffering under the oppression of the Papacy: but rather to open unto each that which concerned its own trial, and in mercy to hide the various trials which were to follow, lest haply she might think them interminable, and lose heart altogether. Yet as in the former prophets of the old dispensation there is an infantine discernment, and, as it were, embryo revelation of all the prophecy which was to follow, so ought there to be a system, and combination, and evenness of progress and end in this book, which was thus gradually to be opened, as the Church should stand in need of its consolation. Thus, concurring with my author in the germ of his system, I concur with him so far in its spirit likewise as to believe, that, as upon the eve of Messiah's former coming there was the dispensation of a fore runner and a preparation; so, upon the eve of his latter coming there may be, nay, there will be, a dispensation of special preparation and perhaps, even of a forerunner; which, I think, is signified in that prophetic voice announced under the sixth vial, "Behold, I come," &c. —Finally, it is enough for the confirmation of these views to find that each of the three great oppressions of the Church, the Pagan, the Papal, and the Infidel, was attended with a corresponding opening and understanding of that part of this book which severally concerneth each, and of the corresponding scriptures, which breathe the promise of the like deliverances. And this, I assert, has been the case: during the first three centuries, the Apocalypse was known and cherished in the Church as the great assurance of the downfall of Paganism; during the sufferings of the Waldenses and the Protestants, it was cherished as the ground of belief, that the Pope and the papal empire was the beast: and now it is beginning to be known from the same, that the infidel antichrist, who is to take the other out of the way, is the great sign of, and shall himself be destroyed in, the coming of the Lord.

Besides this, there is another reason, derived from the same high ground of the analogy of the prophetic spirit, which I have to assign for differing from the opinion of my author, —that the apocalyptic seals, trumpets and vials, &c. have in no part been fulfilled; while I agree with him, that the only end of the Apocalypse is, to manifest, or reveal the coming of Christ in glory and majesty. And it is this: that every other prophetic book, and, I may say almost every prophecy of every prophetic book, hath a part which had immediate, or speedy fulfilment, in order to justify the prophet's pretension, and give assurance and certainty to that other part which remained, unfulfilled till its proper time should arrive. In every prophecy of the Old Testament, and in the prophecies of the Lord recorded in the Gospel, there are two parts, —the former, of private application to a people and to a time close at hand; the latter, not of private interpretation, being spoken by the Holy Spirit for the good of the elect church in all ages, and waiting for its accomplishment till the time of the end, or of the Lord's glorious advent.

For example; The personal prophecy of Emanuel, given to King Ahaz, was linked into connexion with those two sons of Isaiah, Shear-jashub and Mahar-shalal-hash-baz, in whose times an overthrow of the enemies of Judah was predicted to take place; having come to pass, did stamp that glorious prophecy with the signet of Almighty and Omniscient truth, and leave it a most precious jewel of the Church's dowry. It was repeated by the angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary, and by Zacharias commented upon, and had its opening in the birth of Christ of virgin's seed. But the great accomplishment of it abides outstanding till the times of refreshment shall come. So it is also with all the prophecies concerning the captivity in, and the overthrow of Babylon, whereof I will assert, that not one hath had its full and perfect accomplishment in any events yet passed, which events the prophecies indeed included, but they included more; the captivity in Babylon being to the national

church of the Jews what Egypt was to the patriarchal church, —a great event, doubtless, and a great chastisement; but chiefly so, as it afforded a language of facts, in which to express their national captivity to this day, and in which also to express the spiritual thralldom of the Gentile church to the mystical Babylon. So much, also, do I affirm of the deliverance afforded by Cyrus to that handful which returned to Jerusalem; the true Cyrus with his sanctified ones being yet for to come, and deliver those of the captive Israelites who will be delivered. So also our Lord's prophecies of his Second coming in power and great glory, for judgment upon the earth, and deliverance to the Church, have a part which bore upon and had immediate accomplishment in that very generation, to that very city, and upon that visible Church: which being fulfilled shortly thereafter, not only served the end of warning the proper objects of its burdens or woe, but, which is far more important, it authorized the future application of those parts of it which can by no power of ingenuity be compelled to bend to that event, or any other event but the coming of the Son of man.

So also the prophecies scattered through the epistles, of an apostacy that was to come in the Christian Church before the time of the Lord's appearing, had a partial fulfilment in those very days, as Paul and John do testify. And, without multiplying instances, I appeal to all the prophecies for the fact, that every one of them hath a part that beareth upon some proximate event, which in the analogy of divine providence doth resemble and serve to shadow forth an ultimate event, to which the other part of the prophecy hath respect. For the providence of Cod is as subservient to the great end of foreshowing the grand consummation of this world's redemption and blessedness at the second advent of the Lord, as is the prophecy; or rather, the word of prophecy gives signal of the event of providence, according to the Scottish proverb, '*Before wierd there's word.*' And the word is not only the signal, but the cause of the event, as we see in the acts of creation; so that the proverb might have this more religious form, 'Word makes wierd.' Furthermore, it is this partial application of the prophecy to a former event which makes the one half of men say it is all fulfilled already; and it is this partial in-application of it which makes the other half of men say, that it is never to be fulfilled in any real event, but must be understood spiritually, anagogically, &c.

Against both of which perversities St. Peter, in the end of the first chapter of his second epistle, maketh strong debate: insisting against the former class, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private application that is, neither to private men, nor particular ages, nor particular events, but hath an outstanding application to events yet to come, being spoken by the Holy Ghost for the profit of the Catholic Church; while against the spiritualizers, who were not then in being, he deals an anticipative blow, by directing the Church to look to the "sure word of prophecy, as unto a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise on their hearts:" and he brings them a second blow, as I judge, by calling them "the scoffers who were to arise in the last times," saying, "Where is the hope of his coming?" From all which we surely conclude, that it is the rule of the Prophetic Spirit for these two great and necessary purposes, of guiding the church then being, and directing the church which should be unto the end, for the purpose also of verification, in order that the word so confirmed and verified, might be locked up in the faith and hope of the church unto the end; always to have a part of every prophecy applicable to things at hand, as well as a greater part applicable to things afar off.

Now this principle established upon so broad a basis, bears hard upon our author's theory of the apocalyptic prophecy who goes about to deprive it of the former part altogether, and to interpose seventeen hundred years, during which no part of it hath been

confirmed. For, according to the views, all from the fourth chapter forward unto the end of the book, remain unaccomplished, and will be rapidly evolved in a regular succession; immediately upon the eve of the Lord's coming. In which case it is like no other prophecy that the Spirit of God ever indicted; and wants the prophetic sanction of embracing what hath already come to pass, and therefore wants the irreversible claim upon the belief of the church. Whereas taking it as I have elsewhere done (following Mr. Frere's scheme) as successive revelations of prophecy, and correspondent acts of Providence, all bearing upon and announcing near and still more near, the great and glorious consummation, everything comes out in beautiful harmony with the other revelations of the prophetic Spirit. We have first the vision of Christ in emblematic form as the Shepherd and Bishop of the churches; and then we have his epistles to the seven churches of Asia, which I have no doubt were seven actual churches, as Babylon, and Egypt, and Jerusalem were actual places; and that their encouragements, admonitions, threatenings, and promises, were both needed by them and carried to them by the messenger to whom they were entrusted. And as I perceive moreover, that the threatenings contained in them have all an allusion to the pagan persecutions which were about to come upon them, I am very much disposed to confine these epistles to that specific object.

But if any one, considering the broad characteristic differences which there is amongst them, and the promises all applicable to the coming of the Lord, and the mystical import of the number seven be disposed to regard them as including in some larger sense the successive states of the whole Christian church up to the coming of the Lord, I am not careful to controvert that position; so that it be granted to me that this part of the book which is called "the things that are", had a real and literal application to those seven churches to which it is by name addressed. By these seven epistles the great and good shepherd having signified his watchful care and inspection over all the churches, and foretold a speedy persecution that was to arise against them of ten days duration, about to come upon all the world; having also pointed their eye to the great hopes; powers, possessions, and glories of his second coming, and of the new Jerusalem state, as the grand support of all his tried and troubled members and finally having given express predictions with respect to the destinies of these seven most conspicuous Christian churches, which all might observe, and observing believe the prophecy of this book; he proceeds to reveal himself in another character, as the possessor of all power, and dominion, and authority and might, who is about to be put into sure possession thereof, when the times and the seasons appointed by the Father should have fulfilled their courses. This picture is given in the 4th and 5th chapters, upon which our author's observations are most masterly, and most grand, and so I may say of every part of his observations upon this book, though I be forced to take these exceptions to his general method. Thenceforward from the 6th chapter, we have the seven acts by which he takes possession of the purchased inheritance of this earth and sets the prisoners free; which are given under the emblem of seals opened and trumpets sounded, the last or seventh including the seven vials, being removed out of its place to make room for the parallel succession of the trumpets which affect the eastern as the seals do the western half of the fourth empire, and also to make room for the parallel history of the little book of the church under its threefold oppression of paganism, popery, and infidelity. In like manner the seventh trumpet with its seven thunders is postponed, and along with the seventh seal laid out in detail under the seven vials; after which we have six chapters of explanation or interpretation by the angel, having all a direct reference to the events immediately preceding, and attendant upon, the coming of the Lord. This, arrangement of

the prophetic part of the book I cannot stay to open nor to defend. Suffice it to say, that it is derived wholly from internal evidence, and set forth in a small tract published a few weeks ago by Mr. Frere, entitled "The general Structure of the Apocalypse," which leaves nothing to be done or said further upon that head, and to which I therefore refer. So much however was necessary to be, said here in order to demonstrate the completeness of the analogy between the method of this book, and that of the other prophecies.

The epistles to the seven churches of Asia, to whom the whole book of the Apocalypse is addressed, do show that it was intended for the instruction and consolation of the Gentile and not of the future Jewish church as my author would have it. Upon the same grounds, on which I conclude that Isaiah was inspired to be a witness to the Jewish church and nation, and believe that all the terms there used of Jerusalem, Zion, Judah, Israel, &c. are to be literally understood of them, and by right be long to them in the first intention, and will certainly be fulfilled of them, I do conclude that the Apocalypse belongeth to the Gentile church, and was given for her instruction and consolation, and will be all fulfilled in her. I conclude the former, because to them it is addressed; I conclude the latter for the same reason, because to them it is addressed. Will any one say to me that what was written to the Thessalonians was not intended for the Thessalonians; and will any one then say, that what was written to the seven Gentile churches, was not intended for them? To them certainly, the Apocalypse was directed, and through them to all the churches of the Gentiles, not of that generation only, but to all that should arise in all parts of the world, and to us, who treat it as if it were Talmudical fables. (Woe, woe, unto us, therefore!) From whence we conclude, as well as from the emblematical character of the whole book, that if Jewish names do occur in it, as in the sealing of the tribes, and in the new Jerusalem which cometh down from heaven, they ought not to be understood literally, but emblematically, as Egypt, and Sodom, and Babylon are.

But to proceed with our purpose. Those epistles contained a prophecy of trials to come from persecutions, and of deliverance out of them. This was the Pagan persecution. Therefore we should expect that the first revelation of future things should be the taking of that out of the way which troubled the churches, while it let or hindered the apostacy from strengthening itself, that is, the taking away of Paganism. And this we believe is the object of the first four seals, and the first four parallel trumpets, and of so much of the little book of the history of the church as concerneth the great red dragon. Paganism being taken out of the way, the apostacy which had been leavening the church from the beginning, began wholly to possess it; which being properly an ecclesiastical event, is merely mentioned as the subject of the fifth seal, but fully described under the beast from the sea with ten crowned horns, and the beast like a lamb which wrought miracles in his presence, their common period being forty and two months. To have revealed this event and period to the seven churches in the plain way in which the Pagan persecutions were revealed, would have been to have weighed down those who could already hardly stand upright under the load of present and instant afflictions which were upon them. And therefore he shut it up in an emblematical form, the shell of whose mystery, Providence and the Holy Spirit would break in due time. Yet in the midst of the mystery there is a plain enough encouragement to the suffering church, "Here is the patience of the saints, he that leadeth into captivity shall be led into captivity, and he that killeth with the sword shall be killed with the sword." But, for as much as in the eastern half of the church, the visitation of Mahomedanism was not a persecuting apostacy, but a destroying conquest; not a captivity, but a death; not an ecclesiastical, but a political event, we have it set forth under the two trumpets; immediately

following the first four, which bring things in the east down to the beginning of this eradication, as the four seals bring them down in the west to the beginning of the apostacy. Now when the church of the Gentiles had arrived at this sorrowful, tedious, and languishing captivity of Babylon, they had received in the events of the annihilation of Paganism, the fulfilment of the promises which had been made to the seven churches; and they might see in the existing state of the seven churches the exact accomplishment of the threatenings passed upon them. And therefore the Gentile church in her Babylonish captivity did possess the same assurance of the divinity of this book, which the ancient Jews had of all their prophecies when they had seen the first application of them answered by the event. And even this captivity under the mystical Babylon, which occupies the fifth seal and the second part of the church history, and fills up the 1260 years, is but as it were a further confirmation of the book, in order to assure us of the certainty of the great ultimate object of the book, expressed in its title, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ," which is also the ultimate object of all the prophecies from Moses unto John. So that while I agree with my author that the revelation or second coming of Jesus Christ is the great end of this prophecy, as the fifth kingdom of the Son of man is of Daniel's vision of the four beasts; yet as in that and the other prophecies, I find also in this a train of lesser lights leading onwards through thick gloomy navigation to the harbour, and home, and rest of the church. There are lesser lights to rule the night, as well a greater light to rule the day. The watchman telleth of the morning, but also of the night. "Watchman, what of the night? The morning cometh and also the night."

Now I can step aside, seeing my argument has led me into such detail, to make a remark before passing forward, for the sake of my reader, who haply may be one of this sceptical generation of the church, "That almost all, indeed I may say all interpreters of the Apocalypse, are agreed that we are living under the sixth vial, during the procession of the three unclean Spirits, who are now actively engaged in gathering their various hosts to the great battle of the day of God Almighty." Almost all believe that the 1260 days closed in the French revolution, and that the seven vials then began to be poured out upon those who had the mark of the beast. That for the last seven or eight years the sixth hath been pouring out upon the great river Euphrates, or the Turkish power; and that we now stand upon the very eve, upon the very edge and lip of that seventh vial, which is to consummate all wrath, and make a full end of the indignation. Even my author, who hath no knowledge of the apocalyptic arrangement, considering it all as future, although he died in 1801, perceives that Infidelity had been playing an active part upon the stage, and that after a short remission and temporary concealment, it will come forth the second time, and complete the work of the annihilation of the papal religion, and then be swept into destruction by the appearing of the Lord. Seeing this unity of sentiment amongst such differently constituted minds, and differently constituted systems, with respect to the one great point of the place at which we presently stand, and with respect to our instant expectations, who is he that will upbraid the holy subject of prophecy with the disagreement of them who intermeddle therewith. We disagree in parts, because we conceive the subject to be of such infinite importance as not loosely to agree with one another, but you agree in whole to despise God's prophecy altogether, and not to care for it disagreeing in parts, we agree in the great point of our Lord's immediate advent, of the immediate destruction of all his enemies, of the infinite delusions of Satan which are gone abroad, of the necessity, of the most urgent necessity for continual watchfulness (for my own part I feel as if all the legion of hell were continually attempting me): but you agree in scoffing, and contemning and making jokes

upon the whole subject, and eating and drinking, and making merry, and calling aloud for gladness and glory. "And in that, day did the Lord God of hosts call to weeping, and to mourning and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth: And behold joy and gladness, slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine." Isa. xxii. 12, 13.

I never feel satisfied that I have either discovered or removed the error of a great, and a good man, until I have found out the causes which led him into it. This I have pointed out with respect to our author's interpretations of Daniel, and I think I can point it out here also. Seeing with his wonted sagacity the capital idea that the great object of the book is the manifestation of the Lord's second coming, and not perceiving that every prophecy hath a train connecting it with the time of the Prophet, he was naturally led to refer the whole to a time still future. Then perceiving that a great part of it, as the destruction of the witnesses, and the abode of the woman in the wilderness, and the persecution of the two confederate beasts, was to be accomplished in 1260 days, which he understood literally to be three years and a half, it was natural to infer that the rest should be on a similar scale of time, and that therefore the whole could not include a much longer period than a few years at the most. In this notion he seemed to himself to be confirmed by the introductory vision of the fourth and fifth chapters, which presenteth the Lord in full possession, as receiving the homage of the whole creation. Then taking the seven-sealed book to be the new covenant promised against that clay to the Jewish people, and through them to all the world, he was as it were rooted in the idea that the rest of the Apocalypse was but a thick-coming series of signs ushering in that glorious possession. This also led him to find in it so much concerning the Jewish nation and church, who, as I judge, have little or no inheritance in it at all. But the great source of his error is not having studied the structure of the book itself, which I hold to be the only defence against the spirit of system, and the subtle ingenuity of private interpretation. Our author does not seem to have known the method of synchronism first laid down by Mede, and now perfected by Mr. Frere in the ingenious little tract referred to above. And I perceive that it is but labour in vain to study it otherwise, and that it is time wasted even to listen to the wild and visionary hypothesis which every one who hath not so studied it maketh for himself.

But Ben-Ezra is one of those men whose errors become instructive by the stores of collateral truth with which they are defended. And I may truly say of his interpretations of the Apocalypse, that I have found them amongst the most instructive chapters of his work, though I differ from him in these essential points. Nay, as I have observed above, he sometimes made me to suspect that there might be towards the end, three years and a half in which all those things may be literally fulfilled of the personal Antichrist, which have been emblematically fulfilled of the mystical Babylon. Certainly, the infinite ingenuity and apparent simplicity with which he brings out the whole mystery of the woman in travail, as applicable to the Jewish nation, and the mystery of the beast, as applicable, to the infidel Antichrist, made me once more go about and examine all the foundations of those opinions which I have formed, and of those judgments which I have given in my Discourse of "Babylon and Infidelity foredoomed," whereof the result has been, to convince me more and more, that they are thoroughly well founded. And yet I confess myself indebted in the highest degree to his misinterpretations for the cross light they cast upon all the other parts of scripture whence he derives his proofs and illustrations.

Having this opinion even of the few mistakes into which my author has fallen in so great a subject, it may by some be thought wiser, that I should have passed the whole with out any strictures. And so my reverence for him would have led me to do: but my greater

reverence for sound interpretation, and my conviction of the importance of prophetic truth to these times in which we live, and, above all, my reverence for the Apocalypse itself, forced me, against my inclination and first purpose, to say thus much. For I was afraid lest those ignorant and lazy men, who will not inquire into prophecy until it is passed and gone, saying with most consummate conceit of wisdom, Oh, it is all for a far distant, future time! might shelter themselves behind the authority of Ben-Ezra; and that the book of the Apocalypse, upon the study of which such destinies are suspended, and which seems now fairly to be brought again before the Church, might once more be laid aside, under the idea that it had no bearing upon the present times: wherefore, feeling burdened with a great responsibility to the Church in this which I have undertaken, my conscience would not permit me to flinch from the painful duty of saying wherein I thought my author had mistaken the mind of the Holy Spirit.

Before passing from this part of my subject, I have one observation to make further, concerning a personal Antichrist, which my author rejects, having found it amongst the traditions of the Church, encrusted with all manner of rust and corruption. But as he hath justified the opinions of the ancient Millenarians from the errors and gross indelicacies which were intermingled therewith, so might he have done by this ancient and constant tradition of the church concerning a personal Antichrist. That the falling away or apostacy described in Scripture properly answers to a Spirit, and that this Spirit is in the last times to be the Spirit of apostasy, or dissolving the bonds of Christ, and that it will bring about a confederacy of the powers now professing Christianity against the Lord and his anointed, there can be no doubt; but why may there not be a head and leader of this confederacy? To one who studies the seventeenth chapter of the Apocalypse, it is manifest that he is the 8th head of the beast, and likewise of the seven; to one who studies the prophecies of Isaiah, it is manifest that he is the same there signified by 'the Assyrian,' and to one who studies the eleventh of Daniel I think it will be also manifest, that he is the same with "the wilful king," and also with the 'lawless one,' who is mentioned in the second chapter of the second epistle to the Thessalonians, by the characteristic of the seventh head, "that he is destroyed or goeth into perdition at the coming of the Lord." He is the person typified in Pharaoh and Sennacherib, and the destruction of his host is figured in their consummate and instantaneous destruction. If I err not, the mystery of his being the eighth head, and of the seven, indicates that he is to be in some way or other a double personage, which seems also to be indicated in Isaiah xiv. 29, as I think it also is in the eleventh of Daniel; the former personage being as a sign before the fearful appearance of the latter: and both for a sign unto the Jews of their speedy deliverance; and if I err not both to prove a snare unto the Jews. The former, whose day is already past, indicated by the gathering together of the Sanhedrim, and other acts of favour towards them, that course of policy which his successor, covetous perhaps of their riches, the sinews, as they say, of power, may follow up and complete. For this Antichrist is certainly appointed to fall upon the mountains of Israel, whether perhaps he may be driven in some mimickry of divine power, to fulfil the divine decree, or, as he may suppose, to thwart it; —like Julian the apostate, purposing to falsify God's word, or to do by his own power that which God hath reserved for the stretching out of his own most glorious arm. But into this subject I enter no further at present. And here I close the first part of Preliminary Discourse, which purported to give some account of this book which came to me in so wonderful a way, and which I have presented to the churches. And now I betake myself to the much higher object, of justifying from abuse that doctrine, whereof the orthodoxy is established beyond a doubt by my

author; and now I become a fellow-labourer with him, which I feel to be a perilous co-partnery; and yet one from which I must not shrink, as being the servant of God and of his church.

PART II

THE JUSTIFICATION OF THE VIEWS
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I FEEL that I have one other duty to fulfil in ushering this book into the presence and favour of the churches worshipping God in the English tongue, which is to meet and dispose of the question, What's the good of these views which you preach to us, and publish to us, with so much zeal? In handling this I begin by a solemn protest against the place and time in which they are wont to put the question, as if it were the prelude and preliminary, and not the conclusion of every well-conducted inquiry. If we had not a law, and a testimony, and a body of divine doctrine, as old as the creation, and through all ages speaking forth the same great and solemn truth, infinitely diversified in form and expression, to suit the eye of the spirit of man, as it openeth and cleareth under its purifying influence; if we were like a council of revolutionary empirics, sat down to reconstitute the world anew, we might well begin every inquiry and submit every proposition to the preliminary test of "cui bono," what is the good of it? But seeing that we are a church constituted under divine law and government, the first and the great question is, "What saith the statute?" "How read we it in the word of our God and King?" If it be so written in the counsels of his wisdom and goodness; that infinite wisdom and goodness is pledge enough to us that it is useful, yea, and of the utmost usefulness. Wherefore all venerable divines and writers of the best times, are ever wont to place the USES of any subject in the last part of their discourse; first, showing the doctrine out of the scripture, then cleaving it from all cavils and objections, then enforcing it by all grave considerations of the divine will, authority, wisdom, and goodness; and lastly, drawing forth the various uses of consolation, of terror, of reproof, &c. But this spring-tide of expediency, which hath filled all channels to the brim, doth so bear

down the barriers of authority and law, human and divine, as to come sweeping in by every ancient gate you may chance to open. And we no sooner desire to restore a doctrine which the church in the best times of her existence clasped to her soul, and which was only shaken off from her embrace by the strong delusions and efforts of this worldly kingdom, that they cry out on all hands, What's the use of trying to revive any such antiquated notion? And we no sooner enter upon a demonstration of it from the scriptures, than they cry out again, "But what's the good of it, if it were demonstrated? Is it necessary to salvation? Then what matter how we think upon it?" This is the very height of human arrogancy, of intellectual apostacy. Thou worm man! What insight hast thou into the future, or what power of calculating the unseen applications of things, that thou shouldest try what God hath written in his redeeming, all redeeming word, by thy mouse-eyed vision? I wot you utilitarian Christians rail against prophesyings, and well may you, because ye are become prophets in your several spheres, trying all conclusions by your foresight of their future effects and fruitfulness of good; so that it were cutting you out of your own craft, and exposing your own craftiness, that God should take upon him to prophesy, or his servants take upon them to mediate and set forth his prophesies. Oh the infidelity, the deep and destructive infidelity, which is couched under this word, *usefulness*! Oh the mastery which it hath obtained over all the churches; and the fearful odds which any one has to stand against, who would contend for the simple word of revelation and the only authority, of God! Against which way of trying conclusions in this issue, I protest as solemnly as if, being upon my trial before a judge and jury of my country, they should, instead of attending to law and fact, proceed by considering whether it would be more useful and expedient that I should be condemned or not. "It is expedient that one man die for the nation, and that the nation perish not." But forasmuch as I have a perverted church (a church perverted by usefulness), to plead this question before, which will neither, read nor hear a matter, till it hath first shown good cause why it should be heard and pleaded; (although I have always thought the reason, that it is so written in the word of God, to be the best, and indeed the only good cause, for pleading any matter before the church;) I do condescend to this infirmity, and in this preliminary place, shall first take an estimate of the comparative usefulness, and profit of the two systems; the more willingly as my good author, being a textuary and scripturist, and not writing for England, the cradle, and home, and bulwark of utilitarians, hath not touched this matter of usefulness at all, but contented himself with the authority of the holy word, that is, the orthodoxy of the question.

CHAPTER I.

THE COMPARATIVE USEFULNESS OF THE TWO SYSTEMS.

THE two views of the second advent which our author bringeth to the touchstone of the scriptures, to discern thereby the truth from the counterfeit of truth, agree in this, that there will be a personal re-appearance of the Lord at some future time, to judge all who have ever lived upon the earth, and to determine their everlasting condition of blessedness and misery. There is no question, nor ever hath been, nor ever can be, concerning Christ's personal re-appearance in human form upon the earth; although I perceive the faith of the Protestant

churches to be so withered by absolute infidelity or by intellectual demonstration, which is the egg of infidelity, that they start when you say that Christ will appear again in personal and bodily presence upon the earth: and I am sure, for as often as I have heard the judgment discoursed of, in this age of moth-eaten and undervalued creeds; and for as often as I discoursed of it myself, before I had insight given me into this mystery, I have never found it treated as a personal act of Christ, or rightful attribute of his mediatorial office; but as a thing personal to us, a whip to scourge our lethargy, a spell to break our sleep, a thunder-note to awaken our terrors; treated as a metaphysical part of the metaphysical idea of moral responsibility, rather than as the grand demonstration of the and majesty of the humbled Son of God, the grand act of the justification of Christ's injuries and the injuries of his suffering church upon those who had done them wrong. And I am sure the judgement hath become almost a dead letter in our creed and in our preaching, from being thus abstracted away from the personal act and bodily presence of Christ the judge.

In proof of the fact that it hath become so abstracted away from the personal act and bodily presence of the Lord, I need only to state, that I have hardly conversed with one minister or preacher of the gospel, who had thought at all upon the subject of the second advent, excepting that small number who have adopted these views of his kingdom; and I have hardly met with one private Christian of the thousands to whom I have preached it, who had ever heard it treated of as a great head of doctrine, or even had a conception that it was such. And at this moment, I believe, that of Protestants by far the greater number have not even a faith, or if they have a verbal faith, founded on the standards of their churches, have no actual faith in the personal advent of Christ at any time. And we may see into what indifference and contempt the whole subject has come, and how it hath passed into the domain of poetical imagery, and forms of the fancy, when it has become the theme for ribald poems and silly reviews. Whereas in scripture, in all the scripture, it is the grand object of faith and hope, ever present, ever felt, ever *useful*, to the holy apostles and prophets of the Lord. The doctrine of justification by faith in the first advent of Christ, lay not more lost in superstitious forms of the sense, when the Reformers cleared the buried column of its strength and majesty, than doth the doctrine of salvation and glory by the second advent of Christ lie lost and subtilized away into airy abstractions. But this, though a very great evil, which I call upon all ministers of the gospel to look to, concerneth not so much my present inquiry, which regardeth the comparative usefulness of the two systems of opinion upon the second advent; not the abuse into which either of them may at any time be fallen. We are agreed therefore, I say, upon the personal advent of Christ to this earth, to judge the quick and the dead, and to apportion their eternal destinies.

And the points in which we differ are, whether that advent is to conclude the existence of the habitable earth, or to begin the period of its peace, and righteousness, and blessedness; whether he is to come to destroy, or to reign over the earth; whether his presence is to be brief, and as it were momentary, or abiding and everlasting. This draws with it another point of difference touching his people who, it is agreed, will be raised or changed at the moment of his coming, or rather the instant before, in order to come along with him: for if he is not to come till the consummation of this world's existence, existence, and the general judgement of all both good and bad, it is manifest that there can be no first resurrection, but one common and general resurrection to judgment; whereas if he come to set on foot this world's blessedness and continue it for evermore, and his saints do come along with him, we have a first resurrection of the righteous, and their reign upon the earth with the Lord, during the whole time of the millennial period at the least, or until the universal resurrection and

judgement, without taking into consideration the ages beyond that event, which are but dimly revealed. Now the question is, whether doth this idea of the personal advent of Christ, with all his risen saints that sleep in him and are changed, to order the earth in righteousness; or the idea of his personal advent at the universal judgment, to destroy the earth, and remove all that have dwelt therein to heaven or to hell; serve the ends of Christian doctrine, spiritual living, and personal holiness the more? And I observe, First: That the commonly received opinion, as it hath abolished in these days, so must it always abolish, the use of the doctrine of the second advent, and render it altogether abortive of those great fruits of watchfulness, and consolation, and zeal, and perseverance, and holiness, and other fruits of the Spirit, for which it is used so constantly in all the Holy Scriptures, and especially in all the books of the New Testament. For why? For the reason that by setting it to such a far off distance, you wholly destroy its action in any way either upon the personal or the Common interests of the body of Christ. There is a universal belief in the church, that an age, a very long age of blessedness, of at least a thousand years duration, is to run, before the end of the world and consequently before the coming of Christ. And who will speak of the uncertainty or the nearness of the Lord's coming, to men, who thus believe? It were to ask them to believe a contradiction; first, to believe that a thousand years at the least is certainly to intervene, and in direct contradiction thereto, to understand and have it ever present to their minds, that we ought to feel it as an uncertainty whether any time shall intervene at all. You must either give up the certainty of the millennium, or you must give up the uncertainty of the Lord's coming. And because both are revealed in scripture by equally strong terms, they cleave to the former as being more pleasant to the infidel mind, and necessarily forsake the latter, instead of altering their system, and so reconciling both these great heads of divine revelation.

But would it reconcile them, would it enable us to hold the millennium, and be tremblingly alive to the uncertainty of the Lord's coming, if we were to forego our system and adopt yours? Most certainly it would. But have not you also times determined, before which the Saviour is not to come? Yes; but these times and seasons the Father hath reserved in his own power. But are they not written in the scripture? They are written in the scripture, but hidden under such veils, as to have been completely shut up, until the time the Father shall be pleased by his Spirit to take off the veil which covereth them. But have you not sought to interpret them? We have sought, as Daniel did, to search into these prophetic numbers, but no one had ascertained the exact accomplishment of the great leading one, until the mighty events which fell out upon its accomplishment informed us that it was come to an end. So that these numbers did in no way, in past times, produce upon us the same effect which the millennium doth upon you, to cast forward, till after a fixed interval, our Lord's coming, which we should look for daily. And now that the period of 1260 years is accomplished, and the period of 1290 also, are you not still expecting certain events prior to his appearing? Yes ever since we discovered the 1260 years to be accomplished, we have been observing the series of events which are to run, before our Lord's coming, and we do expect certain events, such as the destruction of the Antichristian powers, and the spiritual vocation of Israel. Do not these then act upon you as the millennium doth upon us, to hinder and prevent that constant expectancy by which you set so much store, and which appeareth to have been the condition of the primitive church? No. They act upon us exactly as the forerunners of a king, the out-riders of his state, act upon the city which he is visiting. We are living amongst the signs of our Lord's coming, we have seen six, and we are waiting for the seventh and last; we are lifting up our heads and stretching out our necks with expectation, we are all activity to get the house in order for the master whose avant-couriers have come in,

we are all upon the way-side looking out for the Judge whose six precursors have arrived, we are all furnished with lamps, lest the bridegroom come in the night, and lo, though we be weighed down with slumber our loins are girt, and when the sound is heard, He cometh! lo, we are ready. And thus it cometh to pass, from the Lord's not having broken the seal of those mysterious numbers until the years of omen were arrived, and the signs began to be given, that we were kept all the while of the mystery expecting his coming, and we were brought out of that state at once into the state of seeing the signs of his coming.

And what more natural, what more true, what more excellent way of proceeding, than this, so to construct the revelation as that we should be kept in continual watchfulness every hour, and then mercifully to give us signs, that we might have our selves and all our charges ready? But doth not Paul, in his Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, guard the church against this very notion, that "the day of Christ is at hand," of which you make so much? The apostle guards them against "being shaken in mind or troubled" by the notion, not so much of its nearness, as of its coming without signs and premonitions; and proceeds to show them the great sign of "the falling away first and the revelation of the Man of Sin;" but lest they might abuse this gracious intimation, and in idea postpone the day of the Lord beyond their life-time, and so lose the fruitfulness of it, he addeth, that he perceived "that mystery of iniquity to be already working;" and so the apostle John saw that "Antichrist was already in the world." From whence I conclude, that those two apostles, who had most prophetic foresight given to them, lived themselves actually in the constant expectation of Christ, and preserved the church in the same expectation. Only, lest they might be come nervously sensitive, and fearful, and troubled, the apostle Paul gave them to wit, even as our Lord had done, that a sign of the Son of Man should come before he came in person, even as the Prophets had said continually, that a trumpet should be blown and a standard lifted up on the mountains. But it is utterly a misconstruction of the Apostle's meaning and purpose, and of the drift of all his epistles, to suppose that he intended to put them out of the condition of expecting and longing for the Lord's coming, which he presents every where as the steady pole-star of their hopes, the immediate, diligent, and constant object of their outlook and watchfulness.

The apostle could not say that any given period was to intervene, because he knew not so; neither he, nor all the church, nor the Son of Man himself, knew so much, as to say that the life-time of a man, or any life-time, should intervene. And now that we are living amongst the great and fearful procession of the signs of his coming, there is not one of those few amongst us, who study prophesy, the prophetic numbers and the prophetic signs, that can say how soon the whole procession may close and the great King appear. We are kept watchful, and we observe every event; we observe the deliberations of councils, we observe the progress of opinions, we feel the pulse of feeling beating beneath apparent quietness, we warn the church, we intercede for the world, we are filled with active expectation, and have abiding upon our souls an awful impression of the fearful times in which we live. While you are dreaming of smooth seas and a harmonious crew, and a haven hard at hand, we see the gathering of the clouds, and the curling of the waves, and a rebellious mutinous crew, and a fearful shipwreck from which a few, a very few, of the wise and prudent will escape. You are intoxicated the while with your great achievements, we are beat to the earth by the load of our enormities. You are full of self-adulations, and flatteries, and merry jokes and jests against the poor heavy-hearted wo-begone prophets of evil; we are full of sorrow and of intercession, on account of the delirious church, and praying God to grant us a little more space, and to send soundness of mind amongst you; while for ourselves, we hold up our heads, and are stout of heart, because we know that our redemption draweth nigh.

Secondly. When the great scriptural doctrine of Christ's second advent is thus removed to an indefinite distance of future time, not only is its present influence in keeping alive and awake all the fruits of the spirit, wholly lost; but also most insufficient, and I may say, false views of the doctrine of a future state are introduced which are attended with the most prejudicial effects upon the soul. The resurrection being so far postponed, and a certainty of long continuance given to the intermediate state, the latter cometh to usurp the place of the former, and another great head of scriptural argument is lost derived from the faith of Christ's resurrection, and therewith is lost the continual use that is made of the resurrection as the special and high reward of them which believe. Because, how can there be any speciality of reward in that whereof the wicked are partakers, as well as, and at the same time, with the just, and what use can we make of that as a principle of present hope, which is to be preceded by a long period of certain reality, in the intermediate state. The use made of the resurrection in scripture, being the same to the body which regeneration is to the soul, is evacuated; just as the use of the new-birth would be evacuated if you were to make it coeval and identical with the natural birth, whereof all are partakers. It is no answer to this to say that the resurrection includes the acquittal at the bar of judgment, and denoteth the whole blessedness of the righteous thereafter; for in scripture it is the resurrection, not the acquittal, which is continually presented to the righteous, so as to leave no doubt that the resurrection is itself the very act of acquittal, is in some way or other the distinction, the glorious distinction of the saints. Now this use of the resurrection is restored to us by that view of Christ's advent which we maintain; and which includeth the coming of the saints in their risen bodies to be glorified in him and he in them. Their resurrection from the midst of the dead is their acquittal, is their liberation from the powers of death and the grave, is the speciality of their reward, is the certainty of their eternal blessedness, is to the present militant church what the last judgment is to all the world, according to that plain and distinct contrast of Paul's, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after death the judgment; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation." Heb. ix. 27, 28. The resurrection, I say, not the judgment, is the great revelation to the righteous; the judgment is the opposite revelation to the wicked, though it be presented also as a warning to the righteous, just as heaven and hell are presented to both in order to act upon the good and evil of both, though the former be proper to the righteous only, and the latter to the wicked. Whence it is that St. Paul makes such strivings of soul after the resurrection as the consummation of all attainments, and distinguisheth it from the power of Christ's resurrection which is the regeneration of the soul by the Holy Spirit, saying, "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain the resurrection of the dead." Phil. iii. 10, 11. And to this effect I understand Rom. viii. 1. "There is no condemnation (*κρισις* i.e. judgement) to them which are in Christ Jesus." But I do not tempt myself and my reader into minor discussions, but rest firmly upon this, that the common system having cast out the expectation of Christ's coming, has cast out the special and peculiar reward of the resurrection. Which our enemies have been able to perceive, whether we will perceive it ourselves or not, maintaining that the great end of Christ's death was to make known the resurrection. They understand not what they say, nor whereof they affirm, and yet in what they say they speak a sore rebuke to the orthodox church.

Now in consequence of the far off and indefinite distance to which they have postponed the coming of the Lord, and from the annulling of the first resurrection to those who sleep in Jesus, there has been introduced to fill up the void of doctrine and argument, a

most exaggerated, and I think erroneous idea of the separate state of the soul; which is forced to bear the burden of that glory and blessedness, they have removed from the coming of the Lord, and the resurrection of his saints, and their glorious and everlasting kingdom. But do what they will they cannot find one single scripture to bear them out in this vain attempt. For in scripture the state of the separate soul, where it is mentioned, is set forth to be a state of imperfection, as it needs must, being without the body, a state of longing, as it needs must, waiting for the body. But the truth is that exceeding little is said concerning it, and for this simple reason, as I suppose, that nothing could be said which man can understand. For the actings and sufferings, the blessedness and the misery of a disembodied soul, is what no man can conceive of, let him imagine, and let him fancy till the day of doom. But if you will remove the minds of the people from the materialism of man as utterly contemptible, and if you will postpone the resurrection of the body indefinitely, and give us no material habitation afterwards, on earth or in heaven, what have you left but to dress up to the fancy of the people this intermediate state of blessedness, and that state beyond the resurrection, which they seem to me to make as ill-defined and as undefinable, as that which is on this side of it. In which attempt to reclaim this shadowy void, and turn to Christian uses, no one has laboured more than I did myself in my argument on judgment to come, perceiving that unless something could be made out of it, the whole revelation of the future must be as indistinct and profitless as a dream and vision of the night. But upon approaching the subject, I found that all which could be made of the intermediate state, was a guess or conjecture from what we behold upon the removal of this and that object of sense, as to what might be the case when they were all removed away.

When however I came to speak of that which follows the resurrection, or judgment, (for it was upon the judgment I laid the stress, perceiving nothing in the resurrection upon which any stress could honestly be laid) nothing could hinder me from protesting steadfastly against the exclusion of materialism, and material actions, and material sufferings, from the scenes of heaven and hell which are to follow. And this truly, which was so much laughed at by the sapient order of the critics, is to my mind the most solid and well-grounded part of the argument. And I am happy to understand, that in this view of the future world, I have the concurrence of my friend Dr. Chalmers, in his sermon upon the new heavens and the new earth. But such views of a material world after the resurrection of the body, whencesoever proceeding, are looked upon as fanciful though they be the only ones contained in scripture; while any speculation concerning the blessedness of the middle state is entertained as most orthodox and profitable, however unfounded in scripture it may be, or wild in imagination. But a still greater evil than this oblivion of the second advent and resurrection and exaggeration of the middle state, hath grown upon the church; which is the strange and unnatural use they make of death.

When you propose to pious people of this generation of the church, the coming of the Lord, as the apostles were wont to do, in order to stir their souls to diligent faith, earnest desire, and continual watchfulness, you are met with this most faithless and unprofitable answer; that it is enough for them to look to the day of their death, which will seal their condition, and either unite them to the Lord, or separate them from the Lord for ever. The frequency with which I have had this answer thrown in the teeth of all discourse concerning the glorious coming of my Lord, hath moved me with great anger against the artifice of Satan to blind so many souls; and I feel pleased to have a fair opportunity of trying conclusions with the arch enemy in this matter, and seeing whether the eyes of a few may not be opened to this delusion.

You say that it is all the same to you to look to the uncertainty of life and the certainty of death, and so you put extinction upon the great doctrine of the second advent, which was the brightest candle of the apostolic and primitive church. Now, first, let us look to the fact. Is it a fact that you Christians who say so, meditate your death, and the uncertainty of your life continually? Do you every morning think within yourselves, this day may be my last, therefore let me be watchful? Do you say every evening, I am one day nearer my death, now let us be thankful? I ask you, is the idea of death before your soul continually, darkening the brightness of worldly joys, unmasking worldly pleasures, encouraging you to nobler acts of self-denial, and service in the cause of Christ, comforting you under the oppressions of the world, strengthening you against the might of your spiritual enemies, and recompensing you for your worldly losses; the balm of the wounds of this life, and the food of the powers and faculties of the life to come. Doth the knowledge of your certain death work such a constant and blessed effect upon your life? Doth it? You answer it ought to do so. I did not ask the question, Ought it? but the question, doth it so? No, it doth not so. It is seldom present to the soul, and when its presence is forced upon us, it is painful. We shrink from it. It is so fearful, it is so painful, it is so weak, it is so humbling, it is so afflictive, it is so dark, it is so calamitous: there is no beauty, there is no comeliness why we should desire it. And let me add that it will always be so, because it is sin's great conquest, and Satan's chief work, the fulness of sorrow and affliction, the triumph of corruption, the fulfilment of the curse. Oh it is a strange delusion of Satan, thus to have made the capital curse of God eclipse the capital promise of God; Satan's consummated kingdom over the body take that place in our thoughts, which Christ's consummated kingdom in the body and spirit, even the resurrection, was meant to take.

Such is the matter of fact; but you say it ought not to be so; and I answer it ought to be so, and will be so unto the end. For let me tell you, that the spirit of man is not a creature to like and desire, and doat on every thing, but hath a rooted dislike to think, look upon, and encounter many things of which the chief is death. As light to the eye, such is life to the soul; as darkness to the eye, so is death to the soul. It cannot abide the thoughts of it. "Thou wilt not leave my soul in death, nor suffer thy holy one to see corruption;" this was a chief consolation of the soul of Christ. And a chief suffering was, "The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me, I found trouble and sorrow." He endured the cross for the joy that was set before him. He shrunk from the cup of deadly sorrow that was presented unto his lips. He did not desire it as he desired to eat the Passover with his disciples. And in like manner his apostle when looking to the dissolution of his earthy tabernacle, was comforted only by the building of God not made with hands, eternal in the heaven, which was reserved for him. And death is called the last enemy which shall be destroyed. Now I do not find that Christians are strengthened in their present pilgrimage by looking to their enemies, but by steadily looking to the captain of their salvation and his victory over their enemies.

The ministers of the gospel, as captains of the Lord's host, do not present unto the people or seek to keep continually before them the terrors of Satan, the weakness of the flesh, the powerfulness of the world; but keep before them Christ the victorious, the Spirit the quickener, the Father Almighty, their election unto salvation, their adoption unto the communion of the blessed trinity, their fellowship with all the saints who have endured and overcome. How then be so foolish as to present before them death, or think to encourage them thereby; you should have showed them death conquered, that is, the resurrection, first of Christ, and then of all Christ's people at his coming. You may make the Christian soldier

quake, and tremble, and misgive, by presenting him the frequent aspect of bare and ghastly death, but you will never make him cheerful and bold but by preaching to him the victory over death, which is the resurrection of the just, which is the coming of the Lord. I say not, but that, as in all the trials and combats of the warfare, it is most necessary and profitable to set forth the enemy's force and his wiles, and his violent rage, so also ought death, the strength of his right hand to be presented oft-times to the soul, for the same end of teaching her to have all her armour and weapons in use. But if you do not present the resurrection from the dead at Christ's coming, you do not give her the weapon with which that strongest assault of the enemy is to be met and overcome. You teach the enemy's force, but are silent concerning our force to meet him, which to say the least of it, is the part of a very unskilful officer. And let me tell the church, that, because the resurrection of the saints at Christ's coming, and their reign with him, are so seldom set before the church, it cometh to pass that we have such shrinking from posts of danger, such fencing and fitting out of our missionaries, such shrieking out if any evil befall them, instead of that carelessness to answer the matter, that utter indifference to the fire, that rushing to martyrdom, and committing ourselves to all moral wilds and savage wildernesses, which characterised the first ages of the church.

So much for the very article of death; which, I assert, every one will shrink from till by the doctrine of the second advent and the first resurrection he has been taught to triumph over it. But: you say, We look to the paradise which is immediately beyond. And I ask you, what you know of that paradise? of that separate state of the soul? or what can the finest imaginations make you to know concerning it? Just nothing at all: it is airy, it is shadowy, it is fantastical. I have laboured myself to gather fruit in this field, but found it labour in vain. When I used to preach concerning it, all that I could do was, to study the soul's appearances up to the point of death, but I could go no further. And, what is more, revelation will carry you no further. For though it be said, in the parable of Lazarus, that he was carried by angels to Abraham's bosom, yet there is nothing thence to be inferred with respect to the separate state; and the parable may signify the condition after the resurrection, which seems more appropriate to the imagery, the rich man being spoken of in hell as with a body, lifting up his eyes, and crying for water to cool his tongue and with respect to the thief upon the cross, though it be conclusive as to the question of a paradise to the separate spirit, it gives us no idea of that which it is. Moreover in the Apocalypse, the souls of the witnesses which had been slain for the testimony of Christ, are represented beneath the altar, as longing and crying out for a blessedness which was to arrive at the coming of the Lord. And those who surround the throne look forward likewise to the reigning with him on the earth at his coming. So that all which is revealed concerning this separate state betrays incompleteness, desire, and looking forward to that higher condition of things which we are endeavouring to present unto an indifferent church (but the church in heaven is not indifferent to it). And therefore it is like casting a man back, to fix his hopes there, where he will still be hoping, instead of carrying them forward to that which here he may be permitted to hope, and which there he will also continue to hope. But in plain speech I ask, if so much use was intended to be made of this intermediate estate, why was not more revealed about it?

It could never have been intended of the Lord to be the great object of hope, else it would have been more defined. It cannot be the great object of hope, for hope cannot seize hold upon it. It is inert, it is shadowy, it unworldly. It hath no relation to the present world, that it should lift us above it. It seizeth not hold on the affections, to raise them above the earth; upon the understanding, to fill and possess it; upon the feelings, to ravish and refine

them; upon the interests, to purify and enrich them. It is a mere negation of this evil and that suffering; it hath no positive compensation to any suffering, nor real satisfaction to any desire, nor occupation to any faculty, nor occasion for any function of man; seeing it is not man, but a part of man, concerning which in its severed state nothing can be predicated or understood, hoped or feared: and I boldly aver, that the continual turning of the church's eye to this undefined and undefinable estate has paralyzed hope and quenched desire, crippled all the energies of the spiritual man, and impoverished every field of spiritual life.

In the present aspect of the church's hope, turned chiefly to death and the shadowy existence beyond death, besides this joyless and ineffectual influence upon Christian life, this sepulchral gloom and pale moonlight, like that which shines upon the solitary churchyard, there is a separating and divisive influence, which I feel better than I can describe. Death is a parting, not a meeting; it is a sorrowful parting, not a joyful meeting; it is a parting in feebleness and helplessness to we know not whither, —into a being we know not what. There is our death, and my death, and the death of every one, in a different place, at a different time, and under different circumstances. And we are thus divided and cut off from one another in the great object of our hopes, instead of being thereby concentrated and united from all places, and all times, and all conditions. Now we ought to have one hope of our calling, as well as one redemption, and one baptism, and one communion of one body. It is an anomaly that the Christian religion, which by every other part procureth unity, in defiance of time, place, and all fallen conditions, should in the object of its hope present diversity, and produce separation. To this it is no answer to refer to the union at the day of judgement; for that is placed so remote, and the die is so completely cast before it, that in this system it becomes a dead letter, a formal assize to do over again in solemn form what hath already been done in substance. I desire for myself some object and event so glorious as shall carry my eye clean over and beyond this chasm and abyss of being: some joyful and powerful, some majestic and glorious act, to which I can look, and to which another Saint can look, and to which every saint from every quarter of the earth can look, and to which the saints of all generations can look, —which may join us in one hope and desire, make time and place and change wholly indifferent to us, our death but a change, and the state beyond death un-thought of and uncared for in our anxiety and assurance of this grand reunion with the Lord. For, as hath been said, I do find in the Apocalypse this middle state represented as a state of longing expectation, not a state of perfect blessedness, —a state of desire, not a state of rest, —a state of weakness and waiting for power. But all that is said in the Scripture concerning the intermediate state is only sufficient to show that the soul doth not become unconscious, or subject to decay, like the body, but abides under the altar whereat the everlasting Priest doth minister it is not sufficient to ground any ideas, or rest any conclusions upon much less is it sufficient to become the great object of hope for rallying the distressed mind of the militant church, for giving courage to her in the fearful warfare which she has to maintain against flesh and blood, principalities and powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places.

And therefore we observe in the last place, upon this part of our subject, that it doth traverse the whole Spirit of Scripture, and run counter to all the promises of God, thus to make the day of our death and the undefined state beyond, the great object of the church's observation. The first promise was that the Serpent's head should be bruised, that his power against men should be taken away by Christ, with all the evil consequences of sin and sorrow and death, which have thence flowed in upon us. But this finale of death and the middle state gives me, gives Christ's people no sight nor experience nor expectation thereof, but carries me off the stage of this world by a final blow of Satan and triumph of his power.

Then there was promised to Abraham and to his seed for ever an inheritance upon the earth, a land which flowed with milk and honey: but I am a stranger, as he was and all the saints have been; and when or where are we to have this possession and inheritance, if we are taken for ever away by death, if at the resurrection, when we receive our bodies, the earth is to be burnt up, and we removed to some undefined and indefinable condition? And the Old Testament is not more full of this inheritance than the New Testament is full of a kingdom and a crown, which is to be given against a certain day to all those who love his appearing. And in every epistle, I find the apostles contemplating this as the great reaping time of reward, and directing thitherward the hopes of all the churches, comforting them thereby under every affliction, exalting them thereby to pure and heavenly affection, encouraging them to patience, and yet preserving them evermore watchful. Now you advocates of death what say you? is it not a very daring abuse of Scripture to take the sense out of all this concurring testimony, to reject this method of exhorting and comforting the church, to let it pass wholly into oblivion, attempt no explanation of it, give it up as sybilline leaves were never given up, invent fictions and imaginations concerning the middle state, adopt heathen ideas concerning the judgment, and so wholly change the glorious object of the church's hope. Which, seeing we are saved by hope, I hold to be no small enormity; hardly less than to change the object of our faith, and instead of trusting in the humility of Christ and his atonement, for each individual to trust in his own works, in the works of his own life, rather than in the one finished work of the life of Christ. As the former coming of Christ is to our faith, so is the future coming of Christ unto our hope, one, common and free to all his saints.

Now take into consideration the apostolic, and prophetic, and patriarchal, I may say the universal object of hope during the canonical and primitive ages of the church, viz. the coming of Christ in power and majesty, and the resurrection from the grave of every member of his mystical body, the casting of Satan out of the earth, and the reign of the saints for a thousand years; and I say that you have here an object worthy the hope of the church, to which the eye of hope turns with delight which is full of application to all the present infirmities of our condition, and is the proper recompense of all our sufferings. In the first place it presents to the expectation of the saint all that is to be loved and desired in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, by whom he hath been redeemed, and upon whom he hath been nourished and sustained, not in his humility as heretofore, but travelling in the greatness of his strength; not as a servant, but as a sovereign, uniting in himself all the tender intercessions of the priest, and the powerful majesty of the king, a priest upon his throne for ever. We shall behold him whom not having seen we loved, we shall see him as he is, in whom while yet we saw him not we rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory. We shall see all the glorious attributes of God made manifest in manhood, the Son of Mary glorified into the Son of God, and clothed with the all-sustaining power of the word of God. In the next place, we shall behold all enemies put under his feet, Satan the accuser of the brethren cast out of the earth, and with him all his evil angels which dwell in the natural man, and rule the world. And we shall see the prison doors of death unbarred, and the grave yield up her dead, and then shall come to pass that saying of the prophet, Death shall be swallowed up in victory. In the next place, we shall be gathered with all the saints of God since the world was, who shall all stand in their lot in the latter day, and in their flesh shall see God, the general assembly of the first born whose names are written in heaven, the church of the living God, the patriarchs, the prophets, the apostles, the glorious army of the martyrs, the whole host of the redeemed, whom he shall bring with him, and we who remain till his coming shall be caught up with him into the air, and shall be for ever with the Lord. This is not a cheerless parting, but a

joyful meeting and eternal union of those who are spiritually dear to one another: and as touching natural affections, let it be remembered that the natural man is then no more, the spiritual man alone is, and his affections alone remain.

Then our father and mother, and brother and sister, are they who have fulfilled the will of our heavenly Father. In the next place, this body of wickedness, this body of sin and death shall be exchanged for the likeness of Christ's glorious body; for sinful flesh and blood shall not inhabit that kingdom, nor corruption incorruption; mortality shall be swallowed up of life; it is sown a natural, it is raised a spiritual body; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in honour; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. So that all shall be strength, harmony, and union within us, the perfect man, the holy man, complete in all things, and wanting nothing. In the next place, we shall be for ever with the Lord, partakers of his throne, partakers of his crown, and partakers of his government; his assessors in judgment, his deputies in power, ruling over the cities of his dominion, and judging the tribes of the sojourners of the earth. For though I enquire not into the mode or manner of our being, yet this I am not ashamed to declare, that we shall be like the Lord who ascended up from the earth as easily as he descended, who, after his resurrection, and even before it, passed to and fro without let or impediment of matter, and governed the elements with a sovereign control. And so shall we in the exercise of that government and sovereignty which we shall then be permitted to hold of the earth, be as Adam, a king in his majesty, whom the elements of nature and all the living moving creatures upon the earth harmed not, but delighted to obey. Finally, we shall behold the earth and all the sojourners therein living in peace and blessedness, under the government of the Lord Jesus Christ: Nature repossessed of all her original beauty, and society of all its proper blessedness, peace, gentleness, and meekness restored on every hand, all men blessed in Jesus, and calling him blessed; nothing to corrupt or to destroy in my holy mountain, saith the Lord, for the earth shall be full of the righteousness of the Lord, as the waters cover the channels of the deep.

Such, in few words, is that which is comprehended under the term, "the Coming of the Lord," to which we invite the hope of the church, instead of that which you desire them to look to, the certainty of death, and the uncertainty of life, and the uncertain intermediate state between death and judgement. And we do now submit it to all Christian minds, nay we are willing to submit it to men of natural understandings, whether is the more likely to be effectual in calling forth the noblest endeavours and most devoted endurance of the soul? In the first place, it is an object and an event full of all attractions to the soul, and whereto it must often turn with delight. For whether it be the perfection of its knowledge, which here is childish and dark, or whether it be the satisfaction of its sight, which here it hath not at all as a help, but as a hindrance; or whether it be the completion of its power, and the establishment of its everlasting blessedness; all is fully promised, and will at the Lord's coming be fully possessed. It is an object in which conquest, victory, and triumph, and reward, and rest, do meet together, and it forms therefore the pole-star of this weary and sore-buffed life. The soul that hath such a hope cannot help turning unto it. Do its troubles proceed from the flesh? then the flesh is no more, but a glorious body, the work of the Spirit, and worthy to be the dwelling place of the Spirit. Is it the oppression of the world which grieves us? what so natural and sweet as to turn to the event which shall possess us of power over the world, and enable us to govern it according to the rules and laws of righteousness. Is it the necessity of sacrificing our natural affections for Christ's sake? then we shall be united to all Christ's people, in closer union than husband to wife, in perfect unity as the angels of God, to Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, Moses and Elias, Daniel and Job, Paul and Peter, and all the

apostles, and all the excellent ones which have lived upon the earth. Are we forced to separate from beloved saints, and from their sweet communion? but we shall be united in the day of the Lord, when he shall come with all his saints. Are we grieved to behold Satan's marvellous spoliation of the earth, and perpetual destruction of the souls of men? then shall he be cast out with all his angels, and the world shall be vexed and deluded by him no longer. And so on through all the various aspects of Christian desire and Christian feeling, of Christian want and Christian suffering, we do find this great day of the Lord so represented, as to be unto the soul the full complement of its deficiencies, and the full consolation of its afflictions. And therefore I say it is natural, yea necessary, that the soul which believeth in it should turn to it very often, and peruse it diligently, and become familiar with its applications to all conditions, and feel it to be available in all emergencies. But this is not the case with the day of our death, from the sight of which the soul shrinketh; nor, with the void beyond it, which is so vacant and unintelligible as not to be available for any distinct end of faith, hope, edification, or comfort.

The next thing I would observe is, that not only is it framed as every object of hope ought to be, to draw the soul steadily unto it, but fitted also to give it great courage and steadfastness in the midst of its trials. Behold what an honour, what a reward, what a blessedness it brings to the elect and militant church, that they should be advanced, in consequence of their partaking of Christ's sufferings, into the fellowship of his power and glory! There is no middle state, quietism, or vacuity in the delineations which Scripture giveth of these Christ's honoured members; who come to share his kingdom, to take part in the judgment, to advance righteousness, to glorify God with every faculty, and command the earth with what noble vicegerency Adam heretofore commanded it. The expectation, and hope, and assurance of this, doth raise the soul to a compass and pitch of endurance and exertion which nothing else can, to the removal of which from before her eye, I make no doubt the lameness and inertness of the church in the latter times is to be ascribed. And when the church shall once more be invested with her privilege in this hope, and be filled with the gladness thereof, and have it continually portrayed by her ministers, as the primitive church had it set forth in the preaching and epistles of the apostles, then, and not till then, will she recover apostolic strength and primitive separation from the world; then, and not till then, will Christ's account of the missionary come to be regarded as something better than a dream.

This subject, of the usefulness of these doctrines, I have but touched upon, in order to set it in contrast with the vague notion which Satan hath substituted in its stead. But it is not a question which resteth upon my demonstration, or any man's demonstration: it resteth upon the word of God; Christ's second coming being as much a revelation to hope, as his first coming is to faith; As there be no fruits of faith but from the spiritual reception of the divine testimony concerning the former, and as it is not permitted to alter or abridge, or in any way to modify or mix up with other matter, the atonement which was made for our sins by the life and death of our Lord Jesus Christ; so neither is it permitted us to mix up with any other matter, the redemption which is promised to us at the coming of the great deliverer the Lord from heaven. For the crown of glory is promised to those only who look for his appearing "and not to me only," saith St. Paul, "but to all who look for his appearing." He is promised to come without sin to those only who look for him: "and to those who look for him, he shall appear the second time without spot unto salvation." Again, referring to this great emancipation, Paul saith, "We are saved by hope;" and in the same place, "We groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption; to wit, the redemption of the body." And again, with reference to the same great event, it is said, that our house is broken into and plundered,

because we watch not continually for his coming: “But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and not suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.” And again, in the same place, the Lord maketh this same forgetfulness of his coming to produce cruelty from one member of his house to another, saying, “But, and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming, and shall begin to smite his fellow-servant, and to eat and drink with the drunken; the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of. And shall cut him asunder and appoint him his portion with the hypocrite; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Such are the true arguments, such the true demonstrations, even these passages of scripture, and this constant invocation of the word of God, to be in expectation of the coming of the Lord, and these to a believer, should be all-sufficient to stir up the soul to look daily for the coming of the Lord in power and glory, at the cock crowing, at the first watch, or at mid-day. For myself I can aver, that resting upon these Scriptures hath more availed to set me loose from worldly cares and attachments, to comfort me under worldly trials, to fill me with watchfulness and patience, than all things beside: and hath become to my hope exactly what the cross of Christ is to my faith—a constant peace and continual consolation, an assurance of life which hath swallowed up the thoughts and fears of death, a mighty power which hath strengthened my infirmity, a mighty fulness which filleth my soul with joy in the midst of all my emptiness. And finding it to be so written in the Word, and feeling it to be so efficacious in the Spirit, I do press it upon all, that they may experience the same victory, and far more abundantly, become full of the same watchfulness, and far more abundantly, that the Church of Christ may grow into great contentment, and cheerfulness, and joy, and be able to endure unto the uttermost whatever the Lord may permit Satan to bring against her. And so much in general for the comparative *usefulness* of these two opinions concerning the Lord’s advent.

But I feel it to be a great degradation of so very important a doctrine, and an undervaluing of so great a controversy to treat it thus loosely with a respect to whatever any one conceiveth usefulness to be: and therefore I am minded in this discourse to show the way to a right method of conducting the question, and, as far as my bounds will allow, to pursue it: which seems simply to be, by showing how the two opposite opinions affect the great heads of Christian doctrine; clearing them, or obscuring them; weakening them, or establishing them; how they harmonize with those points of Christian faith on which all are agreed; how they affect the great lineament of the gospel of salvation; and serve the glory of God, the cross of Christ, and the salvation of men. Now in following out this purpose, into which I shall enter the more willingly and the more largely, because my author hath not touched it at all, having contented himself with establishing the orthodoxy and Biblical truth of that system of opinions, upon which we are now to try conclusions with the opposite prevailing system, it will be necessary to line off a certain portion of the principal ground of theology, within which this weightiest dispute may be brought to issue. To this end I lay off, as the lists within which I purpose to keep myself, and with which all orthodox and spiritual Christians I am sure will be satisfied, the following ground: First, How the two systems affect the person and offices of Christ. Secondly, How they affect the doctrine and work of the Spirit. Thirdly, How they affect the church, the pillar and ground of the truth. And lastly, How they affect the spiritual life, and personal holiness of every man. And now may God appear at the side of the right, and help me, with all justice and impartiality, to bring this matter to a righteous decision.

CHAPTER II.

CONCERNING THE BEARING OF THE TWO OPPOSITE OPINIONS UPON THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST'S PROPHETIC OFFICE.

THERE IS no more ancient head of orthodox doctrine, nor pregnant form of spiritual truth, than the threefold office of Christ, as the Prophet, Priest, and King of his church, concerning which we are about to discourse, not at large, but in particular to examine how these two opposite systems bear upon and affect it; which will be found to be in a more remarkable way than many may at first imagine. By Christ's prophetic office, concerning which I shall treat in this chapter, I understand, as it is defined in our Church Catechism, "his revealing to us, by his word and Spirit, the will of God for our salvation;" which divides itself into two parts: first, his revelation by his word; and, secondly, his revelation by his Spirit of the will of God. To the former of these I restrict myself at present; having to speak of the latter hereafter.

Now, of the revealed word of Christ it is to be observed, that it consists of these two essential points; the purpose, promise, or prophecy of God, with respect to our salvation; and the history of the execution of this purpose: the former the intimation of what is to be, the latter the fact of its having come and coming to pass. There is no period of God's church, since the fall of Adam, which hath not had these two necessary parts of every revelation, —a prophecy, and a record, an object for memory, and an object for hope; and by this very thing, I judge the word of God to be distinguished from the word of man, that the former ever hath in it all element which the latter can never have. This is the prophetic, which taketh instruments upon future time, to man's eye unsearchable, and to his wit undiscoverable. Man can be historical and antiquarian, he can be observant and speculative concerning the present; he can also disconnect himself from space and time, and become metaphysical, but he cannot by any means be prophetic: he cannot lay down a purpose concerning events far distant, and constrain all things to bring it to pass. For his own short lifetime, the intractable will of every other man, the profound darkness of the future, all things hinder him from knowing even, much less from causing, what a day or what an hour may bring forth. Herein therefore the word of God hath the upper hand of the word of man; the universal, and unbounded reason of the limited and individual reason.

These premises every sound doctrine and enlightened Christian will assent to; but if haply any one should think the position, that all God's word is at one and the same time prophetic and historical, too broadly stated, and refer me to those parts thereof which are purely biographical and historical, as the books of Moses, and Samuel, and Kings, and to those parts which are purely moral, as Job, and Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes, &c. and to others which they say are purely doctrinal; I answer, that I believe every one of these books to be both the evidence of a prophecy in fulfilment, and a prophecy itself. For example, the books of Moses are full of prophecy, individual prophecies made to the patriarchs and to Moses; of which prophecies the lives of the patriarchs, and the deliverance of the children of Israel, and their establishment in Canaan, were but the accomplishment. I observe further, that not only is the whole of that history a fulfilment of the prophecy, but it is of itself prophetic. There is a

prophetic history as well as a prophetic word, a prophetic providence as well as a prophetic writing. "These things," saith Paul, were for types; and in his epistles he doth continually use them for such: and, though I cannot here go into the details, much study hath convinced me that the prophetic providence of God, in the lives of his elect saints and elect church, is as well worthy of study, and as definite an object of study, as the prophetic word. The word first, then the history of its accomplishment, and next that history itself prophetic of a future period in the history of the church.

For example, who doth not believe that the deliverance out of Egypt was prophetic of the deliverance of the present church from the bondage of Satan, the flesh, and the world; that the sojourning in the wilderness was prophetic of the present condition of the spiritual church, while without her king and without her promised possession; that the captivity of Babylon was prophetic of her captivity and imprisonment for so long, and dreary, and dark a period, under the present mystical Babylon which is just about to be destroyed; and her deliverance by Cyrus prophetic of our deliverance by the true Cyrus, our Lord; that the bringing of David from the shepherds crook to the royal sceptre, through numerous perils and weary warfare, was prophetic of the bringing of our Shepherd to the throne of David which is promised to him; and the peaceful reign of Solomon, who never drew the sword of war, but ever wielded the sword of wisdom to resolve all doubts and questions among the surrounding nations, and preserve their peace, was prophetic of our King who shall rule in wisdom, hasten righteousness, and spread abroad the blessedness of, universal peace. To this some may say, they were typical but not prophetic of these things, because a prophecy must have a visible object in which to be accomplished; whereas the objects of these are spiritual and invisible. In answer to which I observe, that it is a good canon of prophetic interpretation, that its accomplishment must be looked for in visible objects, not in invisible or spiritual states, which so far from contravening, I shall have to make use of before closing this discourse, and allowing it, this much will be yielded to me, that; before we can speak of spiritual states we must have a language derived from visible and sensible things in which to express them.

Now that former history of the church did afford language in which the conditions of the present spiritual dispensation might be expressed. It gave us a holy language for expressing the facts of the spiritual and invisible church, and so far forth it looked forward and has been applied in the sequel of the revelation of the divine purpose. But further, the church of the Gentiles is a great visible object, whereof the events in the history of the former church were prophetic, and are used for prophetic signs in the books of the New Testament, especially in the Apocalypse. And I observe still further, that the series of answering events is not completed, the spiritual church being still lost in the wilderness, not yet having become visible, but waiting for it till the day of the manifestation of the Son of God: also the Jewish dispersion hath to be gathered again into a church and a nation, and the throne of David to be established, his tabernacle to be set up, and the whole earth to be brought under his dominion; of which future visible events as I find the promise and prophecy to be always given in language derived from the history of the Jewish people, even as our present spiritual earnest of them is described by the help of the same language; so I conclude that when these events thus described in prophecy shall be accomplished, they will be found wonderfully to respond to, and to have been predicted in the events of the former dispensation. But enough of this, for I must not suffer myself to discuss things at large, or to be tempted into digressions.

Nor need we be particular upon this point, in the discourse preliminary to a work which is one great demonstration of the prophetic character of all scripture, deriving the

proofs and illustrations of the great doctrine of the second advent, not from one or a few, but I may say from every book thereof.

And enough hath been said to make out what we believe no sound divine or enlightened believer will deny, that the peculiar and distinguishing characteristic of the word of God is not so much that it is truth, but that it is truth prophetic. That the prophetic quality is not an accidental but an essential part of it; not a circumstance which belongeth to a few books, but a substantial part of every revelation and record of the wisdom of the Most High.

In which respect I have found two similitudes whereby to represent this my idea of divine revelation; the one taken from the vegetable, the other from the human life. At first the word of God is as a seed, it may be of the oak or of any other plant, in which the whole majestic form and various parts of the future tree lie undisclosed, ready to reveal themselves when the times and seasons and other conditions which God hath appointed to determine its being shall have taken their course; and there is no break, nor leap, nor start in its growth, which proceedeth by a slow, and sweet, and beautiful progression, to perfect that purpose or word of God which said at the beginning, "And produce every tree yielding fruit whose seed is in itself." So the first promise made in Eden contains in itself the whole of the revelation and prophecy of God in an embryo state; first, the enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, which hath produced all the persecutions endured by the church from the world since the time of righteous Abel until this hour, and which she shall endure until the resurrection: the second part of it, "Thou shalt bruise his heel," hath been likewise developing during the whole of the same long period, in which the heel, or lowest part of the church's body, that is our carnal natural life, hath been vexed and crucified of him during life, and lieth bruised into dust in the grave; but at the resurrection the church "shall bruise his head," casting him out of his usurped domination, and reigning over him for ever and ever. Wherefore it is written, both of Christ and of his church, that they shall rule the nations with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like the potter's vessel, and have all their enemies under their footstool. Now I have not room to trace the progress of this seed sown in paradise, as it is developed in the progress of revelation, and shoots its roots into the soil of the fallen world, and spreads its branches into the atmosphere of time, until it shall possess the whole earth with its roots, and purify the whole heaven with its boughs, and all nations shall find shadow, and repose, and blessedness, under its branches.

Yet in order to show how true the principle is, let me trace it out a little. We have the promise to Abraham still made of a seed, and now all nations are to inherit the blessing, in whose right his Father Abraham is enfeoffed in a country by the divine word; in the mouth of David, the promise is still of a seed to come, which hath now attained the high stature of a triumphant, and universal King, of Judah by pre-eminence, of all the earth by equal privilege: in this same character of a king, the child is made known to the immediate precursors of his birth, Zacharias, Elizabeth, Mary, John: in the same character to Simeon, though now his sufferings and the calling of the Gentiles be hinted as first to happen, which he laboureth all his life long to render intelligible to Nicodemus, to his apostles, and all his disciples. In no other character doth Peter declare him after the day of Pentecost, and James in the council of Jerusalem, and the two shining ones on mount Olivet, and Paul and all the apostles, than as THE KING who ascended on high without seeing corruption, waiting and expecting, till the Father shall accomplish the times and the seasons, and bring in the days of refreshing spoken of by all the prophets, the restitution of all things waited for by the whole creation of God. In no other way doth John see him in the Apocalypse than as a child, the seed of the woman

caught up to God and his throne, and there abiding until after certain sore warfares and persecutions of his church, he cometh again with many crowns upon his head, and followed by all the armies of heaven, in order to break the confederacy of Satan's powers to bind the old serpent himself, and cast him into the bottomless pit, to keep him in subjection for a thousand years, and afterwards turn him into hell with all the nations that forget God. There is such a soft, sweet, and silent development of this one seed sown in paradise, and which in its growth doth change the world into paradise again, reproducing that *kind* of blessedness which the world was then deprived of, that this alone hath ever to thoughtful men marked revelation as a divine work, comprehending the restitution, regeneration, and complete blessedness of man and his habitation. Like the stately branching oak, which beginneth in an acorn, and of which the end and is to generate an acorn, while during the progress of its stately growth, it covereth every beast of the earth with its kindly shade, and nestleth every bird of heaven in its ample branches; so this promise was sown in the soil of a perfect and perfectly blessed state, while man still dwelt in paradise, and its end is to produce perfectly blessed men dwelling in paradise again, while during all the ages of its growth it should bless the immortal spirits of men with salvation and its leaves be for the healing of the nations.

The second and only other similitude which I have found worthy to express this wonderful character of the word of God is the growth of the life of immortal man, from childhood onwards to his perfection. For the word of God is not given merely for a demonstration of the divine perfections in harmonizing a great scheme of truth which should ever announce and ever fulfil itself, and in the fulfilment announce itself again, and so on unto the end; but it is for the support of a spiritual life upon the earth, in that body of chosen ones which is called the church. The word of God is as much the cause of the church, its constitution, its alteration, its perfection; as the word "Let there be light," is the cause that light is, and that it is what it is; as the word "Let us breathe in to his nostrils the breath of life," is the cause of human life unto this day; and the word spoken to the man and woman after the fall is the cause and definition of this present constitution of the niggard earth, of rugged wilful manhood, and of passionate affectionate womanhood, unto this day. And so forth as every word of the Lord hath given life, constitution, and preservation to that whereto it related, so the spiritual word and promise, made in paradise and propagated in the wonderful way which hath been said above, hath given being, constitution, and preservation to that spiritual church which will be manifested in the day of the Lord's appearing. Wherefore that similitude of vegetable and unconscious life cannot represent it perfectly, and we are forced, in order to find its proper representation to meditate the conscious life of the human soul. Now, as every one knoweth who hath studied the growth of the immortal mind, there is in children an embryo of the future man, in their observations, their passions, their inferences from, and interpretations of signs, their affections, their faith; so that a child which did not display in some degree of life and strength these parts of man might be pronounced defective in mind, as you would pronounce it defective in body if it could not hear or see. Whoso studieth as I have done, and reflecteth as I have sought to reflect, upon the twelve first months of a child; whoso hath had such a child to look and reflect upon as the Lord for fifteen months did bless me withal, (whom I would not recall if a wish could recall him from the enjoyment and service of our dear Lord,) will rather marvel how the growth of that wonderful creature, which put forth such a glorious bud of being, should come be so cloaked by the flesh, cramped by the world, and cut short by Satan, as not to become a winged seraph;—will rather wonder that such a puny, heartless, feeble thing as manhood should be the abortive fruit of the rich bud of childhood, than think that childhood is an imperfect promise

and opening of the future man. And therefore it is that I grudged not our noble, lovely child, but rather do delight that such a seed should blossom and bear in the kindly and kindred paradise of my God. And why should not I speak of thee, my Edward! seeing it was in the season of thy sickness and death, the Lord did reveal in me the knowledge and hope and desire of his Son from heaven? Glorious exchange! He took my son to his own more fatherly bosom, and revealed in my bosom the sure expectation and faith of his own eternal Son! Dear season of my life, ever to be remembered, when I knew the sweetness and fruitfulness of such joy and sorrow. How I have ever hated the sentiment of that mad Italian, who, in writing his life, speaks of the season of his infancy as the time of his vegetation, not of his life, and contemneth it. Such rude and passionate spirits, such resolute and urgent servants of Satan, may right well undervalue the season of their comparative inefficiency in lust, hatred and oppression and by such a confession rebuke their manhood: but to me it is certain, that from the earliest infancy there is to be observed the embryo of the future man and that there is a certain dim, prophetic consciousness of the future man, which you can discern and address almost from the first beginnings of intercourse, and which indeed formeth the ground and basis of an education.

For I am sure that no mother who doth not keep in her mind the lineaments of the perfect man or woman, shall ever train her children to become men or women: just as no artist, who doth not present before his young students the perfect works of antiquity, shall ever bring them to any stature in the art. Now I judge that such a growth as the mind experienceth from childhood to manhood, the church hath passed through from Abraham till now, and that the Spirit in the patriarchs was conscious of, and foreshewed the more perfect conditions of the church, as the child is conscious of the man, and puts forth the intension and prognostic of manhood. Such was the view which Abraham had of the day of the Lord; such was the view which David had of his kingdom; and such, also, the view which the prophets had of his sufferings. They felt they were but a part in a great life which was accomplishing, and at the accomplishment of which all the parts should be gathered together: as St. Paul says, "That in the dispensation of the fulness of time (of the times) he might gather together in one (recapitulate) all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are in earth."

Now if any one ask me, why the Lord hath adopted this prophetic method in the revelation of his Word, and not the logical, or the dogmatical, or the predicative? I answer, that it is the only one proper to a spirit, which, like man's, is subjected to the conditions of place and time, by being placed in a sentient body, and having a sensible world to rule. The method of intellection hath only to do with the pure reason, and therefore is imperfect to a being like man. Yet, forasmuch as the pure reason is the noblest part of man, the truth, in whatever way conveyed, must contain the food of pure reason, which my dear friend, my kind and honoured instructor, Mr. Coleridge, hath well proved it to contain, in his invaluable book entitled "Aids to Reflection;" from whom also I received the first idea of the prophetic growth of God's word: as what have I not received from him? But when, besides the reason, the sense and understanding also are to be satisfied, it seems to me necessary that the truth conveyed should be surrounded with, and, as it were, embedded in, the conditions of space and succession; in order that through the avenues of the bodily sense and natural understanding the pure truth may pass into the soul, and, being there, redeem both soul and body from their fallen state. Whether it be an attribute of our fallen estate, to be under the conditions of space and time, I cannot say; but while we are so, I can perceive that, in order to satisfy them, the prophetic is the only proper method of a divine revelation. But questions of this depth I leave to those who have a higher faculty therein, being contented to find that

undoubtedly the revelation which God hath given us is prophetic, from the beginning to the ending of it; and, being so, I can point out with certainty this important consequence which ariseth: —That the revelation becomes at any point its own evidence unto all to whom it is made known, in whatever period of the succession their lot may be cast: forasmuch as they perceive that their own condition, and the condition of the church, and the condition of the world hath been foreseen and foreshown from the beginning; and that which they see and live in, is but one aspect of a great procession of events, whereof the purpose and the issue are both declared; and that each individual is but as a speck in that changing aspect.

Than which nothing is more effectual to bring the intellect in subordination to the great pervading reason, and the will in subordination to the great pervading will. If, indeed, the mind were left under this overwhelming sense of littleness, it might chance to lose itself in contempt and indifference; but when it further perceives that every individual to whom this great revelation is made known, is solicited to submit him self to that Almighty prophet, and be taught of him and redeemed from every evil, that state of atheistical self-contempt is exchanged for the state of Christian faith and obedience. For example, I behold the children of Ham servants of servants unto this day; I behold the children of Japhet dwelling in the tents of Shem; I behold the Jews scattered and peeled unto this day, yet not suffered to be ground into annihilation, but multiplying more and more; I behold the Christian Church in bondage to the Apostolical Roman Empire, and I behold the spirit of infidelity fast dissolving and just about to destroy that foulest superstition; I behold Jerusalem still trodden under foot of the Gentiles, Babylon uninhabited and unvisited, the children of Ishmael un-vanquished, the sons of Jonadab not wanting a man to stand before the Lord: again, when I look at succession, I perceive the four great empires exactly foretold, and the character and conditions of each unto this day; and, without going into detail, I find, I may say, every remarkable feature of the world's condition defined from of old by a decree which it cannot pass: and if I consider my own personal history, the changes and revolutions which have been effected upon my spirit by the communion of Satan in the world, and again by the communion of Christ in his church, I find all answereth as face to face; I find that the confessions and experiences of every believer, and, above all, of Christ himself, answer to my own; and thus perceiving, whichever way I look, that am prevented and circumscribed by a law, which is revealed in the word of God, I am fain to conclude, that the Creator of all, and the Ruler of all, is the same whose word is the law of all: and that this word which I possess is nothing else than the archives of creation, and the decrees of Providence, the certainty of all things past, present, and to come.

Now this is the great evidence of the word of God, and in proportion as this the intrinsical evidence of revelation is set forth, in that proportion will the faith of the people be established. By faith here I mean that to which infidelity is opposed, viz. the conviction of the understanding, and the belief of the fact. Moreover, it is the small interim mixture, or almost total absence of this kind of demonstration which hath let in the infidelity of these times. They have gone about to rest the evidence of our religion upon the miracles which attended the ministry of the Lord and his apostles, and so carried the question into the arcana of Christian antiquities, of classical writers, and the authority of the fathers, whither the great mass of the people cannot follow them: and while thus displaying their own ignorance of scepticism of that prophetic character of God's word which we have laid down above; they have propagated their own ignorance and scepticism to a most alarming extent. All other causes of infidelity put together, are but as a feather in the scale compared with the evil effect of the books which have been written in defence of the Christian religion. The book we most

want, as I have heard my sage friend referred to above oft remark, is, 'Christianity defended from its defenders.' For while they have removed the question into a dark corner of time, and narrowed to the events of one particular spot of the earth that evidence which resteth upon the events of all time and the ever changing aspect of the church and the world, they have withdrawn the mind of the church from looking forward to the future, and fixed it upon an unproductive inspection of far distant and long past events: and these not as the fulfilment of a series of purposes revealed from the beginning of the world, but as isolated events conveyed and brought down to us by means of extrinsical testimony. The fools have cut a brick out of the wall, and said, Look at this, and believe in the divine architecture of the palace from which it came: they have taken the main-spring out of the watch, and, presenting it to you, said, Go to, there's a chronometer for you of exquisite workmanship. But I wander.

The infidelity of the present day is the fruit of our poverty in the knowledge and preaching of Christ's prophetic office and the prophetic character of his word. And whence hath this come, and how shall it be cured? It hath proceeded from the want of an object in the future to carry the mind of the church forward, and to keep her eye looking forward. She hath been turned into the unnatural position of looking backward and accordingly hath not failed to observe and fully to justify the individual prophecies, or rather, I should say, parts of prophecy, which have received accomplishment. But because no prophecy of a private or limited application, so as to run out before the end, but every one, or almost every one, hath something in it yet unaccomplished, they make but bungling, blundering work in proving the accomplishment of any of them to be perfected: insomuch that in the great question of Messiah's former advent, I should undertake to hold the Jewish side, against a goodly number of our Christian divines, interpreting the prophecies according to the canons of sound interpretation applicable to all other books. For if they spiritualized away a part, I should insist upon spiritualizing away the other part; in which case we would have and could have no real Messiah: and if they insist for the literal interpretation of a part, I would insist for the literal interpretation of the other part, which their Messiah hath not fulfilled, and which they do not expect him to fulfil; and in either case I would defeat them. I say this unnatural position of looking backward has deprived the church of the use even of those prophecies which have received a partial fulfilment, but still look forward to a perfect accomplishment; while of by far the greatest part of the prophecy it hath deprived her of the use and service altogether, and made them not only sealed and unprofitable, but really injurious and pernicious to the faith of her own children. For well do I remember (It is not so long) since I durst not trust myself to look narrowly into that corner of the house, and was content to observe merely the grand and sublime tones of divine feeling and utterance which were there found.

But if the church had an object in the future, to carry her eye forward with longing desire and diligent observation, every thing would come naturally into its true place again, and the lines of prophetic revelation would be observed all converging to a certain great event in the future history of the world, called The advent of the Lord, of which such glorious things have been spoken since the beginning of time. And the Spirit, whose office it is "to show us things to come," would begin to ripen in the soul of the church those seeds of future things, which are buried under this rank growth of antiquarian evidence: and the ministers of the church would grow once more into the faculty of manifesting the glory of the latter day, from the types and figures and prophecies of the former day: and they would call upon the churches to be mindful of the things which had been spoken before by the prophets and the apostles of the Lord; to look unto the more sure word of prophecy, as to a light that shineth in

a dark place, until the day dawn and the day star arise on our hearts. Behold those seven letters of Christ to the churches in Asia, if they be not all built upon the great events which are about to come unto the earth. There is not a promise in one of them that doth not centre upon the earth. And our Lord's coming, of which the apostles make such constant use, is always a coming to the earth, an earthly event, an event: the most grand in the history of this world, and the beginning of all its blessedness.

It is no answer to this to say that the eye of the church is kept in the attitude of looking forward to the millennium. It is not the millennium of the scripture, but the optimism of the philosophers which they are looking forward to; and the Spirit of the Lord will not sanctify or acknowledge an error; it is not a hope which leadeth them to search and know the prophetic scriptures, or to honour the prophetic office of the Lord, but to consult the proverbs of earthly wisdom, and the resources of worldly wealth. It endeth not in the glory of Christ, but in the glory of man; it maketh progress by policy and expediency, not by faith; it is the great staring error, the mother of the heretical hopes of the latter times, and may well lead away from the consideration of God's word which contravenes it, but can never attract to the perusal of it.

These things will be enough to the considerate and the simple-minded, in order to explain how this great question of the second advent of the Lord, as a great and blessed event in the world's history, would recover the prophetic office of Christ and the prophetic character of his word, from that oblivion and neglect to which it hath been brought by the opposite opinion, that; the advent is not an event in this world's progress to redemption, but the destruction of the world for ever is not a material event to the personal holiness or blessedness of a saint, which will all have been determined long ere then.

On the Intellect

But that the infinite importance of this may be rendered still more distinct, let me further observe, that the three great offices under which the glorious person of Christ is set forth in Holy Scripture as our prophet, our priest, and our king, are made use of by the Holy Spirit for working out three very distinct parts in the redemption of the believer; the first being used to redeem his intellect, the second to redeem his conscience, and the third to redeem the active power or dominion of both body and mind over the creatures: and these effects in the subject are so necessarily dependant upon those several causes in the object, that it is vain to think they can be interchanged with one another, or that any one can be spared, as if the faith of his prophetic office would also redeem the conscience, or the faith of his priestly office do more than purify the conscience from dead works, and likewise redeem the body from the power of the creatures, which is the fruit of the kingly office: yet though none of the offices of Christ can be separated from its proper fruit and effect, I am very far from saying that there is not a natural tendency in the one to lead on to and prepare the way for the other, seeing the offices belong to the same person, and the operations are wrought upon the same person: but I assert that no more than the promise or buddings of the fruit will be put forth, unless there be applied to the soul that particular nourishment from the knowledge of Christ which is proper to the cultivation and maturity of each several kind.

Now, of these three, the office of Christ as our prophet is the means used by the Holy Spirit for working the redemption of the understanding of man; that faculty by which we acquire the knowledge on which proceed both our inward principles of conduct and our outward acts of power. Knowledge or reasonings upon knowledge are not the cause of natural conscience nor of outward power; these are as essential parts of a man as the intellect itself; which apprehendeth knowledge; but forasmuch as they do not act with any range or certainty

but in the light of knowledge, and indeed do not act at all without a measure of knowledge, place the understanding first, as it cometh first into action, and assert that it is not to be reclaimed from its ignorance and errors otherwise than by receiving Christ as the prophet to instruct us, as the truth in which he instructeth us, the object seen, the light by which we see it, and the wisdom which is gotten by looking into his glorious face. This revelation of Christ, as the prophet includeth the whole word of God, which the Holy Spirit maketh to become unto us knowledge and wisdom, to which holy word the intellect of man is naturally averse, albeit if he displayed with all cunning adaptation to its highest taste, and set forth in the sublimest and most pathetic forms, with a constant respect to its natural desires and appetites. But by the very reason that man is so proud and selfish, and bent on calling that most excellent in which he findeth himself have made any progress, it cometh to pass that instead of relishing these the perfect forms which the universal reason and the eternal word hath put on, he turneth aside to feed on the garbage which he hath gathered from some corner of fallen nature; haply from his own reflections upon himself, haply from the imitation of another like himself, haply from the common sense of the multitude, haply from some barren field of inanimate nature.

And so it tareth to the intellect from its very degradation, and contentedness therewith, to be naturally averse from the sublime and perfect truth which is written in the word of God, that is, from the revelation of Christ as a prophet. Whence the fallen intellect becometh the most fertile parent of infidelity, setting itself up as a sufficient light, as a sufficient prophet to the whole man. What with its proverbs, and its expedients, and its mechanical resources, it deemeth itself to be the Lord of this visible creation; in which it frets itself in the despite of God, to the great satisfaction of Lucifer, the Son of the morning, who is the prototype and pattern of all these bastard and fruitless intellects: and it lays the foundation of the doctrine, that man is the prophet, the priest, and the king to himself, withstandeth Christ's eternal Lordship, and requiteth as deceivers and blind leaders of the blind all those who would yield him reverence in his High and Holy Place. And the result is to destroy all bonds and obligations, to subvert all government: to obliterate the sweet traces of all relationship, and make each man an isolated tyrant to the extent of his power, breaking up all society, and treading under foot all things sacred and divine. Whereby it cometh to pass in the end, that the strongest intellect becomes the master tyrant, of discontented and dissatisfied tyrants, whom he is fain to keep in check by military government; of all which we have had a notable instance in the French revolution, that first great work of the spirit of the human intellect, which will soon be cast into the shade by other works still greater and more terrible. Now this is exactly the spirit that ruleth in all countries of Europe, that rageth most of all in Britain, because it hath here most to contend against, and especially in Scotland, whose ecclesiastical institutions are eminently fitted to cultivate intellect, and are at present wholly inefficient to overawe their own child, but do rather cajole it, and keep it quiet by presenting every divine doctrine at its bar, instead of submitting it steadfastly to the supreme and indefeasible jurisdiction of faith. Of which faith indeed my countrymen and churchmen have matured an intellectual theory, (that it is no more than the bare receiving of the written word or testimony,) a fictitious counterfeit, for the use of our intellectual land, and in homage to the intellect who ruleth the ascendant of this age. Oh how Satan hath enthralled us, and how resolved he is to hold us in his thralldom! for while he hath been pushing forward this empire of the human intellect upon all sides against the church; he hath at the same the begun destroying in the church the reverence of Christ as the prophet, which alone can withstand him.

What do you mean? I hear them say aloud around me. I mean that Christ is not received any more by the church as her prophet. I hear them answer, Is not his word honoured above all former time, circulated beyond all former example? still I answer, you contemn Christ as a prophet: you despise the prophetic character of his word ; you make light of those who esteem it, you take any account of it; and I say unto thee, thou backsliding intellectual demi-infidel church, thou knowest nothing of the prophetic office of Christ, or the prophetic character of his word. It is not against Christ the teacher, but Christ the prophet, that I arrest thee of high treason. This quality of every word of God to be prophetic as well as commemorative and instructive, hath been quite forgotten, and is utterly despised of thee. And, as I said, it is by this peculiar part or property alone that his word holdeth mastery over the intellect of man; the mind of God in this differing from the mind of man, and by this having authority over it; in that it is prophetic, and doth take instruments upon the dark future, as well as upon the past and the present. The human mind is historical, and it is observant of the present, and it is metaphysical, that is, independent of place and time, but it is not prophetic. I say not that in any kind It doth at all approach to the mind of God, but that in all other kinds it can ape it, and steal from it, and make a fashion of withstanding it, and doth withstand it, and suppose that it has triumphed over it; but in the dark arcana and mysteries of the future it can make neither pretence nor debate against the holy word. Now (observe the subtlety of Satan, and the deceivableness of man) this is the very attribute and characteristic of God's word, which the visible church despiseth, holding it no unequivocal sign of folly or madness to give any heed to it, But they are the fools, they are the madmen, they are the traitors to the cause of God, who venture into the field of battle without a weapon, or think to cast out Beelzebub by Beelzebub. I do not mean to assert that the word of God hath not a sweet accommodation and a strong argument to the intellect, which none in this age better understandeth or more ably wieldeth, than the ministers of my own church; but I say it hath no power nor mastery over it, no lordship nor sovereignty such as my Lord expecteth from his word, so long as it is submitted to the judgment of the intellect, and not presented in those overmastering forms which lay the intellect prostrate at its feet.

From the first promise made in Paradise, to the last scene in the Apocalypse with which this warfare will be accomplished, every thing that is said, and every thing that is done, and every thing that is instituted by God is a regular succession of prophetic history and developement, every part fulfilling something foregoing, and holding out something which remaineth to be fulfilled. Yea, and the providence of God to his church is also prophetic, containing more than met the observation or occupied the understanding of his servants then present and acting. It is truth continuous and in a state of growth; of which the world is as it were the soil, and the the clear heavens into which brancheth forth like the great mustard tree, and the whole church is the changing forms of the fruit as it ripens to the maturity of a redeemed world, every individual member a sort of first fruits of the harvest which is to be reaped. And it is the demonstration of this truth in all its variety which constitutes preaching or prophesying, the showing of Christ in every type, person, and ordinance of God's election, the showing the testimony of Jesus to be the Spirit of prophecy, the showing that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, but hath respect to Him, being spoken by the Holy Ghost whose office it is to take of the things of Christ; not of his own, but of Christ's, and show them unto our souls, and to show us also things to come.

It is Christ the prophet, it is not Christ the metaphysician, nor Christ the scholar, nor Christ the doer of miracles, but Christ the prophet, by which the Holy Spirit takes hold of the human intellect, to shake it out of its own vain self-sufficiency, and bring down its proud

imagination, and find admission for those infinite holy truths which are revealed in the word. Then when you have humbled the rebel intellect by mightier power, and tamed the cruel savage by greater wisdom, the Holy Spirit doth deal with him, and bring him into the subjection of faith, and so work upon him the image of Christ. But while the inferior reason yieldeth no awe of the superior, or pretendeth to try conclusions with it, while the rebel child holdeth his head proudly erect, in presence of his ill-used and much offended Father, it is vain to expect any dutifulness. There must be reverence first, and reverence cometh of superiority. And this is the great point of the superiority of the divine mind over the human mind, of the universal reason over the individual fallen reason, that it knoweth no bounds, dimensions, nor limitations, but dealeth with the past as with the present, and with the future as with both. Of which things being well convinced, whether thou, backsliding church, wilt hear or not, I will lift up my voice while I have a being, and declare that thou shalt never meet the sceptical, intellectual, and infidel character of those times, but by occupying the ground of prophecy; whereof, let me tell thy present ignorance, there is as much in the gospels as in the prophets, as much in the epistles as in the psalms, and abundance every where: as the perusal of this book which I have translated with show thee, and as the teaching of the Spirit who teacheth things to come will teach thee, when thou wilt acknowledge this his office, and give heed unto that by which he executeth it, viz. the prophetic character of God's word. Which spoliation of the prophetic office of my Lord and Saviour, and neglect of the prophetic character of his word, hath arisen from losing sight of, or explaining away in the manner set forth above, the great future event of his coming, of the resurrection of the saints, of their reign upon the earth, and the earth's complete and everlasting redemption. This consummation for which every thing that hath been done, and is now doing by God, is but the preparation, having fallen out of the expectation of the church, or been supplanted by an aerial ethereal state of indefinite and undefinable blessedness, the church hath cast her eye from the future upon this earth, to a future away from this earth, and so ceased wholly from regarding the prophetic bearing of Scripture, as concerning matters of fact, and come to regard the prophecies as spiritual similitudes and emblems. Which she was in a manner forced to do by that system of future shadows she hath embraced for future facts, and she must continue to do so while she holdeth the system fast. For it is most manifest that if sayings such as these, "we shall reign upon the earth," "I will give them power over the nations," "I will make thee a pillar in the New Jerusalem which cometh down from my God out of heaven," "thou shalt stand in thy lot in the end of the days," "his feet shall stand upon mount Olivet," &c. &c. with all the events therewith connected, are not to be fulfilled on the earth, what can one who receives the Scriptures do, but forget their prophetic character altogether, and spiritualize them as darkly and dimly shadowing forth something which is to be elsewhere?

How much better did the Jews occupy this part of their commission, than we Gentiles have done. They never doubted that the fact would be as it was written, and there where it was written, to take place. But we not only doubt, but disbelieve both. By which very disbelief, all the prophetic virtue of Scripture is lost to us, and we are open to every assault of the enemy. The Jews can throw stones at us, the infidel can deride us for want of evidence, the antiquarian can cast obscurity over our records, the metaphysician can reason us out of all the essential points of our faith; and the intellectual believer substitute his own demonstrations for the submission of faith. Whereas, if the expectations with which Christ for ever endowed his Church were again to become her belief; she would look forward to his second coming, and diligently inquire into and carefully guard every part of Scripture which

bearth thereon: whence it would come to pass that the prophetic character of all Scripture would come to be recognized, for it all pointeth to that glorious event; and the prophetic office of Christ restored, and a barrier, the only effectual barrier, placed against the deluge of infidelity which hath swept over the church under the disguise of intellectual illumination and expedient usefulness. It was the expectation of Messiah which made the Jews to set such a value upon their prophecies; it is the absence of such an expectation or indifference to it, which hath made us to set so little value upon them. And this overawing restraint being removed, the intellect hath run riot in its own follies. Oh when will the foolishness of preaching reduce the rebel to subjection again; when again shall we have those Spirit-taught preachers, who did draw the substance of their discourses from the whole providence and word of God, presenting Christ every where, and labouring to show the glory of his person every where! I would not despair of the times, if I saw preaching beginning to resume the character which it had at the reformation, and adding whatever other weapons out of the armoury the Lord may give us for the fearful odds that are now against us. But I do despair when I behold ingenious reasonings, loose declamations, subtle school exercises, and other forms of man's wayward mind, substituted in place of the royal ordinance of preaching, and the plentiful demonstration of Christ's glorious person, and the discovery of his all-comprehending wisdom, and the fine relish and high delight of truth which is in all his words, and the masterly dignity which is in all his discourses.

On the Use of Emblems

Not only, however, is the right apprehension of the prophetic office of Christ, and the prophetic character of his word most necessary for enforcing the divine authority of it over the mind, and constituting for it a body of evidence wide and large and lasting as the events of the church and of the world thus foreshown; but also for obtaining an outward visible history, and emblematic imagery, a sacred language to express spiritual things withal, and in which the true spiritual church might read and know her own condition. Our great Prophet, foreseeing that the fulfilment of the priestly office which he properly took upon him at his death, and hath since exercised by the Holy Ghost in the souls of believers, would, during the ages which had to intervene between his two advents, be an administration purely spiritual and essentially invisible; and kindly considering that what cannot be seen cannot be described so as that a man may know whether he possesseth it or not, and those who possess it may communicate with one another, and preach it to the understanding of others, to the end they may take means to obtain it, did by the history and institutions of the earlier church, constitute a set of emblems, and make a language, which should be appropriate for setting forth the great spiritual acts of the Trinity in the salvation of a sinner, the progress of spiritual perfection in the souls of believers, and the conditions of spiritual life in the midst of a world lying in wickedness. This I take to be one of the great works of Christ our Prophet, preparing for the coming of Christ our Priest. To open this idea fully and completely will require a little patience, but it is most worthy of all which we can bestow upon it.

There are only three sets of terms which can be employed to communicate the work of our Great High Priest, in sanctifying the soul of a believer by the Holy Ghost. The first is by using the common and current language of life, in which men are wont to express the more ordinary appearances of the outward world, and of their own personal experience. The second is by using the more refined language of the polite and learned, of the philosopher, and the poet, and the moralist, which I call the language of the schools. The third is by using the language of the sanctuary, that is, the emblematical language furnished by the events and

ordinances of God's church, which are recorded in the Holy Scriptures. Let me open a little the peculiar character and effects of these three which may be called the popular, the philosophical, and the prophetic methods of setting forth Christ the Prophet, Priest, and King of his church.

The first deriveth its illustrations, and figures, and other forms of expression, from the objects of daily observation with which the people are familiar; and is almost the only popular preaching of this day. You have it in its most distinct form amongst the methodists; but it prevails less or more among that great body of ministers who are not prepared for the holy office of preaching, and take it upon them from a conceit of their faculty of speech, and their strong impressions of religion. Yet far am I from saying that the unlearned minister must necessarily adopt this method, to which we have a notable exception in John Bunyan, and William Huntingdon, two most able preachers, and, as it seems to me, two of the purest writers after the scriptural type; nor do I mean to say that the learning of the schools will protect from this vicious style of proclaiming the work of Christ in our salvation; for the schools can only perfect the second method, which hath perhaps as great though not such obvious faults as this popular method whereof I now treat, The evil of which consisteth, first, in connecting spiritual things too much with sensible images, whereby they are degraded and misunderstood, and the visible world too much honoured.

The topics of a discourse whose object is to exalt the life of faith over and above the life of sight, ought to be taken from the things of faith, from the revealed acts of God's invisible power and glory, the manifestations of his favour and displeasure, of his salvation and his judgment: not from instances contained in this or that magazine, or remarkable events recorded in this or that newspaper, nor from the sermon of this or that man, nor from the storehouse of the preacher's rough and ready remembrances. This is to look at things seen and temporal, not at things unseen and eternal. I say not but that there ought to be a happy intermixture of this kind, in order that the familiar scenes and current events of life may be sanctified by comparison with the holy scenes and recorded events of God's revealed acts; but I do say that when those form the great fund for the language, reference and illustration of a discourse, the effect is to vulgarize, vilify, and degrade, to the level of the basest forms of human thought and discourse, those spiritual themes, which being aptly expressed and illustrated by the great prophetic emblems of the scriptures, would purify the heart, enlarge the soul, and exalt the discourse of the common people in a most wonderful degree: whereof we have such a striking proof and illustration in the Scottish peasantry, whose prayers are beyond comparison the most copious and worthy of the divine ear, that I have ever heard pronounced extempore.

The second evil of the popular method of discoursing is, to leave the people totally ignorant of the Scriptures, which they no longer realize as writings of no private interpretation, dictated by the Holy Ghost for the food of that spiritual life which is common and not peculiar, nor as the record of God's great and wondrous acts, for setting forth to us his incommunicable and invisible being and attributes; while they hear them skimmed superficially, tortured violently, accommodated ingeniously, spiritualized wildly and left mainly unknown, hidden in the obscurity of profound disregard; one text in a chapter haply comprehended, and the rest not thought of; the scope, the facts, the allusions, the predictions, and all the other most essential ingredients of the divine record wholly unnoticed and disregarded. And this they call preaching simply, preaching to the heart, setting forth plain truths to simple people; as if the Lord had not given the people a mind, or would not be loved and served with all the mind; or had not revealed light for the understanding; or as if the mind

could be rank and unweeded, and the heart be pure; the head unfurnished with the knowledge of truth, yet the heart filled with the love of it. Oh, such folly, oh, such wickedness, oh, such villany, oh, such treacherous dealing by thy Holy word! such poisoning and destruction of thy holy people! For this popular method of expressing spiritual things by visible and common imagery, instead of drawing the fact, and illustration, and doctrine and all from God's word, is the very bane of the people; and is preparing them for superstition of some form or other, if it hath not already plunged them into it in many quarters.

The second method of discovering to others the mysteries of the divine being and his offices in the salvation of a sinner, of continuing the prophetic office of Christ and ministering to the sanctification of the church, is by using the more refined language of the learned classes, and drawing the subject matter of the discourse into the form of a disquisition, of an argument, of an embellished oration, of an essay of morals, of a pathetic piece of sentiment, or a poetical invention, or some other philosophical exercise proper to the closet, or some rhetorical performance proper to the platform or the stage, or some dry logical question proper to the schools. The effect of which method is to overlook the great body of the congregation, to entertain or astonish the rest; and to discharge the proper office of the ministry to none. It may serve the end of maintaining the reputation of a clergy for learned accomplishments, and of a church for orthodoxy; to propagate amongst a people the spirit of speculation, and build them up in the sufficiency of their intellect; to play a tune upon the feelings and dally with the fancy, and somewhat stir the surface-waters of the heart; but to convince of sin, and convey adequate apprehensions of its hatefulness, to teach the knowledge of God, and to convey a worthy idea of his holiness, to reveal the glorious person of Christ, and of the mystery of godliness contained in his threefold office, or to communicate the evidences of a work of grace, and the fruits of the Holy Spirit; it is as inadequate, it is as vile and worthless, as to expound the system of the heavens in the language of a magazine, or to describe the heaven of heavens with the vocabulary of a newspaper. This kind of discoursing in Tillotson and his school, brought forth the religious formality and ignorance of the last century in the Church of England in the writings of Blair and his school, (dilettante preachers and amateur divines, fair sportive creatures of the sun-beam, the genus of being farthest removed from that whereof preachers ought to hold who are the children of the quickening Spirit) it begat moderation in the church of Scotland, which style of it, being likened to things on earth, is the nova-Zembla of preaching, in the air the limbo of vanity, and in the depth below a still lower deep than the lowest. Oh, but I perceive in my dearly-beloved land and mother church, a more subtle form of this insufficient preaching to have won its way among the orthodox and spiritual, (if I may dare to use that word in its popular use to signify the negation of down-right formality, *not formal*,) which is to reduce every point of doctrine to an argument or expostulation, and engage with it, as if it were an intellectual question to be demonstrated before the intellect of the people; or a question of natural feeling to be appealed to their natural sense of well being; or a question of advantage to be rendered to the common interest of men. Whereby they erect a judgment seat, and constitute a court within the person of the fallen sinner, and they do constitute into a judge the guilty arraigned criminal, whom God doth not plead before, but presenteth to him an accusation proved, a reprieve purchased, and if not accepted, a judgement and second death sure and everlasting as the word of him who spake it. Whereby they mangle the productive unity of divine truth, and present it in a dead state, cut into small pieces, to be served up to the taste of men. Whereby they propagate that idolatry of the human understanding which they aim to contend against; taking Satan's damned weapons to fight

against Satan, and contesting the battle with his gyves upon their feet, his shackles upon their hands, and his speech that needeth to be ashamed in their mouth. Oh my country! Oh my mother church! I am pained for thee. How surely thou art steering to the gulf of infidelity, unless the Lord send a strong one to turn thy head against the stream!

From which two evils of prophesying to the sense or to the understanding it seemeth to me there is no deliverance now, nor defence at an time, but by betaking ourselves to that prophetic character of the word of God, to which we have made so much reference. Christ's priestly Office cannot now be preached by us but through the knowledge of his prophetic office. The things written aforetime for our learning must be known; the things written for types must be used as types of spiritual things; the foreshowing providence of God to his servants and to his church must be opened; the shadows of the priestly office of Christ contained in the Levitical institution, which Paul calleth the perfection of Christian doctrine, must be known and interpreted; the experience of the national church of Israel must be brought forward for the instruction of the holy nation, which is the spiritual church; the fasts and solemn feasts, the offices of the temple, the temple itself, and all its service which was only the mystery of Christ's holy humanity; the sacrifices daily and annual, the offerings voluntary and required, the ablutions, and every other appointed method of remission, which is only the mystery of Christ's sacrifice for our sins; the announcements of the prophets, who were but his ambassadors and forerunners, to warn the world of his coming; all the various furniture of the church of God; all the emblematical imagery and language of the sanctuary ought to be the materials with which the preacher declareth the mystery of the work of redemption, and the mystery of its application to the souls of believers. This is the preaching of faith, this is simple preaching, and preaching to the simple, this is enlightened preaching, this is practical preaching, this is the prophesying which the Holy Ghost will bless. Take up any writer of the age of the reformation, take up any writer of the puritan age, take up any writer of the non-conformist age, take up our properest models, the discourses of our Lord and his apostles, the epistles to particular churches, the seven epistles to the angels of the churches, the Apocalyptic prophecy, that epistle general to the Gentile church, and see whether they are not all redolent with the incense of the former covenant; whether they are not all living with the imagery of the former dispensation; whether their language is not thence derived, their illustrations, their instances, in short the whole body of their discourse, be it argumentative, doctrinal or practical. Can any Christian who is unskilled in these things sing the Psalms of David which are all expressed in this holy and emblematical language? those Psalms heretofore the treasury of the church, now set aside by compositions of men, or accommodated to the language of the country and times in which we live.

I cannot go into this subject at that length which my convictions of its importance to this present time requireth; and therefore to illustrate and convey the force of what I mean, I shall take one or two examples. And I begin with the history of the Jewish nation, which, past, present and to come, I believe to be a great type and emblem of the history of the spiritual and elect church which hath been from the beginning of the world; the manifestation of a spiritual object by means of a visible and conspicuous object emblematical thereof; the invisible object being the holy generation of the sons of God, the nation of true kings and priests; the emblematical object being the children and nation of Israel. Seeing that the spiritual church was to continue invisible until the second advent of the Lord yet future, and could not therefore become the object of history, observation, or experience, it was necessary in order to preserve its unity, and enable it to know its own spiritual conditions which are also invisible, to choose out a people, to distinguish them and preserve them distinct from all

peoples, to give them a history and character of their own, outward, visible, remarkable, and faithfully recorded, which might abide for an emblem of the history and conditions of that true church over whose preservation the Lord watcheth night and day, and whose preservation till he come again is no less a constituent part of the redemption than his incarnation; and for whose sakes, even for the sake of the elect, all the revelations and acts of God to the earth have hitherto been confined; hereafter, no doubt, to be manifested to the whole world of mankind, and for the profit also of the animal and elemental creatures. That which could not be written in the reality, the Lord hath thus written in the emblem, which great emblem and prophecy it is the office of the Spirit, and under Him of the Christian ministry to explain unto the church; not confounding the emblem with the reality, but carefully preserving both. For to obscure, to curtail, or to explain away the emblem, is to do the same evil offices by the spiritual thing signified therein.

In illustration of this I go not into Abraham's life, which is wholly emblematical, nor into Joseph's preservation of the chosen family, emblematical of the elect church saved by their outcast prophet; nor do I speak of Egypt preserved by him, which is the world preserved of God out of respect unto Christ's eternal offering of himself; but, I begin from the Egyptian captivity, which denotes the bondage of the sense and of the powerful Prince of darkness, out of which the spiritual church is delivered by Christ our Passover sacrificed for us. Pharaoh is oft in scripture denominated the dragon and the leviathan, which are proper in their true sense to Satan the piercing serpent. The passing through the Red Sea has been by the apostles declared to be the emblem of baptism, which puts a division between us and the house of our former bondage. From the time that the true spiritual church of Christ hath received that seal of their redemption, they are in the wilderness of this world, and are nourished with the manna of the body of Christ, which is the sacrament of the supper of the Lord, and with the water which follows their footsteps, which is the Holy Spirit following us from our baptism, until we come to the border of the land of promise. So much of our spiritual history is explained by this emblem. I pass the intervening events until the kingly office was constituted in Saul, and afterwards reft from him to be given unto David and Solomon: which I shall hereafter interpret as the great type of the future regal office of Christ and his spiritual church. Then comes the captivity of the Jewish people, which abideth till now, and of which Babylon was but as it were the first month. This, as an emblem, the Spirit of God in the Apocalypse hath applied to the city of Rome, and the kings of the earth confederate with her, who brought the spiritual church into a bondage which she endureth in some degree until this day. The city of Babylon, which was the centre of the captivity, becomes, in its downfall and perpetual destruction, the emblem of that papal city (not Rome, as I judge, but the ten kingdoms with Rome as their centre of unity) which will be destroyed in like manner, immediately before the liberation of the captives by the coming of our Cyrus (Κυρος) with his sanctified ones.

But this long enduring captivity of the Jews, and their scattered and peeled condition, like dried and bleached bones, doth most commonly stand for the emblem of that long captivity of death which the spiritual church is enduring, their bones being scattered about the grave's mouth. And hence it is that the prophets, foreshowing the restoration of the Jewish nation, do always mix it up with the resurrection of the dead. (Isa. xxv. Hos. xiii.) The scattering of the Jews among all people, without home or property, denoteth the pilgrim state in which the spiritual are waiting for the inheritance to be revealed in the last times. The gathering of the Jews into their Jerusalem upon the earth denoteth the gathering of the spiritual church out of the captivity of the grave and of αἰης, or the separate state (if I might

dare to call that a captivity, which certainly is a forcible divorce or separation into the new Jerusalem which cometh down from heaven. And the metropolitan character of the Jewish people among the nations of the earth, is the emblem of the government of the saints under their King. All which I might show with a greater degree of minuteness.

Now so far is this from being fancy, that I am bold to assert it is the pillar and ground of the truth of Holy Scripture. The prophets were taught the future by means of these emblems, as a blind man is taught arithmetic by means of counters. They never speak in the spiritual mood, because they never saw in that mood. Everything which the Spirit manifested to them was by these emblems: and is expressed in these the great historical events and epochs of their nation. True, the matter is too much for the vessel into which it is pressed, and is continually pressing it out of dimension, but still it is the vessel which appeareth. Or, to use the figure of scripture, the womb is big and heaving; but the child was not born to them. And whosoever will not attend to this the language of the prophets in respect to the future, must fall into one or other of these great errors; either despise them wholly as of no profit to truth spiritual, which is to sail in the teeth of the testimony of Jesus and his apostles; or to spiritualize them altogether, which is to be lost; in a shoreless sea of conjecture, speculation, and outrageous extravagance. But understand the character, (and it is very simple to one who is not preoccupied and prejudiced,) and you shall understand the thing which is written therein, and find it like all scripture to be profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness.

All that I can say is, that by attending to these simple elements which I learned from St. Paul, the whole of the Old Testament hath become to me like a globe of light, instead of being darkness that might be felt. Keep the pitcher whole, and the waters are safe; break the pitcher, and the waters are spilt upon the ground, and cannot be gathered up again, and your pitcher also is become a broken vessel, the most useless of all things. At the same time, while I thus give forth these the providences of the Jewish nation as the shafted window and coloured glass, which cast the Mosaic church into a twilight gloom, I know that the light is still the same light of life which is in Christ Jesus; and that it served the ends of the ministry of that house given to the keeping of Moses and his successors. Likewise I believe that their own history is to the Jewish people typical of that which is to come to them, when they shall become a Christian and spiritual people; may I believe that after it hath served all the purposes of the present Gentile church for spiritual guidance, it will begin to serve anew all the purposes of the Jewish nation, in respect to their promised future deliverance out of all nations, the drying of the river of Egypt and the river of Assyria, the sojourning in the wilderness the falling of the walls of Jericho at the last of the seven blasts of the seventh trumpet, which is now about to be blown. This I believe, because I find the prophecy of the future restoration of the Jews to be written very much in the language of the former redemption out of Egypt. And if the language which words the one, borrows intelligence, and illustration, and typography from the language which words the other, I believe the providential acts which shall fulfil the one, will stand in a similar relation to the providential acts which fulfilled the other. For why should not two stalks shoot out from the same seed? In the same way it is, that I suspect the Christian prophecy of the Apocalypse may come into a second service in these times of Israel's redemption, as my author believes.

Now while I surely believe that the history of the Jewish people, while it was a great fact and lesson unto the world of God's righteous acts, was also a typography with which he might write the mystical history of his invisible church until the time that it shall become manifest in the day of our blessed Lord's appearing, I believe, at the same time, that the very

same spiritual truths are written a hundred different ways in the history of individuals and of particular periods, line upon line, and precept upon precept; of all which the harmony in diversity the oneness in variety, gives such a demonstration of the divine Spirit as I can hardly express, it doth so pass every other form of conviction.

Of all these views Concerning the prophetic office of Christ and the prophetic character of his word, I regard his discourse to Nicodemus to be a most remarkable confirmation, wherein he not only showeth the instance of the cross under the emblem of the brazen serpent, and the work of the Spirit under the water-purifications of the law, but asserteth generally that the new birth of the Spirit and the whole spiritual life thence flowing, and our present spiritual dispensation and church, are but a part of the earthly things. The honest yet blinded Israelite came to inquire of our Lord concerning his glorious kingdom, who postponed the subject for one more immediate and more important, opening to him the spiritual meaning and spiritual promise of the earthly dispensation, which had begun with Moses, and was now arrived at the second stage of its growth, for which the word of the prophets and the dispensations of divine providence had been diligently preparing the way; against which the spiritual pride and carnal security of the Jewish rulers had been as diligently blocking up the way: wherefore it came not unto them, but passed by on the other side, and went unto the Gentiles, leaving them outcast of heaven and earth. By this high authority we are informed that our present spiritual dispensation which is wont to be interpreted as complete in itself, without any bud or promise of another, is as much preparatory to another, as was the Mosaic, which the Jews also thought perfect in itself: or rather, to speak more exactly, the dispensation from Abraham to the present time is one dispensation, which is incomplete and inexplicable but by the belief of another dispensation of glory about to follow. Our Lord here expressly declareth to Nicodemus, that all which he taught him, concerning the regeneration of the Spirit, and his own lifting up, and the light unto the Gentiles, was a part of the earthly things, and no part of the heavenly things; or in other words, that the spiritual dispensation under which we live is but the unfolding and completing of the ritual and prophetic dispensation, and can no more be separated from it, than the exposition can be separated from the text, or the resolution from the perplexed riddle.

It is manifest from our Lord's discourse, that the spiritual dispensation to which he introduced the Jewish ruler, pertaining to the earthly things which were to be seen and known at that time in the Jewish dispensation, as the living countenance and form are to be seen through the veil which covers them. For there can be no doubt that Moses was but Christ under the veil, and the law was but the holiness of the Spirit written upon stones. The veil was taken off the face of Moses by the Prophet like unto Moses, and the gospel was discovered to be beneath it. By the coming of the Spirit the tables of stone were broken, and the writing was transferred to the fleshly tables of the heart. Christ's incarnation completed the prophetic part of the dispensation, and sealed up the vision and the prophecy; his life fulfilled the law; and as by one man's transgression the curse came upon us, so by one man's obedience the curse was taken off; his death finished and accomplished the sacrifice for iniquity, and brought in an universal righteousness. By his resurrection he spoiled death, and the grave, and corruption; and by his ascension up on high, he became the High-Priest of his church to procure the forgiveness of their sins, and to shed down abundantly the gifts of righteousness and peace, to become the providence of the world, and the true King in Jeshurun. These things were all contained in the former half of the dispensation, the semblance of them appeared through the covering of the ceremonial law, the spirit of them,

like the child in the womb, struggled for liberty, and the prophets, through great oppression and fainting of soul, were able to articulate the very words of it. The gospel liveth and moveth everywhere in the former dispensation, and is not to be separated from it. They are parts of one life, the former the elements of childhood, the latter the discoveries of manhood. It is one revelation from the beginning even until now, and is properly called the earthly things, in contradistinction to the heavenly things, which shall have place, when Messiah shall come in majesty and glory.

To see this thing completely, we need to ascend yet a little higher. The coming of the Son of God in flesh to offer himself for our sins, was only the manifestation or revelation of that which he had done from all eternity. The act of his intercession and mediation, yea, of his suffering and death are presupposed in the words of the first promise made to our first parents in Paradise: and from that time until now, every word of divine revelation, and every institution of divine worship, are so many manifestations of the eternal act of self-devotion for the salvation of the world, —are but the wording, or the preaching of it, the prophecy and the manifestation of its eternal reality. The gift of the law from Sinai, and the gift of the Spirit in Zion, the tabernacle in the wilderness, the temple built of stones in Jerusalem, and the spiritual temple of the Christian Church built of lively stones, are great bequests of God, purchased by the death of Christ, which was accomplished in heaven, where it was first purposed and declared by the Son, and accepted by the Father, though not accomplished upon earth till he was crucified on Mount Calvary. This is the view held forth in the Old Testament scriptures, especially in the Psalms and the Prophets, taught by our Lord in this discourse of Nicodemus, and in all his divine discourses recorded by John, and of most of the epistles of Paul it forms the introduction. I open these epistles at a venture, and I find it written in the beginning of Titus, “In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the world began; but hath in due times manifested his word through preaching.” If you inquire the reason why the revelation of the whole truth was not made from the beginning, I answer that it is the prophetic method of God, which seemed best to the wisdom of God; and I doubt not, when the work is finished, will so seem to all his saints who take pleasure to inquire into the wonderful works of God. But for us, who stand midway in the work, and see but one half of it, who are of small comprehension, and very un-spiritual, it is a vain attempt to comprehend the infinite scheme of grace; and it doth better beseem us, with the Gentile apostle, to adore its infinite dimensions, than to attempt the measurement and comprehension of the whole. And yet this much I can discern, and feel free to declare, that when sin had once entered into the finished and blessed work of God’s creation, it was needful that it should run its course, and untold all its poisonous fruits, and do its worst to mar the beauty and murder the life of the goodly creatures of God, in order that its malignity, unmercifulness, hideousness, and horrid misery might be revealed and made manifest unto all the intelligent creatures of God, that they might stand amazed and aghast at the terror, and be confirmed in their hatred of the exceeding hateful thing which God hateth. This, I take it, is the cause why the manifestation of life and righteousness took such a long while to complete itself, in order that the manifestation of death and sin might complete itself. But through all the doublings of the cruel enemy the Son of God did follow him, and unto the darkest chambers he made his light to be seen, and at no time suffered this earth to be without a hope and a promise, and a holy symbol of faith. And herein lay the infinite wisdom of our prophet, in being able to preserve alive upon the earth in despite of the gates of hell, an inward life of godliness and an outward monument of mercy, a spiritual and a visible church, to make the devils to believe and tremble, the wrath of man to praise him, and the remainder of his wrath

to restrain. The difficulty of such an undertaking is known only to God; and I doubt not it will be manifest hereafter unto his saints, that in this, far more than in the creation of the earth, and the stretching out of the heavens, is his almighty power revealed. It would be a long discourse, and not proper to our present aim, to show the marvellous accommodation of the divine promise to the evil plights and narrow necessities into which sin hath at different times brought the world. How the wisdom of the Saviour doth baffle the subtlety of the destroyer, and pluck the prey out of his hands. Which things I have found much cleared up in the study of the Psalms. But to return to the point in hand.

We cannot separate the ministry of our Lord, from the former dispensation which it was intended to accomplish, and we cannot separate it from the present dispensation of the Spirit, which is the disseminating abroad of the doctrine which he taught, and of the gifts which he purchased, that is of his priestly gifts by his prophetic word. Nor can we separate the dispensation of the spirit from the dispensation of the law, or the church of the Gentiles from the church of the Jews, that they should not be parts of the same redemption, parts of the same warfare, parts of the same humility and suffering, parts of the same earthly oppression of the church, with nothing of that heavenly glory and royal power, which is about to be revealed. The Jewish dispensation wanted to be uncovered of its veil, and our spiritual dispensation wanteth and longeth to be covered with an outward power and visible glory, instead of being oppressed with this body of sin and death, and trodden under foot by the powers of the present evil world. This much I draw from our Lord's discourse with Nichodemus, that we are still conversant with the earthly things and have still the heavenly things to expect; that as much as the Jews, ought we to look forward to the glory which is to be revealed, and that it is an utter error fraught with evil consequence, to consider the incarnation of Christ as the ultimate end of the prophecies, and the utmost satisfaction of the wants of the world, All that hath yet been revealed in the Providence of God to his church, is the least half of what is promised in the word of God, and what his church should hold fast with assured faith.

Moreover, she should look upon the incarnation only as another form which the revelation took; another method of manifesting the everlasting love, and showing the eternal sacrifice which the second person of the blessed Trinity made of his honour and dignity upon our account. And she should give heed in the study of the Scriptures, to regard them as one truth in various ways manifested, one glorious person by many emblems made known, according to the word which the angel in the Apocalypse spake unto St. John, "The testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy." Whereby is signified that as in creation all things were not only made by him but for him, so in revelation all things were not only spoken by him in the mouth of the prophet, but for him in order to show some excellent feature of his glorious person, to declare some act of his most righteous government or make known some point of his infinite wisdom, unto the children of men. Because however it may be to the unfallen and blessed Spirits, to us it is most certainly ordained that we shall neither be able to know the secret councils of the Father, nor to receive the blessed operations of the Holy Ghost, but through the mediation of the Son, in the knowledge, and honour, and worship of whom standeth the knowledge, and honour, and worship of the Godhead. So that nothing is derogated from the Father or the Spirit, but on the contrary their true being and blessed offices are all rightly secured to them, when we say that all things were created for Christ, and that the spirit of prophecy is but the testimony of Christ.

If, then, it be true, as the revealing angel declared unto John, that the Spirit of prophecy is but the testimony of Jesus, the church should be prepared to expect, (making due

allowance for the different ages in the progress of revelation,) and she should seek to find in the prophets to whom the word of the Lord came, a like Spirit, and a like manner of expressing it, to that which is found in the blessed Lord himself, and in the holy apostles. For they spoke by the same Spirit which dwelt, in him, and they brought their messages to the same fallen sinners, and for the same end of restoring them to the lost favour of God, and obedience of holiness, and future kingdom of the saints. Therefore it is to be expected they will speak the same truths though with different clearness, and make use of the same natural figures with which to illustrate it. And we ought to look carefully for that harmony and consent between the teaching of the Lord and the prophets which came before to prepare his way. And he who doth so shall not be disappointed, but will find that every parable spoken by our Lord is but the beautiful unfolding of some great truth which lay folded in the bud, until the light and life should come to perfect the beauty of its manifestation and prepare it for bearing fruit under the influences of the waters of the Holy Spirit. And thus we have the evidence of his being the word of God, and the Messiah promised to the Fathers, not only by his fulfilment of the prophecies which respect place and time, the outward actions of his life, his death and resurrection, but also by his appropriation of all the names and designations which had been given of him, and his ready use of all those words of wisdom and forms of discourse, which are to be found in the Old Testament.

Because nature did not furnish emblems enough whereby to show forth the varieties of heavenly truth which in the person of Jesus Christ were to meet together; art, divine art was called to aid, and by the constitution of the Jewish state, and the ceremonial religion, a new language was invented, which should have no meaning nor possible interpretation but in him who was to come. And a long and various history of a particular family was preserved through thousands of years, during which they were placed in all possible conditions of wanderers, captives, warriors, conquerors, as a family, as tribes, as a nation under judges, under kings, and under priests, all which history was so ordered as, in every or almost every part to be an emblem and allegory of the history of Him who was to come. So that to the stores of natural language and similitude, might be added the stores furnished by the artificial institutions of an intricate church and state, and by the various events of a most remarkable providence. Which makes the interpretation of the gospel a work of much study in the former dispensations of God, and of much satisfaction, being rightly performed. Therefore ought the interpreters of the gospel and epistles to be well skilled in all emblems and prophecies of the Old Testament, and be delivered from the narrowness and prejudices of the natural man, and enlarged by the Spirit of God into a great capacity to receive the beginning, and middle, and end, and whole progress of the scheme of the testimony of Jesus which is the Spirit of all the prophecy. And the members of the church of Christ should for themselves learn to inquire carefully into the things of the Spirit, in the midst of which they live and move and breathe and have their being, praying always that God would fill them with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. For let me tell my brethren in Christ Jesus, that in proportion as the work of the Spirit proceedeth in our souls, and we feel the oppression of the flesh and of the world, we will groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, viz. the redemption of the body. And we will perceive how all the creation around groaneth and is in bondage, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God.

Then it will come to pass that the kingdom of Christ will not be a speculation with any of us, but a desire, a longing, a prayer, an assured faith, yea, a very instinct of the renewed man. Purified of all sensuality, yea, the sense crying out for purity; the flesh and heart crying out for the living God; crying, O Lord, how long, holy and true, dost thou not

deliver me from this body of sin and death, dost thou not destroy these worldly powers of which my brethren and dear friends are taken captive, dost thou not make manifest thy captivity of all captivities, thy spoilation of the principalities and powers of this dark and cruel world, and enable us to sing, Oh enemy, thy destructions are come to a perpetual end! Oh death, where is thy sting? Oh grave, where is thy victory?

CHAPTER III

§ 2. How the two opposite Systems affect the PRIESTLY Office of CHRIST.

THE priestly office of Christ hath the same relation to the conscience of man which concerneth righteousness, that the prophetic office hath to the intellect which concerneth knowledge. For there is in the nature of man a desire of righteousness of which proceedeth all discernment of right and wrong, with every ordinance of law and government; and of these two this seemeth to be the higher function of the soul, and there is but one higher still, the desire to live and exercise all our powers according to the light of knowledge, and by the just dictates of conscience, to which third and highest function of man the kingly office of Christ bringeth its gracious control. Now in considering the second of these, the natural conscience, I perceive that naturally it is a law unto itself, as the intellect is a light unto itself, having naturally no apprehension nor acknowledgment of the eternal, essential, and perfect holiness of God. I say not that it is not capable of education or culture, nor that it is in all men of a like force and clearness, but that it doth never of itself rise above itself, to perceive its own essential impurity and unrighteousness even in its best and purest moods. Nor by this do I mean merely that it falleth short in the execution, but that it falleth short in the idea and in the purpose, enlighten it as you will, and convince it as you will. Or in other words, the justest code which hath ever been devised in the idea of philosophers, or embodied in the codes of legislators, neither runs parallel with, nor ascendeth into the region of that justice or righteousness which ever proceedeth in the presence of the eternal God. And this is what the divines mean by the original sinfulness of human nature, the native deceitfulness and wickedness of the human heart.

Yet while I believe and assert that there is in the conscience no natural perception of the true character of sin, as an original and unstaunched fountain in the soul of man, I perceive that there is a great desire after that idea of righteousness which it doth perceive, below which it never falleth without a great sense of pain and trouble, which we call remorse. This is best perceived in the beginning of life, before evil becomes habitual, and to follow wickedness hath become to us like a second nature. But it never dies, and I have oft seen it the strongest in the wickedest, when you touch them upon a part of their nature which hath not grown callous by many wounds. As if they still kept a Goshen-spot of light within the bounds of their darkened consciousness, whither they might betake themselves for consolation. Speaking of men in general, it seemeth to me that they cannot live without such a spot, either in the present possession, or in the future prospects of their soul. And when conscience hath no light at all left within her quarters, nor dawn, nor hopeful star of a morning yet to come, the man then becomes desperate, and careth not for his life any more, but desireth to die.

The ignorance of a universal and common sinfulness con-joined with this desire after righteousness of some kind or other, doth bring all men into the condition, and even into the necessity of imagining a rule of righteousness or standard of holiness, which the conscience may take pleasure in contemplating, and do her endeavour to attain. And this I hold to be as universal an attribute of man, as the desire of knowledge or the desire of power, one of those fundamental laws which define our fallen being. Now this ideal rule of righteousness which the conscience of every man by its best endeavour frameth to itself, is what the scriptures denominate self-righteousness, and the works which proceed from it are called dead works, and the conscience while in this state, is said to be defiled with dead works; from which it must be purged in order to serve the living God: now this is the office of Christ considered as the Priest, to purge the conscience from dead works that we may serve the living God. At present I do not speak so much of the sacrifice of himself by which he atoneth for our sins, as of the application of the blood of this sacrifice to cleanse away the pollution of the conscience, or to convince the soul of its native and original sinfulness.

But this is not the whole account of the priestly office of Christ, although it be almost the whole of what is ordinarily by the church regardeth as such. For as the office of Christ the Prophet knows no bounds nor limitations, save the complete expulsion of darkness and error from the mind of man, so the priestly office of Christ knows no bounds nor limitations, save the complete expulsion of sin from the being and habitation of man, and the restoration of all things, to that spotless purity and sinless perfection which they had at their first creation, with whatever accession of power and glory they may have acquired in the work of regeneration and restitution. Of this restitution we have the first stage, in the gift of the Holy Ghost, by which we are born, anew and prepared for the kingdom of heaven. This is commonly regarded, with what justice we shall hereafter observe, as done upon the soul, and not in any respect upon the body; which all agree to defer until the resurrection. And as the resurrection is supposed to concern the body only, so it is inferred, that the regeneration concerns the soul only; a distinction, as we conceive, more simple than true, and repugnant both to reason and experience, as it is inconsistent with all the scriptures. But whether the account given of the exact effect and operation of the regeneration and resurrection be true or not, it is never to be doubted that these are two great, successive acts in the Holy Priesthood of Christ, which ought to be considered apart. And it seems to me that, besides these two, there is but another, which is, the purging and cleansing of the earth, and all the creatures which were made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him that subjected them; in hope that the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. And when this hath been accomplished by our purifying Priest, then, it seemeth to me, that his priestly office is concluded and completed, and the kingdom in a fit state to be given up to the Father. These three acts of the priestly office of Christ we shall now touch a little in order; showing how each of them is delivered from a cloud, and illustrated beautifully by the views of his second advent and kingdom, which we uphold.

Now, forasmuch as the church, labouring under her present dimness concerning the future advent of Christ and his glorious kingdom, hath been much taken up with the former advent, and led greatly to exaggerate the importance of the out-pouring of the Spirit at Pentecost, that first act of the priestly office of Christ, under which we now live; it is hardly to be expected that much should be found needing here to be reformed by the views which we now offer. But as no important error in the system can long exist without being every where felt, I shall be able to show, in respect to the giving of the Holy Spirit, some very

important changes which the scripture view of that subject hath undergone, through the hiding of the light of the glory of his second advent and kingdom.

I. To a fallen creature, like man, whose conscience hath become darkened and defiled, as hath been set forth above, a necessary accompaniment of the priesthood is the revelation of a law. If the pure and perfect type of righteousness, according to which the Priest is to restore all things, live no longer in the conscience, nor be realized in the will, then is it necessary to give it an outward existence in a written revelation, or living personification, or both. Now in respect to the revelation of the law, it properly belongeth to his prophetic office, and consisteth of all those parts of the word of God, which being wholly independent of space and time, apply themselves to the pure reason; while by being presented imbedded in the circumstances of space and time, they give demonstration and satisfaction to the lower faculties of our nature as they pass inward to the reason. This law is perfect righteousness, defining the condition of a perfectly holy man; the pure and unfallen reason, in the light of which, our conscience perceiveth its own fallen condition, its defilement, its death, "The law revived and I died." But the pure and perfect law serveth at the best no higher end than to slay the self-righteousness of man, and can never be used for a higher end. If you try to bring life out of it, or hope, or consolation, you utterly mistake its power, and miscalculate its effects; and will end in corrupting and debasing it down to the level of the apprehension, or even of the performance of men; buttressing that very self-sufficiency which it was given to overthrow, and sanctifying that vile stable which it was given to cleanse.

To have given such a law of righteousness, without giving at the same time power to keep it, would have been to reveal to the conscience her death, without revealing any hope of her resurrection from death; to have left her plunged in the blackness and darkness of despair, with which, we observed above, the conscience of no man can dwell. And here it is that the character of the Priest properly begins in redeeming us from that guilt, to the existence of which he hath in the office of our prophet brought us to be conscious. Now this office of Redeemer consists of two parts, first, in redeeming us from the guilt, and, secondly, from the power of sin; the one to justify, the other to sanctify; the former proceeding from the virtue of his death, the latter from the power of his resurrection. Of the former I have nothing to say; being fully satisfied with the thorough riddance and clearance which our reformers made of it, out of the hands of Roman crafts men, and out of the midst of Roman rubbish. But of the second part, I have to observe, that, as under the law it pertained to the High Priest, first to offer the sacrifice of atonement for the whole congregation, and likewise to proceed with the blood of the sacrifice into the Holy of Holies, in order to make intercession before the Lord: so to our High Priest it appertaineth not only to have offered his own body as the one sacrifice which hath for ever perfected all them that are sanctified; thereby opening the closed and barred gates of the divine favour to all who believe on his name; but also, besides this, to be continually employed within the veil of the heavens, interceding on their account, and presenting the incense of their prayers, and the odours of their faith, and hope, and charity. Now it is very evident that before any such odours of good works can ascend unto the divine intercessor for presentation in the Most Holy Presence, it is necessary that there should be afforded unto the believer, power to perform the same; for as much as it hath been said, that in us dwelleth naturally no power to perform, nor even in our conscience any power to discern such righteousness as the most righteous God may accept. Here then is an intermediate function of the priestly office intervening between the atonement and the intercession, or rather I should say the first part of the intercessory office, which is to put into his censer the incense of his own merits, and in virtue thereof to obtain not only the

forgiveness of our sins which appertaineth to his death, but likewise the gift of the Holy Ghost which appertaineth to the power of his resurrection. Wherefore it is not only written “that he ascended up on high leading captivity captive, but that he received gifts for men, even the rebellious, that God might dwell in the midst of them.” It belongeth not to this but to another place to speak of the Holy Ghost; yet was it necessary to say so much in order to express a most important part of the priestly office of Christ which is not sufficiently attended to, but which is, I think, in scripture the most frequently insisted upon under this form of expression, “He baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.” And accordingly we find the fact to have been, that the disciples were forbidden to commence their active ministry until they should receive power from on high; which power was given to them on the day of Pentecost.

Now this is the first defect which I have observed both in the circulating and in the written theology of our churches, the omission, I mean, of Christ’s office in baptising with the Holy Ghost; whose influences I think are rather regarded to come of his own intention and motive, than as proceeding from the Father and the Son, and virtually since the resurrection, under the administration of the Son, to whom “all power is given in heaven and in earth.” An omission which, if, as I judge, it do actually exist, is of great loss to the church; to whom it could be no mean encouragement to know, that the bestowal of the Spirit is in the same hands which were pierced for her, and upon the palms of which is engraven the love of Zion. This omission, it appeareth to me, proceedeth from our not bearing always in mind that Jesus is a Priest after the order of Melchisedek; that is, at once a Priest and a King, in every act a Priest and a King, not only Christ but also Lord. Insomuch that Peter in one of his sermons held at Jerusalem in the days of Pentecost, declareth that “God hath exalted Him a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance and remission of sins unto Israel.” This kingly office having received from God at his ascension, he doth even now exert in granting these two things, repentance and remission of sins to all who believe; and moreover, in bestowing the Holy Spirit to regenerate and build up the new man after the image of God in righteousness and true holiness. And it is very sweet to me to know, and feel, that my Saviour is become King, and is presently exercising kingly sovereignty over the spiritual world, being able, and being willing to grant the blessings of his priesthood to all who believe on his incarnation, and desire the righteousness which cometh of that faith. It is for every one to judge of this matter for himself; but I return to declare my conviction, that this great and capital head of spiritual doctrine “that Christ baptizeth with the Holy Ghost,” is a good deal overshadowed by a much lower and less worthy notion, that the Holy Ghost, as it were of his own will, and without any respect to that divine relationship, doth by means of the written word work the fruits of holiness in our own souls. From whence it hath naturally come to pass that the written word which is the means in the hand of the Spirit, hath come to stand in the room of the living Word and Mediator, who is to the Holy Spirit, what his Father was to Him, the dispenser, the sovereign dispenser of his power. And whence it hath proceeded that the kingly office should have been thus obscured in the priestly, I have no way of accounting, otherwise than by this, that his kingly office hath been altogether much obscured, by the neglecting or explaining away of those passages in the Old and New Testaments which have main respect unto his second advent when he shall be revealed as a King.

That same retrospective attitude of the church, of which we have seen the evil effects, upon the prophetic office, that exclusive study of the incarnation of Christ to become the sacrifice, hath brought it to pass, that the part of the priestly office which regardeth the sacrifice hath been magnified over and above the part of the priestly office which regardeth the King, and looketh forward for its manifestation to the day of his second advent. And the

only way which suggesteth itself to me of joining the kingly into indissoluble union with the priestly office, in the great matter of our present spiritual life, is to bring forward into their proper prominence those passages of holy writ which respect the priestly and kingly advent, without casting into the shade those which respect the prophetic and priestly advent.

And here I may go back a step and make a similar remark upon the divorcement of the law from the lawgiver, and of both from Christ. This inquiry in which I am engaged, needeth a sagacious spirit, a single eye, and a delicate hand, requiring me to make a continual estimate of the current theology, and bringing me into the midst of the prejudices of living men, and present times; the more may the Lord deliver me from all malice and unrighteousness, and enable me to discern truly between *His word* and *His people*, between *His church* as it ought to be, and *His church* as it actually is. Well then; I do certainly feel persuaded that Moses is some way regarded as our law-giver, and Christ as our Saviour from the law; or rather that the law under which we are placed holdeth of the former dispensation, and the gospel of the latter dispensation. Which not only contradicteth Paul's express declaration, "For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law." Heb. vii. 12. and his argument in the eighth and ninth chapters of the same epistle, where he sets himself to prove the faultiness of the former testament and its need of being set right or reformed by another testament, which was made unalterable by the death of the testator: but from whence ariseth an antagonist feeling between law and gospel which confuseth many people, and in Satan's hands is made an open door to antinomianism. Now, however necessary it was for the apostles when showing the impossibility of justification by the works of the law, to rest their argument upon the mosaic law in which the party with whom they reasoned, did repose their trust, I think, for us Christian divines, who have not the same form of antagonist, to do the same, is greatly to weaken our own argument, and to prejudice the cause of godliness which is committed to our trust. Because no one will say that the law written upon the two tables of stone, though sufficient in its kind, and perfect in its end, as all God's revelations must be, is at all to be compared in respect to the force of its precepts and the spirituality of its application, with those laws delivered by our Lord to his disciples in the days of his flesh, or to those which the Holy Spirit spake by the mouth of his servants the apostles.

The moral law of the old dispensation, is to the moral law of the new dispensation, what the gospel under the former, is to the gospel under the latter; a writing of the same for a younger period, even the infancy of the church. Now, no one would return to their rudiments of knowledge and conscience received in infancy, but press forward to a higher, and a purer, and more comprehensive, and more manly form of the same. Yet this is exactly what we do when we rest our laws upon that form which was given by Moses, instead of resting them upon that form which was given by Christ in the days of his flesh, or rather I should say at Pentecost, when in his character of Lord, he shed down the Spirit, and the power, and the law of holiness upon his church. Christ is my law-giver, and the words written by the Holy Spirit in the books of the New Testament are my written law; but my living law is the Holy Spirit in my soul bearing testimony to every case as it ariseth. We have a law-giver, and a written law, and we have an interpreter of it, and there needeth no casuistry nor casuists. The Holy Ghost serveth us in that capacity. To convince the natural conscience of a sinner therefore, of its sinfulness, I would not be for going to the ten commandments, whereof he may have kept the very letter, and be a greater sinner than he who hath kept none of them (as the Pharisee was a greater sinner and further from the kingdom of heaven than the publican); but I would take him to the words of Christ and his apostles which express it spiritually, and directly address

the conscience and say, Brother, feelest thou thus to thine enemy, dost thou thus to thine enemy; feelest thou thus to him that hateth thee? &c. And I would take him to the life of Christ and say, Brother, livest thou thus? thus communest thou with God? thus bearest thou a world's indignity? thus art thou in agony for a world's salvation? thus bemoanest thou the hidings of thy Father's countenance? And so would I find law and life, precept and example combined together, and come down with all the power of a personal case upon the person with whom I treated.

This divorcement of the law-giver from the law, and both from the person of the Saviour, whence many consequences that I have not time to follow out do arise, proceedeth from the same cause mentioned above, as having produced the like divorcement of the King from the Priest, in the bestowal of power to perceive the purity of the law and observe its commandments; that is, from forgetting, or in a great degree overlooking his office as the Judge, and explaining away the passages which relate thereto. The common system cannot afford sufficient prominency to the judgment, conceiving it to be the work of a very brief instant, at most a day; and as hath been remarked, doth not connect the events of that day so much with the Judge as with the judged, to whom it is a most important and decisive act, to Him as it were but the occupation of an hour or a day. And, because there is a very great portion of scripture which speaketh of that judgment in a state of long continuance, and of that holy law in a state of exact fulfilment, and of the blessedness thence resulting to the earth, under the judge and law-giver and king, the abettors of the present system are fain to hide that large portion of Scripture from their observation, silently to pass it over, or diligently to explain it away in some other than the literal sense. But the system whereof our author sheweth the orthodoxy puts this whole subject in a worthier point of light, and gives body and substance to the whole, by presenting us the royal Judge coming to execute judgment by visible acts upon the earth, and after having consumed those who will not return from their rebellion, proceeding to judge the world in righteousness and the people with equity; establishing that law of holiness triumphant which is now trampled under foot, and by its sweet influences, producing all love, and unity, and blessedness amongst men. This gives an end and an honour to the law of righteousness, and to the law-giver, which cannot otherwise in any way be obtained. It giveth manifestation to the judgment and to the fruits of the judgment. It condemneth the sinfulness of the nations, it glorifieth the justice of God, and over all it glorifieth his mercy. And it establisheth the righteousness which is by faith, and realizeth the law and constitution of God by an actual object, by a long-enduring condition of things which the earth in those long ages shall witness. And thus here again the remedy is the same as before, in turning the attention of the church to the future advent of Christ as the judge and king of the quick, instead of restricting their attention to his former advent as a judged and condemned criminal. For these two we shall see as we advance, are the two pivots upon which the gate of sound doctrine and holy living will turn sweetly and safely; though it will neither turn sweetly nor safely upon one only.

Though in opening up these two observations I have touched upon the evils which flow unto the church from this obscuration of our High Priest's authority and power, I deem it advisable to open them a little more fully. By those only who know how an error or omission in these, the great foundations of Christian doctrine, comes to be felt in the superstructure of Christian life, and to affect the condition of the church, will the importance and truth of these two observations be justified.

The right understanding of the person and offices of Christ is, the right understanding of the person and offices of the Father and of the Holy Spirit; and it is, moreover, the right

understanding of our own person and offices, as men renewed after his image, and members of his Holy Church From the forgetfulness of the former great relationship between Him and the Spirit, and that he is a King in bestowing the benefits of his Priesthood, I make no doubt that two errors, in the common feeling of the Church, if not in her current system of doctrine, have originated; of which the first is, that the gift of the Holy Spirit is an uncertainty, is something which hath to come, and is not yet come, and into the coming of which we have no insight, nor ground of certain hope, or assurance. In support of which opinion they quote that text of our Lord, spoken to Nicodemus, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." John iii. 8. Now if by this uncertainty they mean that the Spirit is not to be calculated upon according to any rule of human wisdom, nor obtained in any course of nature, nor drawn down by any work of man, nor with the use of any outward means of grace necessarily connected, I agree with them; and hold that, as the gift of the Son was wholly of the will of the Father, with the due obedience and consent of the Son, so is the gift of the Spirit wholly of the will of the Son, raised unto that royal prerogative by the satisfaction of the Father, yet with the due obedience and consent of the Holy Spirit, who speaketh nothing of himself, but taketh of the things of Christ, as Christ spake nothing of himself, but in all things bare testimony of the Father.

But if by this uncertainty they mean that we are wholly in the dark, and, without a ground of hope, must wait on till the time of his coming, as, I think, is commonly believed by the spiritual, they err grievously, and do exceedingly dishonour both the Son and to the Spirit, and, above all, occasion great perplexity to the Church, and throw a great stumbling-block in the way of the impenitent. For the Spirit is in his hands who loved us to the death; the Spirit is in his hands who died for us; the Spirit is in his hands who intercedeth for us; who hath constituted the Church for a dwelling place to the Spirit; and who, in admitting any member to his Church, doth signify and seal to him, not only all the benefits of his death, but also all the benefits of his resurrection; amongst which one of the principal is, the gift of the Holy Ghost. So that, in the same sense in which the written word doth represent to us the freedom which we have unto the Living Word, and press upon us by all means to be joined unto him, I believe the Sacrament of Baptism doth represent to us the freedom which we have unto the Holy Spirit, and cordially entreat us to accept of all the blessings of the regenerated Church. And so we are left, in looking for the Holy Spirit, not in the state of an uncertainty, or dark mystery, but have a clear revelation, and are given as great an assurance, and applied to with as powerful means, as are consistent with the freedom of our will. It is a very great matter indeed to know that what we need, our elder brother hath to bestow, and hath a desire to bestow upon us. And it is a very different matter, to know not where that which we need is to be found, or whether we may presume to expect it at all. Let no one suppose by this that I take the gift of the Holy Spirit out of the hands of our King to give it into the hands of a priesthood, or embody it in a visible symbol. I do place it in the hands of our King, to be given, at his pleasure, to those who believe upon his name, and are obedient to his ordinances and commandments. But who is that King? who but our Saviour, who but our Redeemer, who but Jesus the most bountiful, the most gracious to man! And where would man have it, with so much safety, with so much wisdom, with so much advantage to the world, reposed, as in his hands who died to redeem the world.

It is a poor compensation, either to the injured prerogative of Christ, or to the disappointed condition of his Church, to direct her attention to the written word, as the appointed means by which the Spirit worketh the regeneration and edification of the body of

Christ. A means is at the will and posterior to the will of him that useth it; and, unless we know something of the gracious disposition of that will, it availeth little to know the means with which it serveth itself. That which they say concerning the written word is true, while the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son, and the power given unto the Son, in virtue of Mediator, to baptize with the Holy Ghost, is also a truth; but the one of these truths is not the same with the other, neither will the former serve the ends of the latter, or stand for both. The prerogative pertaining to the LIVING WORD, of sending forth the Spirit, is greater than, and includeth in it, the power of the written Word to feed and nourish the Spirit; but the latter includeth not the former. Now I am strongly convinced, that, through the eclipse of this royal prerogative in the priestly office of Christ, the written Word hath come to be exaggerated into an importance which it can never bear, and that the progress of spiritual life is made dependant upon a certain intercourse of the natural faculties of the mind with the knowledge which is therein revealed: and to this source I attribute that notion of faith which is taking such deep root in our church of Scotland, as if it were no more than the assent of the mind unto the testimony of the Word. From whence it hath come to pass, by necessary consequence, that preaching is fast becoming an exercise of the natural faculties of the preacher, to make manifest to the natural faculties of the hearers, good grounds upon which he should give his assent unto the testimony: instead of being the voice of Christ, the Prophet, Priest, and King of his Church, speaking by the authority of his minister, to the faith, love, and reverence of his people: the Holy Spirit in the minister taking of the things of Christ, and showing them unto the same Spirit in the hearer. Preaching, especially in our Church, has become an offspring of the understanding exercising itself about the revelations of the Gospel; instead of being the offspring of the Spirit, bestowed by our King and Priest, from faith to faith: and the consequence hath been, the upbuilding of the understanding, instead of the upbuilding of the believing Church; and the end will be, an intellectual apostacy, instead of a house all prepared to receive its Lord and Master.

I am not ignorant that spiritual religion hath a demonstration to the natural man, and can present a stronger pleading to his mind, and to his heart, and to his social affections, and to his political well-being, than any other system of truth; in which belief I allow that our preachers have laboured well, and won to themselves much renown over the infidelity of these days: so hath it a demonstration to the very sense, in the health, and comeliness, and tranquillity, and strength, and other fruits of that temperance and wholesome discipline which it imposeth upon the body: but neither the one nor the other of these demonstrations have any power to regenerate and quicken the soul, which cometh only by the preaching of the righteousness, which is by faith upon a crucified and risen Redeemer, to whom every knee must bow, and every tongue confess, ere we can be visited with any fruit of his mediation. This gradual declension into the region of the natural intellect hath come about, I conceive, from our forgetting that prerogative of Christ to be in every act of his priesthood also a King; which being borne in mind, no one would for a moment dream of obtaining the Holy Spirit by merely conning the pages of a book, or hearing a man's speculations, critical, or intellectual, or sentimental, thereupon; but we would look for Him in the exercise of faith upon the Prophet, speaking in his word and by his faithful ministers; in the crucified and risen Priest, dispensing the gifts of the Holy Ghost to those who believe in his name and do his commandments: and the Holy Spirit, instead of being connected in no relationship with any other person of the Trinity, or bound to the pages of a book, would be restored to that proper relationship to the Son, to that witness of the Son, in which he hath been revealed as delighting to exercise himself. I could, in like manner, open the evils which are flowing into

the Church by the disseveration of the law giver from the law, and of both from the Saviour and Author of eternal righteousness; but that I perceive I have much ground to travel over. And yet I know not what to do; for there is such a subtle mimicry of the truth about the intellectualism of the times, that unless you be at great pains to distinguish and explain things, one half of the Church holdeth you to be a traducer, and another half holdeth you to be a fool. But, Wisdom is justified of her children.

So much and much more if space permitted, have I to say upon the prejudice which the priestly office of Christ hath undergone, through that oblivion of his kingly and judicial office which hath come over the church, by reason of her neglect, unbelief, and spiritual annihilation of those large portions of scripture which make known his second advent and set him forth as a Priest, not upon his cross, but upon his throne, not humbled and rejected of men, but ruling in righteousness from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth. In all that I have said, I have confined my self to that first province of his priestly power which concerneth the regeneration and sanctification of the soul; and I have now to treat and enlarge upon the two other provinces thereof, which our modern theology, though making such a parade of the written word, and the written word only, hath almost suffered to drop out of the mind and memory of the church. I mean the redemption of the body, and the redemption of the earth on which we dwell.

II. When the eternal Son of God came to be the sacrifice for the sins of his church and of the world, he took unto himself not only a reasonable soul, but a human body, passive flesh, the whole nature of the seed of Abraham; and the Holy Spirit, by whose power he was conceived in the Virgin's womb, and exercised all the offices of his earthly ministry, and offered himself without spot unto the holiness of God, did preserve in perfect purity and separation from sin, both his body and his spirit, that is, his whole humanity. Now because Christ in the days of his flesh was the type of all his people, the captain of their salvation, the author and finisher of their faith, I do most certainly conclude, that the, same Holy Spirit, when by our King he is commissioned to beget in any of his elect people, the child of Christ, the new man created in righteousness and true holiness, doth not take effect upon our spirit only, but upon our body also, upon our whole fallen humanity, to restrain it, and to sanctify it, and to prepare it for eternal glory. It is one of the evil fruits of our spiritualizing whatever will spiritualize, and neglecting the rest, to have spread abroad the notion that the Spirit operateth upon the soul primarily and upon the body only in a very inferior degree; and that while the soul is purified in some sort, and changed, the body lags far behind in an obstinate love of the fallen creature which death only can dissolve. Whereas I believe it to be according to the scripture, that the whole humanity is operated upon by the new law and life of the Holy Spirit, which Christ planteth in all them who believe. The law of the flesh, or of the animal, or natural man, which the apostle Paul so oft declareth to be opposed to the law of the Spirit, and enmity to God, is alas! not confined to the bodily instincts and senses, but extendeth to the desires of the mind and to the inclinations of the heart, and to the will of man in his fallen and unrenewed state. Whence we find our Lord referring all abominable lusts to their origin in the heart, and Paul enumerating the desires of the mind along with the desires of the flesh, and pronouncing upon them the same sentence of condemnation. And the law of the Spirit to which they are in continual opposition, is not any power or principle inherent in the invisible part of man, but the disposition of the Holy Ghost within us, the motions of that eternal life which cometh by faith in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, into whose name, that is, into whose spiritual power we were baptized. Whence we find that Paul speaks of the body of the baptized as married unto the body of Christ by his resurrection from the dead, and again of

our bodily members as the members of Christ, and again of our conscience purged from dead works, and our bodies washed with pure water, and again he intreateth them to present themselves, “body, soul, and spirit, a living sacrifice unto God.” I hold it therefore, to be a point of sound theology, that our royal High Priest when he baptizeth with the Holy Ghost, hath a respect to the body as well as to the soul, to the whole undivided humanity of man, and that their purification proceedeth *pari passu*, and not separately, —the spirit now, the body hereafter. So that the life of the Son of man, and his experience of agony, both inward and outward, —horrors of darkness and clouds of grief within, as well as pains and afflictions and torments without, is the pattern to his children of the sufferings both of soul and body, in the spirit and in the flesh, which they have to endure in following his steps. Between him and his people there is no difference in respect to that which is observable; while there is the utmost difference in respect to the principle and cause; in the Son of man the cause was the imputation of the sins of the people, in our case it is indwelling sin, and the sin which is around us. But the same Spirit that enabled him to suffer, enableth us to suffer; and to suffer for the same hatred of sin and continual contention against its power in us and in others. In our humanity we have the first fruits of the Spirit; but the Spirit within us groans, being straitened, vexed, and almost quenched, by the vileness of the habitation; and these groanings are his intercession for us. “We who have the first fruits of the Spirit do groan within our selves, waiting for the adoption, that is, the redemption of the body.” And the Spirit is therefore called “the earnest (or earnest-penny) of the promised inheritance,” “the seal with which we are sealed till the day of redemption.” And herein consisteth our humility in being burdened with this tabernacle, and with all the evil associations, confederacies, and temptations of the world and Satan, with which it bringeth us to be acquainted and familiar. Wherefore if these things be so, it is clear that the priestly office of Christ to sanctify whom as King he pleaseth to sanctify, regardeth the body no less than the soul of his people; and must be studied with as diligent a reference to the one as to the other.

Let us now proceed in our observation of that Life which is the great ensample of the life and history of every saint, and of the whole church, in order that we may observe the consummation and completion of the priestly work, whose beginnings and first fruits we have thus explained. Our Mediator having endured the living ordeal of the Prophet, offered himself as a sacrifice upon the cross without spot; and his body was laid in the grave but saw no corruption, because he had set the Lord continually before him; and whither went his soul? to paradise, according to his own word unto the thief; to hell, according to the creed; and according to the common interpretation of both by the Catholic church, to the place of separate spirits, whither also went the thief along with him. Here then, as I judge, is the first point at which a good theologian or true believer in revelation will contemplate any separation in the humanity of our Lord, between the reasonable soul and the human body; and consequently in the humanity of any of those who by faith are brought into the conformity of his death. At which stage I will allow that the work of the Spirit to the soul and to the body of man, may, and ought to be considered apart; in the separate consideration of which nothing will so effectually serve us, as the meditation of our Lord’s state during this same interval of separation between his body and soul. And in this meditation I can assert, first, negatively, that his separate reasonable soul not ascend unto his Father, because he said to Mary Magdalene after the resurrection, “I am not yet ascended to my Father.” Which express declaration of his own lips is amply confirmed by that large and various discourse which he held with his disciples in the interval between the going forth of Judas, and the act of his betrayal. In which discourse, “the little time” that he was to be absent from them “because he

went unto the Father,” can by no means refer to the hours between his death and resurrection, but to this present time of the Comforter’s ministry, during which his church should be waiting, and longing, and pained for his appearance, as a travailing woman is for the appearance of her child. “A little time” he thought it was to be, and a little time his disciples expected it to be, and a little time it is twice called in the Apocalypse; but for our faithlessness have we been kept so long wandering in this wilderness, and because of the long-suffering of God, “not willing that any should perish but that all should come unto him and live.” During all this time I reckon that the souls of the righteous have been in that separate state, call it paradise, or call it hell, whither our Lord’s soul descended, while his body lay in the tomb; and in like manner the body of his church lieth scattered like bones about the grave’s mouth, under the power and dominion of corruption. In the sixteenth Psalm, on which this article of faith chiefly resteth, it is acknowledged as a great act of divine recompense unto his righteousness, that his soul was not left in hell; and the same of his body’s not seeing corruption. And as the latter boon hath not been yielded to any of mortals save to Enoch and Elias (what the Catholic church asserteth about the Virgin Mary, being, as I conceive, no better than a legend) all the rest of men being permitted to lie under the power of corruption unto this day, save those who arose with the Lord; so do I reckon that, because their souls are detained in that place of separate spirits, apart from their bodies and from the human presence of their Lord and King, whose humanity is at the right hand of the Father, there is occasioned thereby a diminution of their blessedness, which causeth them continually, from beneath the altar of his mediation, to pray for the Lord’s coming, and to rejoice so mightily when the seventh trumpet of his appearance and his reign is blown upon the earth. This however, I say, without for a moment doubting their blessedness in that separate estate, according to the kind of blessedness which they are able to contain and be filled withal. But, upon the grounds just stated, and because the uniform tenour of the hope of all saints in Holy Scripture terminateth in the coming of the Lord, and the resurrection of the body, I have the boldness to assert, that the separation of the soul from the body, the abode of the former in paradise, and of the latter under the dominion of corruption, is not a completion of blessedness, but containeth a let and barrier of Satan unbroken down, and which shall not be broken down until the Lord cast him out of the earth and the air into the bottomless pit, and so retrieve from the dust the bodies of his chosen, and call their spirits from that place whither he descended, and which the ancient fathers thought to be in the heart of the earth, and so also in some sort, within Satan’s dominion, who is the ruler of the darkness of this world.

Forasmuch then, as the sanctification of the body is a benefit of our Lord’s priesthood no less than the sanctification of the Spirit, and that the whole work is not completed at death, but in the resurrection of the righteous; I hold, that an integrant part, yea, the very chief work of his priesthood, and the consummation of it, is done by the resurrection of the body from the dust of the earth, and by the enlargement of the soul from that state of incomplete blessedness in which it is presently detained. Whence we find the redemption of the body assigned as the time of the adoption; “And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body,” Rom. viii. 23; that we have received at present only the “spirit of adoption,” verse 15. To the same effect is it written, that not until “the coming of the Lord Jesus with all his saints,” are we presented “unblamable in holiness before God, even our Father,” Thess. iii. 13; that till then also the inheritance is reserved in heaven, and we kept for it by the power of God, till it be revealed in the last times, at the

appearing of Jesus Christ, 1 Pet. i. 3-8; that this also is the condition to which we are elected and predestinated, Eph. i. 4, 5, 10. And in truth I may say, there is not such a thing in Scripture, as the termination of our hopes, or the sealing of our sanctification as complete, until the resurrection from the dead and the inheritance of the kingdom. And of Christ even (to recur to the great prototype of the Church's condition), we find it not only said, that he offered himself by the Eternal Spirit a sacrifice, but, "that he was declared to be the Son of God with power (that is, adopted as to his manhood), according to the Spirit of Holiness, by his resurrection from the dead." And, in like manner, we believe that the present sealing and earnest of the Spirit is but the first fruits of that gift of the Spirit, whereof the residue is in the hands of our King, to pour it out without measure in the day in which the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live.

From the same constant respect which the office of our Priest hath to this its final consummation, we find that in his office of Prophet he directs so much of the attention of the Church to the great act of his resurrection; insomuch that it was to the resurrection of Christ the apostles gave testimony after the day of Pentecost, and it was Christ and the resurrection which Paul preached at Athens. And hence it is, that the power of the resurrection is placed generally higher than the power of his death, and necessary to enter into the fellowship thereof; "that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death, if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection (ἐξανάστασις, the resurrection out from amongst) of the dead;" Phil. iii. 10,11. where the attainment of the resurrection is made the climax and consummation of all attainments. And, in like manner, a much higher grade of blessings is made by Paul dependant on the life of Christ than on his death; "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." Rom. v. 10. Now, that the whole mystery of the resurrection of Christ, with all the varied uses in the spiritual life to which it is made available by the holy apostles, is departed and lost at present from the current preaching of the church. I have no doubt. And I believe the reason to be, that the common system, which embraces the resurrection of the righteous and the wicked in one act, and for one end, of judgment, has had the evil effect of turning the minds of men away from those manifold parts of scripture which speak of the resurrection as the great reward of faith, and peculiar privilege of Christ's elect church; being for quite another object and end than the general resurrection of the rest of the dead, whereof exceeding little indeed is written in scripture. Not that I have any doubt of the latter, or would disparage its awful dignity, for the end of judging the wicked and the great multitude of the righteous who shall have lived during the millennium, and constituting the eternal and unchangeable destinies of the righteous and the wicked, of beautifying and glorifying the place of the latter, and making miserable and abominable the place of the former, and for many other great ends and mysteries of God's providence, whereof I cannot now speak more particularly. Nevertheless, I think it a great and essential error, to have confounded this with the first resurrection, that special privilege and prerogative of the ransomed and redeemed church, to be raised triumphant over death, and the grave, and the power of hell, and to have dominion over them for a great season in the sight of God and of all the intelligent host of heaven. And this is the second province of the priestly office of Christ, which the present system of opinions concerning his second advent hideth, and which the more orthodox and ancient opinions maintained by our author would restore, to the glory of his mediatorial office. And there is yet a third.

III. The third subject of the priestly office of our Lord is, the redemption and purification of the earth whereon we dwell, and which, with all that it contains, was originally put under the dominion of Adam, as it is written in the eighth Psalm: "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers; the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands: thou hast put all things under his feet: all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air, and the fish of the Sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas. O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!" Psalm viii. 3-9. This is but an expansion of the original act of man's investiture, as it is written amongst the archives of creation: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." Gen. i. 26. Now, as Christ came forth to redeem from the power of Satan that which Satan had usurped, and wholly to destroy the works of the devil, and to reinstate man in his lost estate, we surely conclude that his work will not cease and determine until this world whereon we dwell shall have been delivered from the defilement and the oppression of sin. And to this agreeth the reasoning of the apostle, in the second chapter of the Hebrews, where he takes hold of that very portion of the eighth Psalm, and thereby proves that, in the world, or age, to come, Christ will actually be seen invested with that very sovereignty, of which the first man was dispossessed by the subtlety of the tempter. And the apostle in that place argues that, because they did not then see all things put under him, it was certain that it would be so seen in that future age which was put in subjection to Messiah. And I now argue, in like manner, that, because we still behold not that complete subjection, it is yet outstanding, as a part of the great completion: and that all which hath yet been manifested of his power in the church is but the first fruits of that harvest which he is yet to reap from his humiliation unto the death. In which place the apostle immediately proceeds further to argue, that his brethren shall be sharers, or fellow-heirs, with him therein, deriving this blessed conclusion from the mystery of his incarnation, and from the identity of our spiritual life with his. And, the more to confirm this, as a great end of his mediatorial work, he represents, in another place, the whole creation as groaning and travailing in bondage until the day of the manifestation of the sons of God: "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, because (in hope that) the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." Rom. viii. 19-22. And that this is spoken of some mystery very different from the first resurrection, which we have set down as the second province of his priestly office, he maketh clear, by the verse which follows, wherein he makes the distinction in express terms; "And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." Rom. viii. 23.

For I set this down also as a part of his priestly rather than of his kingly office, because if any separation can be made betwixt these two, it is this, that the one is virtually the preparation for the other, righteousness for power, purity for peace, although actually they are ever seen conjoined; for he is a Priest after the order of Melchisedek (Psalm cx.) a Priest upon his throne (Zech. vi. 13.); or, in other words, it may be said, that by the sacrifice of the priest

he entereth into the combined office of priest and king. It is in virtue of that sacrifice, because he humbled himself to the death, that he hath been so greatly exalted as our mediatorial king. And it is by his having overcome sin in the flesh and upon the earth, that he hath acquired the right to expel sin out of the flesh and out of the earth. It is to the act of expelling them by a greater outpouring of the regenerating Spirit, than that of Pentecost, that I now refer. Up to which point the kingly office is seen in the priestly; from that time forth the priestly shall be seen in the kingly.

Now with respect to this great work of our High Priest in purifying the earth, I see it to have been a constituent part of the mystery from the very beginning. The first sacrifice consisted not only of blood, in token of our holding present life and receiving future life, by virtue of the sacrifice offered before the foundation of the world; but it consisted of the fruits of the earth also, in token that the vegetable life which the earth held, and the prospective purification which it was to receive, were both in virtue of the same great sacrifice. Abraham had not only the promise of a seed, but also of a land for them to inherit. To the Son was promised not only the heathen for his inheritance, but the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. And to the righteous are continually promised the inheritance of the earth. Moreover, under the law, the first fruits of beasts and the first fruits of the ground were holy, as well as the first fruits of man. Meichisedek, the great type of Christ, presented to Abraham, the great type of the elect church, when returning from the destruction of the kings, bread and wine the fruits of the earth, and received from him tithes of all which he had, in token of homage. And I may add, that Christ in the sacrament of the supper doth the same by all the Gentile church. And while the mystery of the purification and liberation of the creation was thus interwoven in all the Levitical ordinances which foreshowed the redemption of man, it was continually in express words declared by the prophets as about to be coeval with the same. Thus, in the 102nd Psalm, after the "Lord ariseth, and hath mercy on Zion," and "the heathen do fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth his glory," it is said that "the earth and the heavens shall wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed;...but the children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee." In like manner, in the 65th and 66th chapters of Isaiah, we find new heavens and new earth are created, in which Jerusalem is to be made a glory and her people a praise, and the glory of the Gentiles to flow unto her like a running stream. And when the rod out of the stem of Jesse judgeth the poor with righteousness, and reproveth with equity, for the meek of the earth, we have it added, "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them." Isa. xi. 6. And again, "The wilderness, and the solitary place, shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing; the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon; they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God." Isa. xxxv. 1,2. And in an infinite number of passages is this mystery of the renovation of all things set forth by the prophets of the Lord. And that it is a great object of hope and desire to the saints, Paul doth sufficiently testify, when quoting the kindred prophecy of Haggai he thus applieth it: "And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire." Heb. xii. 27-29. In the three last words of this text we have the manner of that purification glanced at, which Peter doth enlarge upon in both his epistles,

setting forth the deluge to be to the earth what baptism is to man, the assurance of a complete purification by the baptism of fire, of which he giveth the particular account in the third chapter of his second epistle, into which things we need not enter particularly, as they are contained in many parts of this book.

And who that reflecteth for a moment, upon the ends of Christ's humiliation and sacrifice, will not at once admit that all those things are necessary to be fulfilled to the very letter, in order to defeat the malice of Satan, and display the triumphs of redeeming grace. Whence came these hostilities among the unconscious creatures? or how came they to be possessed with the guile and destructiveness of Satan? Whence came those bowling deserts of which the earth is full, those wastes of thorns and thistles, those poisonous plants and noxious weeds, and that stout rebelliousness of mother earth, always hasting back to rank and unweeded un-profitableness? And whence those cloudy and inclement skies? And whence the forked lightning and smiting thunderbolt, the hurricane, the volcano, and the wild tornado? And whence the breath of the desert wind, the nipping frost, with all the vicissitudes of the harmful seasons? And whence pestilence, which the invisible air doth bear abroad, and noxious damps and exhalations? Are not the elements possessed with Satan's malice, and the animals, and the dust of the ground, and every thing within the sphere of man's evil influence? All, all, one fallen system of things, from the invisible and immaterial soul through the regions of animal life and vegetable life, and through the inanimate creation; down to the centre and outward to the utmost verge of the bounds of the earth. All constituting one fallen system, made subject to bondage, not from any will of their own, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope. And as the fall of man's spirit from the allegiance which he owed to his creator's word, brought along with it the sense of shameful nakedness, and the degradation of the body to constant toil, the disturbance of the creature's peace, and the present warfare of elemental nature, with all the evils in which the world is drowned; ought not the recovery of man's soul to the faith and allegiance of the divine word, which became incarnate, to draw with it the hope of the body's royal dominion, and of the creature's dutiful allegiance, the earth's blessed fruitfulness, and the peace and harmony and innocency and purity of all things? Otherwise the work of redemption were wholly incomplete, if it contained not within itself the assurance of all this; and the name of Second Adam were not proper to Christ, nor that of "the Father of the age to come," (Everlasting Father) which was given to him when first he was promised of the Virgin's seed. And further, I see all this pledged and assured to me in the entombing of Christ in the bowels of the rock, which yet was not able to retain him, but yielded him up. Then not only was the dead flesh, but then also was the wall of rock, both of these at the moment of his resurrection when he was quickened in the Spirit, were yielded to his almighty power.

Now this third province of our High Priest's work I find to be thus written in the Scripture. That at the coming of the Lord there will be such a purification of the earth by fire, and amelioration of its condition by other means, known perhaps to God only, though our author hath well, yea, magnificently speculated thereon, as shall realize the blessedness of that millennial kingdom, whereof some part of the delineation is set down above. This will take place by the casting out of Satan, that prince of the power of the air, and of spiritual wickednesses from their high places, with all the inferior rulers of the darkness of this world; and by the subjugation of all things to the Prince of Peace, and to the saints who shall be raised to be partakers of his government and kingdom. But forasmuch as death, generation and corruption, and growth and decay, shall still have a place in that new earth, (Isa. lxxv.) it cannot yet have received its entire purification at the hands of the Great High Priest, but

looketh forward still with expectation to the end, when death the last enemy shall be destroyed. But in the mean time the earth, and all the inhabitants of it, shall possess the bright assurance of this future consummation, by the presence of the heavenly Jerusalem, into which nothing entereth that defileth, or maketh a lie, which flesh and blood cannot inherit, which is incorruptible and unchangeable in its beauty, the habitation of the risen saints and elect church of our Priest. This material city, I say, in which the saints shall dwell, and from which they shall go forth on their errands terrestrial or celestial, shall bring to the matter of the earth that same assurance of an unchangeable beauty and perfection yet to be, as the pure body of Christ that, rose to the eternal throne, doth bring at this moment to my body and to the body of the church now living or mouldering in the grave. Oh! I rejoice to meditate on the mysteries of the new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from our God, and abideth in the sight of the earth during the reign of Christ, the city of the great king: what a pledge to the mute earth and to the dwellers upon it that matter also may be constituted without change, and without corruption, and without death! How very beautiful, and pure, and spiritual in that renovated condition Thus, in present peace and brighter hope, shall the earth dwell and endure for the long season of the millennium, and thus shall Christ and his saints reign over it, having their enemies under their feet, but not destroyed.

And meet, very meet it is, there should be such a time of triumph over them, and treading them under, before the time of their utter destruction come. For they have had a long day of triumph over righteousness, and they once triumphed over the body of the righteous one, and do now triumph over the bodies of his church, propagating a generation of vipers, to blaspheme God and honour Satan. All this triumph have they had in the sight of the intelligent heavens, and in the permission of God, albeit his Son was slain in the reality of the divine purpose before the foundation of the world: and now that he has been slain in the manifestation for these eighteen hundred years, they still maintain their dominion over his humbled church, trampling under their feet the most holy blood of the covenant, and doing despite unto the spirit of grace. And for the honour of the Lamb, and for the honour of the children of the Lamb, and for the glory of God's justice to his own Son, and of his faithfulness to his saints; yea, and for the justification of his great scheme of grace, and for the punishment, the condign punishment of the fell avenger, ought it not, ought it not thus to be, that in this very place where they have triumphed, they should be put under, and held under, kept growling in their chains, gnashing their teeth yet perishing not, while the Priestly king and his saints do bless and govern the earth, judging it with righteousness and equity, and making it to be full of the glory of God, as the waters cover the seas? Then when the fulness of the time shall come for wholly redeeming the earth, and all upon the earth, from the curse of death, and making it to consist in that indefeasible glory with which the city of the saints shineth resplendent, it shall undergo its final purification, and become fit for presentation in the presence of the Father. The evil dust of the wicked shall be taken out from it, and cast into the lake of fire, so also shall death, and hell the place of separate spirits, and the devil, and "the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolators, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." Rev. xxi. 8. Concerning the condition of the earth thereafter, we have no information, if it be not in that word of St. Paul; "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, All things are put under him, it is

manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all." 1 Cor. xv. 24-28.

Now concerning the presentation of the kingdom thus purified and subjected unto the Father, I have somewhat to speak more particularly, which affordeth me a proper opportunity of presenting in one point of view the priestly office of Christ, as it is brought out by these views of the kingdom which we maintain. The purity, the inexpressible holiness of God, in whose sight the heavens are not clean, and who chargeth his angels with folly, could not, would not endure the presence of this earth any longer, or of any spirit upon it, after Adam had committed one transgression. So fatal, so unchangeably fatal is the stain of sin, so extensive, so abiding. And from thenceforth until now no fallen spirit hath approached unto the Father, hath known him, neither can approach to him, or know him. Every thing connected with the administration of this world, connected even with its existence, (for it should have been by right in the state of the second death,) hath been conducted under the covert of mediation. It hath been permitted to abide, and we to abide upon it, only by virtue of that great sacrifice of Christ for its redemption, consummated before the world was, and made manifest in these latter times. Every thing of a religious kind instituted by God was prospective of him, and accepted for his righteousness sake. And the rest of the earth not included in the covenant, was imprisoned in hope. Oh! and what a value there must be in that offering which could shield such a world from the consuming wrath of a Holy God! When I think, what a weight of iniquity this round earth is now oppressed with, even now at this dead hour of night, when even wickedness should go to rest, when I think what an outcry of wickedness is ascending into the ears of the Lord God of Sabaoth; what blasphemy, what riot, what revelry, what oppression, what murder, what sighing of the poor and needy, what ungodly mirth and feasting, what wantonness, what lust, what dishonesty and theft, are now proceeding under the eye of heaven, upon the round of this earth, and when I further think that this hath been, that this ever hath been so; it would stagger me in my faith that there is a Holy God in heaven above, did I not know and believe in the infinite preciousness of that sacrifice, of that most holy sacrifice of Christ, which was offered and accepted from the foundation of the world. And what a thought, that this deluge of sin shall be baled out, that the long long covered hills and valleys of holiness shall again present themselves; that the slimy path of the serpent shall be cleansed out of all nations, and the alloy of hell with fervent heat be burned out of the elements of the solid globe; that the kingdom peopled with the souls and bodies of the redeemed, shall become meet to be presented in the presence of God, shall be given up to the Father as a pure and a holy oblation, and remain for ever the most glorious monument of his almighty power to save; —this, this is indeed a consummation worthy that the eternal Son of God, should withdraw from the bosom of the Father: and none but he were worthy, as no one but he were able to travail in such a mighty work. I praise God who hath enabled me to comprehend something of the depth of this mystery of sanctification, and God enable me to disclose it a little, that the office of Christ may be magnified.

The word of God took flesh of the Virgin Mary, passive humanity he took, obnoxious to every temptation, and begirt with every sinless infirmity. And that holy thing which was born of her was the seed of the regenerate world. The world's regeneration and eternal glory lay infolded in the fate of that child which was born in Bethlehem. For if flesh can abide the proof, and come off sinless; then shall all the matter of the world which was formed for flesh, and of which flesh was formed, be also redeemed. And the humanity of Christ, though tried with every extremity which flesh can possibly encounter, though forsaken by God, and left

alone to make the perilous stand for a lost world, which God could no longer favour, no, nor favour his own Son, when he put himself within the conditions of the cursed region; that humanity (such was the holiness and mighty power of the Son of God, though in the weakness of flesh) prevailed against all the powers of hell, and was found blameless. But he had to descend into the still lower depth of the grave, and wrestle against Satan in his strongest hold. And there with my Lord the hopes of a world were entombed. Then was the hour and power of darkness; and the earth seemed lost forever. But the Captain of our Salvation arose; the Son of the Virgin Mary arose. And shall he carry flesh into the presence of the ever-holy God? —flesh that had accumulated such a load of guilt since it first came out of his creating hand. Behold, he doth bear flesh into the presence of the Holy Father. And the Father counts not the divinity of his Son dishonoured by flesh, but rather clothed with new honour, and he sits down at the right hand of the majesty on high. Now then there is hope, now the work is begun, and how is it to be completed?

Furthermore, it pleased the wisdom of the Father that the Son of God and Son of man should be withdrawn from the earth for a season, for a little while, till his purposes should proceed; but he permitteth him to bestow a first-fruits of that quickening Spirit which shall yet quicken every living thing upon the earth. He is pleased to bring many sons unto glory by the same path of humility and suffering. He is pleased that the great demonstration of the power of his Son should be showed forth upon sinners while Satan and his angels are possessed of all their strength, and spite, and hatred; and that the Son of God by virtue of his new power, should beget sons unto God out of the very stones. This is the mystery of the elect church which doth demonstrate the greatness of the victory which Christ had achieved. There will, no doubt, be a terrible strife and struggle when Satan is bound and cast out, but the Son of God shall then be in the field. But while he is absent from the field, and Satan hath it wholly to himself, that a poor and sinful man who seeth him not, who never hath seen him, should be able by the power of his quickening Spirit to prevail; —this is the great triumph over Satan which hath been going on since our Lord ascended up on high. Oh! but I, as one of that church, do feel it to be the greatest proof of the power of God, that I should be thus made conqueror over the devil, the world, and the flesh. And I can have no doubt after what hath passed upon myself, that my Lord's power should prevail when the time cometh to bind Satan, and to redeem the whole earth.

The elect church is the whole extent to which, for the present, the application of his righteousness is extended; and why no further? because so the order of God's wisdom willed it. But will it go farther? Yes it will. And how far? To the whole world. When? When so the order of God's wisdom shall will it. Every one in his order, Christ the first fruits, then they that are Christ's at his coming, then cometh the end of all, and the presentation of the kingdom, when he shall have put down all authority and rule, &c. And hath any soul, or any body of men, save the Virgin's Son, had presentation to the Father? I trow not. And hath any of them dared to present a prayer to the Father direct? I trow not. When shall they be presented unto the Father? When their bodies are delivered from the power of the grave, for while there, they are underlying his curse. And when shall that be? At his coming. And then he shall present unto his Father a glorious church, "without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing." And then another stage of the redemption is complete, the presenting of the church unto the Father; at which time shall take place those holy espousals of the second Adam to the second Eve, who was taken out of his bleeding side: when I may say, they are also in the mystery, commanded to multiply and replenish the earth; for then will the multitude of children begin to be born unto Christ. And now endeth the mystery of election which then

hath its accomplishment, “accomplish the number of the elect and hasten thy kingdom.” And now the hastings of unfaithful Arminianism (“he that believeth doth not make haste.”) the blinding hopes of our present Millenarians (but their proper name is Optimists) will begin to be harmless, which now are ruinous; for as yet their time is not come. The dispensation of election is ended; and the dispensation of universality is begun. And then I will myself become a Wesleyan Methodist, and preach Christ the Saviour of all. And then I will proclaim the merit of his blood, and the benefits of his death to all. For why to all? Because so the order of the wisdom of the dispensation will have it. But is the Father dwelling amongst them yet? I trow not; he cannot dwell where death is. In the new Jerusalem indeed, because there is nothing to offend, will the Father dwell. “In that day ye shall know that the Father is in me, and I in him.” And do the sojourners on the earth present their prayers directly to the Father? I trow not; not without a Mediator; for the subjects of death are still under the curse, and cannot at the same time be under the favour of God.

There must therefore be a third stage, when after all the sojourners have paid the forfeit of death, and death himself hath paid the forfeit of the second death, and the wicked dust of the wicked hath been cast out; and all opposing will hath been expelled from the earth; and the righteous have been separated in the last judgment; and the kingdom completely purified; then, but not till then, may the High Priest present the kingdom unto God even the Father as a pure offering, the end of all offerings, the purchase of the offering of himself. With respect to the condition of the earth thereafter, it is not my part to discourse, and my author hath discoursed most worthily thereon. But so much I have thought it good to set forth, that all men may know whether our doctrines concerning the second advent and the kingdom of our Lord, do or do not, give more worthy views of his priestly office, than those which are commonly held.

CHAPTER IV.

How the two Systems bear upon the KINGLY office of CHRIST.

THESE three offices of Prophet, Priest, and King, under which the work of our Redeemer is contemplated in the Holy Scriptures, and by all orthodox divines, have respect, not to his essential divinity as Son in the bosom of the Father from all eternity, nor yet to his first procession as the creator of all things, but to his second procession as Mediator between God and his sinful creatures. They respect him not as the eternal Son of God, but as the Son of man; not as the Word, but as the Word made flesh; and are descriptive of the perfect completeness of the man, taken into eternal union with the second person of the Godhead. It is not therefore, an arbitrary division of divines, but the essential form of perfect humanity, as it first came from the hands of its Creator, and as it became in the person of the Redeemer, and shall become hereafter in the person of all the redeemed. And it is no speculation of the divines, but a great fundamental truth of theology, that the first man Adam was created a prophet, a priest, and a king: —a prophet, in the knowledge and foresight of all the properties of the creation into which he had been introduced as head; wherefore God brought all the creatures to him to be named, according to their qualities: —a priest, in all that pertained to the worship of his Creator: —and a king over the animal, the vegetable, and the elemental

kingdoms, whereof he was constituted the lord. To the knowledge of good and evil he was indeed a stranger, perceiving only the good of every thing, for every creature of God is good in its constitution, and the distinction of evil was introduced only by the fall. This same constitution I can perceive even in the fallen children of Adam, though broken and powerless, yet ever endeavouring to recover itself. All science I hold to be but an attempt at prophecy, to know the result or outcome of certain combinations of matter or proceedings of man. The only perfect science is astronomy, and its perfection consisteth in this, that there is no appearance in the heavens which it cannot account for according to a law, and predict according to the set and appointed period of its law. Indeed what are the laws of nature, after which they seek, but those ordinances of the Creator to his several creatures, which Adam demonstrated himself to be possessed of by prophetic intuition, when he gave to every creature its proper name? So that all science is but the groping after that knowledge and power, which the body of Adam possessed by intuition and instinct, in virtue of that sovereignty which God gave it, over every thing that he had created and made. This hunting after the knowledge of natural science and political economy, I hold to be nothing else than the instinct of man putting forth its prophetic gift within its bounded sphere, moving over the ruins of his great ness, and putting forth desperate but ineffectual struggles to recover the first and lowest of his birthrights.

In like manner, I do perceive man struggling hard in his present thralldom, to repossess himself of his office of a priest, which properly pertaineth to the conscience and concerneth itself with righteousness. Justice, which it is the first object of men in some way or other to establish among themselves, is an essential part of religion; and testifies this her high relationship in her continual appeals unto God by the sanction of an oath: morality also, which is the inward form of justice, holdeth of the same high original: as also do the gropings of the spirit after God, if haply she might find him, with all the traditions of a primitive religion, institutions of temples, sacrifices, and religious rites. Man is every where characterized by something of this kind, which is a continual effort to regain the primeval dignity of the priest. And I may say that the superstitions of all ages and tribes of men bring to me the same evidence of the priestly office being still remembered and sought by him, which the erroneous systems of knowledge do bring of his appetite and desire after the prophetic office. A nation of atheists would be to me as great a wonder as a nation of idiots.

And surely every one hath the desire of power implanted in his constitution, and doth ever exercise it, alas I with how much hunger, and thirst, and hasty indiscretion! *My own*, is the dearest word of all languages, and one chief end of all restraints and punishments is to prevent it from being the only word. This noble instinct of power testifies the king, as the former instincts of knowledge and righteousness do testify the prophet and the priest in man. And it is the highest and noblest of all the three, to which the other two serve but as guides and stewards. For no sooner hath man discovered any piece of knowledge, than he straightway proceedeth to achieve a point of mastery and power. And no sooner doth he attain an office of righteousness, than his spirit riseth into a new degree of dignity, undervaluing in conscience the multitudes who have not yet effected their escape from the bondage of the sin. The great philosopher's aphorism, that "knowledge is power," and the poet's much-applauded sentiment, that "an honest man's the noblest work of God," express what I mean by the inward and the outward advancement in power and dignity, which are given by knowledge and by righteousness; or the subserviency of the prophetic and priestly to the regal office in the nature of man.

Now the redemption of man from the threefold degradation of ignorance, unrighteousness, and oppression, and the establishment of knowledge, righteousness, and liberty over all the earth, is the end which the Son of God proposed to accomplish by the second perilous procession from the bosom of his Father's love. He purposed to restore man to his primitive birthright, and the world to its primeval blessedness. I say not that this is all, but do rather believe that it is but a very small part of all which shall come out of this great demonstration of the divine love, to his own infinite glory and to the wonderful exaltation of man for ever and ever. It is, however, distinctly contained in the mediatorial undertaking, and completely accomplished when the kingdom is given up to the Father. But what may be the condition of humanity thereafter, taken as it hath been into eternal union with the divinity, and what the office of those kingly priests and prophetic spirits through eternity, and what the destiny of this glorious earth, I know not, neither stay I here to speculate; choosing at present to confine myself to the accomplishment and consummation of the mediatorial dispensation.

When the Son of God had proceeded forth upon this errand of mercy, and began to put forth the presentiments and precursors of his coming to the earth, we find him investing his chosen ones with prophetic, priestly, and royal dignity combined in one. Such was Noah, when he offered sacrifice unto God, and divided the earth to his three sons, foretelling also their various destiny. Such was Abraham, a prophet, a priest to offer his own son, and greater than a king. Such was Melchisedek, a priest, and a king, and he was a prophet, also by the very act of bringing out bread and wine, with which to give the patriarch possession of the land that had been promised to him. And the prophet Moses was a king in Jeshurun, and the institutor of his brother Aaron in the priestly office. But from this time forward the offices were divided by the levitical institution, which was meant to be only for a time. Yet the Lord promised to make the whole people a nation of kings and priests, and likewise prophets, that they should all, from the least to the greatest, know him, see visions and dream dreams. And when he came in person, he came in the fulness of all the three offices in which he had been foretold, the prophet like unto Moses, the priest after the order of Melchisedek, to make an end of sin, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, the king, of David's loins, to sit upon the holy hill of Zion, and to have the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession.

But, though born to the plenitude of all these offices, and, as such, announced in the angelic messages to Zacharias, to the blessed Virgin, and by the revelations of prophecy to Zacharias, to Simeon, and to the Baptist; as such, saluted and worshipped by the shepherds and the wise men; and as such persecuted by wicked powers; he did not at once act in them all, but with a due order, according to the signification of the divine counsel, and, doubtless, according to the perfection of the divine wisdom. He laboured, first, as the Prophet, and instructed his church in all things which were written in Moses, and the Prophets, and the Psalms, adding thereto whatever to the fulness of his wisdom it seemed good to add. By his death, by the offering of his own body as the sacrifice upon the accursed tree, he prepared the way for his entering into the office of High Priest, but did not enter into it yet, having some important work, into which we inquire not, to discharge in the separate state of his soul: nor did he enter into it when he had fulfilled that mysterious ministry, but still abode after his resurrection for forty days, perfecting the prophetic work which the unbelief of his disciples had prevented from being completed before. Yet, by breathing upon them the Holy Spirit, he showed that he was already in possession of the holy office of the Priestly King; even as, during his whole life time, he showed the same, in his forgiving sin, and exercising all kingly power over the creatures and the elements of nature. Still, as in the type, no one did enter into

the fulness of the High Priest's office, or clothe himself with his priestly, regal vestments, till he had presented the blood of the sacrifice in the Holy of Holies before the face of God; so, St. Paul reasoneth, Christ did not enter into his office of our High Priest, until he had passed within the veil of the heavens, to appear in the presence of God for us. And even yet, I may say, he is not the vested and manifest Priest, because he hath not yet come forth from within the veil, but is there still making atonement for the sins of the nation, the chosen nation, the royal priesthood, and the chosen generation of the elect church, whose number is not yet completed: and I may say, also, for the sins of the Jewish nation, who, while the High Priest was absent from their sight within the veil, making the yearly atonement, were wont to be filled with lamentations, and supplication, and mournful cries unto God, that he would accept it, and wash away the nation's sins. Even so hath that nation been kept in an agony of doleful suffering, during all the disappearance of their High Priest; nor will hold their joyful jubilee, the feast of tabernacles, until he come forth again from within the veil of the heavens, which he will yet do without sin, unto salvation to all those who are waiting and looking, looking and waiting for his appearance.

Meanwhile, by the gift of the Holy Spirit, which he sendeth forth to those without the veil who believe on him, he is sealing as many as his Father willeth to give unto him; and proving to the world by their means, that his offering of righteousness hath been accepted, — that his is the only acceptable righteousness, by the acceptance of which it is the will of the Father that men should be saved, and by the rejection of which it is the will of the Father that they should be condemned against the day of his appearing. And we, who have received the first fruits of the Spirit, have a foretaste of the prophetic, and priestly, and kingly offices, — are said to know all things by this holy unction, and are called a royal priest hood, to show forth the honour (the virtues, or powers) of him “who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light,” “kings and priests unto our God,” and we shall reign with him on the earth. But we are so, only in part, according to the measure of the Spirit and according to the measure of faith unto every one. The office of the church is prophetic, inasmuch as it is given unto her by the Spirit, to understand and explain the prophetic word of God and show the fulfilment of his purposes in the work of providence. This, I say, is the office, not of the priesthood, or rather it should be called, not of the ministry only, but of the church; the ministry being for the church, as the church is for the world, appointed to witness the truth of Christ's prophetic word, of Christ's priestly righteousness imputed unto us, of Christ's royal promise about to be revealed in us. And it is the next office of the church to intercede as a priest for the world before the mercy-seat of Christ, by her prayers and by her sufferings, and by her labours, and by her agonies of soul; a duty little thought of now, when it is the most fearfully needed. And the church fulfilleth the office of king also in the same spiritual sense in which Christ presently fulfilleth it; that is, by dispensations of forgiveness and excommunication, of binding and of loosing. For, though she may little think of this her high prerogative, and leave it in the hands of the Papists to be made a profane idolatry of, it was part of the church's investiture from the mouth of her Lord, before he left the earth. And, I believe, to this day, that all his dispensations to the earth, of good and of ill, are made in consideration of the church, and in answer to the prayers which his Holy Spirit moveth in the breast of his church.

But though in this spiritual way the church doth shadow forth all these three offices, yet, in none of them is she completely invested. She doth but see as through a glass dimly; she hath forgotten that she was purged from her old sins; and she exerciseth no kingly discipline over her members, but is under bondage to every low and crafty influence. She

hath been so from the first, and will be so unto the last, growing worse and worse, until utterly wearied out, and casting away all hope of her amendment, her King shall come and judge her. Yet, all sunk and degraded as the church of Christ hath become; she is the only visible Prophet, Priest, and King of the earth. For if that be the Prophet of the earth, which rebukes it of its sin, and teaches it of righteousness and warneth it of judgment to come, then is the Christian Church that Prophet; for she only hath any knowledge, or giveth forth any lessons of these divine things; —science being apostate, and philosophy vain, and all the world besides lost in the pitchy darkness of idolatry. And if that be the Priest of the earth, whose offerings of prayer, and praise, and thanksgiving, and holiness, and painful intercession, fasting, weeping, and lamentation, do restrain the anger of the Lord from bursting forth upon the horrid wickedness with which the earth is full, then is the Christian Church that Priest; for she alone hath any humanity or mortification of spirit, or acknowledgment of God's mercies, or fear of his judgments. And if that be the King of the earth, who from his ample storehouse serveth out to the needy nations the gifts of God's almighty goodness, and for whose worthy petitions the Lord sendeth rain, or withholdeth it, dispenseth the heat of the sun in genial supplies, or now with scorching heat, and now with cold and cloudy faintness, for whom also he overthroweth kings and setteth them up, and bindeth princes in fetters of iron, or enlargeth them to wider conquest and dominion, blesseth the cottage with plenty and contentment, or, as now, sendeth every where niggard famine, and puny, miserable wretchedness; then such a royal Mother is the Church; for surely it is for the sake of the elect Church, to cherish her, or to avenge her, to chastise her, or to gratify her, to vex her, or to bless her, according to the order of a right-holy and all-wise discipline, that the Lord bringeth these vicissitudes, and alterations, and changes upon the face of all the earth.

From these premises it clearly appeareth, that the work of human redemption, whether regarded in its types, or in the person of the Redeemer, or in the operation of the Spirit upon the church, aimeth at and tendeth to the reproduction in human nature of that threefold dignity of prophet, priest, and king, in which it was created all entire at the first; and which it ever ineffectually attempteth to recover for itself. That this however is still but an aim or a tendency, and hath not yet been realized upon the earth, will appear no less manifestly from the slightest observation and reflection. We are yet in the state of the embryo, having the rudiments of that perfection, and hasting to the birth. Even Christ, while he was seen, did only show these offices in the mystery, or at most in the humiliation; not in the manifestation and the glory. A prophet indeed he was, and greater than a prophet; but hidden by surrounding darkness, and waiting still for the manifestation of his fulness: a priest also and a king, but holier than any priest, and more powerful than any king; yet withheld and restrained by the sufferings and afflictions which he must first undergo. The promise of them there and then was demonstrative of their true existence; waiting for their glorious and powerful manifestation, until the times and the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power should be fulfilled. And so also it is with his church, which deriveth from his Spirit no more power than is sufficient to follow his foot steps: prophesying in part, and in part fulfilling both the office of kings and priests, but only in part. The Holy Spirit given at Pentecost doth set us in the way of our Lord's suffering, and enable us to be conformed to his death; but He doth no more. And behold how exactly it is so fulfilled in her experience. For though the church fulfilleth to the world by the ministry of the Holy Spirit, from the hands of our priestly King now within the veil, the offices which have been mentioned above; the world doth requite her only with contempt, and persecution, and death, even as it requited Christ himself

during the days of his flesh. And according to the activity, and purity, and plenty of these her gracious ministries, the world is but stirred up to entreat her the more cruelly; insomuch that the church for her own ease and safety is continually tempted to fatal accommodations. From which arrayed opposition it clearly appeareth, that not Christ, but Satan the enemy of Christ still ruleth over the powers of this world, whose kingdoms are not yet become the kingdoms of our Lord. In no sense can Christ therefore be said to have been invested with the kingdoms of this world, otherwise he would not surely trouble and afflict his own church which he hath purchased with his own blood. The times and seasons which were to elapse before the kingdom should be restored to Israel, the times of the Gentiles during which Jerusalem was to be trodden under foot, have not yet run their appointed course. Our Priest is still detained in expectation, at the right hand of his Father, and waiting while the Lord hideth his face from the house of Jacob. Giving all weight to the kingly style with which he was born, and with which the superscription was written over his cross, and to the present kingly office of his church, as I have stated it above, I cannot see how with any propriety he can be said, either during, or since the days of his flesh, to exercise the office of a King, save in that initial and partial sense which hath been already explained. The office and function of a King is that of exaltation, but Christ's life, and the life of his church, are of the lowest humiliation. No one is greater than a king in that dominion over which he ruleth; and yet Christ was lower than all. He was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," smitten, stricken, and afflicted. He was not in the form of a king, but in the form of a servant. He was the heir of the throne, and making his way to it by the cross, but he was not crowned, he was not enthroned, he had not assumed the power. Satan in his hearing said, These the kingdoms of the earth, and all the glory of them, are mine; and Christ did not challenge the usurpation; if indeed it may be called usurpation, for Satan had achieved them by his potent subtlety. He held them in virtue of the curse of God: and he must hold them till that curse can be removed consistently with the holiness of God. Immediately before Christ was taken up, he was asked if he would then restore the kingdom to Israel, by which it was manifest that he had not yet fulfilled that great object of his mission. Paul bears his testimony to the same truth, that the rule and government of the world are still in the hands of Satan, in these words, "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:" Eph. ii. 2. And the Apocalypse, in chap. xx, declareth that it shall continue so until the beast and the false prophet, that is, the personal Antichrist and the papal power, with all that follow them shall have been destroyed in the battle of Armageddon. And this we do not yet perceive, for the personal Antichrist is not yet made manifest, and the false prophet still sitteth as God in the temple of God. On every ground, therefore, I hold it to be a contradiction of all language, and a confounding of all distinctions, to say that Christ hath begun to exercise his office of a King. With as much propriety might he have been said to exercise the office of a Priest during the days of his flesh, while he forgave sins, which the apostle in the Hebrews testifieth that he did not. His being so in the mystery, is a very different thing from his being so in the manifestation. In the mystery he was Prophet, Priest, and King, from all eternity. But in the manifestation he became not a Prophet until the days of his flesh; albeit it was he and no other who spoke in all the prophets; and he became not a Priest until he ascended up on high, to present his wounded and slain body in the Holy presence. And he shall be King in the manifestation, when he cometh forth in his robes of state, or in his glorified body, to destroy his enemies and take possession of the earth. Accordingly you do not find him crowned in the vision of his person

made to the apostle John in the first chapter of the Apocalypse, nor in that given in the fourth and fifth; but in that of the eleventh when he comes forth to take possession of the kingdom.

These views will become more apparent if we take into consideration one of the most famous prophecies which respect the person of Christ; that of Emmanuel, contained in the seventh, eighth, and ninth chapters of Isaiah. I prefer this prophecy to any other, because it is by peculiar preference the prophecy of the incarnation: and when the announcement of the incarnation was given to the blessed Virgin, it was given in the very words with which this prophecy is summed up and concluded. It is moreover distinguished from every other prophecy, by giving to the Virgin's child not only the name Emmanuel, expressive of his divinity abiding amongst men, but also that descriptive or titular name, which contains in it the progression and fulness of his dignity and office. And from which will appear not only the completeness, but the unfolding of the completeness of his person. Though the substance of the personal prophecy be in the 6th and 7th verses of the ninth chapter, it will be necessary that I run hastily over the two preceding chapters, which are all concerning Emmanuel, the Son of the Virgin.

The Lord had promised and sworn unto David, that of the fruit of his body, a king should sit upon his throne for ever; and so it had continued to be exactly accomplished till the days of Ahaz, when the revolted and insurrectionary kingdom of Israel, and the kingdom of Syria, confederated against the word of the Lord, "to set up a king in the midst of Jerusalem even the son of Tabeal." Wherefore "the heart of the house of David, and the heart of his people being moved as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind," the Lord revealed for his consolation at this juncture the famous prophecy of Emmanuel, and sent forth Isaiah to declare it unto the king for his consolation and assurance: "Behold, a Virgin shall conceive, and bring forth a son, and shall call his name Immanuel," and to connect this child with deliverance, and give a sure sign of the distant event, he adds, that before Shear-jashub, the child whom he had in his hand, should know to avoid the evil, and choose the good, the land which he feared should be forsaken of both her kings. And then he describeth the calamities which the Assyrians and Egyptians should inflict upon Judah. This first revelation of Emmanuel is very enigmatical, but to one versed in the prophetic style would easily convey that his birth was to be the great sign of the deliverance of Judah out of the hands of her enemies; yet not till after a very fearful desolation of their land. But the prophecy of the eighth chapter, "He shall pass through Judah, he shall overflow and go over; he shall reach even to the neck: and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel," Isa. viii. 8; shows us Emmanuel as a King, the child born of the Virgin as the king of the land, which the Assyrians should overflow, even to the neck. The two verses which follow, "Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces; and give ear, all ye of far countries: gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces; gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces. Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought; speak the word, and it shall not stand: for God is with us; (Or, for Immanuel);" Isa. viii. 9, 10; carry our views forward to a great confederacy of all nations, which should be broken by this same child which was to be born of the Virgin. Then the prophet presenteth him as the sanctuary of those that trust in him, but as a snare to both the houses of Israel, "Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence, to both the houses of Israel; for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken." Isa. viii. 13-15. After this calamity, of which, though intended for a deliverer, he is to be the occasion, this wonderful prophecy

represents a season of separation to his disciples, “Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples.” Isa. viii. 16; which is, as I take it, descriptive of our exact condition since his rejection of the houses of Israel; —a separate people, in whom is bound and sealed up the testimony and witness of Jesus. During this while, Messiah represents himself as waiting upon the Lord till the end of that calamity, “And I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him. Behold, I, and the children whom the Lord hath given me, are for signs and for wonders in Israel, from the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion.” Isa. viii. 17, 18. Then he instructeth them in the cause of that fearful darkness which was to overwhelm them, and the only safeguard against it, “And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep and that mutter; should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? To the law and to the testimony:” Isa. viii. 19, 20. Then comes the description of the desolate condition and maddened misery of those who had rejected this counsel, “If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them (literally “that no morning to them,” i.e. say, that there shall be no morning to them). And they shall pass through it (the darkness) hardly bestead and hungry: and it shall come to pass, that, when they shall be hungry, they shall fret themselves, and curse their king and their God, and look upward. And they shall look upon the earth; and behold trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish; and they shall be driven to darkness. Nevertheless, the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation;” or, (as the Vulgate and Mede render this first part of the ninth chapter, which they connect with the preceding description, of the darkness) “and to cleaving darkness, and from their straits they shall not be able to escape.” Isa. viii. 20-22; and ix. 1.

When these the fatal effects of rejecting his person, and his testimony, and his law, ministered by the Holy Spirit through the apostles, have been fully declared, this wonderful prophesy proceedeth to open the dawning of the light upon that long and wintry night. And the prophet perceiveth it breaking upon the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, in recompense, as it were, for the darkness of conquest and captivity, which first set in upon that side of the land in the time of Hoshea, king of Israel. And here I must follow the Vulgate and Joseph Mede, in translating the latter part of verse 1, as I did in translating the former part; for in our version it is utterly unintelligible, and mars one of the most beautiful and perfect prophecies in scripture “In the first time the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali were undervalued, but in the last time shall the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the nations be honoured; the people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.” Isa. ix. 2. Whether this was wholly accomplished in his first coming, to which it is applied in the gospel by Matthew, I leave every one to judge for himself; but to me it seems manifest that it was not, both because they profited little by the light then afforded to them, which can therefore hardly be said to have much exalted or recompensed them, but rather, as our Lord argues, aggravated their condemnation. But inasmuch as it points to the place where the great light was to burst forth, there can be no doubt, that it is a very remarkable prophecy, though, in respect to the complete fulfilment, I have my suspicion that it remains yet to be shown, against that time when the light of the Gentiles shall begin to become the glory of his people Israel, and “the Sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings,” Mal. iv. 2. On this subject, however, I do no more than express my own conviction, while I feel assured that no one can doubt that of what immediately follows no part hath been fulfilled: and now we must begin to be more minute.

“Thou hast multiplied the nation.” That this is a characteristic feature of the restoration of the Jewish people at the future advent of Messiah, is manifest from almost all scripture which hath reference thereto; as from Isa. xxvi. 15. “Thou hast increased the nation, O Lord, thou hast increased the nation: thou art glorified: thou hadst removed it far unto all the ends of the earth.” From Isa. xxvii. “He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root: Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit.” From Isa. xlix. 19,20. “For thy waste and thy desolate places, and the land of thy destruction, shall even now be too narrow by reason of the inhabitants, and they that swallowed thee up shall be far away. The children which thou shalt have, after thou hast lost the other, shalt say again in thine ears, The place is too strait for me: give place to me that I may dwell.” Next comes the joy of Messiah and the nation, at the breaking of their bondage and the destruction of all their oppressors, “And to him (margin) increased the joy: they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil. For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian.” Isa. ix. 3, 4. Then comes the manner of this great overthrow of the enemies of Messiah and his people, so extraordinary and so extraordinarily typified in the destruction of the host of Midian, by the sound of the trumpets and by the fire of the lamps of Gideon, with his three hundred chosen men. It is needless to add that fire is a constant instrument of this destruction in all the scriptures. “For every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood; but this shall be with burning and fuel of fire.” Isa. ix. 5. And to crown all, we have all these glorious events referred back to the birth of that child, with whose announcement the prophecy began; whereby the whole, from vii. 14. to ix. 7. is as it were clasped together, and presented to us as the achievements of this child, who was promised to king Ahaz in that desperate strait. “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The ever lasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.” Isa. ix. 6, 7.

From these two last verses, which are worthy the elucidation of many volumes, I shall deduce the progression and fulness of Christ’s regal office, which includeth and draweth up into itself both the prophetic and the priestly. The office of the child is government, “the government shall be upon his shoulder.” What government this was to be is explained after his name, “of the increase of his government and dominion there shall be no end;” that it shall include all bounds, at least all the bounds of the earth, and fill all time, that is, be eternal, according to what is foretold in Daniel vii. 13, 14. “I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.”

But our prophecy is more particular than that famous prophecy of Daniel, adding the royal seat and metropolis of this universal and eternal empire. “Upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.” Isa. ix. 7. This is the last and also the main part of the prophecy, which, be it always remembered, was given as an assurance to the wavering heart of the house of David; and to that end doth declare and

signify that this vast dominion was to acknowledge the throne of David, and him that sat thereon, to acknowledge the supremacy of the house of Jacob, and him that ruled over the same. Which ought to have been consolation and sustenance to the wicked king in his present strait and agitation, for it was more than had been ever declared by the mouth of prophet or of seer. And so important did the Lord esteem it, and for such instant use did he intend it, that he confirmed it by two great signs; the one that Syria and Samaria should be divested of both their kings, before the elder of Isaiah's sons should know to refuse the evil and choose the good: the other that the rulers of Damascus and the spoil of Syria should be carried away by the king of Assyria, before the younger of his sons could say, My father and my mother. A prophecy which was thus sealed with two of the greatest events of those days might well claim the belief of the wicked king, and retain the belief of all posterity. It appears therefore from this great prophecy of the incarnation, that the idea which, was given of the Man-God, or Emmanuel, was that of a deliverer and rightful inheritor of the land, the destroyer of all its oppressors, the remover of all its bondage, the multiplier of the nation, the increaser of its joy, the occupant of its throne, and the governor of its people for ever, yea, and the monarch of an universal and eternal dominion upon the earth. These predictions concerning the Child are in this prophecy, and no others are in it. If it mean not this it meaneth nothing. If a child was ever born of a virgin it was for these ends he was born. And if he have not fulfilled these ends, then he is yet to fulfil them, nor would such a delay weaken but rather confirm the prophecy; for there is mentioned a mysterious waiting on his part, and rejection of him on their part, and a woful visitation of darkness in consequence thereof. And accordingly they are so found till this day, rejecting his aid in miserable woful darkness, nothing of all the glory having been accomplished, but the very reverse; because the season of his waiting is not yet expired. The prophecy therefore waits still for its great accomplishment in the Son of the Virgin, by the act and power of the Son of the Virgin. If any one say, No; Jesus of Nazareth shall never sit upon David's throne, nor rule over the house of Jacob. Then I say, Jesus of Nazareth is not the person here prophesied of, but some other. If they say, Yea, but he is the Emmanuel born of the Virgin, who now is spiritually filling the spiritual throne of David, and spiritually reigning over the spiritual house of Jacob, and spiritually holding universal spiritual empire. Then all I have to say is, I do not know what the spiritual throne of David means. It is the throne of a believer's heart. Where learned you to call a believer's heart the throne of David? It is the throne of the Majesty on high. How dare you blaspheme, and call the throne of God the throne of David? And what use was there to tell Ahaz in his present straits that a Son should be born and a Child given, who should reign in the hearts of men, and be exalted to the throne of God? And what signs of such an event were those two which were granted? Besides these spiritualists know not where they lead themselves. If they will have all the substance of Emmanuel's work to be invisible and spiritual, then I will have his birth also to be spiritual and invisible upon the earth. If they will annihilate the greater part to please themselves, I will annihilate the lesser part to vex them. And then what have they left of all this bright and glorious prophecy but the shadow of a dream. But forsaking such quibbles, I desire to pursue my exposition of this prophecy by a short meditation of the manifold name which is given to this Child.

This name of the Child, which was to be born of the Virgin and given unto the Jewish nation, is "Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace;" not five names, but one name comprehensive of the being and office of Emmanuel; of which the first characteristic, the Wonderful, referreth to the miraculous nature of all his works and ways. Beginning with his conception, and ending with the accomplishment and

presentation of the mediatorial kingdom; yea, and going back to the announcements which were made of him from the days of old, what do we find but that it is all out of, above, and against the course of nature, and intended to deliver man from the present thralldom of the natural life into the freedom of the life spiritual and divine? In the ancient times, when he delivered the church from Egyptian bondage, they sung him “Wonderful in his praises.” When he appeared to Manoah, he did wonderfully, and prayed them not to ask his name, for it was wonderful; and so was his conception, and his birth, and his life, and his resurrection, and his ascension, and his gift of the Spirit from his present unseen abode; which yet are all but a prelude and faint signification of that wonderfulness with which he shall show himself the second time unto the world, and avenge his elect, and deliver his own people with a mighty hand and an out-stretched arm, and plant them in their own land, and rule the world in peace and righteousness. The wonders of this second appearance shall so utterly transcend all that hath been seen heretofore of the working of this wonderful one, that it is said by Jeremiah, “Therefore, behold the days come, saith the Lord, that they shall no more say, the Lord liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt. But, the Lord liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land.” Jer. xiii. 7, 8. The law of the natural man and of the natural course of things being opposed to the law of the Spirit of God, and that being wonderful or miraculous which opposeth the former, and establisheth the latter, every act of Christ in his progress to the redemption of the world must necessarily be supernatural, and that of all others the most so which consisteth in the casting out of Satan from his usurped dominion, and the restoring of the earth to the government of righteousness. This I judge to be the import of *Wonderful*, the first letter or syllable, if I may so speak, in the Lord’s name.

For the second, *Counsellor*, I regard it as expressing and being the fittest word to express his prophetic office in all its amplitude, whether as exercised before his coming in his servants the prophets, or by himself in the days of his flesh, or by the Holy Spirit since his ascension into glory. And its second place in the great name teacheth that his wonderful and mighty workings are all accompanied with and done on purpose to sustain, righteous and holy counsels; that he is the Saviour of the earth by that which he shall teach them. It pointeth moreover to the ordinance of preaching by which it hath pleased God to save them that believe. The power of this word, however, is not yet completely told, but hath, I make no doubt, a chief reference to that future coming in power, and glory, that reign, and righteousness, of which it is thus written in the prophet, “And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.” Isa. xi. 1, 2. And not only shall these attributes of the prophet shine resplendent in him on that day, but also in all his people, concerning whom it is prophesied, “And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” Jer. xxxi. 34. And to the same effect by Paul it is said, “For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then I shall know even as also I am known.” 1 Cor. xiii. 12. It is the redemption of the mind of man, and the completion of his knowledge to which this part of the Redeemer’s office, this letter in his name hath respect. Even as the former hath respect to that command over nature, and sweet subordination of it to the law of the Spirit and the will of God, which shall be afforded to

every one who shall in that day be found in his likeness. The one redemption from the tyranny of nature, the other redemption from the darkness of ignorance.

The next letter in this name, “El-gebor the mighty God,” consisteth of two parts, the one essentially divine, the other essentially human; being according to the original, “God mighty,” the word *mighty* being commonly used of a hero or mighty conqueror, as we would say “God the heroic one.” Its first half hath reference, no doubt, to his name Emmanuel, which also hath in it the same name of God, with the addition of his local habitation with us; while its second half hath reference to those heroic acts and achievements of war for Israel’s redemption, which had just been predicted of him in the preceding verses. In this prophet we have the same combination of words in the 21st verse of the tenth chapter, and used in like manner of his great and powerful demonstration in behalf of Israel, when, as I judge, he shall begin to be their Emmanuel. “The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God,” El-gebor. Isa. x. 21. Where by perusing the context it will be perceived that it is introduced in the train and sequel of that great exploit with which he shall reveal himself to his people, by breaking the Assyrian upon the mountains, This gives him a right to the title of, Gebor, the mighty one. And this *mightiness* maketh the people “to take hold upon his strength, and to make peace with him, and they shall make peace with him.” It is by the same title of Gebor, the mighty one, that he is described in the forty-fifth Psalm as coming to conquer the love of his Spouse, and to marry her forever. And there also he introduceth himself to her by great exploits of war and conquest, wrought on her behalf. Now whatever may be said of the two former letters of his name, I do say of this one, God the heroic one, that it hath not been accomplished, and that it is yet future: for as the man of war, the Virgin’s Son, hath not revealed himself; as the Lord of hosts accomplishing whatever was foreshown in a figure by the victories of his people Israel, when he marched at their head in the pillar of fire, the Son of Mary hath not yet appeared. We wait for him in this character, and he waiteth until the time shall come, when as it is written in all the prophets, he shall awake and come in his strength, and accomplish that of which old things were but the emblem and prelude, as it is written a hundred times in this prophet. “Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord; awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon? Art thou not it which hath dried the sea, the waters of the great deep, that hath made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over? Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion, and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall, obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away.” Isa. ii. 9-11 Then his people shall call him not only, Emmanuel God, with us, but El-gebor, God the mighty one.

The next letter, in this comprehensive name, is, “the everlasting Father,” or as it is, being truly rendered, “the Father of eternity, or of the eternal age.” Time by the Jews was divided into two great portions, the age that is, and the age that is to come; meaning by the former the duration of their captivity, affliction, and waiting for Messiah; and by the latter, the eternity of their triumph and rejoicing, and kingdom, in the presence of Messiah. The eternal age of which the child is here called the Father, is the latter of these two, according to the word of St. Paul, “For unto the angels hath be not put in subjection the world (age) to come; whereof we speak.” Heb. ii. 5. The character of that age is thus described by the Lord, “And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world (age) marry, and are given in marriage: But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world (age), and the resurrection front the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of

the resurrection;" Luke xx. 34-36. which is spoken, not of the sojourners who shall then be upon the earth, but of the raised, in answer to the question of the Sadducees, concerning those of this present age who shall be thought worthy of the resurrection, and the eternal life of that age to come. For it was a universal opinion among the Jews, that at the commencement of the future age the dead should be raised who had lived and died in the fear of God, and in the hope of Messiah: who, they believed, would not disappoint their faithful expectations, but bring them along with him. Of this age it is here said that he is to be the Father, even as Satan is the father of this age, and all save those begotten unto Christ are his children. "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do." "According to the prince of the power of the air, the Spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." This the third syllable of Emmanuel's name conveyeth to my ear the sweet and blessed intelligence, that when in his character of the mighty God, he shall have cast out all his and our enemies, and the chief of them, that piercing serpent, as is set forth in due order in the nineteenth and twentieth chapters of the Apocalypse, he will rule the earth as a father doth his children, in righteousness and peace, and they will obey him as children in all love and obedience. His power, his counsel his divine might shall pervade every thing and make it blessed even as Satan's power and counsel, and devilish might do now pervade every thing and make it cursed. In which age to come there shall be a first period, during which his enemies are under his feet, trampled upon but not destroyed, imprisoned but not executed, in order that his royal clemency may be displayed; and a latter period during which they are utterly cast out and overwhelmed with the passive horrors, and inactivity of the second death. The child shall be with them all the while the Father of the age, for his name is Emmanuel God with us. He is not now with us, but absent "for a little while," and therefore the age is still under Satan's fatherhood; but he shall be with us again, and for eternity, then shall be acknowledged as the Father of all the earth. And we who are now begotten to him by the Spirit are his children, the first fruits, the honoured heirs of his sufferings, that we may also become the heirs of his glory. Finally, He is the Prince of Peace.

This is the last syllable of his name, and ariseth to the highest pitch of honour and dignity. It addeth the awful attribute of sovereignty; the singular majesty of royal power, to the wonderfulness of working, the wisdom of counsel, the almightiness of power, the graciousness and propriety of Father. It invests him with the sovereignty of the world, and crowns him Lord of all; and by adding thereto the epithet, 'of Peace,' it takes out of sovereignty those attributes for which it is dreaded; and invests it with those for which it is constituted and upheld of God as most necessary to human well-being. And as the final consummation of every scheme is that for which it is undertaken, and towards which it struggles through every impediment, this last characteristic of Emmanuel to become the Prince of Peace doth show us, that the great end and purpose for which he became incarnate of the virgin, and hath travailed in such humility, and is to come again in such fearful and terrible acts of war and destruction upon all the earth, is to bring about peace, against which Satan is so determined, and the devilish nature of wicked men so determined, that before it will give place to the power of our king, it will writhe the whole world and bring it to an agony like that of death itself. But as the devils, though they struggled to the last and almost destroyed the frame of their wretched victims before they would come forth, were yet fain to come forth at the powerful word of Emmanuel, while he was yet with us; so when he shall come to be with us again, at the same powerful word, shall they be forced to surrender the heavens and the earth, and the whole orb of humanity which they have usurped, though they shall make it shudder and be agonized, and sweat forth its blood as if ready to give up the

Ghost for ever. After which there will be peace. After which there will be peace, but till then never. For till then Satan shall rack the bowels, and tear the heart-strings of human peace; and stir up wars to the end of the earth for ever, until God, born of the virgin, shall again be with us. That, the end of the convulsion on the edge of which we presently stand, and of all convulsions which shall follow, till the consummation, is to bring about peace for ever, is manifest from all the Scriptures, of which I may quote as one instance out of a thousand, these verses of the forty-sixth Psalm. "The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah. 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. Selah." Ps. xlvi. 6-11.

If any one doubt concerning the above interpretation of this the prophecy of the incarnation, I can refer him to high authority, even that of the angel Gabriel to the blessed virgin, and of Zacharias filled with the Holy Ghost, and of the angel to the shepherds, (interpreting the word Lord, as Jesus himself in the gospel, and Peter full of the Holy Ghost doth in the ii. Acts interpret it,) and of the star to the wise men, and of the great national counsel when they were called together by Herod, of which witnesses every one beareth the same testimony of this Child, that he was to sit upon the throne of David, and become David's Lord, and rule over the house of Jacob for ever, and become the glory of his people Israel. And if any one doubt that he is to come again to fulfil these things which are written, I can refer him to Simon Peter's discourses in the beginning of the Acts, and to all the New Testament; as if God giveth me time and permission, I shall yet make manifest to his church.

But this last and crowning attribute of the child that was born of the Virgin, containeth in it a deeper and more blessed mystery than the making of wars to cease unto the ends of the earth; bringing to the troubled ear of my soul the tidings of its peace, and to the church, and to the redeemed world, in the person of the great Mediator and Peace-Maker; in whom God is present and powerful to reconcile the world unto himself. It presents him to my mind in his character of King-Priest, having accomplished the reconciliation, and reigning over the reconciled; the Melchisedek who, as to his person, is King of Righteousness, and, as to his dominion, is King of Salem, which is King of Peace. It presents him to my heart as the King who reigneth therein by the power of his Holy Spirit and hath given me the victory over all my enemies: it presenteth him to my flesh as the King who shall yet accomplish my poor body's emancipation from that vile prison house of death, by a still mightier power of that Holy Spirit whereof the residue is in his hand. It presents him to the Church as her Head, who hath broken down the middle wall of partition, which Satan had interposed between man and man, between nation and nation, making us all of every kindred and nation and tongue to love one another as he also loved us; who preserveth the unity and continuity of the Church's life against all the powers of earth, against the evil counsels of the gates of hell; and who shall present her unto himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, holy and without blemish. It presents him also as the Head of the nations, ruling and defending them front the power of Satan; and blessing them with all the inheritance of the new covenant, which hath been confirmed to us in his death, and whereof the present Church is as it were the ark of the testimony, and the tabernacle of the witness, borne up and down the wilderness, not yet having found a place to rest. For I agree with my author in thinking that we are not yet put in possession of that new covenant, described in Jeremiah and Ezekiel,

and quoted by Paul in the eighth chapter of the Hebrews, which is made to Israel, and, in her, to all the world; (for she is, as it were, the mediatrix and mistress of the nations, at the time of her restoration) for the fourfold blessing of that covenant will by no means apply to any visible body at present on the earth; and only in the way of an earnest will apply to the spiritual Church, which is invisible, and cannot be said to contain Israel, or, as little, to contain all men. We have had the covenant confirmed in the blood of Christ, and we have received the heavenly manna, and the waters from the rock, and the indestructible righteousness, and, for our faithlessness, we are wayfaring in the desert till the appointed times and seasons shall have been accomplished. We have not yet entered into our rest, any more than Paul or the Hebrew Church had entered into theirs; but we are looking for it in that city whose builder is God. We are under our Prophet, who, like unto Moses, is conducting us: we have a Prophet and we have a Priest, but we have as yet obtained no King, because we have not obtained the kingdom which cannot be removed, but look for it.

The Christian Church, like Israel of old, sought for a king, and God gave her one in his wrath; a wicked Benjamite, him of the triple crown, who hath usurped the kingdom; whose spirit of phrenzy our David with his prophetic minstrelsy hath sometimes laid for a little while, but aye as he awoke he would aim a blow to smite him to the wall. And that stout old ireful king hath children whom David loveth as his own soul, and who love David more dearly than they love themselves. But our David hath been fain to separate himself, and with his chosen band to wander in the wilderness, a banished man: anointed, indeed, to the kingly office, and assuredly destined of God to over throw that wicked king over the people, whom God gave them in his wrath, because they lusted after courts and kings, in the days of Constantine and onward, till the crown was placed on the head of that Benjamite. Our anointed, King and his chosen ones, I say, are yet in the wilderness, not daring to appear, but persecuted by the usurper. Yet shall it come to pass, that the usurper shall fall upon the mountains of Gilboa, and with him Jonathan, whom David loved, yet not by David's hand, but by one whom David hateth and destroyeth the instant he cometh into his presence. And then our King is crowned, and Israel is a kingdom, and under her King doeth valiantly upon all that rise up against the Lord; having "the high praises Of God in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand; to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all the saints." Psalm cxlix. 7-9. Which being accomplished in the antitype of the warlike David; the pacific Solomon succeeds, that Prophet of Wisdom, that Prince of Peace, who never drew a sword, but sat instated in a throne of wisdom and an empire of great glory; honoured by all the kings around, who came to him for counsel and with offerings, and to have all questions of state, and enigmas, and dark sayings explained. And so "Behold king Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart." Solomon's Song, iii. 11.

I could expatiate largely upon that composite type of the kingly office of Christ, which was reared up by God in the persons of David and Solomon, the man of war and the Prince of Peace. I could show the mystery of Solomon's knowing all plants, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop that groweth on the wall: and the mystery of that mighty ocean of political and social wisdom, which is recorded in the book of the Proverbs; at which Lord Bacon, that wisest of uninspired men, used to stand aghast, to see how far his own human genius and cunning wit were over reached: —the former being to the saint the assurance of that intuitive insight into all natural things, which in Adam and his posterity hath become

obscured; the second being to the saints the assurance of that sublime faculty of preserving the righteousness and well-being of the earth, over which they shall reign in the day of Christ's glorious kingdom. But I forbear: only one word will I add upon this head. That when the combined type of David and Solomon's kingdom had been given in three books of Scripture, and interpreted by more than half the Psalms, as if the end and purpose of the kingdom had been accomplished, it straight way fell into inextricable disorder, and floundered on from bad to worse until, at length, by the golden head of Daniel's statue, it was taken away, and hath passed through the four successive oppressions in Daniel's image, signified as about to accomplish the times of the Gentiles, during which Jerusalem was doomed by the Lord to be trodden under foot; after which times and seasons the kingdom shall be again restored unto Israel; and then the times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, the eternity of which Christ is the Father, the peaceful dominion of the earth of which he is the Prince, shall begin their long expected course of blessedness. "For unto us a Child is born unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor; The mighty God, The everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this." Isa. ix. 11. Amen and Amen.

That system of opinions with respect to the coming of Christ, which at present holds possession of the churches, gives no representation whatever either of Christ's priestly or kingly office; and the system which with our author we maintain, aims at demonstrating from the scriptures, that there will be a manifestation of both, upon this very earth where both were set at nought. We do not deny that our Lord was a priest and a king in his estate of humiliation, though he manifested himself in neither the one character nor in the other, that is, neither fulfilled in the temple nor upon the throne the priestly or regal dignity; and we believe that now in his exaltation he hath entered into both, agreeing in this with the words of the Catechism of our church, 'that he exerciseth the offices of a Prophet, a Priest, and a King, both in his state of humiliation and exaltation;' and to that end I have shown the prophetic, priestly, and kingly offices which his church is invested withal, even at this present time. But while we hold these things along with our brethren, we believe further, that the time is coming, yea and is now at hand, when, not at the right hand of God, but in the sight of this world, and in the despite of all his enemies, he shall as a king and priest be manifested on the earth, and of the earth hold the royal and the priestly sway for ever and for ever: be that whereof Meichisedek was the figure, be that whereof Moses was the figure; be that whereof Adam was the complete and perfect figure, the Father of an age yet to come. We add this to the present popular creed of the church, from which we take nothing away. We say that the day of the Lord which is the face of Peter's warning, they interpret of a natural day, but which we in the spirit of his warning, and of John's exposition, interpret of a thousand years, is the period during which this manifestation will be made. We interpret the conflagration of the earth to be its purification or baptism with fire, and not its annihilation. We doubt whether annihilation be an idea contained in the scriptures at all; for we perceive that the second death is not annihilation; nor are wicked men annihilated; nor is Satan, nor is death, nor is $\alpha\delta\epsilon\varsigma$, the place of separate spirits, which are all cast into a lake of fire. We believe that our Lord shall reign a certain limited time with his enemies under his feet, that is in a state of subjection; and afterwards that he shall reign for ever, with his enemies under the dominion of the second death. That there shall be a period of Satan's imprisonment and of death's subjection, and of

the earth's protection, government, and blessedness, in despite of all the powers of darkness; and that after this there will be an eternity of Satan's second death, and death's second death, and the second death of all wicked men and wicked angels, and their fruits of wickedness; which shall be to the earth an eternity of infallible blessedness, of God's immediate presence, of the concentration of his love, of the peculiar abode and government of his Son. And that this immortal earth for ever, and the redeemed saints inheriting for ever their inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away, and the Son of God their king, united to human nature for ever, shall be for ever the monument of God's love and mercy to believing sinners, the enduring proof unto the universe of the incredible power of faith in the word of God, which when all the unfallen creatures of God behold, they may adore the triumphs of faith, and hold fast their allegiance, and delight in the glory of redeeming love, and in the victory of almighty grace over sin. While on the other hand the lake of the second death which burneth with fire and brimstone, where their worm dieth not and their fire is not quenched, where Satan the Prince of darkness, and the angels which kept not their first estate, where the grave and place of souls accursed, with all unbelievers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and, in short, every thing in the kingdom which offendeth, are tormented for ever and ever; this hell of the second death, with all that are doomed to abide therein, shall serve the opposite purpose to all God's intelligent and unfallen creatures, of demonstrating to them the horrors of disloyalty and disobedience to the great King, the fearful fruits of sin, the indestructible horrors of death, the passive and impotent misery of those who disobey the will of the Highest; the awful stability of the laws of heaven, and the indefeasible sovereignty of the word of God. But if these theorists destroy the earth, or make of it their hell, for neither of which ideas can I find a single passage of scripture, and against them a thousand; if they carry off the race of redeemed men to mingle with, and be lost amongst the countless myriads of the unfallen angels, the whole end and termination of the glorious mystery of redemption is lost. And the manhood of Christ is lost. He is not God and man in two distinct natures and one person forever. And our honour to have all put under our feet is lost; and the crowning truth of the whole mystery is lost, which is, that God's power and love is able from the dust of the ground to create a substance worthy of being incorporated with his own eternal essence; and that of the children of sin and frailty, his redeeming word and regenerating Spirit can make the kings and the priests of the universe. For I have no idea that after the purification and exaltation of this earth, those who passed through Christ's trials and attained unto his glory, shall dwell above in isolated blessedness, or be seen from afar like a solitary star in the spangled heavens; but do conceive that we shall be as it were the heralds of faithfulness, carrying in our person both the lesson and the example wherever we go; ministering to all his creatures the profound mysteries of God's love to his faithful children, judging angels, ruling principalities and powers, and having all things under our feet; partakers of the prophetic, priestly, and kingly throne of Christ. This I conceive to be the mystery of the God-man, which is not a phenomenon or appearance made to the earth only, but is a reality, a substantial union of the two natures which cannot be hidden, but must be known to all creatures in and under heaven. And if this be the orthodox doctrine of Christ's humanity, who can doubt, that under Christ creatures of the same glorified humanity may be the stewards of that universal kingdom, and that the saints who are redeemed out of great tribulation, washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb, shall reign upon the earth, where Christ for ever reigneth, and from that as the court and centre of their government, exercise under their king universal government to the end of the world. This I believe to be the mystery of the kingly office: and I have still some remarks to make upon its connexion

with and enlargement beyond the priestly, or rather how it exalts the priestly, for they can never be separated.

The prophetic office of Christ hath the same relation to the priestly, which the intellect of man hath to his conscience, and the priestly hath to the kingly the same respect which his conscience hath to his power. For as the intellect needeth to be enlightened with all variety of knowledge, and to be enlarged with all experience, in order that the conscience may come to its office of discerning the oneness of righteousness, and detecting the variety of wickedness; and as the conscience being fully and fairly satisfied, doth call upon all the members of the body and faculties of the mind, to be the executors of her verdict: which having obeyed and subjected the world of means within their reach to the rule of right, the part and function of a man is completed, and he hath attained the full compass of his present fallen condition, and might, according to the apostle James, claim the title of a perfect man: so the Son of man, in winning his way, from the humility of the lowest condition upon earth to the exaltation of the highest honour in heaven, doth pass through the same threefold order; first as a prophet, revealing in the law, and in the prophets, and in the gospel, all the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge, until he could say, It is finished, with that word sealing up the vision and the prophecy; then as a priest, promulgating the law of the Spirit of life to his church, and making her conscious thereof, hereafter to promulgate it to the world, and make it in like manner conscious, to cast out Satan and his angels from elemental nature, at which second epoch it also shall be said, It is done, Rev. xvi. 17: then finally, entering into the office of king, to constrain and oblige all powers, thus brought to a consciousness of the law of righteousness, to work together and carry it into effect, and so he ruleth the world in righteousness, and through this threefold gradation, and by the full execution of these three fold perfections, doth attain to the honour of the finished redemption, riseth into the full-orbed perfection of the Man-God, and bringeth the earth into the condition of heaven. And like as the intellect of man is as it were drawn up into the conscience, and in the righteousness thereof the light of the other is included, and as the righteousness of the conscience is drawn up into and embodied in the fulness of the active life: so the prophetic office of Christ being completed, is taken up into the holiness of the priestly office, and both again embodied in the rule and dominion of the regal office. Which was the order of man's fall; first his faith in the word was lost, then the purity of his conscience was sullied, and finally the sovereignty of the world was lost; he listened to the tempter's word, he felt the inward shame, and he lost the obedient region of his blessedness: so that is the order of man's recovery; he is enlightened in all knowledge and understanding, he is sanctified by the casting out of Satan from his Spirit and from his flesh, and finally, he is installed in regal dignity upon earth, as it was in the beginning. And when will this completion be accomplished? Then when the kingdom is delivered up unto the Father: not at the beginning but at the ending of the millennium. This is the æra of the sinless purity and perfect integrity of mankind and their dwelling place.

At which many start back, and object against Christ and his raised glorified saints coming to reign upon the earth, where mortality and corruption still abide: and on that ground I hear it often objected, that "it is rather to degrade than to exalt our Lord, to suppose him reigning personally and visibly in such a world as this: if we could, with the Socinians, suppose him a mere man, we could conceive such a throne to do him honour; but the actual visible display of the glory and majesty of the glorified God-Man in a world still sinful, seems as repugnant to the nature of things as the admission of a sinful creature into heaven

itself.” Objections like this I hear so continually made by those whom I love and esteem in the highest place, that I deem them worthy of very grave consideration.

This objection, which is I know a very popular one, hath its full and proper answer from reflecting a little more closely upon the incarnation of the man-God; who was from the day of his anointing with the Spirit of Holiness after the baptism at Bethabara, the very Prophet, Priest, and King of his church; though waiting for the proper season of their due manifestation. Because it is written in the Hebrews, as hath oft been said in this discourse, that he did not enter upon his priestly office till after his death and resurrection, and ascension into glory; we properly enough conclude that before that time he was manifested in no higher character than the prophet; and because he is to be a priest after the order of Meichesedek, we likewise conclude, that when he is manifested as a priest, he shall also be manifested as a king. But this way of speaking concerning the manifestation doth in no way alter the truth, that from his anointing by the dove, he was the Messiah complete, that is, Prophet, Priest, and King, united in one. According to the words of our catechism, ‘Christ exerciseth the offices of a Prophet, and a Priest, and a King, both in the estate of humiliation and exaltation.’ Those who think that the anointing at Bethabara installed him Prophet only, should remember that the prophetic office had no such ceremonial, at least that I can find; whereas the priest and king were always set apart by unction. And it is said that he was anointed with power from on high, and with the spirit of holiness, as well as with the spirit of preaching. And the passage of scripture with which he opened his ministry, as being declaratory of the fulness of that office to which the Spirit had set him apart, doth contain every office of a Prophet, a Priest, and a King. “To preach good tidings to the meek;” what good tidings is the gospel without the knowledge of his priestly sacrifice and priestly intercession? “To bind up the broken hearted,” in what way but by the balm of his sorrows and sufferings for our peace? “To proclaim liberty to the captive;” in what right but that of a victorious King? “And the opening of the prison-doors to them that are bound;” in what power but that of an Almighty Prince? &c. This whole passage, which I may call our Lord’s credentials, breathes the Priest and King in every word; insomuch that I am tempted to say, the prophetic office was only for the end of making known the rich consolation, and most dignified immunities which were to flow from his offices of Priest and King.

From the time of his baptism therefore, I regard Christ as the head of his church, having in his person all the dignity of Prophet, Priest, and King, and fulfilling the power of these offices in the various acts of his ministry, towards Satan and his angels, towards the men whom it pleased him to deliver from the power of sin, towards the great multitude whom it pleased him to deliver from disabilities and diseases, towards the enemies whom he would astound as at the purging of the temple, and towards the elements of nature over which he ruled at his will. And yet he consented to be humbled and afflicted, and in all ways circumvented, and to be taken, and to be maltreated, and to be put to death. This did the man-God consent to for the gracious end of the world’s redemption; because he had taken flesh and was found in human likeness. And having consented to the greater humiliation, who will say that he may not also consent to the lesser. For no one doubts that to rule as a King from the city of the New Jerusalem over a subject earth, is, however it be conceived, a less humiliation than to be treated and crucified as a malefactor by the earth combined against him.

But it is argued by the objectors, that after the ascension he was glorified into a much higher and more honourable condition, of which it would be as it were a great reduction, to come back to the earth again and rule over it. That Jesus is exalted to the right hand of God,

both Lord and Christ, is every where declared in scripture, and may at no rate be doubted; and that this name is far above every name that is named in heaven or in earth, is equally certain; also that it implies in itself the headship and sovereignty of the worshipping creation; but that he hath already taken upon him the office and dignity of reigning over the invisible powers and principalities of heaven, I have the evidence to seek. That this shall yet be the consummation of the Son of man, I most truly believe; but that it is so now manifested I very much doubt. The resurrection declared him to be the Son of God with power; it proved him to be both Lord and Christ; but we do not yet see all things put under him; for he sitteth at the right hand of the Father till all his enemies be made his footstool. If by the power which he presently exerciseth, be meant merely the attendance and obedience and adoration of angels, he had that at his birth, and throughout all his life. If it be meant that he sustaineth all things by the word of his power; the same had he from eternity. But if, which alone is proper to this argument, it be meant that as the Son of man, he entered into any other reward than to be head of the present church, and to wait to be made the head of the heathen, and of the world, and of the blessed universe, I must regard it as an hypothesis till I can find it proved from scripture. I know it is loosely held amongst the people, and the ministers of the people, but this is not conclusive evidence to a Christian or a minister of Christ.

On the other hand, I find his coming again into the world always presented as the time of his reward, and of his power, and of his glory. His resurrection was the assurance of it, and therefore it is ever spoken of as certain; but a season of waiting is also ever spoken of. And what meaning were there in waiting, if the thing were in hand. The second advent, or the bringing again of the Only Begotten into the world, is the realization of that glory. It is yet future to him, though certainly his by the very seat of singular honour where he is seated, but not until the good time of his Father be accomplished. And then he shall be revealed with great glory; then all the angels of God shall worship him; and all kings upon the earth shall serve him. He shall come, not in suffering flesh, but in power and glory; not to suffer, but to rule; not alone, but with ten thousands of his saints; not in the manger of a stable, but in the city of the New Jerusalem. And who is he that will say that this is a degradation. He is now but the head of a humbled church, then he shall be the head of a glorified church. He is now seated in rest and in expectation, all his enemies trampling his inheritance under foot; then he shall be arisen out of his place, and entering into possession, and putting his enemies under his feet. Now his brethren according to the flesh, are scattered, and peeled, meted out, and trodden down, then they shall be gathered in great mercy, restored in great power, and possessed with an everlasting possession of the land promised to their Fathers. This, with much more that might be mentioned, surely constitutes a step of promotion and advancement.

But this is not all? Surely not. He that believeth doth not make haste. Everything in its own order. Christ the first fruits, then they that are Christ's at his coming; then cometh the end. But they further object, how should the glorified God-man be present on the earth still under the dominion of death? I have answered this question already; and have hardly patience to answer it again. But yet there is another way of looking at it which may perhaps help some doubter out of this dungeon. I will propound a far harder question. How did the man-God condescend, after he was baptized from heaven and declared to be the Son of God, deign to be in a meaner condition than the foxes of the earth and the fowls of heaven? The answer they give to this question is, that he did thereby redeem men. This is true, but it is not the truth I seek; for by emptying himself and becoming a servant, and dying upon the cross, he redeemed men. But why, when he was baptized both King and Priest, did he humble himself while he was fulfilling his most wonderful ministry? The answer is, that he might show the

way unto those who should be heirs of salvation, that is, to his elect church, who should in like manner be baptized kings and priests unto God, how they should follow his footsteps. He was our prototype. In his humiliation, we were humbled; and after a manner he is still humbled in our humiliation, by the Holy Spirit “who maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.” This I conceive was the specific end of his ministry, from his baptism to the garden of Gethsemane.

Now when this dispensation of the elect church is consummated, when the number of the elect is completed, and the kingdom is to be ushered in; how, I ask, is the manner of the kingdom to be set forth? for there is nothing in our Lord’s life that will be the type or pattern of it. Now, Samuel wrote all the manner of the kingdom in a book; and the type of it was constituted in the kingdom of David and Solomon. But where is the antitype? Antitype there is none. For though Christ was king, he was so under the veil of his humility; and is the pattern to the present church, who is also king in the same sense. Here, then, is a type, but no antitype. Here is to be a kingdom, but no pattern of the kingdom. Those, indeed, who do not hold the elect church, get over this difficulty by adopting the Arminian idea of a religious world, which is Arminianism realized: but how do the orthodox believers in an elect and separate church get her out of the condition of a small and dispersed people, into the condition of an universal and exalted people; out of a church which was constituted for a little time, into the condition of an eternal kingdom? To my mind, it is utterly impossible to get over this difficulty in any other way than by the revelation and manifestation of our Priestly-King unveiled; as we had him heretofore manifested under the veil, in order that we might follow in the same twilight. But if the Sun is to arise upon us, then it must arise in his person: he must again set us the example, that we may follow his steps. And for this end he will come as a manifest King, in order to set up the kingdom, and constitute the third estate and highest dignity of man, which is power after a godly sort. He and his risen saints under him will govern the nations and tribes upon the earth; will administer the universal church, or kingdom. Now if there were no presence of evil, then there would be no government, nor wisdom in its administration: if there were no possibility of disobeying, there would be no skill in preserving obedience: if there were no growling adversaries, there would be no power displayed in restraining them. His enemies are under his feet, but not destroyed: he ruleth in the midst of his enemies, and by his might keepeth them under. He advanceth the meek, he establisheth the righteous, he glorifieth the humble, and maintaineth the peace of all. And yet this is not the end, or final condition of the kingdom; but that intermediate manifestation of Christ’s power over all his enemies, and the preparation for that eternal kingdom and government which the sons of men shall hold through all eternity over this universe of God. The church is now preparing to be the head of the kingdom; and the kingdom shall be prepared to be the head of the universe.

Now let me reason thus: had he passed at once into the heavens, without any previous signification of the manner of his fulfilling the priestly office unto his present church, we should have had no distinct understanding of our priestly office unto the world; it could only have been a spiritual revelation, without any outward form to refer it to, or at best only to the typical form in the law without any realization of the type. Now the typical can never pass at once into the spiritual, but must pass through the intermediate degree of the real: otherwise the spiritual being without an object, would become mystical. Therefore in order that those who were to be the subjects of the priestly dispensation might have an object with which to compare, and to which to conform themselves in their priest hood, Christ was a priest inaugurate from the time of his anointing to the time of his death; as I may say, serving his

novitiate, in order to show us the example of that novitiate which we should have to serve ere our priestly office should be perfected. And so he forgave sins, and he cast out devils, and he cleansed the temple, and did other offices of the real priest, though he meddled not with any of the typical offices thereof; which would have been to confound the reality with the type. And yet though a Holy Priest, separate from sinners, and bearing about with him an uncontaminated body fit for heaven, he did not deem it unworthy of him to dwell amongst sinful men in the form of a servant. He was the God-Man, and yet was not ashamed to be scorned, and derided, and set at nought, and crucified. Because it was necessary thereby to condemn sin in the flesh, and to show by a manifest life that all its power and violence could be held at bay. He lived amongst his enemies and the enemies of all righteousness, and they had him under their feet from his birth until his death; though he could have commanded ten legions of angels by a single word. But he would not. It is against reason that such a holy thing should be upon the earth; it is still more against reason that he should be trodden down by the wicked things of the earth. And yet so it was, in order to set reason at nought, and demonstrate her inability to attain unto any part of the mystery of divine love.

Now I ask, if so the Scripture reveal it, what difficulty should there be in conceiving such another season between the completion of the priestly and the kingly office. Not that the priestly and kingly are ever separated; but between their manifestation, or before the manifestation of the perfect and complete mediatorial king. Why may not Christ from his new Jerusalem give laws unto the earth, and restrain the powers of iniquity from passing their prescribed bound. He hath since his resurrection administered the kingdom over our spirits. Why may he not at our resurrection administer it over our bodies also? If he could administer it over our spirits while our bodies were under the law of corruption, why may he not administer it over our spirit and body, while the earth and its inhabitants are under the law of corruption? If he could be present as a pure priest in humility, why may he not be present as a pure priest in glory? Everything in its order. He did not start from his birth to his cross, why from his cross to the goal of the redeemed world? There is a redeemed church and there is a redeemed world: and these ideas are at no rate to be intermingled. Or rather there are these three, a redeemed body, a redeemed Church, and a redeemed world. The redeemed body was accomplished at Christ's resurrection, the redeemed Church shall be accomplished at the first resurrection, and the redeemed world at the general judgment. But if from the redeemed body of the Lord, the body of his Church hath derived such blessed sanctification as that it should be called a pure sacrifice though the heir of death why may not, why by analogy ought not, the earth that is to be redeemed, and all that inherit it, have a like season of restrained though unwilling sanctification, though itself the heir of death, and waiting for a further perfection, ere it be brought to its chrySTALLINE purity and new Jerusalem blessedness. Such as the bodies of the saints, the members of Christ, are to the bodies of sinners, the members of Satan, is the earth that now is to the earth that shall be after the coming of the Lord; and as the body of the saints is not less a dwelling place of God by his Spirit though it be the heir of death, so why should we wonder that the earth then may become a dwelling-place of God by his glorified Son, though it is afterwards to be the heir of a judgment and purification analogous to death?

Nay, more, though it is very presumptuous to speculate upon these things by the way of natural reason, the only possible way being by analogy of God's past dealings, yet because they drag down the question to this tribunal, I can see as grave reasons for Christ executing his royal function upon the earth during that millennial season of incomplete perfection, as for his executing his priesthood during that intermediate season before he was perfected as priest. In order that his church acting as kings and priests under him over the earth, and the

sojourners upon the earth by them trained up to the same high preferment in the ages to come, both might be able, when the Lord shall require it of them, to fulfil those same offices over all the regions of the universe, which I conceive to be our high destination. Why may it not be that the Son may administer the kingdom of all the universe by that race of kings and priests whom he hath brought through the same tribulations through which he passed himself? It may be that he may appoint the whole multitude of the ransomed for a court and ministry to the whole creation, as he appointeth the present elect church for a court and ministry to the earth. And that they may sing with exultation during the millennial age, 'And we shall reign with thee over the universe,' as now the church in heaven singeth perpetually, 'And we shall reign with thee upon the earth.' It may be that as Christ hath grown up through suffering and strong crying, and contention with sin, into the high office of mediator to this earth; we may be growing up through the same discipline into the high office of mediators between him and the other races of his creatures; to become the ambassadors of his kingdom, the counsellors of his mind, the doers of his will. And that this earth having passed through the same tribulation, may become the centre of material perfection, the place of the manifestation of the glory of God. These it may be said are but conjectures; I propound them as no more: and do only set them forth as counter-conjectures of reason to that conjecture which I am exposing, that it is unworthy of Christ to make his habitation upon the earth. But they are not mere conjectures; they are hints of high discourse, and germs of infinite thought, all flowing from the fountain of that one great feat, the eternal union of the nature of man with the nature of God. To have conjectured this would have been the most daring of all conjectures; but the Lord hath made it no conjecture, but a stupendous fact; I cannot think that it is an unproductive fact, or that time will tell the end of its fruit-bearing. I believe that it may produce wonders connected with human nature far beyond what I have expressed, and far beyond what I dare to express. Nathanael is not the only one who shall yet see greater things than these. If angels be my ministers in this my humiliation, what in my exaltation may not I hope to become. The Lord knows I am not ambitious of these dignities, and that I write not these things in any ambitious mood. But to justify his power and his grace, which hath already made me, a worm, to become a spiritual member of his eternal Son.

But to restrain ourselves within more narrow limits of thought, and to return to closer quarters with those who oppose the idea of Christ's reign, on the principle of its degrading him: I beg them to consider that Christ doth not consult his own dignity, else would he never have joined himself to the woman's seed, but remained enthroned in the glory which he had with the Father before the world was. It was his Father's glory that he sought, knowing well that in advancing the same, he was advancing his own dignity. And how is that glory advanced? Not in destruction; else the second death had swept all things into its fiery lake the moment that Adam fell. No, but in redemption; in the vanquishing of the victor, and the expulsion of the usurper, in the glory of mercy and love, over sin, and sorrow, and death. This brought Christ from the eternal throne of his divinity, to the lowest condition of a man. Oh! how can any one bear such a thought, as that the eternal Son of God, and creator of the universe should become a man. Degrading thought! Such loss of dignity! Such dishonour to God! It cannot be. It must be a fiction of the schools. So naturally doth this reasoning concerning dignity bring us to Socinianism, from which it affecteth to lift us. But, and if he came to the lowest and stood there in order to redeem his church, why may he not come to a much higher and stand there to redeem the world? For I conceive Christ's personal presence with his saints in the New Jerusalem to be no vain parade of glory, no effulgence of idle beams, but an active, wise, and necessary ministry for the redemption and blessedness of the

world that then shall be; just as Christ's incarnation and presence in the Spirit, is no idle waste of suffering or display of voluntary humility, but an active, wise and necessary ministry for the redemption of the church. And what if the former most wise dispensation which is performed in God's eternal counsels for the millennium should end in an insurrection of the long blessed inhabitants of the earth, requiring the loosing of Satan, and that last infliction of wrath which brings on the consummation, is there any thing more wonderful therein, than that this present dispensation of the incarnate God and the out-poured Spirit is to end, and is now ending in a desertion, in an apostacy, in an almost total absence of faith and eclipse of light. Is the one more dishonourable to the power of Christ's presence by his Spirit, than the other is dishonourable to the power of Christ's presence in his glorious person? Dishonourable! what do they idly talk about? Is the revealing of sin in all its forms, is the defeating of it in all its attempts, is the stemming of it in all its spring tides, is this dishonourable to the Son of God? Thou fool, for this very end was he manifested to destroy the works of the devil. And wouldest thou have this done all at one stroke, or at two, or at three; or what if God without asking thee, should do it by four, or even five? That was one doubtless, when Satan first conceived sin in heaven. That was another blow when Christ ascended to heaven, for he was limited then. There will be another when Christ shall come to the earth, for he will be limited still more then. Heaven rejoiced formerly; now the earth will rejoice. But he is not yet cast into the lake of the second death. There abideth another therefore at the last judgment. And I hear of none besides. Hast thou any objections, brother, that it should be so? I have none. And who dareth to object, for who hath been his counsellor, or who hath instructed him?

But then they reply, How shall I conceive it, or how is it possible to be conceived, that the eternal Son of God should reign on earth in human form; as a man, limited in the space and region of his presence? and what becometh of the infinite spaces and innumerable worlds, around us? and of the heavens, and of the heaven of heavens, when this poor world, certainly but a speck in God's creation, hath, and holdeth him altogether to herself? Oh! it is a foolish exaggeration of the importance of this earth: a speculation suited to the middle ages of religious darkness; and not to these times, when we have become enlightened with larger and more philosophical views of the universe. Nay, it is enough for us to have had the Son of God upon our earth for a few years: to talk of having him for ever, is extravagant and ridiculous, and not in any way to be borne.

I shall suppose myself and the objector to have lived before the time of the first advent, and that from the ancient scriptures I had derived the doctrine that God himself was to come and dwell with us; that he was to be born of a woman; that he was to exist in human form; that he was to be scoffed and derided by men; to be crucified and put to death after a few years abode upon the earth: and that I did promulgate this doctrine to my friend, into whose mouth I have put the strain of objection mentioned above. What could he do, consistently with himself, but object to this, as ten times worse. First, he repeats his objection, word by word, —'How is it possible to be conceived that the eternal Son of God should reign on earth in human form? as a man, limited in the space and region of his presence? and what becometh, &c. —and then he adds, But, that he should be conceived in a woman's womb, and be a child, and an oppressed man, and be put to death too; it is too monstrous to be imagined. Hold not that language to a philosopher: go tell the tale to the credulous vulgar.' And this is exactly the way in which the Socinians have argued with respect to the incarnation, and exploded it from their creed. But how any orthodox Christian, believing in the incarnation of the Son of God for a few years in humility, should be unable to believe in

the incarnation of the Son of God in glory forever, is what I cannot understand. Let us examine this point a little more narrowly.

And first, What is meant by the incarnation? By the incarnation, we mean that the Son of God took up into himself the nature of man, and joined it in a consubstantial union with his person: so that these two natures do and shall for ever co-exist together in him. And while the divinity dwelt in the son of Mary, was it absent from all other parts? No, surely. It is of the very essence of the divinity to be everywhere present, and altogether present in every place. By his divinity, therefore, he was everywhere present throughout all worlds, sustaining and governing them; while, by his humanity, he was present in one place, and in one only. His incarnation, then, doth not hinder him from the presence of heaven; for he himself declareth that he was in heaven, while he abode on earth. As the Son of man, he had beginning of days; but, as the Son of God, neither beginning of days, nor end of years. As the Son of man, he hath degrees of advancement in honour and glory; as the Son of God; he is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Now, we do all thus believe the incarnation; we repose all upon it; we view it as the great substantiating fact, not only of our peace with God, but of the very trinity itself. For the trinity to us had been only a Platonic speculation of the schools, but for the incarnation; which, showing us the Son, reflected to us the Father, from the secret hidden depths of his being; and brought in the necessity of the Holy Spirit, as the great personal communication between them both; in the circle of which all things are derived from and return unto the Godhead.

Thus believing concerning the incarnation of the Son of God, let us proceed a step, and ask, Where is the humanity of Christ existing at this time? Do you say it is existing everywhere? Then I conceive it is humanity no longer; for true humanity is necessarily restricted and limited to place. Besides, if it be existing everywhere, why may, why ought not the bread existing in the eucharist to be considered as his real body? For he absolutely saith, This is my body. I know of no satisfactory reply to the sophistry of Dr. Milner and the other papal casuists of these and other times, but by simply making answer, That Christ's body is in one place, and can not be in two places at the same time, without destroying altogether the idea of his humanity, and so abolishing his incarnation wholly, which is the very effect of that accursed mass. He is not very man, if his manhood can be in many places at the same time; and he is not very God, if his God-head can be confined to any place at any time.

Where, I ask then again, is Christ's body? Not in earth; not in the tomb; not in the place of the dead; not in every place, but in some one place. And where is that place? At the right hand of God. And where is that? I know not; but it is somewhere: the very existence of a body giving existence to the idea of a place. This humanity of Christ is, I fear, entirely lost sight of amongst us; and the comfort of it is lost. His intercession for his church, in human form and human sympathy; his longing to deliver his church, their bodies from the grave, their spirits from the place of spirits; his coming to the earth in great power and glory; are, I fear, all, or almost all, lost sight of: and instead, we have a theological creation, an abstract conception of atonement, redemption, and judgment, presented to us instead of the reality of a Redeemer living in human form, and about to be glorified in human form. But once receive to the mind that the humanity of the Lord is somewhere, and the difficulty will vanish of its being about to be revealed again and to remain on this earth for ever. For that place where it now abideth it doth as much honour, above all other places, as it will honour this earth above all when it cometh to abide here. And surely no other quarter of the dominions of God can suffer any deprivation, the which they suffered not during the incarnation, and which they have not suffered since. But what do I speak of deprivation? Is it deprivation to the old, for

God to create something new? Is it deprivation to the former age, that in this latter age he hath become incarnate? How were the heavens before he was incarnate? Enjoy they not the same condition since he became incarnate, with whatever accession is thereby brought to them by the knowledge of the grace of God? The root of all this objection is either a fallacy or a heresy. It is either the fallacy, that the humanity doth coop the divinity up within the range of its view and influence: or it is the heresy, that the humanity and the divinity were united but for a time, and not as saith the catechism “in two distinct natures and one person for ever.” Whoso believeth the incarnation to have been some eighteen hundred years ago, believeth it to be forever: the only question is, whether it shall be manifested in this earth forever, or somewhere else. The conception is equally difficult wherever it is manifested; most difficult that it should have been manifested at all. For if it was once manifested a child in a manger, surely it may be again manifested a king upon a throne: if it was once manifested a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, surely it may be again manifested as the only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords: if once manifested to die, surely it may be again manifested never to die, &c. &c. through all the diversities of the former and of the latter advent, which I need not detail. But surely it is the most preposterous thing that was ever heard of, to believe the former, and to say I cannot find in my reason to believe the latter. Why in believing the former, thou fool, thou dost believe the latter, and much more. The substance of them both is the same; they only differ in their circumstances; the circumstances of the former are most unlike to God, the circumstances of the latter most like to God.

Now I may be bold and ask, Seeing that by his humanity he must necessarily have a local inheritance and abode, what place so well entitled to it as this earth, which he came on express purpose to redeem? Is not the earth made for man, and man made for the earth? Was not man’s body made of the earth’s mould? And, I may say, was not Christ’s humanity derived from the dust of the ground? Was it not taken from Mary’s substance, and was Mary of other materials than all womankind? What then is the inference, but that the silent and inorganic earth hath a part in Christ’s humanity, which is forever joined to his divinity? It is a strange thought, but it is a true one, that the very earth is linked unto the immortal and eternal chain of being. It hath a representative in the court. It hath the royal pledge of heaven that it shall never perish; that into what dignity humanity is advanced above all intelligence, into that dignity will the material earth be advanced above all compositions of matter. Oh! it is a glorious mystery this of the incarnation. I cannot fathom it; but I see in it such glorious things yet to be developed in God’s good time. In that wonderful act of Emmanuel’s conception I see the supremacy of man’s nature over all natures, and the metropolitan dignity of the earth over all places. And I wonder not that the mystic Fathers, meditating too intensely upon the one act of the Virgin’s conception, should have lost themselves in all manner of dreams and visions concerning her immaculate conception, her divine worship, her not seeing corruption, and all the other inventions of Parthenology. Let me not lose myself in any of these pits of error, while I seek to draw out the wonderful consequences of the mystery, “A virgin shall conceive and bring forth a son, and call his name Emmanuel, that is, God with us.”

Beyond this period of the kingdom, concerning which we have discoursed, there is another condition of things at which we have sometimes hinted that, viz, beyond the destruction of death, when the kingdom shall be given up, and the Son himself also shall be subject unto him that hath put all things under him. Here opens a great mystery into which I desire to look, if at any time it might please the Lord to reveal it to my faith and prayers by his Holy Spirit. The mystery consisteth in the subjection of the Son after he hath finished the

work of the mediatorial kingdom, and presented it worthy of God's acceptance. What this subjection may mean is, I say, to me a very great mystery, into which I long and pray hard to be introduced. I have sometimes thought of it thus: That since the resurrection, the Son of God, as man, hath been invested with a supereminent power over the apostate world, and the apostate angels, because of his exceeding great travail of humility on the earth, in the grave, and in hell: of which accession of power beyond what he possessed as the eternal Word, he giveth the notification to his apostles in these words, "All power is given to me in heaven and in earth," of which also God giveth the notification in the second Psalm, and several other places, under the form of a decree which he had ratified in his counsels from of old. Let no man start when I say an accession of power to that which he possessed as the eternal Word, as if I meant that his power as the eternal Word was not equal to the Father's: for I do but mean that the Godhead had given up this earth into the operation of the curse, and considered it virtually to be in a state of death, under the dominion of Satan and his angels. By the law of God it was so appointed unto miserable death; and could not be said to enjoy the blessedness of divine rule. For being broken off from the divine will, it was under the dominion of a lie: lost and forlorn, resigned and given over. To redeem and recover and restore was the undertaking of the Son, who set every thing, his very divinity, (if I may so speak,) to risk and peril: and when this risk and peril had been undergone, the price and ransom of his blood paid, it was both righteous and reasonable that the remainder of the work, the reaping of the triumph, the driving out of the conquered enemy, and the pacification of the province should proceed in his hands and by his power. So that in the same sense in which the chief part of our redemption was wrought out by Christ; I say that the chief part of our restoration is conducted by him and in this sense it is that I represent him as having received an accession to that power which was his own from all eternity, as the coeternal Word, but which one may say had been usurped by Satan, and in a manner, if I may so speak, taken from the Godhead. Which did all no doubt proceed by divine permission, yet being so permitted to proceed doth certainly draw to the Son an increase of power and glory which ariseth from redemption. Now when he hath completed the work, and wholly purified the kingdom, he taketh and presenteth it to God even the Father, who can now receive it under his all-pure and perfect government. And from this time forth I can perceive that the increment of power which Christ held in virtue of his great emprize, there is no call why he should hold any longer: and it is here expressly said that he is to give it up. This is the only *subjection* of which I can form an idea; namely, the resignation of that super eminent and more than equal power which he now holdeth as the mediatorial king of the earth. For as in his humiliation he acknowledged himself the inferior though one with the Father; so in his exaltation I may pronounce him the superior though still one; understanding both the inferiority and the superiority with relation to this earth merely, of which he is the prophet, priest, and king. To give up this superinduced power, and return into the condition of his primeval equality, into the condition of the Son begotten from all eternity; this is what I understand St. Paul to mean when he saith, "then shall the Son also be subject unto Him, that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all;" that is, the earth shall no longer be under mediatorial regiment, but under the same direct regiment of God in which the unfallen worlds are. And God, not God and a Mediator, but God in his personalities and offices, shall be all in all.

But I confess that the difficulty is not wholly removed; and I question whether the question is at all resolved, by what hath been said; for what becometh of the human nature which is united to the divine nature of the Son for ever, "in two distinct natures and one person for ever?" For the Man-God, that is, the Son of man, declared to be the Son of God

with power by the resurrection from the dead, must ever be an outward visible manifestation of the Son's essential glory. And what shall be His condition when the kingdom is given up? If we suppose the manhood of Christ capable of the like omnipresence with his Godhead; that is everywhere present, and wholly present in every place; then why not present in the bread and wine of the Eucharist? and what meaning in his now sitting at the right hand of God? what meaning in his absence at present? what meaning in his coming the second time to set up his kingdom for ever upon the earth? All idea of place is lost in that which is omnipresent, and all idea of succession in that which is unchangeable. Besides what beginning could that humanity have, or what limitation of place from its beginning, or what limitation now? In his divine nature Christ is everywhere, and wholly in every place. So was he while on earth. He was present in all his power in the Son of the Virgin, and yet he was in heaven. He was present in all his power in his holy human soul which descended into hell; and even then he was in heaven, and on earth also in his divine omnipresence. And when he shall return again with the same body with which he ascended, and in the same manner as he ascended, he shall not the less cease to be in heaven, beholding the face of his Father, and for ever more beheld of him: upholding and governing all the things which he hath created and made. Now, as I have said above, it is the divinity in the man, it is the indwelling power of the Son of God in the Son of man, unto whom is committed the power and the glory and the kingdom of this earth for ever and ever. It is in virtue of his having taken up manhood into himself that the whole work proceedeth; and in virtue of the same that it will make progress to its end and perfection. And being perfected and completed, what becometh of the humanity, of Christ? How standeth it in relation to the Godhead and to the redeemed world?

In relation to the Godhead, Paul informeth us that the Son also shall be subject unto Him, that put all things under him; by which I understand that the Man-God who sitteth on the throne of David, and for ever reigneth over a pure and spotless earth, shall look up to God even the Father, in whose bosom, as the word, he doth for ever dwell. That in that outward manifestation in humanity which he shall evermore retain, he shall acknowledge that more ancient, that everlasting affiliation to the Godhead, in virtue of which his presence in the manhood shall be acknowledged of God, and be made resplendent with divine honour and glory. He shall say as he did in the days of his flesh, "I and my Father are one;" and again, "my Father is greater than I;" and again he shall say, "and no man hath ascended up into heaven but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man, which is in heaven." In the same sense in which he acknowledged subjection while in his humility, he will acknowledge it when he hath put all enemies under his feet, and reigneth over a world at rest and in blessedness. Meanwhile since his resurrection, and until that time, he is clothed with a super eminent power, with a regal prerogative, the highest of all, without challenge, and I may say without dependance. For if the Father forsook him to leave him when in the extremity of his distress, it may well please the Father to make all the fulness of the Godhead to dwell in him bodily; and leave the government entirely on his shoulder. And such an independent sceptre I believe to be provided for him; such an independent sceptre will he begin to wield, when the time of his waiting is accomplished; and with such an independent sceptre shall he judge and destroy all the enemies of the Lord, and chase them from without the active creation to the region of passive suffering. Which being accomplished, he shall give up that sceptre of the complete Godhead, which God hath placed in his hands, and become as the God-man, the same obedient Son which heretofore he was in the days of his flesh as the Man-God. But into this subject of the regal office of Christ I forbear entering further at present.

CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY

OF THE WORK OF CHRIST, AS HELD FORTH IN THIS TREATISE AND ITS PRELIMINARY DISCOURSE.

OH how much more remaineth to be said upon the other three heads of this apology; viz, the Holy Spirit, the Church, and the personal well-being of every member of Christ; which I may say hereafter, if the Lord grant me time and permission; but for the present, that I may rightly improve, and practically conclude this preliminary discourse, by subjoining a meditation upon this whole subject, with which the Lord did comfort my solitary and sorrowful hours, when that sweet child, who was dear in life and dear also in death, lay near me in shrouded beauty, the daintiest morsel that death did ever feed on. That was the blessed æra when, to me, the light of this blessed morning star brake through the clouds in which the church is presently shrouded up. I prayed God to avenge me of death. I have sought diligently ever since to fight against Satan, the Prince of darkness. The Lord hath given me no mean success, blessed be his name. And while I live I will fight against death that so bereft me. And I will conquer him when we come to mortal battle; and I will reign with him under my feet; because I have made the Lord my refuge, and the Holy One my habitation. This meditation containeth the great work of our Prophet, Priest, and King, in redeeming us from the curse of death; and being written in a practical form, becomes an appropriate conclusion to this Preliminary Discourse; and by being more widely circulated may accomplish more effectually the end I had in view, of contending with weapons of heavenly warfare, against the king of terrors; and it may serve as an example how these views of Christ's kingdom may be applied to the ends of practical discoursing. The subject of the meditation is, the great achievements of Christ, who "by death destroyed him that hath the power of death, which is the devil, and delivered them who through fear of death, were all their life time subject to bondage."

Death, with all the terrors of which he is the king, is only the outward form and manifestation to the eye of man, of an evil yet more terrible in the sight of God, which is sin, at whose entering into the creation of God, the whole creation groaned; under whose oppression it groaneth still, and shall continue to groan until the day when the sons of God shall be revealed; when sin shall be cast out of the new Jerusalem and city of our God, and death swallowed up in victory. And of sin the strength is not in itself; but as death deriveth his oppression from sin, so sin hath her strength from the law of God; which is inflexible and unchangeable, and before whose least jot and tittle heaven and earth pay their reverent homage, saying, We shall change as a vesture and shall be changed, we shall remove, and as a scroll shall pass away, but thou, O righteous law of God's unchangeableness, shall not pass away, but be wholly fulfilled. Sin is terrible only because God is terrible in his righteousness, and death is destructive, because the hand of the Lord is stretched out against iniquity, and the grave is consumptive of beauty and life, because our God is a consuming fire.

But still more deeply to enter into this mystery of sin and death, Satan, one of the princes and lights of heaven, whom God had created to administer and watch over his kingdom, hath fallen from his high estate, and with his angels is reserved in chains of darkness until the judgment of the great day: whence it is written in the Psalms, concerning evil magistrates and delegates of God upon the earth, "I have said that ye are gods, and all of you are children of the Most High, but ye shall die like men, and fall *like one of the princes.*" For the angels and archangels and principal sons of God's glorious strength are not infallible,

but stand in the faithfulness of their ministry; “are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation?” Whereupon Satan having conceived sin in his high estate, the law of God which is holy, and just, and good stood up against him; that law which heretofore supported his eminent spirit as the heavens, and earth, and all creation are supported, stood up against him, even the Word of God who divulgeth the law of the Father’s unsearchable will stood up against Satan, to cut him off and destroy him for ever. And as God accomplisheth all things in wisdom, and revealeth his doings unto his holy ones, that they may be blessed in the knowledge of him, and he honoured in their praise which he dearly loveth, it came to pass that the Lord did not at once cut off and destroy the rebellious prince, but resolved to make a show of him openly, and in his fall to demonstrate before all the sons of light, the terror and horror of sin, that there might come out of his instability stability, out of his sin righteousness, out of his rebellion, more constant allegiance in all the myriads of intelligent and heavenly beings.

Therefore he did not annihilate Satan with a blow of the thunderbolt, or with a word of his mouth destroy him utterly, which had been an exercise of power, but no standing monument of power, nor visible demonstration of wisdom for ever, nor manifestation of the complete and perfect Godhead. On which account Satan, abiding in a certain reach and prerogative of power, prevailed against the Father of men, and by his subtlety transplanted sin into the innocent and blessed earth. Whereupon the law stood up against man also, and the Lord might have smitten Adam and all that were in Adam’s loins to destruction at once; but that this annihilation is not the method of God’s, but of Satan’s working, —an idea found not in the Scripture, but in the speculations of human reasoners, so that I often question with myself whether it be an idea proper to a spirit whose essence I take to be immortality or the incapacity of being annihilated. The Lord’s way, which is more glorious and beautiful, was to follow the footsteps of the destroyer into the earth dismantled of its beauty, and into the souls of men stripped of their holiness, wherein standeth the image of God, and in his wisdom to reveal by the history of the human race, as upon a theatre in the sight of all the universe, such a wonderful manifestation of his hidden love, as should by many cords bind the universe more closely in its allegiance, and make more manifest demonstration of Satan’s ineffectual strength. For this end the Son himself came forth from the bosom of the Father, to reveal the Father’s unsearchable love to the sinner, while he revealed at the same time, the Father’s immeasurable hatred against sin; who, being long promised, prophesied of, and expected, did come at length in the likeness of sinful flesh, and in a servant’s humblest form; whom Satan strove with all his might to overthrow, but prevailed not, though he brought his body to the dust of the earth, and his soul to the nethermost hell of sorrow, whence he arose in the greatness of his strength, to become the Father of a new race, begotten in death, and brought forth in the tomb: being exalted as a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins unto all who believe.

Thus hath Satan, one of the princes who fell, and, falling, drew after him many angels and the sons of men, been made the cause of the revelation of the love of the Father, of the redemption of the Son, and the sanctification of the blessed Spirit, who could not have been known in their mercy and in their grace, otherwise than in the recovery of those who had yielded to temptation. Now, if ye will consider, what a glorious company of the heavenly host are looking with earnestness into the face of God’s being, and into the history of his counsel, as they are revealed at sundry times and in divers manners, in his glorious works and wonderful acts, ye may imagine and somewhat conceive what an increased ravishment of blessedness, and devotion of strength, and energy of praise, hath been made to arise through

all the host of created spirits, by this mighty act of the redemption of a fallen world. And moreover I may add this mystery, that Satan was a grief even to the heavenly host in their holy habitations, a continual trouble to the sons of God, with whom he was wont to present himself as the accuser of the brethren, and when at Christ's resurrection he was cast out of heaven, and fell like lightning to the earth, they sang aloud, "Rejoice ye heavens and ye that dwell in them:" but "woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea, for the devil is come down unto you having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." So that Christ's incarnation, which was but as it were the seed of blessings to the earth, was the consummation of blessing to the heavens, out of which Satan is now cast to roam at large for a short time over the principality of the air, and the principality of the world, thereafter to be chained in the bottomless pit a thousand years, and finally cast into the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, to be tormented in it for ever and ever.

Mark ye it well, ye sons of the earth, that the whole intensity of his cunning artifice, and the whole cruelty of his murderous passion is at present, till Christ's second coming, concentrated to destroy us; while the whole intensity of divine love, and the whole vitality of the Prince of life is concentrated to save us. And know ye it well that he hath the first of the field, and all advantages against us, because sinful flesh is on his side, and the world is also on his side, and the unchangeable law of God is on his side, and he can stand up before God, and say, They are mine, for they have broken thy law; and he can say, They must die, because they have sinned; death must feed on them, and the grave must hold them, because they are cursed. For thus in ancient times stood he up before God against patient Job, and consumed him like the moth, and thus he standeth up against us all, and bringeth upon us those billows of affliction and overwhelming waves of sorrow, which would drown our souls in perdition, were there not a rock to flee unto which is higher than we. And you might as well think to change laws and times, and to reverse the stable ordinances of God, as think in your own strength to withstand his assaults, or redeem your souls from his dominion; because it is the dominion of sin, whose strength is the law, whose constancy is the unchangeable God, who hath said, The man that sinneth, he must die. Can you say unto disease, depart? Can you say unto pain, gnaw my vitals no more? or to sorrow, poison my peace no longer, and no longer consume my verdure? Can you say unto the clay-cold lips, breathe upon me once more? or to the death bound tongue, speak to me again, that my soul may be comforted, and my hopes revived? or can you say to the grave, give me back my dead, thou devouring grave? or to corruption, feed not on my darling? Canst thou, Oh man! abrogate or reverse any one of these bitter stings which trouble thy soul's good condition from the cradle to the grave? Why then thinkest thou to be able to redeem thy soul from sin, or to deliver thy life from the mouth of the lions, or to wrestle with death, or to bereave the grave, or to navigate the gulf beyond, or to meet the issues of judgment, which are more terrible than death; being to all the faculties what death is to all the powers of the body, with this difference, that it is not clay to be resolved unto earth, and lie insensible matter till the resurrection, but that it is quick and sentient spirit, able to be blessed only in the righteousness of God, and capable of being only cursed while it lieth at the mercy of Satan, and cleaveth unto sin?

Thus may ye understand the iron oppression and deadly load which lieth upon the estate of man, and crusheth him to the earth with a perpetual death; for we endure in our natural estate a death continual of the spirit, and are defeated evermore of the pure fountain of life, which never reacheth our parched lips in the wilderness of our sinful and unregenerate state; and our beauty is no adorning, save for death to make a banquet of, and our flesh is a morsel to the jaws of corruption. We are by nature the devil's thralls, the mockery of various

evil angels, their tools for all uncleanness and filthiness of the flesh, their ready servants for pride, malice, and revenge, breeding up in our bodies to be the espoused ones of corruption, and in our souls to be the espoused ones of spirits reprobate; fattening for nourishment to the ground we tread on, and thereafter for fuel to the lake that burneth. Such is man by nature, and such is the miserable condition of universal nature.

And who can turn this mighty tide that is against, us, or bale out these overwhelming waters? Sooner might you think to say unto the ocean, Forsake all thy channels, and return back again, ye restless waters, into the great deep from which the Spirit of the Lord did call ye at the first. O man, O my brother man, be not deceived by the artifices of that arch-deceiver, that liar from the beginning, and let not the stealth of the arch-murderer who delights to mangle innocency, and to whose cruelty Herod's in Bethlehem was but as earth to hell, please thy soul with the fancy, with the fond fancy, that thou canst prevail in thyself to undo the undoing with which he hath undone us, and to reverse the sentence of the Omnipotent, in which Satan is strengthened as is a rock of adamant, by that law of laws, the key-stone of the happy universe, "THE SOUL THAT SINNETH IT SHALL DIE." Hear ye, and understand what ye bear. Shall the light flow out of its chambers, because he said, Let there be light; and shall darkness mantle the night when the light is gone? Shall the sun rule the day and the moon the night forever? And shall the lowliest plant which looks upon the sun concoct its seed within itself, and continue its being for ever. And shall the rainbow hang out its covenant of mercy in the watery clouds, and protect the earth from a deluge forever? Shall the ordinances of summer and winter, spring-time and harvest, continue for ever; and all the ordinances of God, recorded in his word, for ever endure, because he said, Be it so? And ye foolish, ye sottish, ye possessed of Satan, shall not the ordinances of the spiritual world, for which the visible world was ordained, only as the body is for the soul, or the husk for the precious seed, not be more steadfast and enduring; and above all that ordinance of ordinances, that law of laws, which saith, "the soul that sinneth, it shall die?" "And is God a man, that he should lie, or the Son of man that he should repent? And shall he be holy no longer? Shall Christ embrace Behial? Shall God enter into unity with mammon? Shall Satan the fallen prince gain his purpose, and achieve the throne of the Eternal? And heaven and hell be mingled together, and chaos return again, and there be no God, nor Spirit, but warfare and confusion, inexplicable disorder, and wild uproar, most wasteful ruin, and infinite desolation?

What say you? Can you dare to think it will be so, or that it is so? or is any of you so wicked as to wish it so to be? And O, ye sufferers, will you not look around ye into the visible creation, and behold how the outward curse hath fastened on and fasteneth everywhere? Is not the earth cursed for your sake? Are not briers and thorns its natural productions? Is it otherwise cultivated than by the sweat of your brow? Withdraw your hand from the most fertile, sweet, and blooming spot of the earth, which smileth by the force of sweating toil like the garden of Eden, and whither in a few years would it run? To thistles, and briers, and thorns, and unpruned trees, and wild forests haunted by savage beasts and savage men. And thou, woman, who wast also cursed, doth it not strike to thee and cleave to thee as the flesh unto thy bones? Canst thou achieve thine emancipation from the man, that thy desire shouldst not be to thy husband, unworthy, most worthless though he be? Canst thou conceive children without pain, or bring forth children without pangs? Or, can ye parents, make a covenant with death, that he should spare your children, or with the grave, that he should not consume them? Or, sinful man, canst thou strike a covenant with life, that it should not be with pain, and sorrow, and trouble; or with sin, that it should not be masterful and oppressive; or with conscience, that it should not bite and sting; or with memory, that it

should not fester; or with the tongue that it should not be false; or with the eye that it should not be covetous; or with the flesh that it should not be lustful and voluptuous; or with life, that it should not be full of pride; or with any thing beneath the sun, that it should not be full of vanity and vexation of spirit?

I would persuade and convince my beloved brethren, fellow-heirs of suffering, if the Lord have ordained you unto eternal life, that in yourselves, and of yourselves, you are by no means able to take the sting out of death, or to wrest the victory from the grave, who are chartered in their rights by the unalterable law of the Eternal, which is more steadfast than heaven and earth. For it is, because ye are deceived and deluded by manifold temptations of Satan, either not believing at all, or trusting in some false refuge, that ye do not flee to the hope set before you, nor expect salvation to come out of Zion, nor wait for it as for the morning light, nor desire it with more longing than they that watch for the light of the morning. I say to every one who hath not laid hold of the salvation of Christ, being drawn by the will of the father, and empowered of the Holy Ghost, that he is underlaying a fatal delusion of Satan, who hath seared his conscience and blinded his eyes, lest he should see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. I tell ye of a truth, that every chamber of nature hath become a spiritual prison full of darkness and evil, and that there is not a spot to flee to, within the coasts of human knowledge or imagination, whereon your spirit can breathe the liberty of God, or be delivered from the thralldom of Satan. Power Almighty is against us, and Power Almighty can alone save us. The law of God is the strength of sin, and sin is the sting of death, and the victory of death is the grave; and Satan being the first conceiver of sin, hath the miserable pre-eminence, and hath strength to keep, and cunning to entertain with all deception, his miserable victims, whom he draggeth with him in fell despite down to that lake, whereto he is himself descending by degrees more and more doleful, the spectacle of God's triumph over sin, the lesson to all his creatures to stand steadfast in their allegiance.

He that created can alone recover; he that formed the spirit of man can alone redeem it. There must be Power Almighty to recover that which by Power Almighty is held in its lost estate; and here beginneth the most wonderful revelation of the love of the Father, and the love of the Son, and the love of the Holy Spirit, through whose Almighty operation the recovery of our condition is accomplished. For it is a misapprehension to think that all the Persons of the blessed Trinity are not concerned, according to their offices, in this divine work. The Son would not have been permitted to come forth, had the Father not been willing; because from the Father he proceedeth, and without the commission of the Father worketh nothing. And therefore the procession of the Son from the bosom of the Father to redeem, was an act of the Father's unspeakable love. Whence it is written, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son." And again, "Greater love hath no man, than that a man should lay down his life for his friend; but herein is the love of God manifested, that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." But, Oh! to measure that love which yielded up the Son to such loss of place and endurance of grief, who shall undertake, who knoweth it, and who can know it, but the Eternal, and who contain the knowledge of it, but the eternal fountain of love, from which all that is lovely and blessed hath proceeded? To set it forth by earthly similitude is a vain attempt, even to an apostle who had been translated into the third heaven, and seen and heard things which were unutterable, who crieth out, O the height and the depth, and the length and the breadth, of the love of God in Christ Jesus, it passeth knowledge. And Christ is not able by words to render it, or by language of prayer to comprehend it, but only to say, With that love with which thou lovedst me before the world was.

But if the love of the Father be transcendent in permitting his Son to come forth to save the fallen sons of men, then is the love of the Son not less transcendent in coming to save us. For he was not a creature that he should obey. He was not of finite power that he should be constrained to obey. He was not a sinner that the law of the Eternal should bow him from his high estate. Wherein lieth the mystery of the Son's personality, that had be not been distinct in personality the manifestation could not have been made. For it would have been God reversing by one act, or series of acts, that which by another act, or series of acts, he had brought to pass. And redemption would have been no longer a mystery, into which the angels desire to look, and from the opening of which all the angels and saints shall be ever blessed, and Satan and his angels be for ever cursed; but it would have been a contradiction, an inconsistency, a doing and undoing, or at best a circle returning into itself, and compassing no good with its void circumference. But because he was God, and full of liberty in himself, the wisdom of God which declares the will of God, the word which reveals the mind, the Son which expresseth the Father, the variety in which the unity is seen, while he is himself a unity, the Creator who is installed in creation, the lawgiver who utters the law; therefore that love which the Father had towards us, it was proper to him wisely to manifest, graciously to reveal, truly to word, and as he had given the law of power, so now to give the law of love. For creation is the law of power, and regeneration is the law of love, two principles which were united in one at first, when power was love, which now are parted by our fall, love having departed out of creation, and wrath entered instead; and no longer to be discovered therein, by any methods of science and philosophy, as the unlovely lives and characters of our men of knowledge doth amply show: for love had fled like Astræa to the stars, there being no place found for her any more in nature, and room was not found for her, save in the unfolding of that promise which in all its parts is above nature, "the seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent." Which word declared unto the fathers, and opened from time to time into more distinct unfoldings like a seed germinating in the earth, was to the fathers who comprehended its plentiful fruit from its present promise, the foundation of faith and of trust; as it is also to us, who do not yet see the perfection of its growth any more than they, although we behold it in a riper state, yet not ripened. For the seed of redemption which was sown in Eden, where all other blessed fruits became accursed, hath not yet been perfected, nor will be perfected until the last trumpet, when the grave shall yield up her dead, and the sea shall yield up her dead, and they shall come from the north, and the south, and the east, and the west, and sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. After which time of millennial blessedness, death and hell shall be cast into the lake of fire, where the beast and the false prophet are, and Satan after having endured one thousand years confinement in the bottomless pit, shall likewise be cast into the lake that burneth, to be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

And the good and evil are separated, and shall dwell apart forever. The sinners that have been redeemed by the blood of Christ, and ransomed from the power of the grave, being washed and purified shall become the everlasting spouse of Christ in the heavenly places, their bodies also being raised incorruptible, like unto his glorious body, shall be beheld by the hosts of creation, in every look with which they behold Christ in like manner arrayed. For surely he hath taken upon him, not the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham, and when he appeareth we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. And then where is Satan the serpent that deceived our first parents, and now deceiveth the nations? Cast down by Christ's first coming out of heaven where he accused the brethren, and afterwards by his second coming cast out of earth into the bottomless pit to make way for the kingdom of Christ upon

the earth, afterwards loosed for a space in order that he may show his unsubdued mischief, for which he is again cast out into the lake that burneth, to move evil no more, but be the subject of evil for ever and ever. And where are Satan's angels? With him there. And where is sin? With him there. And where are death, and the grave, and corruption their daughters? There, where sin and Satan are. And where are all their earthly works, the men and nations whom they deceived, and who would not be redeemed, the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars? They have their portion in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. And the creation of God is clean swept again and the works of sin are destroyed, utterly destroyed, left an ever-enduring monument of destruction; and a new book of God's character hath been opened unto the host of heaven, the book of his mercy and grace, and a new revelation of the personalities of the Trinity in offices of salvation, which heretofore were not needed and not known. For in this work the Spirit hath his wonderful part to sustain, no less than the Father and the Son; the Spirit who anointed the man Christ Jesus with power from on high, who quickened his body in the tomb, who descended from on high upon the church at Pentecost, to disperse the leaves of the tree among the nations, who regenerateth every soul that cometh to glory, and quickeneth every body that is laid in the tomb, who bringeth forth the new heavens and the new earth in their most fragrant beauty, and ever liveth in the souls who come to glory, maintaining their everlasting union with the Son their husband, who leads them in their pure beauty to his Father and their Father, to whom they are obedient for ever and for ever.

And thus the victory over death and the grave, over sin and Satan, over evil angels and wicked men, over the world and the flesh is accomplished, not by any strength or power resident in us, but by the working out of the mighty counsels of the Most High. For as that law of the will of God, which being expressed in words is, 'the soul that sinneth it must die,' was the cause of all the ruin and havoc wherewith the world is stored; so that other law of the divine will which being expressed in words is, 'God is love,' is the cause of all the blessedness which hath been derived from the promise, and which shall be derived until the regeneration be complete. As that word 'the soul that sinneth it must die' brought forth from its infinite womb those threatenings, and curses, and statutes and commandments comprehended in the law; so that word 'God is love' brought forth from its infinite womb those promises, benedictions, consolations, and divine covenants of mercy comprehended in the gospel of Christ. And as from the law which stood in commandment, sin started up and said, 'lo I also am;' and death started up and said, 'and I also am;' and the grave arose with her yawning mouth and said, 'and I also am;' and all exclaimed, 'let us have our own, thou law, for whose sake we watch and ward, lest thou shouldest be transgressed; now that thou art violated, let the dragons that have so long watched thy virgin spotlessness have for a morsel those who have abused thee.' So the gospel which is the law of reconciliation, the ordinance of love, did come and say, 'and ye shall have your own, O sin, O death, O grave, a nobler victim than ye could have desired shall ye have. Behold the man of my right hand, smite him sin; and sin brought all her ordinances of law against him, but could not smite him. Smite him oh death, and death brought her cruelest weapons against him, and thought she had smitten him. Have him O grave, and the grave enclosed him in a tomb of hollow stone, her strongest house, and thought that she had him forever. But speedily death found life stirring in her yet silent and undisturbed realm, and the grave found that her hoary secrets were invaded by the light of life; and their prison doors burst, and their sceptre broken, and themselves captured by their captive, captivity led captive, the spoiler spoiled, the law vindicated, and sinners

saved. For why? because there is another ordinance in God than justice. They knew not but that God is only justice; and therefore they had thought their being everlasting as his own. But a new ordinance was in the Lord, the ordinance of love, of which death and the grave had but heard the rumour from afar, which had been slowly unfolding its most meek and radiant form, and now being perfected hath come in and destroyed, and spoiled their realm, to bring in upon sin, righteousness, and upon death, life, and upon the grave, resurrection. And now, love, which heretofore had been in swaddling bands, is grown to stature; and sin which heretofore had been a giant, is weakened in his strength. The former must increase, the latter must decrease. Until all things shall be accomplished which have been written from the days of patient Job, who said "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand on the earth in the latter day, and though, after, my skin worms may destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God. Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me," —down to the time of St. Paul who wrote so divinely of those things, "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. xv. 53-57.

Thus have we laid open the two dispensations of death and of life; to the former of which we are heirs by natural birth, to the latter of which we become heirs by spiritual birth, —the former of which we hold by the entail of sight, the latter of which we hold by the assurance of faith. The two dispensations are equally certain, and eternally true, flowing each out of an eternal law of God's unchangeable being; the former flowing from the law of his justice, the latter from the law of his love. We cannot deliver ourselves from the dispensation of wrath and misery, which holds the sinner within its grasp, as surely as the particles of the earth are holden together by their law, or the stars of heaven by theirs. But out of it we can escape into the dispensation of love, which the love of God hath framed for our sake: and to the end that you may escape, was it framed of the love of God; and to the same end is it continually ministered to you in the Church of Christ. The Lord, our righteousness, hath revealed it, not only by word, but by deed, conquering in his incarnation all that opposed themselves to the mighty work; and you have it made known by his ministers. Now, if ye will receive these things which we have heard, and in your hearts believe them, ye must seek earnestly of the Father, that he would send forth his Spirit into your hearts, and anoint you with his power, as heretofore he anointed the man Jesus of Nazareth, that you also may go about doing good, and destroy the works of the devil. For though no one but the Son of God can discharge that ministry which brought life and immortality to those who were through the fear of death all their life time subject to bondage, yet every one who, like him, would condemn sin in the flesh, and obtain the victory over death and the grave, must walk in his footsteps, and in the same strength prevail over the enemy of souls and all his evil angels. But without the Holy Spirit ye can as little stir in this warfare, as without Christ ye could have known that such a warfare was to be undertaken, or such a victory to be achieved.

But will the Holy Spirit be granted to you? Will a Father grant bread to his starving child, or a Mother grant milk to her imploring babe? Therefore, by the faith of that which Christ hath revealed, and by the expectation of that which the Spirit is promised to perform in your regeneration and sanctification, it will as surely come to pass that you shall be saved from the power of sin, of death, and of the grave, as it is sure that, without such faith and co-

operation, ye shall perish for ever. Because, as hath been said, hell is as sure as heaven is sure, being equally the offspring of the law of God's unchangeableness. And they shall both last through eternity; the one to deter from disbelief and disobedience, the other to encourage all creatures to faith and to obedience. For when the host of heaven shall, after the restoration of all things, look to Christ, in every look they shall behold human nature glorious, and see faithful sinners inheriting his glory, and acting in him as the members of his body, infallible as himself, and as himself honoured and blessed. And in every look which the host of heaven shall cast towards the Prince of evil, who was ambitious of Christ's pre-eminency, they shall behold him in shame and vilest misery, and along with him, sharing in his durable torment, all who would not believe the word and promise of God, but cast off their allegiance to his most holy laws. And these two objects, as the opposite poles of the spiritual world, shall maintain its stability, and perhaps for evermore avert the inroad of pride and ambition, of folly and wickedness, from the seats and settlements of the blessed.

Therefore, if ye will turn unto your strong holds, ye prisoners of hope, and by faith lay hold of the hope set before you, and by faith and patience inherit the promises; if ye will receive the word which is preached unto you, that Christ Jesus, the Son of the Highest, hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, hath died our death and risen the first-fruits of our resurrection, and satisfied the Law and made it honourable, and broken the covenant into which the Law had entered with death and the grave, and made it enter into a covenant with life and immortality; turning the tide that was against us by his Almighty strength, and manifesting most clearly that it is God's will to love and save the transgressors by the Gospel, as surely as it is his will, without the Gospel that they should perish: if these things ye will receive, and not reject, but truly believe with your hearts, and come unto the Lord, ye shall be saved,—for the promise is to you, and to your children, and to as many as the Lord our God shall call. But out of Christ ye cannot be saved. Ye have heard the Gospel, and ye have known it; it hath not been hid from your eyes, nor hath its voice been removed from your ears; but it doth abide before you continually, before you and your fathers. And ye must reject it, or ye must receive it. There is no middle course. Ye cannot plead ignorance, like the heathen: ye cannot plead delusion, like the servants of the beast. There is no sorcery upon your eyes; nor sackcloth covering upon the Old and New Testament, the two witnesses of God; which must either consume you with their curses, or bless you with their blessings; be either the savour of life unto life, or of death unto death. Therefore, make ye up your minds this day, which you will serve —Christ or Belial, God or Mammon, the Church or the world. For assuredly it shall come to pass, that upon you shall come all the curses which are written in the book of God, all the pains and sorrows that are before death, all the fears and tortures that are in the article of death, all the judgments that are in eternity. For you were called, but you would not give ear; ye were intreated, but you would not repent.

Oh, and will ye serve Satan, men and brethren; and will ye do the works of Satan, who striketh us with unceasing strokes, and with sore smitings doth wound us; who hath taken peace from the earth, and made the dust of the ground one heap of corruption; who hath grieved and torn us and all our fathers; and now unto this day ceaseth not his enduring warfare upon the flowers of all families and the hopes of all hearts. Oh, and will ye serve him, will ye do his work? Yes, ye will serve him, and his works ye will do, and he will pay you with his wages which is death: and then unchangeable doom, fate irreversible hath you. Ye are thenceforth limbs of Satan, members of the devil; and with him must fall, and with all his angels must sink to uttermost perdition, and live, and live for ever in misery, the prey of sin and death, the monuments of God's justice, the evidence of the law —“he that sinneth

must die," the terror of all creation, its great beacon, its fearful warning, the stay and establishment of its allegiance.

But, upon the other hand, if ye will turn unto the Lord, and serve the Captain of your salvation, whose great destruction of sin and death hath now been declared; then it shall come to pass, that, from being fellow-workers with Satan in your destruction and the destruction of others, ye shall become fellow-workers with Christ in your salvation and the salvation of others. For verily I say unto every one of you, that by the regeneration of the Holy Spirit, which followeth upon the faith of Christ, ye shall work out your salvation with fear and trembling, God working in you to will and to do of his good pleasure: and by the quickening of the same Spirit, when the day arrives, ye shall rise from the tomb, and disappoint death, and be cleansed from sin, and be united unto Christ in royal and divine dignity for ever and ever.

Oh, men and brethren, how ye are deceived this day, as many of you as despise this great salvation; how miserably you are deceived of your inheritance, dragged down from highest honour, deprived of power almighty against Satan and his works, easy captives, willing thralls, spiritless creatures, without God and without hope in the world, heirs of wrath, sons and daughters of corruption, self-condemned, self-sacrificed, despisers of God, lovers of Satan, careless of heaven, deservers of hell. Whereas ye might have been engaged all your life long in counter-working evil and abolishing misery, in straitening Satan and repaying on his head some of the evil he hath visited on you; fellow-workers with Christ in bruising his head, partakers of those sufferings whereby the waters of sin are assuaged, and builders up of that ark, even the Church, wherein the precious life of the generations of men is preserved.

But we would not, we would not. Oh Lord, have mercy upon us! Oh Christ, have mercy upon us! Oh Holy Spirit, have mercy upon us, who thus set your offices at nought! We are of all men the most worthless, and it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for us.

But all ye, who have believed the report of the Gospel, and seen the arm of the Lord made bare against sin and Satan, in the death of Jesus Christ, against death and the grave in his resurrection, be of good cheer in all troubles and adversities, for your Redeemer liveth, the same yesterday, to day, and for ever; and He is head over all things to his Church, correcting not his children but for their good, and chastening them only because he loveth them. And every wound on this side the grave, is but a wound to your body of sin and death, whose wounding is the Spirit's strengthening; whose death is the Spirit's life. Therefore let sorrow and affliction do their kindly office, and let death in due time do his kindlier office. Their wounds are open mouths, through which the spirit may receive angel's food from heaven. And oh exercise yourselves at such seasons with solemn thoughts, and the Lord will bring in array before you such a congregation of your sins and shortcomings, of your worldly affections and fleshly attachments, of sense still living, and sin still surviving, as shall humble you to the dust, and lay you low upon the ground before him. And when they have humbled your soul, and broken your heart with contrition, the Lord, according to his promise, will come with an increase of his indwelling Spirit, and work the more in your soul's redemption, so that you shall be, like Job, doubly blessed in the riches and affections of the Spirit; haply also, if the Lord will, in the riches and possessions of the present estate; for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof. And, above all, you will be wrapped into profounder views and deeper apprehensions of the hatefulness and deformity of sin, of its exceeding sinfulness, and misery, and sorrow, and death; from whence will come more lively apprehensions of the love of the Father, in sending his Son to redeem us out of its power; of the travail and

sufferings of the Son, who wrought out the work and finished it; of the quickening and consolation of the Spirit, in making us to go through the same work in our souls, which Christ went through in the sight of angels and of men. And thus we become partakers of the sufferings of Christ, and crucify the flesh with its corruptions and lusts, and have the pledge and earnest of a glorious resurrection, by the power of the same spirit which mortifieth our members within us: and are enabled in all cases of trial, and in all deaths of dear kindred in Christ Jesus, and in our own death, but, above all, in our resurrection, to exclaim —“O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Cor. xv. 55-57.

Christmas Day, 1826.

P.S. —I have said, that this work was to have been laid on the altar as my Christmas offering to the Church; and in the body of this Preliminary Discourse I have signified that it was written on that day, as indeed the substance of it was; and now two months have past beyond the stated time. The cause of this delay I hold myself called upon to give; especially as I feel it will not be less agreeable to the Church to receive it, than it is to me to offer it.

There arose, in the beginning of last summer, amongst certain students of prophecy in London, a desire to compare their views, with respect to the prospects of the Church at this present crisis; and we held meetings during the summer, from time to time, as we could find opportunity. When one of our number, well known for his princely munificence, thought well to invite by special letter all the men, both ministers and laymen, of any orthodox communion, whom he knew or could ascertain to be interested in prophetic studies, that they should assemble at his house of Albury Park, in Surrey, on the first day of Advent, that we might deliberate for a full week upon the great prophetic questions which do at present most instantly concern Christendom. In answer to this honourable summons, there assembled about twenty men of every rank and church and orthodox communion in these realms. And, in honour of our meeting, God so ordered it that Joseph Wolff, the Jewish Missionary, a son of Abraham and brother of our Lord, both according to the flesh and according to faith, should also be of the number. And here for eight days, under the roof of Henry Drummond, Esq. the present High Sheriff of the County, and under the moderation of the Rev. Hugh M’Niel, the Rector of the Parish of Albury, we spent six full days in close and laborious examination of the scriptures, upon these six great heads of doctrine:

First, The doctrine of Holy Scripture concerning the times of the Gentiles. Secondly, The duties of Christian ministers and people, growing out thereof towards the Gentile churches, Thirdly, The doctrine concerning the present and future condition of the Jews. Fourthly, The duties growing out of the same towards the Jews. Fifthly, The system of the prophetic visions and numbers of Daniel and the Apocalypse. Sixthly, The scripture doctrine concerning the future advent of the Lord. And Lastly, The duties to the church and the world arising out of the same.

Now these are points on which men are supposed to be wholly at sea, without chart, course, or polar star; and it is the common rebuke of the students of prophecy, that no two of them are agreed on any one matter: and therefore the thing which I am about to say, will appear the more wonderful; That though we were for the most part strangers to one another, of different churches and of different countries, and under no influence of one another, we were so overruled by the One Spirit of truth and love, as to have found our way to harmony and coincidence in the main points of all these questions. We believed in common that the present form of the dispensation of the gospel was for a time commensurate with the times of the Gentiles, which again are commensurate with the period of Jerusalem's being trodden under foot, and of the Jews' dispersion; that the restoration of the Jews would introduce altogether a new era into the church and the world, which might be called the universal dispensation of the benefits of Christ's death, while this is the dispensation to the church only, which *few* compared with the *whole*. That the conclusion of the latter in great judgments, and the commencement of the former in great mercies, was hard at hand, yea even at the very door; all being agreed that the 1260 and 1290 days of Daniel were accomplished, and the remaining 45 begun, at the conclusion of which the blessedness will be fully arrived. And that during this judgment, which may open upon us any day, we are to look for the second advent of the Lord in person, to raise the dead bodies of his saints, and with them to reign upon the earth. All agreeing that in the view of these things, there was required of us the greatest vigilance at our several posts, and the most fearless constancy in affectionately warning and preaching righteousness to all; according as they are admonished by our Lord in the sixth vial, under which it was the universal opinion we are now living, ready for the last great and concluding vial of wrath.

These things I write from recollection, not caring to use the copious notes which I took, for it was a mutual understanding that nothing should go forth from the meeting with any stamp of authority, that the church might not take offence, as if we had assumed to ourselves any name or right in the church. But there was such a sanction given to these judgments, by the fulness, freeness, and harmony which prevailed in the midst of partial and minor differences of opinion; by the spirit of prayer, and love, and zeal for God's glory and the church's good; by the sweet temper and large charity which were spread abroad; and by the common consent, that God was in a very remarkable way present with us; that I deemed it my duty to make known these great results to the Christian churches, which I have thus so early an opportunity of addressing; seeing, moreover, it is the just cause of, and the only apology for my delay.

Having said so much, I think it to be my duty further to state the godly order and arrangement according to which the Albury conference, concerning the second advent, was conducted: for to this, under God, I attribute in no small degree the abundance of the blessings with which our souls were made glad. We set apart a day for each subject, and resolved to give no more than one day to each; and as we were but six free days assembled, having met on the Thursday and parted on the Friday of the week following, we joined the fourth and the seventh subjects together, conceiving them to be closely connected with one another. And having apportioned a separate subject to each day, we proceeded to each day's work after the following method. We divided the labour of each day into three parts; a morning diet before breakfast, the second and principal diet between breakfast and dinner, and the third in the evening. The object of our morning diet, to which we assembled at eight o'clock precisely, as early as we could well see, was two-fold; first, to seek the Lord, for the light, wisdom, patience, devotion to his glory, communion of saints, and every other gift and

grace of the Holy Spirit, which were necessary and proper to the labour, which was that day appointed us in God's good providence: this office was always fulfilled by a minister of the gospel. Secondly, one of the number was appointed over-night, and sometimes several nights before, to open the subject of the day in an orderly and regular way, taking all his grounds of argument, and substantiating all his conclusions out of the Holy Scriptures: and while he thus proceeded, the rest of the brethren took down the substance of what he said, and noted down the texts from which he reasoned. For we sat in the library around a large table provided with every convenience for writing and for consulting the Holy Scriptures. When the outlines, and divisions, and whole ground-work of the subject were thus laid out by the brother, strengthened by our prayers, we parted without at that time declaring any thing, and refreshed ourselves with breakfast, where we met the pious and honourable lady and family of our worthy host. Two full hours were allowed from the breaking up of the morning till the assembling of the mid-day diet, which was at eleven of the clock, in order that the brethren might each one try and prove himself before the Lord, upon the great questions at issue, and that we might come together with convictions, not with uncertain persuasions, and speak from the conscience, not from present impressions. And when we assembled and had shortly sought the divine favour to continue with us, an office generally performed by our reverend Moderator, he proceeded in due order to ask each man present for his convictions upon the subject which had been laid before us in the morning. And the rest diligently used their pen in catching the spirit of what dropped from each other's lips. No appeal was allowed but to the scriptures, of which the originals lay before us, in the interpretation of which, if any question arose, we had the most learned eastern scholar perhaps in the world to appeal to, and a native Hebrew, I mean Joseph Wolff. In this way did every man proceed to lay out the nature and the ground of his conviction, which was done with so much liberty and plentifulness, and mutual respect and reverence of the Holy Word, as much to delight our souls.

Now this diet lasted oft four, and sometimes almost five hours, our aim being to gather the opinions of every one before we parted; and when we tired we refreshed ourselves with prayer, which also we regarded as our main defence against Satan. This diet also we closed with an offering of thanksgiving by any of the clerical brethren whom the Moderator might pitch upon. After dinner we again proceeded, about seven o'clock to the work of winding up and concluding the whole subject; but in a more easy and familiar manner, as being seated around the fire of the great library-room, yet still looking to a Moderator, and with the same diligent attention to order, each seeming desirous to record every thing which was said. This went on by the propounding of any question or difficulty which had occurred during the day, addressed to him who had opened the subject, or to any other able to resolve it; and so we proceeded till towards eleven o'clock, when the whole duties of the day were concluded by the singing of a hymn, and the offering up of an evening prayer. Such were the six days we spent under the holy and hospitable roof of Albury house, within the chime of the church bell, and surrounded by the most picturesque and beautiful forms of nature; but the sweetest spot was that council room where I met the servants of the Lord, the wise virgins waiting with oil in their lamps for the bridegroom, and a sweeter still was that secret chamber where I met in the Spirit my Lord and master whom I hope soon to meet in the flesh.

Oh Albury! most honoured of the King
 And Potentate of heaven; whose presence here
 We daily look for! In thy silent halls
 His servants sought, and found such harmony
 Of blessed expectation, as did fill
 Their hearts with lively joy: as if they'd caught
 The glory of the cloud which bore their Lord,

Or heard the silver-toned trump of jubilee
 Sound his arrival through the vault of heaven.
 From thy retreat, as from the lonely watch-tower,
 We had certain tidings of the coming night,
 And of the coming day. The one to brace
 Our hearts with dauntless resolution,
 All sufferings to endure in his behalf,
 Who for our souls did bear the ascendant dire
 Of Satan's hour and power of darkness.
 The other to delight our hearts with thoughts
 And dearest joys which are not known to those
 Contemptuous and unfaithful servants,
 Who think not of the promise long delayed
 Of thy most glorious coming, gracious Lord!
 For me, and for these brethren's sake I pray,
 That the sweet odour of those hallowed hours
 May never from our souls depart, till thou
 Our glorious King thy standard in the heavens
 Unfullest, and command'st the Archangel strong
 To make the silver-toned trump of jubilee
 Sound thine arrival through the vault of heaven,
 And quicken life within the hollow tomb.

So singeth my soul full gladly in the watches of the morning, which I have prevented, to recall these sweetest recollections of my life. And now I must conclude my labour by entreating thee, courteous reader, to weigh well such an unanimous voice of various divines; and to con consider well ere thou scornest unheard, or unexamined dost reject the sum and substance of the great doctrine of the second advent, which thou wilt find expressed in this great work of God's favoured servant. The doctrine maketh most winged speed, I perceive, among the babes who are simple-minded, and among the strong men who are content to be accounted fools for Christ. But how is it I hear no account of any movement of desire and expectation of the common husband amongst the virgins who belong to my own quarter of the city, my dear brethren or kinsmen in the Lord, the children of the daughter of my people!

I said, the truth of his Son's glorious advent maketh winged speed in all the churches, as was evinced in the harmony and unanimity which pervaded those many long and laborious sessions of the divines and lay-men who met together from various quarters at Albury Park, for the end of consulting the Scriptures, and laying open their several convictions upon this great subject. Of which assembly the least that I can say is this, that no council, from that first which convened at Jerusalem until this time, seemed more governed, and conducted, and inspired by a Spirit of holy communion. I said it maketh winged speed in all the churches, but alas that church to which I owe my reverence as to a mother, a bountiful though somewhat a stern mother to me, giveth little heed that I can hear of, to this great immediate overwhelming truth. Do thou bless, O Lord, this second attempt of her unworthy son to awaken some of her fathers, some of her doctors, some of her ministers, some of her elders, some of her members, yea all, yea all, Oh my God, if so it might be pleasing in thy sight and according to thy will. For, that our fathers did heretofore witness a good confession to this kingly office of thy Son, the stones which cover their bones do testify, in the moors and solitudes where they fell martyrs to the doctrine of thy sole supremacy in thy house. Which these eyes can attest; for with unwearied foot I have visited them almost every one, and with keen eye spelt their moss-grown monuments, and do now delight to remember those the haunts of my early youth, upon this lonely watch tower where the Lord hath stationed me in his wonderful providence ; —mine appointed post, from which, by the grace of God, I shall make known

unto the Church whatever I hear and see; —fearing not, Oh my Lord, these Pharisaical and Sadducean enemies, with whom I am surrounded, not caring that I have not that communion of the brethren for which my soul longeth. For am not I thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid, whose hands thou hast untied? And to whom then is my light of knowledge, my life of conscience, and my freedom of speech and action due, but unto thee, O my God and King! my Head, the Head of thy Church, the Head of the worshipping universe! unto whom, with the Father and blessed Spirit, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

EDWARD IRVING.

*Caledonian church,
January 17th, 1827.*

A DEAR friend and brother in the ministry of Christ has just sent me the following Note, which I have much pleasure in adding to this Dissertation, not being able to embody it. —It should be affixed to that part of the Work which relates to Transubstantiation. “I think a few words would be desirable; merely observing, that the pious Author does not seem to have been aware that there is no word in Hebrew or Syriac which denotes ‘to signify.’ They always use *the thing* signified for *the sign*. *The seven lean kine, are seven years*; that is, signify seven years: the seven golden candlesticks, *are the seven churches*; that is, signify the seven churches, &”

THE COMING OF
MESSIAH IN GLORY
AND MAJESTY

TO THE READER.

A LEARNED Spaniard, resident in Madrid, having remitted to me several curious documents for publication, if I should see it good, amongst the rest I have fallen in with a criticism upon the work, entitled, *The Coming of Messiah in glory and majesty*; which was first printed in this city, in the Spanish tongue. And considering how universally allowed, are the profound knowledge and vast erudition of R. P. Fr. Paul, of the Conception, by whom this criticism was drawn up, I have deemed it of importance to make it public; in order that the purchasers of the work might possess themselves of this also, and give a new value to their copies, by prefixing it to them.

TOURNACHON MOULIN.

A CRITIQUE OF THE WORK

COMPOSED BY JUAN JOSAFAT BEN-EZRA

ENTITLED,

“THE COMING OF MESSIAH IN GLORY AND

MAJESTY;”

BY M. R. P. FR. PAUL,

OF THE CONCEPTION OF THE ORDER OF THE BAREFOOTED CARMELITES.

My Lord Vicar General, (“Señor Provisor Vicario Capitular.”)

FEW things entrusted to my care, have occasioned me so much perplexity and pain, as the criticism which your excellency requires me to give upon the first volume of the work entitled “The coming of Messiah in glory and majesty;” written, as appears, by Juan Josafat Ben-Ezra, who takes the character of a Jew converted to our holy religion of the Catholic Apostolic Roman Church. The cause of this great concern, my Lord, is the very magnitude of the work, and the consciousness within myself, as indeed I am truly conscious, of my

incapacity to pronounce upon it a sure and steadfast judgment, such as would set my conscience at ease, and relieve me of the responsibility which must be incurred, whether in condemning or approving it. It may be somewhere about one and twenty years, since I first read the said work in manuscript, with all the interest and attention of which I am capable: and from thenceforth there arose within me the lively desire of obtaining it at any price, in order to read it over and over again, and study and meditate it, with all the pains which it deserves, and which I could afford. At length I obtained my desire, and for several years have had by me, in constant use, a copy which I have read over as often as I could, consistently with the other occupations of my ministry. And every time that I have read it over, my admiration has been redoubled in witnessing the profound study which the author had made of the Holy Scriptures; the method, order, and exactness which adorn his work; and, above all, the light which it casts upon the most deep mysteries and obscure passages of the sacred books.

The truth, the abundance, and natural application of the passages which he adduces from the sacred Scriptures, both of the Old and the New Testaments, incline me in such a way to the understanding and reception of his system, that I dare take upon me to affirm, that, if what he says be false, never has falsehood presented itself so attired in the simple and beautiful garb of truth, as this author hath set it forth in: for the tone of ingenuousness and candour, the very simplicity of the style, the invitation which he always gives to read the whole of the chapter, or chapters he quotes from, as well as those which precede and follow the quotation, the exact correspondence, not only with the quotations, but with that sense of the sacred text which first strikes the mind; all this, I say, gives such strong presumption of truth, that it seems impossible to refuse one's assent, unless through obstinate prepossession in favour of the contrary system.

Nevertheless, when I take into consideration the number of ages which have elapsed in the church, without even the mention of this system, otherwise than as a fabulous opinion; and advert to certain fathers and doctors, as Jerome, Augustine, Gregory, and to all the theologians since their day, who treat it with aversion, and some of them as positive error; I cannot help quaking and trembling, under the impression that there is less risk in erring with so many learned and very holy masters, than in venturing to aim at the mark by one's own inclination and judgment. True indeed it is, which somewhat tranquillizeth me, that the matter in dispute preserves the faith of the holy church inviolate, whichever side you embrace: there being between the two parties but one faith, and one Christ Jesus, whom they believe in and adore as their God. All of us believe and confess, as it is in the creed, that this Sovereign King will come to judge the quick and the dead. The faith of the catholic church, or any of her children in this article, hath never been, nor can ever be unhinged. Now the controversy, merely turning upon the mode and circumstances of that advent which all believe, stands thus: —the common opinion of the doctors of our times restricts the coming of Jesus Christ to the single and terrible, and most solemn act of finally judging the whole race of mankind, and publicly assigning to every one through all eternity the reward or punishment which their works deserve: while our author, without excluding, or at all doubting the truth of this judgment, extends it to a period of time antecedent to that last testimony of the sovereignty and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, plants his throne and his tabernacle for a time amongst men, while yet sojourners upon the earth, makes him to dwell with them who became his people, and he their only God, known and adored of them all. —We know that this opinion is not new, but was held by the fathers of the first four centuries of the Christian church; amongst whom we count certain of the disciples of the apostles themselves; who yet did not

condemn those who thought differently; as may be collected from the expressions of Justin Martyr in his dialogue with Trypho the Jew.

That the opinion, or judgment of these first fathers should have been abandoned, and that the contrary should have obtained from the fifth century forward to our times, with such force and constancy, there is to be taken into account, on the one hand, that the heretics of the third and fourth century did intermingle gross errors with the sound doctrine of these saints, —and on the other, that the universal erudition and venerable authority of that great doctor, St. Jerome, who openly declared himself against the Millenarians, without distinguishing between the Catholics and heretics, might bring it about that they should be all involved in the indiscriminate condemnation of their doctrines. This, however, appears certain, that the opinion of the Millenarians, unpolluted with the errors which the heretics introduced into it, was common, and held by very many Catholics, as St. Jerome himself gives us clearly to understand, in the introduction to the eighteenth book of his Commentaries upon Isaiah; where, having said that a very vast multitude of our church follow in this single point the opinion of Nepos and Apolinarius, he adds these remarkable words, —“*with a prophetic mind I already perceive, how many will be stirred up with rage against me*” (ut presaga mente cernam, quantum in me rabies concitanda sit). Whereby it is clearly manifested, that the opinion which the holy doctor contravened was widely spread. And when it is observed, that the commentaries upon Isaiah, of which this eighteenth book is the last, were entered upon in the fifth century, towards the year 409, the proof is complete, that at this date there prevailed very commonly in the church this idea of the reign of Jesus Christ upon the earth, which is the foundation of the opinions of the Millenarians. But when the immense learning, authority, and deserved reputation of St. Jerome had declared itself against the notion, wherein he was followed by the great doctor St. Augustine, it came to lose ground, and at length to be given up as a point nowise concerning the purity of the faith; and which was to be looked upon as very remote, wherewithal had been mixed up gross errors, deservedly condemned by the ecclesiastical doctors and by the church herself. But this infallible and prudent guide of truth, at the time that she condemned the errors of Cerinthus, and his kindred heretics, who polluted with their gross notions the pure system of the Millenarians, had a care to decide nothing against the latter; as is well observed by the authors who have written catalogues of heretics, or heresies, and especially by Alfonso de Castro, of the minorite orders, in his valuable work *against heresies*. So that the opinion has against it only the authority of the fathers and theologians from the end of the fifth century onward. Great and very worthy of our veneration as is the authority of so many doctors so wise and holy, it is not with all this worthy to rank with the verities of faith, having never been sanctioned by the infallible authority of the holy church; as is fully cleared and argued by our author in the preliminary discourse to his work.

In virtue of these reflections, my spirit became tranquil upon this point, and had only to struggle with the profound respect due to certain doctors in all respects so venerable; but having been taught by themselves, and among the rest by St. Augustine, that it is only to the divine books, and the decision of the Holy Church, we should yield an unlimited submission and absolute assent; it might be allowed me without temerity to examine the system of the author, although contrary to those learned doctors, and to see if the apparatus of proofs and testimonies which he brings in behalf of his opinion, deserve our approbation, or our blame: and this is what I am now about to perform, in compliance with the command of your excellency.

Two capital points, among many others of inferior importance, form the foundation and key of Ben-Ezra's system: The first that Jesus Christ, with all the state of majesty and glory described to us in the divine books, is to come to our globe, not only to pronounce here definite sentence upon all the sons of Adam, but also, before the time of that judgment arrives, to reign in this world, and be acknowledged of all the nations of the earth together; that our world may enjoy a period of blessedness, wherein all its inhabitants endowed with reason, shall know and adore Jesus Christ the Son of the living God, and his Father who sent him for our salvation, with all the other mysteries which are taught by our holy religion. The second, that in the beginning of this happy period, the Jews, whom by such a wonderful providence we see preserved, though dispersed and oppressed among the nations, will be converted to Jesus Christ, and acknowledge him for their Messiah, will return and become the people of God, and worship him in spirit and in truth, to the universal promotion of the whole world.

These two points, which, as hath been said, are the essential points of our author's system, appear to me to be theologically demonstrated, by the multitude of authorities from the holy scripture which he brings in this behalf, and the clearness with which they are there expressed: and these great points at issue between the two systems, being found theologically demonstrated, the substance of the work and the main object of the author are secured. All the other matters treated of fall under these two great subjects, being but the demonstration of the most likely mode of their coming to pass; of which, though many be in themselves of the greatest consequence, it will, in respect to the system, be found a matter of indifference, whether or not they fall out in the way in which Ben-Ezra, always reasoning out of the scripture, alleges, they will. So that whosoever shall set himself to prove that any one, or many of these points are different from the author's explanation of them, will not thereby depreciate or destroy the foundation of his system. Nevertheless I hesitate not to acknowledge, that the work presents difficulties in some passages, which if the author were living, I should ere this have unfolded to himself, that he might resolve and explain them; and now with more reason I might do so, and enforce them in this criticism; but that they will not, I am persuaded, obscure the clear light of truth, with which the substantial matters of the system shine forth. For which reason, and because of the profound and enlarged reflections which I find throughout every part of it, my judgement is; That in this work there is not contained any thing repugnant to our holy faith, but that it may be of good service in making known, and publishing abroad, many truths, whereof the knowledge, though not absolutely necessary in the first ages of the church, is become indispensable in the times in which we now live.

And with respect to customs, not only does it contain nothing contrary thereto, but on the other hand tends much to reform them by the motives which it brings forward; as will appear from what I shall slightly point out, First; by the magnificent idea which he gives of our Lord Jesus Christ, clothed with glory and majesty, and of his immense empire and power, he stimulates the soul to that fear and love of him, which is the fountain of all righteousness. He infuses, moreover, into the mind a profound feeling of the truth of the holy scriptures, and draws to the perusal of them all believers, and especially the priests, to whom above others belong the exact understanding and explanation of them. The hearts of true christians he fills with fear and trembling, by showing them how they themselves through the looseness of discipline, are threatened with that most fearful calamity which the Jews endure at present, of being cast out from the marriage chamber, which is the holy church, into the outer darkness of infidelity in which they shall perish, for ever lost to Christ Jesus the Saviour. Before the

unbelievers and ungodly, who have renounced the profession of their faith, he sets forth with energy and truth, the horrible lot to which they are reserved, if they renounce not with detestation their blasphemies and errors, and cease not to fight against the Lord, and his Christ. To all classes of men it may be profitable; because it turns their eyes inwards upon themselves, and leads them to consider their eternal destiny, and so to shun their own ruin, and the desolation of the whole earth, when, as God hath told us by the mouth of his prophet, “desolations, &c”.

From all which I judge, that it may and ought to be allowed to be printed. But I should remark in respect to the copy which your excellency has sent me, that it is full of errors of the press, both in the text, and in the quotations: Some are corrected, but there still remains much to be amended, which ought with all patience to be done by the exact copying of it before committing it to the press; if your excellency permit that it be published, any error, in a matter of so much importance, may be of very great consequence.

This is my judgment, saving a better. Given in this Convent of barefooted Carmelites of Cadiz, the 17th of December 1812.

Fr. Pablo de la Conception.

TO

THE MESSIAH JESUS CHRIST,

THE SON OF GOD,

SON OF THE MOST HOLY VIRGIN MARY, SON OF
DAVID, AND SON OF ABRAHAM.

O LORD!

THE end which I have proposed to myself in this work, as is well known to thy Holy Majesty, is to make known a little more widely, the greatness and excellence of thine adorable Person, with the great and admirable mysteries which relate to the Man-God: of whom such clear testimonies are contained in the holy scriptures. In the present constitution of the church, and of the world, I have judged it highly expedient to bring forward some ideas, not new in themselves, though after a new method, which on the one hand appear to me expressed in the scriptures of truth, and on the other, present themselves to my mind, as of exceeding great importance, especially with respect to three classes of persons. In the first place, by this means, I desire and purpose, to stir up, and even to oblige the priests to shake off the dust from their Bibles, inviting them to a new study and examination, a new and more attentive consideration of that Divine Book, which, though the book proper to the priesthood, as the

instruments of his trade are to any artificer, appears in these times to have become to not a few of them the most useless of all books. What advantages might we not expect from this new study, were it possible to re-establish it among the priests, in themselves qualified, and by the church set apart for masters and teachers of the christian community!

My aim and desire, in the second place, is to arrest many, and if it were possible all, whom with the deepest sorrow and compassion, I see running precipitately towards the horrible gulf of infidelity; for this hath certainly no other origin, than want of knowledge of thy Divine Person, proceeding from simple ignorance of the Sacred Scriptures.

My purpose and desire, in the third place, is, to offer some greater light, some other remedy more prompt and efficacious to my own brethren the Jews, *whose are the Fathers, and of whom is Jesus Christ according to the flesh*. And what remedy can these miserable men receive, but the knowledge of their true Messiah whom they love, and for whom they sigh night and day without knowing Him? and how are they to know Him unless the doctrine be opened to them? and how, in the state of ignorance and blindness in which they are actually found, can that doctrine be sufficiently discovered, while you show them only the one half of Messiah, while the other half is concealed, and even positively denied? —if there be preached to them only what is to be found in the scriptures, pertaining to thy first coming in suffering flesh, as Redeemer, as Master, as Example, as High Priest, &c.—and there be denied to them without any reason, what, according to the same scriptures, though with ideas little worthy, and even gross, they believe, and hope, pertaining to thy second coming?

O my Lord Christ Jesus! Bounty and wisdom unsearchable! all that I purpose by this work, if by thy grace any good should come of it, must necessarily redound to thy greater glory, which thou hast made to consist with the well-being of man; and I would therefore hope from the benignity of thy most gracious nature, that thou wilt not despise this small gift, which is offered unto thee out of my profound reverence, my acknowledgments, my love, and my earnest desire to serve in any way the cause of my gracious Lord.

If, as I desire, and dare to hope, there follow from this any true benefit, I humbly offer it all to thy glory, and with myself, lay it at thy feet. In consideration whereof I implore, O Lord, with the greatest earnestness, thy Sovereign protection, of which I stand in the greatest need, inasmuch as I fear, and not without reason, great contradiction, being but an obscure man, without human favour, though I acknowledge and confess myself thy servant, however unworthy and unprofitable. &c.

Juan Josafat Ben-Ezra.

PREFACE.

I DID not venture to expose this treatise to the criticism of every sort of readers, without sufficient warrant, without indeed making trial of it over and over again by the best and nicest tests which were within my reach; that is, not until I had consulted many learned men of the highest order, and been by them assured, after a laborious and rigorous examination, that it contained no error whatever, nor even any matter worthy of censure.

Yet as this private examination could not be conducted with such secrecy, but that in some way it should transpire, there arose, in consequence, a great curiosity in the minds of certain other learned men of whom at that time there was no thought, and it became necessary under the penalty of no slight inconvenience to comply with their importunities. This indulgence, though innocent and proper in itself attended with certain disagreeable, and even prejudicial consequences. The treatise while yet every way unfinished was made public, out of all time and season; and in this state several copies of it were taken against my will, and without my being able to prevent it: and what was still worse, those copies were circulated beyond all reasonable bounds; and one of them, I am assured, made its way across the ocean, where they say it has caused no small stir. This, for the following reasons, I can well enough account for, first, because that copy which took so far a flight was incomplete, being only a fragment of the work; secondly, because it was undigested, being no more than the first sketches and conceptions of the mind, which were noted down in the view of being corrected, arranged, and perfected in due time; thirdly, because this copy in itself so incomplete, had been in several parts interpolated and mutilated at the will and discretion of the person who sent it abroad, and who, though full of the best intentions, could not, from his peculiar opinions, do less than introduce into it some very considerable errors. And therefore I may hope that all considerate persons into whose hands this unhappy copy may have fallen, or who may have any knowledge of it, will take these things into account, and not judge of a work from a few soiled and undigested papers transcribed from hand to hand, which, contrary to the wish of the author, were imprudently given to the winds, when they should have been given to the flames. This last destination, not only as a favour, but even as an act of justice I entreat of every one who may possess them.

Having given this preliminary notice, which seemed to me indispensable, I must now offer some slight satisfaction to two or three strictures of a general and obvious kind, and which have actually been advanced by persons of no mean account.

Stricture First. —The first and loudest of all is novelty. This say they, (and they say it as it were with fear and trembling, and doubtless with the best intentions,) in points which

any way refer to religion, such as the understanding, and explanation of the Holy Scripture, has always been, and ought always to be eyed with suspicion, and avoided as dangerous; especially in an age when so many novelties are broached, and which has hardly a relish for any thing but novelty.

Reply. —That novelty in these points is to be eyed with suspicion, and not on slight grounds to be admitted, is a very just remark; from which, however, it doth not follow that we ought at once to cast away as dangerous, or without farther thought give sentence against any thing, upon the mere score of its novelty. This would be completely to shut the entrance door against truth, and to renounce for ever the hope of understanding the Holy Scriptures: seeing it is honestly confessed by all interpreters, ancient as well as modern, that in the scriptures themselves, especially in the prophecies, there still remains an infinite number of things obscure and difficult, and not understood; of which although with the utmost possible pains they have all endeavoured to give some meaning or explanation, yet as is well known to those who are versed in these matters, these meanings and explanations of theirs really give no satisfaction, being for the most part no better than merely gratuitous and arbitrary accommodations, of which the impropriety and violence stare you in the face.

Now I maintain that those things in the Holy Scriptures, which until this present time have not been understood, must at some time come to be understood, or at least their true sense to be proposed; for it is not to be believed but rather is repugnant to the infinite holiness of God, that he should cause them to be written in vain. And if a time is to come when they shall be understood, or their true sense proposed, that time must necessarily be future, and consequently upon these points novelty at one time or another is with absolute certainty to be expected: against which if you have positively shut all doors of entrance; if a thing is always to be received and regarded as perilous, and simply upon the score of its novelty, if sentence of reprobation is always to be passed against it; then what hope is there left to us? Nay but this precise charge of novelty, even in these sacred subjects, so far from scaring away your truly wise and learned men, though ever so pious and religious, ought the rather to quicken, and even oblige them to enter upon a formal examination, that it may be searched to the very bottom, and ascertained: First, Whether it really be a novelty or not; whether it be an idea wholly new, never uttered, nor thought of in the Catholic Church from the time of the apostles until now, or only an idea pursued, set forth, explained and proved after a new method. Between which two things, that there is a wide difference, and as it were an infinite disagreement, no learned, pious, and religious Catholic can be ignorant. —Secondly, Whether this novelty, or this idea, not new in itself but only in a new way handled, be false or not; that is to say, whether or not it oppose some verity of divine faith, and contravene these three rules, which are the only infallible tests of faith —1st. Divine scripture in its proper and literal sense: —2nd. Divine tradition: —3rd. The express and clear determination of the church assembled in the Holy Spirit.

Far from fearing a formal examination by this standard, or by these three only infallible rules just mentioned, it is the very thing which I desire, and pray for with all possible earnestness, and the only thing which I fear is the withholding of it. If the matters which I am about to submit, (call them new in themselves or only in the manner of setting them forth and treating them,) be found opposed, or not conformed, to those three infallible rules, and this be proved in a clear and satisfactory way, I will on that account at once yield as conquered, and readily acknowledge my ignorance. But should our novelty contravene none of these three rules, but respect and scrupulously conform to them, in that case no one may with reason or justice condemn it on the single plea of its novelty, or because it does not

conform to the common mode of thinking. This were solemnly to consecrate as points of divine faith the numberless senses and explanations, with which, though bare accommodations, the interpreters of Divine Scripture have heretofore contented themselves, to the absolute exclusion of the true meaning: —a thing known, and lamented, and complained of by the learned amongst them, especially as it respects the prophecies.

Stricture the Second. —Ariseth out of the system, or ideas which I term ordinary, upon the second coming of Christ. They say that these are the faith and belief of the whole Catholic Church, as set forth, and explained by her doctors, who in this their interpretation and explanation cannot be in error, seeing all, or the most part of them, concur in it. It is true (they add) that in the three or four first ages of the church, they were differently set forth and explained by some; but (they continue) fourteen ages are of more value than four; fourteen most enlightened, than four obscure ones, &c.

Answer. —In all this declamation, as brief as it is arbitrary, I find nothing but an equivocation. First they confound without distinction that which is of divine faith and belief to the whole Catholic Church, with that which is a matter of purely human faith and belief, or mere opinion; that which we Catholics do all believe and confess as the indubitable points of divine faith, with those particular and accidental things which upon these same points have been, or may be held as matters of opinion. This word *faith or belief*, may have, and really hath two senses, as diverse, and far distant the one from the other, as God is from man. Even in things pertaining to God, and his revelation, there not only may be, but there is entertained by believers within the Catholic church, a faith and belief entirely divine, as well as a faith and belief purely human —that infallible, this fallible —that binding, this free. The latter of these, in things that are but accidental to any article of faith, not denying, but rather pre-supposing it, is properly denominated *opinion, dictate, conviction, honest belief*, &c. In this sense, St. Paul takes the word faith when he says, *Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.* Rom. xiv. An opinion, however common and universal, may very well exist in the church as *honest belief*, without on that account ceasing to be matter of mere human faith, or rising above the degree of an opinion: and this honest belief, this faith and belief, however honest and universal it may be, does not properly obtain the sacred name of, *The faith and belief of the Christian church*, till after the Catholic Church itself, being assembled in the Holy Spirit, shall have adopted as certain that particular thing whereof it treats, formally declaring it to be not a matter of human, but of divine faith; either because it so appeareth clearly and expressly in the Holy Scripture, or because it hath been so received, and faithfully transmitted from the first times of the church.

Whence it legitimately follows, that such words as the following, which in substance are to be met with in every class of ecclesiastical writers who have written upon this side of the question during the last two or three centuries, *It was so thought during the four first centuries of the church: but the fourteen following centuries in which it has been thought differently, are of more weight, &c.* are words of small importance, and promote their cause but very little. Four ages of one opinion, and fourteen of a contrary opinion, no other foundation or intrinsical reason being produced, weigh no farther, in a question entirely of the future and not within the province of human reason, than four authors of one opinion, and fourteen of a contrary opinion. Although you were to multiply those four centuries, and those four authors by four-hundred, and those fourteen centuries by four-thousand, or forty-thousand, you could never produce a dogma of faith divine, simply from having multiplied by the larger number: nor for such like reasons alone can you bend down the liberty of

understanding, which, in things of this kind that respect the future, resteth solely on divine ground, nor suffers itself to be bound by any authority but the Holy Scriptures, and the decision of the church. Wherefore the four, and the fourteen, whether authors or ages, if not supported by some other true and solid reason, must remain for ever in the state of mere opinion, or faith simply human, and nothing more.

Now, whereas the things of which we speak do stand in this condition of opinion, or of obscurity, without its certainly appearing on which side the truth lieth, we ask, who doth or can hinder in so important a cause, that we should not diligently search for the truth? Search for it, I say, through the fourteen as well as the four. And if it should not in any of them be found clear and limpid, (for as much as the things are but opinions, and have never emerged from that sphere) who can hinder us from searching for the very truth in its proper fountain, the Holy Scriptures? The question not being to search the Scriptures for the *substance* of the dogma; which is already known, presupposed as known, believed, expressly and publicly professed in the whole Catholic Church; but simply to search therein for certain things accidental to the dogma, whereof the sure and certain knowledge, though not absolutely necessary to salvation, may yet be of the utmost importance, not only with respect to Catholics, but with respect to Christians in general, and also perhaps much more with respect to the miserable Jews. And, though in these things of which I speak, accidental only to the article of faith, there is, perhaps, in the church a certain honest belief, this can never in a reasonable or Christian way be reckoned the faith of the church, or, which is the same, divine faith; this false principle once admitted or tolerated, what ruinous consequences might we not apprehend.

Stricture Third. —A few years ago there appeared in Italian a work intituled; “The Second Epoch of the church,” (*la seconda época de la Iglesia*) of which the author calls himself Euodio Papia. As there are many things in the present work whose title is, “The coming of Messiah in glory and majesty,” resembling much those that are to be found in the other, (although set forth, and followed out after another and a different method,) there is much reason to fear that both may have the same fate, that is, that this may be forthwith consigned, as was that, to the *Index Romanus*: [i.e. the Roman list of proscribed books] therefore the right thing would be to prevent in time so unbecoming an issue, by smothering it in the cradle, and transmitting it from the womb to the grave without discretion or mercy.

Reply. —They who talk in this way appear to me either not to have read the first work of which we speak, or not to have read the second, or which seems most likely, neither to have read the one nor the other, but to speak at random, and constitute themselves judges, without any knowledge of the cause. And the reason I have for this supposition is the very variety of opinions which have come to my ears upon this point, differing as widely from each other as the thirty-two points of the compass; now accusing me of plagiarism, as if I had taken my ideas from Euodio Papia, now that in substance I follow the same system, now that I conform to him in the principles and the ends, differing only in the means; and in fine, to be short, that although I disagree with this author in almost every thing, yet at least I do agree with him in my audacious manner of pretending to untie the sacred and indissoluble knot of the twentieth chapter of the Apocalypse; of which guilt indeed all are partakers who have taken in hand to explain the same Apocalypse.

Now, briefly to meet so many, and such diverse accusations, it appears to me that one general reply may suffice. First, I protest that from this work of which we speak, neither have I taken, nor had the power of taking the least particle; for the simple yet decisive reason that I

have not read the work in question, nor looked even upon the outside of it, nor so much as heard it spoken of by any one who had read it.

The only thing of this author's which I have read, is the exposition of the Apocalypse, in which he sometimes refers to another work, which he promises as about to follow, that is, to "*The second epoch of the Church.*"

But this exposition of the Apocalypse, so far from satisfying me, displeased me as much, and even more, than anything I have read in various authors. For although some things which he points out be good in themselves, he does not ground them solidly, but presents them crude and even deformed, with out explanation or proof; while others appear hard and indigestible; others extravagant; others not a little coarse, and even ridiculous: for example, all that he says upon the battle of St. Michael with the Dragon, from chapter xii. &c. To all which may he added the error (for such I regard it) of supposing three comings of Christ; though all the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, and the Apostle's Creed, speak only of two: the one as being already past in suffering flesh; the other as yet to come in glory and majesty, which by the apostles St. Peter and St. Paul is frequently denominated the revelation or manifestation of Jesus Christ. From these and other defects which I have found in the exposition of the Apocalypse by this author, I surely infer that there will be found others, equal or greater, in the second work to which he sometimes refers.

Which although I have not read, as I protested a little ago, yet by a brief extract from it, that a friend has just sent me, I comprehend well enough that both the general system of this author, and his method of treating it, differ as widely from mine as the east does from the west. Omitting whatever is extraneous, his general system appears to me the same as was proposed in the last century by the learned Jesuit Antonio Vieira, in a work entitled, *Concerning the consummation of Christ's kingdom on the earth* (De regno Christi in terris consummato). And this system again appears to me the same in substance with that of many holy fathers and other doctors therein cited, as also of others that have written since; who all hold it for certain, that one day the whole world, with all the peoples and nations and even individuals thereof, shall be converted unto Christ, and enter into the Church; which being come to pass, they add, that the Jews also shall then enter in, that it may be fulfilled which is written by St. Paul (Rom. xi. 25), *that blindness in part is happened unto Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in; and so all Israel shall be saved:* And by the evangelist, (John x. 16.) *there shall be one fold and one Shepherd.* Consequently they suppose there is to be another state of the church, much more perfect than the present, wherein all the inhabitants of the earth will be true believers, and great peace and righteousness and observance of the divine laws, &c. will reign in the bosom of the church.

The only difference which exists in the opinions of the doctors on this point is, that some of them place that blessed estate long before Antichrist, who, according to them, will come to destroy this peace. Others, and I believe the greater number, place it after Antichrist, in order to save, in some way, certain consequences of which we shall speak in their place; and so admit, without the possibility of avoiding it, some space of time between the end and Antichrist; between Antichrist and the glorious coming of Christ. Euodio seems to steer this last course, and would not be chargeable with any novelty, did he not, at the beginning of this epoch, suppose a middle coming of Christ to destroy iniquity, and to order the church and the world after another and a better fashion; making him to come once more at the end of the world, to judge the quick and the dead: upon which point, it seems to me, he should have explained himself more fully. Now how can it be possible that I, who do not admit but reject all these ideas, as seeming to me opposite to the gospel and all the scriptures, should follow

the same system? Then what system do I follow? No one: but simply that article of divine faith, which says, *From thence he will come to judge the quick and the dead*. And upon this doctrine of divine faith I follow the thread of all the scriptures, without interruption, without violence, and without artificial reasonings, as any one may see with his own eyes, if he be not blinded.

It may nevertheless be found that I agree with Euodio Papia, as with other authors, in some things either general or particular. *But what then?* Shall it be permitted upon that ground merely, at once to confound the one work with the other? At what tribunal durst such a sentence be given? The work of Euodio, as being the work of a Catholic and religious author, it is to be believed, will contain very much that is good, innocent, pious, true, and probable; and it is likewise to be believed, that along with this will be found something else, plainly false, crude, and indigestible, without explanation, or proof, &c; seeing there must be some reason for which it hath been suppressed. And from these premises the just and reasonable inference is, that whoever agrees with this author in those things which are reprehensible, will doubtless deserve the same reprehension; which he will not deserve, nor without injustice may be visited withal, should he agree with him only in the things which are indifferent, good, true, or probable. Is not this according to the undoubted dictate of pure natural reason?

Let it therefore stand for the conclusion of the matter: that Euodio's work and mine, being two very different works, of different authors, ought to be examined apart, and each dealt with according to its proper merit or demerit; not examining or judging that for this, nor this for that: which were a method of judging utterly repugnant to all laws human and divine. Besides, I affirm nothing dogmatically, but only propose to the consideration of the intelligent, and that with all the clearness I can, the reasons on which I build; submitting all in good faith to the judgment of the church, *whose prerogative it is to judge of the true sense of the sacred scriptures*. Nor refusing to submit to the judgment even of individual Doctors, after I shall have heard their reasons.

THE COMING OF MESSIAH

IN

GLORY AND MAJESTY.

OBSERVATIONS OF JUAN JOSAFAT,

AN HEBREW CHRISTIAN,

ADDRESSED TO THE PRIEST CHRISTOPHILUS.

PRELIMINARY DISCOURSE.

OVERCOME at length by thine entreaties, my respected friend Christophilus, and having resolved, although with the greatest reluctance, to put down in writing, some of the things which I have communicated to thee, I yesterday set myself to think over the particulars which I had to write, and the order and method which might be most serviceable, as well for relieving the labour, as for explaining myself with freedom. After an enlarged meditation, perceiving that I did but lose the time, and weary myself to no avail, I endeavoured for the

present to put my thoughts to silence; and for that end opened the Bible, which was the book that lay nearest my hand, and casting my eyes on the passage before me read these words, which begin the ninth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, *I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness, and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.* By the consideration of these words, it was not long before the very feelings of the apostle awoke within me; and perceiving that my heart was oppressed by the reawakened and renewed force of that grief, which I do almost always bear about with me, I shut the book, and hastened into the fields to relieve my heart. Where, the first burst being over, and my grief a little subsided, various reflections began to succeed.

In what way is it possible —(I remember to have said) in what way is it possible, that the people of God, the holy people, the house of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, men the most illustrious, the most just, the most beloved and privileged of God, by whose name God himself is known in all succeeding ages, *I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob...this is my name for ever, and this my memorial to all generations*, Exod. iii. 6, 15. that a people who were born, nourished, and brought up in the faith and expectation of Messiah; a people whom God prepared for Messiah, by an unheard of succession of providences and miracles, by the space of two thousand years: that this people of God, this holy people, should possess in the midst of them that same Messiah, for whom they had sighed through so many ages, should with their own eyes behold him in all the splendour of his virtues, hear his voice and words of life, admire his miraculous works, saying and confessing, *He hath done all things well; he maketh both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak*, Mark vii. 37; that they should receive at his bountiful hand benefits of every kind, continual benefits, as well for the body as for the soul: and yet with all this receive him not? with all this disallow him? persecute him with the utmost fury? look upon him as a seducer, a malefactor; and, as Isaiah had before signified, *number him with the transgressors?* Isa. liii. 12. with all this, in fine, invoke upon him with loud exclamations the punishment of the cross? Surely there have happened things on our earth really incredible, which yet are certain, and rest on the surest evidence.

But (pursued I in my musing) what might be the cause of this great malady, with its infinite train of wretchedness and misery? Perhaps it was that the publicans, the sinners, and the harlots, could not bear the sanctity of his life, nor the purity and perfection of his doctrines? It appears not: for the gospel itself assures us, that *the publicans and sinners gathered together to hear him*; On which account it was that the scribes and pharisees murmured —*and the scribes and pharisees murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them*, Luke xv. 1. Perhaps it was owing to the commonalty and lowest ranks of the people, always rude, dross, and unadvised? As little so: for on the contrary the common people would not rest away from him, but sought him out, followed him into mountains and the most solitary deserts, and with exclamations hailed him Son of David, and King of Israel; yea defended him, and bore testimony to his righteousness; and it was for fear of the people that they did not sooner condemn him.

There remained then no objects of our inquiry save the priests, and the learned doctors of the law, in whom was vested the knowledge and judgment of whatever related to religion. And in truth these were the cause, and with them lay all the blame. But by this very thing, my wonder is increased; *Why herein is a marvellous thing* (said the man blind from his birth), *that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened my eyes*, John ix. 30. These priests, these doctors not know that which they believed? not know that which they expected?

not read the scriptures whereof they were depositaries? Were they ignorant, how could it well be that they should be ignorant, that these were the times in which Messiah was to manifest himself according to the same scriptures? Gen. xlix. 10. Dan. ix. 25. Were they not eye-witnesses of the sanctity of his life, of the excellency of his doctrine, of the novelty, multitude, and greatness of his miracles? Yes: this is all true; but surely the malady was incurable, because it was old: it did not begin then, but descended from a more remote time: surely it had deep roots.

In one word, the malady lay in those ideas which they had formed of Messiah, so wide of the truth, and at such variance with the whole scriptures; which ideas they had imbibed, and did continually imbibe from the very interpreters of those scriptures. These interpreters, whom they honoured with title of Rabbis or Masters for distinction, or of Elders, had already obtained more authority with them than the scripture itself. For which indeed Messiah himself reproved them, in the words of the twenty-ninth chapter of Isaiah: *Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth and honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me: but in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.* Matt. xv. 7,8,9. Mark vii. 8,9.

These then are —(I concluded) these certainly are the men who have blinded us, who have deceived us. Those doctors, and scribes skilful in the law, who having received, and holding in their hand the key of knowledge, would neither enter themselves, nor suffer others to enter in; Luke xi. 52. In the scriptures the signs of Messiah's coming, and Messiah's person, are very clear; his life; his preaching, his doctrines, his righteousness, his sanctity, his bounty, his meekness, his miraculous works, his sufferings, his cross, his burial, &c. But there being, at the same time, in these very scriptures, and that at every step, other things infinitely great and magnificent, written concerning the person of this same Messiah, our doctors with high indiscretion, laid hold of the latter only, and put them together after their own manner, while they forgot the former, and absolutely despised them as being little to their mind. And what was the consequence? Messiah comes, they hear his voice, behold his righteousness, admire his doctrine, his miracles, &c; he refers them to the scripture, where, as in a faithful mirror, they would find him portrayed in every point. *Search the scriptures, for they are they which testify of me,* John v. 39. But all in vain: for as there was no longer any Scripture, but the Rabbis; no longer any ideas of the Messiah, but those supplied by our doctors, who themselves, scribes, pharisees, and lawyers, knew only the Messiah described in the books and traditions of men; it was as it were a consequence inevitable, that all should go astray, and that the blind people, conducted by the priest hood equally blind, should fall along with them over the precipice.

Dangers Through the Neglect of Study

Now my friend, setting apart, and endeavouring to forget things so wicked and sad, and which we cannot remedy, let us turn the whole discourse into another channel. If I should dare to say, that we Christians in our present state are not removed so far as is thought from the same danger, nor so secure of not stumbling upon another such precipice, doubtless you would think that I jested. But if you saw that I spake seriously, and held to what I said, you would, I take it, instantly pronounce upon me the sentence of death, crying with a loud voice "take him and stone him." Yet my Lord, though they take up stones on every side, *I say it, I say it;* the proposition I hold to be certain, and the foundation I judge to be the same without any substantial difference. Listen to me then with good nature, and start not so at the outset.

How certain it is and of faith divine, that the Messiah promised in the holy scriptures, hath already come into the world, so certain is it, and of faith divine, that, being passed into the heaven since his death and resurrection, he shall come the second time, to this same world, in a manner infinitely different. Accordingly, we Christians believe in two comings, as the two essential and fundamental points of our religion; the one already past, whose wonderful fruits we see and taste to this hour, the other infallibly to come though we know not when. —I ask you is it not true, that these ideas are so certain, so well-grounded, and so just, as to admit of neither fear nor doubt? —You will naturally answer, Yes, *surely*, but always in the good faith that all the notions held of the second coming of Messiah be faithfully drawn from the Holy Scriptures, whence alone it is allowable to take them.

Notwithstanding I ask thee, thine own self, to whom I speak individually, hast thou, by thine own study, travail, and diligence, drawn these ideas out of the holy scriptures? It were easy to say that we should take it for granted, that seeing thou art a priest, and either hast, or shouldst have the key of knowledge, thou couldest hardly have any excuse for going to draw from other cisterns not so safe, when thou mightst open the door and drink the water pure from the fountain. But the misery is, we cannot take this for granted, knowing quite the contrary from thine own confession. For thou boldly sayest, what need for any one to take upon him self the great and arduous work of drawing pure that which is locked up in the holy scriptures, when so many doctors labouring therein their whole life-time, have saved us the pains. And if I were to turn upon thee, and ask again —but art thou certain and secure, as in so grave a question thou shouldst be, that all the ideas thou findest in the doctors upon the second coming of Messiah are certain and correct? —I fear much, thou wouldest not deign me an answer, but turn me away as an impertinent and foolish fellow. And therefore, I do point with my finger to that very danger above spoken of, lying close before thee, that very precipice over which my brethren the Jews fell headlong.

One of the greatest evils at this day in the church, not to say the greatest of all, is, as appeareth to me, the neglect, the indifference, and even the almost entire oblivion into which the priesthood have fallen with respect to the study of the holy scriptures; I mean, the formal study, not the superficial reading of them. You yourself may be a good witness of this truth; since, being a learned man, and as such devoted to polite literature, you have had, and still have intercourse with men of letters in every department: among all these, how many scriptuaries have you found? how many, who at least sometimes opened that divine book? how many, who paid to it the small honour of giving it a place among other books?

But, returning to our subject, I take upon me, Sir, to tell you, and even to prove to you in all due form, that the ideas given by the interpreters on the second coming of Messiah, in respect to its manner, duration, and circumstances, and received by us as so sure and well-grounded, are by no means such as need not to be examined; which examination can in no other way proceed, but by comparing the said ideas with the scripture itself, whence they have been, or ought to have been taken. A diligence, which if the Scribes and Pharisees of my nation had given, when they were referred to the scriptures by the Lord himself, they had certainly taken up other ideas, widely different from those held by the Rabbis, and might haply not have erred so egregiously.

Review of Previous Systems

What my friend, wouldest thou, have me to say unto thee? For great as is my veneration and respect for those interpreters of scripture, who are men verily great, most wise, most erudite, and full of piety; I cannot help saying that, which not without great

wonder I see and observe in them upon this particular point, whereof we treat. I see them, I do say, entirely occupied with the task of accommodating the whole of sacred scripture, especially its prophetic parts, to the first coming of Messiah, and the effects of that coming doubtless great and wonderful; without leaving any thing, or hardly any thing for the second, as if it were their only object to furnish matter for discourses to be preached, or to arrange some office for the time of Advent. And this they do with such zeal and fervour, that they are not at any time let or hindered by the impropriety, or by the violence, or by the silliness of their accommodations, nor even by the rules, which they have laid down at the outset, nor as little (which seems the most strange) do they hesitate to omit several things, now forgetting one, now many entire verses, as if they were of little importance, when often they are so important as manifestly to destroy the exposition which they will nevertheless persist in giving.

On the other hand, I see them assenting to principles, and giving rules or canons for the better understanding of the holy scriptures, but for what I can see it is clear at a glance, that some of these rules, and those not a few, are set down at discretion, without resting on any other foundation, than the exposition itself, or the understanding which they have given, or design to give of many very remarkable passages of scripture. Now if this exposition or understanding hath little justice, or be very wide of the truth (as falls out frequently enough), then have we most proper canons for never coming to the understanding of what we read in the scriptures. Whence also have originated those various meanings, of which they make such abuse, as a safe shelter upon occasions; seeing that however plain and apparent the text may be, if it opposed the ordinary ideas, they have always at hand their Allegorical sense; and if this will not carry them through, then comes promptly to their aid, the Anagogical; to which there are in addition the Tropological, Mystical, Accomodatical, &c. of all which they make a most frequent use, now of one, now of another, now of several at one time, mounting from earth to heaven with all liberty, and the next moment descending with the same ease from heaven to earth, taking, in the selfsame prophecy, in one and the same passage, yea sometimes even in a little verse, one part *literally*, another *allegorically*, another *analogically*, and so composing of various party coloured shreds one thing, one whole, of which at last no one can make any thing, or so much as tell what it is. All the while, the divine scriptures, the book of truth, most venerable, and most holy, lies subjected to the edge and fire of ingenious minds, at the mercy of whosoever can make the best accommodation of it, as if it were a book of enigmas.

From this Sir, imagine not that I absolutely reprobate the allegorical, or figurative sense (and what I say of this, I say in a degree of the others also). The allegorical sense in particular is often a good and true interpretation, to which we should give attention in the letter itself, yet without quitting the letter. By the testimony of St. Paul, we know that many things which are found written in the books of Moses, were figures of many others, which afterwards were verified in Christ; and the same apostle in the fourth chapter of his epistle to the Galatians, speaks of two covenants that were prefigured by the two wives of Abraham; and by his two sons, Ishmael and Isaac, adding, "which things are an allegory." Now as we know the Epistles of St. Paul, to be equally canonical with the books of Genesis and Exodus, we remain certain and sure, not only of the history but of its application. And yet because of this allegorical or figurative explanation, we are neither to give up our belief that the two wives of Abraham, Agar and Sarah, were really two wives, nor that the things which were for figures, really were, and were accomplished according to the letter of what we read in the books of Moses. Of this kind, however, are not the figurative meanings which we find

assigned to Scripture, not only by Origen (whom on this account Jerome calls ‘the ever-allegorical interpreter,’ and in other places ‘our allegorist’), but by ecclesiastical writers of every name, both ancient and modern; which interpretations of theirs, most frequently leave no room for, but utterly destroy the historical, that is, the obvious and literal sense. And although it be all true which they say, it is obviously not the truth contained in that portion of Scripture of which they treat, but derived from other places of the same Scripture, interpreted after a literal and obvious way; which they themselves agree is after all the only method of interpretation, that will establish an article of faith, or teach a point of truth.

By all this, says a modern author, it shall come to pass, that Holy Scripture has not till this day been explained in any different manner from that of the fourth and fifth century, which was rather oratorical, than exact and literal; partly out of an ill-understood reverence for antiquity, partly because it is a more easy and convenient way, whereby hardly any text, how ever obscure it may appear, will not admit of some interpretation; which is all they desire. Thus, a licence to explain divine scripture, in a thousand other senses besides the literal, has encreased by time to such an excess, that we may say without exaggeration those very commentators have made it inaccessible, and in some respects contemptible. (These are not my expressions, but those of the learned man just referred to)³ Inaccessible to those pious and religious persons, who having a hunger and thirst after the truths contained in the sacred books, are deterred from the fear of falling into the great errors which these same doctors muster against them, if they shall dare without the light and help of their commentaries to read the sacred books. And as in those commentaries so great and various, that which is oftenest in fault, and seldomest keeps its ground, is the Scripture itself, which not unfrequently we see thrust out of its proper place, and something else substituted in its stead; it seems a necessary result, that at the least a great part of it, and especially the prophecy, should remain hid, and as it were inaccessible to those who in good earnest, and with the best intention desire to study it.

The commentators, to speak generally, certainly do not enter into many very grave and plain mysteries, which are found repeated under a thousand forms in the Holy Scriptures. This is an evil, and no small one; but a greater still is this, that they forbid the entrance, and shut the door upon many who might have entered, giving them reason to understand, and sometimes taking the greatest pains to persuade them, that those mysteries to which I refer are perilous, are errors, dreams, ravings, &c. and that although in the Scripture they appear express and clear, they may not so be understood, but in some other way, in an hundred other ways, according to their different notions; excepting only and always that one way, and that one form, in which the Holy Spirit hath dictated them. And if thus to pious and religious persons, the Scripture has been rendered in a good measure inaccessible by its very interpreters, to others less pious and religious, especially in this age, which they call an age of light, it has been made little less than contemptible; inasmuch as they have given such persons occasion to say, and sometimes with the greatest liberty, that the Holy Scripture is at best a useless book, signifying nothing of itself, and not to be understood as it is read, but in some other way which must be divined: a book, in short, to which every one may give the sense that best him. Whereby, through the respectful dread of the one class, and the impious contempt of the other, one and the same effect hath naturally been brought about, than the study of the scripture could have come to be entirely given up, —an evil which in these days hath reached its height.

³ Fleuri. V. Discourse upon Ecclesiastical History.

All this which I have just pointed out, though in a general and confused way, must, I am persuaded, appear to you harsh and insufferable, especially in the mouth, or from the pen of a miserable Jew; and your displeasure will certainly increase, as we descend to the examination of those particular matters, so little examined, though generally received: for in those particular matters of which I am about to treat, I think, Sir, that I shall depart from the common sentiment, or the common judgment of the Expositors, and to a certain extent also, from that of the Theologians. This precise and formal declaration, which I make thus early, and which as we proceed you will see accomplished to the full, naturally makes me fear the first burst of your indignation, and constrains me to look out for some retreat from the face of the tempest, I mean the tempest of strong and violent censure, which I anticipate.

It appears to me a thing most natural, and therefore most excusable, that before having sufficiently heard, even before you can be possessed of the full knowledge of the cause, and even without giving heed to the process, you should condemn me at the least, for a rash and audacious person, who have dared by myself, being a fellow of no account, to contradict so many learned men, who after attentively considering the things in question, have established them as it were with an unanimous voice. Far be it from me to think of myself as any thing by the side of such, and so great men, whom I venerate, and to whom I bow, as is in reason and justice most due. But this veneration, this respect, this deference, you are not ignorant, Sir, has its just and precise limit to which it is lawful to advance, but beyond which we may not pass. The doctors themselves do not ask, nor can ask of us to pass those limits at the expense of truth, but teach us the very reverse; seeing there is hardly one among a thousand of them, who does not differ in something from the opinion of the rest. I say in something, for to do so in every thing, would be at the least an insufferable extravagance.

I treat only of one particular point, that is the coming of Messiah which all look for; and if in the things which pertain his particular point, I find in the doctors some deficiencies, or some ideas far from correct, and which yet appear to me of great importance, what do you think, my friend, that I ought to do? Shall it be a crime to speak of these defects, to publish them and to maintain their fallacy? Shall it be temerity and audacity to propose this to the consideration of the intelligent? Shall it be to fa- in the respect due to those very wise doctors, if we say, that either they overlooked them by having their attention divided over a thousand other things, or that it was impossible to help it on the system which they followed? —And this is all I say, or claim a right to say: to which if you continue to apply the terms temerity and audacity, look, my worthy Sir, for words more proper to express the thing. What wonder if an ant, whose path is in the dust of the earth, should discover and make use of some small though precious grains, which might well escape the eye of the eagle? What wonder, what presumption or audacity were it for an ordinary man, though of the lowest ranks of the people, to discover in a great edifice that it was weak and threatened decay in some particular part? Not, certainly, that the edifice in general was not built according to rule; but that the foundation on which some part of it rested was not of an equal strength, or so firm as it ought to be. Would it be at all right to treat such a man as ignorant and clownish, to reprove him as a rash and audacious fellow, to say unto him with scorn, that he presumed to know more than the architects themselves, who, having as good eyes as he, did build on that foundation? But if, unfortunately, the architects in reality had not examined the foundation in that part, or not with sufficient attention; if they had trusted to others that went before them, and those again to others; and if in this trust they built without suspicion, looking no further, than to the placing of one stone upon another —in this case, were it wonderful that the vulgar and ignorant fellow should discover the defect, and, in making it known, speak the very truth! By

this simple and obvious example, you may understand how much I have to allege in my own behalf: it will all come under this homely instance, to which I deem it unnecessary to add any further apology.

Only I ought to forewarn you, that, as in all this treatise which I am about to lay before you, I must necessarily at every step speak of those interpreters of scripture or rather of the interpretations which they give to those passages of scripture bearing my particular subject, I fear greatly lest I should be inevitably betrayed at times into expressions or words, which may seem to fail in respect, and even in civility. Whatever you shall find of this character, I pray, Sir, that you would have the goodness to correct; my intention being surely nothing more than to speak clearly and seeking in the least to wound the venerable name of our doctors and masters, that, on the contrary, I look upon them with particular favour, as not being ignorant of the boundless field of the scriptures in which they laboured, nor doubting of the goodness and rectitude of their intentions. So, let my expressions and words be what they may, they have no reference either to their persons, or to their piety, or to their wisdom, or to their erudition, or to their genius, &c. but regard merely the system which they have embraced. This system is the thing which I take a right to combat; showing by very facts, and by arguments the most simple and manifest, that it is insufficient, mainly weak, and unable to stand beneath so vast an edifice as is that mystery of God, which the holy scriptures unfold; and proposing another system, which is the only one, as it appears to me, able to sustain the whole. By this method, for more than a century, our physical philosophers have proceeded in the study of nature; neither art thou ignorant, what progress by this method they have made.

This work, or rather this friendly letter, which I have the honour of presenting to you, (to aim at some sort of order,) will, I think, arrange itself under the three principal heads of a husbandman's labour; —to prepare the soil, to sow, and to reap. So as our first part will embrace merely the necessary, and at the same time the most helpful preparations, such as clearing the ground, ploughing it, removing obstructions, and resolving difficulties, &c. The second will embrace the observations, —which may be likened, in some sort, to the grain which is sown. In the third, and last, we will do our endeavour to collect whatever fruits of our labour we can find.

Fain would I present all these things in that admirable order, and in that concise and clear style, which might satisfy the good taste of our age. —But, I am not ignorant that this talent is not granted to all. Among the innumerable multitude of writers, who are every day produced in this enlightened age, one cannot help distinguishing the nobles from the plebeians, —the few among the many. But what order or style can you expect from a common man, whom you yourself have obliged to write? Will it not be sufficient to understand what such a one says, and to make out the point which he would express? Now this is all that I desire. If thus much I attain, there remaineth to me no thing more to aspire after, to thee nothing more to desire.

THE COMING OF MESSIAH

IN

GLORY AND MAJESTY.

PART I.

WHICH CONTAINETH CERTAIN NECESSARY PREPARATIONS
FOR A RIGHT VIEW OF THE SUBJECT.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE LETTER OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

§ 1. ALL that I have to say to thee, my venerable friend Christophilus, reduces itself to the serious and formal examination of one single point; which, in the present constitution or system of the church and the world, appears to me of the highest importance; viz. Whether the ideas which we entertain concerning the coming of Messiah, that essential and fundamental article of our religion, be true and just ideas, faithfully drawn from the divine testimony, or not.

In this second coming of Messiah, I comprehend, not only his manifestation, or his revelation, as St. Paul and St. Peter frequently term it; but also all the things which immediately connect themselves therewith; or hold with it an immediate relation; as well

those which shall precede it, as those which shall accompany it, and likewise all its consequences. If my eyes deceive me not, I seem to see all those things with the greatest clearness and distinctness in the holy scripture. I seem to see them all, grand and magnificent, worthy of the majesty of God, and the wonderful person of the Man-God. And far from finding any difficulty in constructing and harmonizing them one with another, they appear to me coherent and consistent, as being all dictated by one and the same spirit of truth, which can in no wise be inconsistent with itself. It is true, indeed, that many of these things I understand not, nor am able to form a clear and precise idea of the manner in which they are all to come about: but what doth this signify? Am I in any way able to comprehend the wonderful manner in which Christ is present in the Eucharist? Yet withal I do believe it, though I understand it not; and by this faithful and genuine act of belief it is, that I am able to find in that sacrament the sustenance and life of my soul.

This reflection, which doubtless affordeth the greatest and most solid comfort, I extend, without any fear, to all things which I read in the holy scriptures; and, full of confidence and security, I reason with myself in the following simple strain: God is in every thing infinite, and I am in every thing puny: God can with the greatest ease do infinitely more than I am able to conceive: therefore must there be an infinite absurdity in thinking that I can measure him within the littleness of my ideas; consequently when he speaks, and I am certain that he speaks, I ought to bring my understanding and my reason into captivity to the obedience of faith, and therefore ought to believe at once whatever he says to me; and that, not after the mode in which it shadows itself forth to my mind, but precisely after that mode, and with all those circumstances, which he has condescended to reveal to me, whether I understand them, or whether I understand them not: because it is faith, and not intelligence which is required at my hand. By such argument, not the less excellent, because it is simple, I feel, my friend, that my heart opens, my faith revives, my hope strengthens, and, in short, I feel other effects, assuredly good, which there is no occasion to mention.

Yet as the desire of understanding is natural to man, and often highly to be praised, so that it keep within its proper limits I seek to understand those things which I believe; that is, the things of which I speak pertaining to the Messiah's Advent, for I meddle not with any thing beyond; and for the understanding of these things, I look into the interpreters of scripture. And what follows? To you it will appear incredible, and almost a solemn absurdity, when I say, that hardly have I looked into the authors upon the points I speak of, when I feel almost every thing I had read and believed in the scripture to fade away from my sight, leaving my understanding so obscured, my heart so cold, and my whole soul so disgusted, that it is not till after much time, and many efforts, I can bear to look inward upon myself.

Which happening to me many times, or to speak with more propriety, so often as I read the interpreters upon the points mentioned above; one day when wearied of so much disgust, I began to think within myself, that it might prove a useful labour, to undertake an attentive and lengthened trial of those explanations, and meanings which are found in the Interpreters, comparing them one by one with Scripture itself. This which I read with my eyes, I said, taking into my hand the holy Bible, is certain, and of faith divine. God himself is he who speaketh herein. That which I read in other books, be they what they may, is neither of faith, nor can be. Because, verily, in them speaketh man, not God. Because, verily, some say to me one thing and some another. Why, in fine? Because, verily, they tell me things very wide, very foreign, and sometimes very adverse from that which is clearly and expressly told me in the holy Bible. Finding then between God and man, between God who speaks, and man who interprets, a great difference and even contradiction, to which of the two should I give

credit? To man, and cease from God: or to God, and cease from man? Doubtless you will say what these very Interpreters say, and preach often enough, that I ought to believe both God who speaks, and man who interprets; that is to say, God who speaks, but not in that literal, simple, and clear sense which the letter declareth, and in which he appeareth to speak, but another recondite and sublime sense, which the Interpreter discovers, and by which he explains what God hath spoken. And this do, say they, upon the pain of imminent danger, upon the pain of falling into great errors, as hath happened to so many heretics, and so many besides who were not heretics, but catholic and pious men.

Not so fast, my friend, let us pause here a moment. Seemeth it to you, in strict and formal speech, that there may be some real danger in simply and faithfully believing what is so clearly written in the Holy Scripture? I judge you durst not say as much of the writings of St. Jerome, or any other celebrated doctor. Danger in the Holy Scripture? Danger in understanding it as you understand and believe any writer? Danger in believing the infinitely true God, holy and faithful in all his word, unless licence shall have first been sought of scanty and limited man? —I am not ignorant of the instance so common and hackneyed by which they attempt to prove this danger, viz. that the divine scripture oft speaketh of God, as if he really had eyes, ears, mouth, hands, and feet; of all which nothing can be understood literally, forasmuch as God is a pure spirit, with the notion of which, nothing of that kind can consist. But why not consist? Why not take all this exactly by the letter? For this very reason, as every reader of scripture well doth know, that the true God whom we adore, is a most pure and simple spirit, without bodily or material mixture. This being known, is altogether sufficient for one, though of the slenderest capacity, to conclude at once, and evidently comprehend, that the eyes, ears, mouth, and hands, which the Scripture assigns to God, cannot be corporeal, but purely spiritual, and such as to consist with a pure spirit. And if thus he understand, and thus believe, doth he not understand and believe a truth? How can God speak to be understood by us, but in our language, and by our words? Whence, then, by this example, doth the danger of the literal sense appear?

The danger, my friend, I say not remote and apparent danger, but proximate and real, lies on the contrary, in believing man the interpreter, when he departs from that proper, obvious, and literal sense, which the letter with all its context holds forth; when he omits, or conceals, or adds any thing which opposes, is away from, or not entirely consistent with the literal sense. Or if not, tell me why they should not admit, but condemn as dangerous, or at least as crude and undigested, that famous proposition of the most learned Theodoret? who in the 39th question upon Genesis, commenting on these words,—“The Lord God made for Adam and his wife, coats of skin, and clothed them;” and purposing to deny, as he actually doth, that God gave to Adam and Eve, such a clothing of skins; thus expresseth it, —“*We ought not to adhere, as it were, faithfully to the naked letter of the sacred Scripture, but seek after the treasure hidden under the letter, for this reason, that the very letter of Scripture sometimes declares a falsehood.*”⁴ Either this proposition is not false, harsh, and reprehensible, or if it be, then so also are all the threats they make, and all the fears of danger and destruction, which they cast upon the literal understanding of scripture.

Observe here, in passing, a thing of great importance, which you shall find in very common practice. This learned bishop of Scyro, probably believed as a wholesome, certain, and safe opinion, that which was commonly received in his time, as it is in ours, and in both without foundation, to wit, that the transgression of our first parents took place in the very

⁴ Non oportet adhærere nudæ literæ scripturæ sanctæ tanquam verb; sed thesaurum in littera latentem, quærere, eo quod ipsa litera divinæ scripturæ interdum falsum dicat.

day of their creation: some indeed granting them another day of grace, and others according to their greater or less liberality extending it as far as the eighth day. Upon this supposition, it appeared to them inexplicable, that God should so soon find skins to clothe them withal: which could only be in one of two ways; either by creating these skins out of nothing, or by taking them from some animals: not the first; *for God had ceased from all his work*: as little the second, for the animals just created, had not had time to multiply, and it is not to be believed, that a species should perish in order to obtain their skins; therefore the clothing which God made for the offenders, could not be of real skins, but of some other material which is not known.

This reasoning appeared to that learned man, both good and conclusive, as it hath appeared to others since his time; and if the reasoning be good and conclusive (which it is far from being, because it resteth upon a falsehood), then follows very forcibly this alternative; either the divine scripture tells an untruth, or the transgression of our first parents did not happen so soon as is supposed: but this last may not be said, because it is the common opinion of the doctors, which is more sacred than scripture: therefore the divine scripture must pay for it: consequently the divine scripture affirms a falsehood. —So that to save a common opinion from contradiction, there results this general rule, “*we ought not to adhere, as it were, faithfully to the naked letter of Holy Scripture, but search for the treasure hidden under the letter, for this reason, that the very letter of scripture sometimes declares a falsehood.*” —I consider it as certain, that you will look upon this rule not only as false, not only as crude, not only as wanting in reverence, but also as fraught with prejudice and danger. Nevertheless, I do not hesitate to express my apprehensions upon good grounds, that the use of this same general rule appears to yourself, to be perhaps, upon occasions, convenient, useful, and even necessary.

§ 2. But then, have not many (I hear you reply,) erred; have they not fallen into peril, and therein perished, from understanding the scripture exactly as it reads? Has not the literal sense of scripture, proved unto many a very grievous stumbling-block? My friend, I resolutely answer, No. —The errors which so many have taken up, as well heretics as not, have in no instance originated in the literal sense of scripture, but absolutely in the very reverse, in having departed from that sense; in having understood, or in the pretence of having understood, something different from that pointed out by the letter: in having believed, or imagined there is or may be some error in the letter; and under this impression omitted, or added something. Read with attention the history of heresies by any one of the many authors who have written upon this head, and you shall find yourself forced to confess, that not one has owed its origin to the obvious and literal sense of scripture: I mean its true and real origin, not that which they wickedly pretend for it. I have now before me the catalogue of heresies drawn up by St. Augustine until his time; wherein are comprehended, all, or most of those, which St. Ireneus, and after him St. Epiphanius have confuted; and I have reflected not a little upon those which have arisen since; and so far from finding their origin in the letter of scripture, I find it always in quite the contrary cause, of not wishing to conform to the letter and the literal sense.

This is the reason, as St. Augustine testifies in his second book of Christian doctrine, why the Holy church in the Holy Spirit assembled, when it has mentioned and condemned any of these errors, has only had to produce the letter of the scripture upon the point: that is, the text and the context taken literally in that sense, which obviously, clearly, and naturally occurred to the mind. Nor, I may add, has the church ever defined any truth, no, nor ever can, by drawing the text from its obvious and natural sense, and carrying its meaning to something

else away from the letter, or opposed to it. —What more would heretics have desired? They would instantly have triumphed!

Not only by the church in the Holy Spirit assembled, but also by all the ancient fathers, and by as many doctors as have since written against heresies, hath this same course been always, or almost always observed. I say almost always, because it is not to be denied, that sometimes in the heat of disputation, they have passed much beyond this rule, and much beyond this just and precise limit. And then it is precisely that they conclude nothing and effect nothing. So that it may be said with truth, thus saith the Holy Scripture in this matter; and by other means is not any thing concluded.

Heretics the most corrupt, and the most wide of the truth, have ever pretended to establish their errors by scripture, as if this were indeed that universal fountain, from which every one might drink what pleased him best. They would, I say, have us to believe, that they are in scripture, and have been thence derived. But, in truth, they held them already, independent wholly of the scripture; and held them for the most part in the heart, rather than the head: and having adopted them, and perhaps without adopting or believing them, they went to the divine scripture to search therein for some confirmation, or defence of them, out of a spirit of mere malignity, of emulation, of hatred, of independence, and of system. And what followed? It followed, and it is quite natural that it should so follow, either that they found in the scripture, a text in a kind of way favourable; or they themselves did open violence to it, in order that it might stand on their side, now taking away, now adding, now divorcing it from all its context, that it might be forced to speak that which it really did not speak. The Manicheans, for example, maintained their two principles, or two gods, the one good, the other bad; the one the cause of all the good in the world, the other the cause of all the evil, physical and moral, which afflict and trouble the children of Adam. Having with this view ransacked, with the utmost care and diligence, the whole of the sacred writings, they at length found these words of Christ, *Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit; a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.* Matt. vii. 17. The joy of such an important discovery must have been so great to those learned, though hardly rational men, that it would not give them leave to read another line which immediately follows, to the great dishonour of their second principle—*every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down, and cast into the fire.* —This second principle, they might have reasoned, always produceth evil, and never good, therefore sometime it shall be hewn down, and cast into the fire. Consequently it neither can be, nor can be called God, nor with any propriety, *a principle*; therefore there cannot be more than one only true God, the principle and end of all things. All this, these doctors might have concluded from that very text which they adduced, had they read the whole of it with good eyes; but as their eyes were so vitiated, it was a necessary consequence that the whole should be vitiated.

Thus, in the heresies of that time was fulfilled, hath been always fulfilled, is fulfilled, and for ever shall be fulfilled, to the very letter, that which is written in scripture: *He that seeketh the law shall he filled therewith, but the hypocrite will be offended thereat.* Ecclesiasticus xxxii. 15. Reading the scripture with such bad eyes, and with such depraved intentions, what wonder, that instead of the truth which they do not seek, they should find the error and the offence which they do seek? —And shall it be said, that this and other errors of the like kind, have had their origin in the letter of scripture?

Calvin and several others, to take a step forward, advanced that Jesus Christ was not really and truly present in the sacrament of the Eucharist. And as if this were clear and

express in the scripture, they defied any one whatever to a disputation, upon condition that they should bring and use no other arms than scripture itself, for which they professed a high degree of respect and veneration. Say now that you and I, who are Catholics and have a sufficient knowledge of the question, with all our heart take up this defiance, and enter to the disputation with the Bible in our hands. But before opening it, I ask of them the favour to show me some place, or places of the scripture, from which they have extracted this novelty. The real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, I add, counts years of possession, even for as long as the church hath been invested by Christ himself; for it is clear from constant and universal tradition, and likewise from all ecclesiastical history, that the church has always believed, taught, and practised it, as a thing received from the Apostles, and found written in the scriptures themselves. —With all Catholics, therefore, we stand in lawful possession of this doctrine of the real presence; and a legitimate immemorial possession, is sufficient, and more than sufficient to establish a sure right.

It is not enough, in a tumultuous body they answer me, unless there be found, and produced in judgment some instrument, or authentic scripture, which proves the contrary. Well then, I say, let this instrument be shown, this scripture, that it may be seen what it says, and in what terms it speaks. With all the labour they take, with all their turning the Bible over and over again, they in fact produce nothing, they show nothing, and can show nothing which contradicts, or in any way makes against my possession, and my right. Where, then, is this place of the Holy Scripture to be found? Whence, by taking it literally, have they imbibed this error? On the contrary, I show them not one but many places of the same scripture, which are clearly in my favour. In the first place, I show them the four Evangelists, who with all clearness declare it when they speak of the last supper. St. John, indeed, on that occasion, being occupied with other admirable mysteries, omitted by the other Evangelists, makes no mention of it, having already left it, both spoken and repeated in the sixth chapter of his gospel. —*My flesh is bread indeed, and my blood is drink indeed; he who eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, &c. —The bread which I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.* I show them, in fine, the instruction which St. Paul gives upon this subject to the church of Corinth, and thereby to all the churches besides, saying, that which he had there taught he had received immediately from the Lord. —*For I have received of the Lord, &c. 1 Cor. xi. 23.*⁵

Having shown them all these places of the scripture, clear and undeniable; I pray in the name of grace or of justice, this only, that they would not strip them of their literal sense, that is, the obvious and natural one which the words bear; because it is not lawful to do so, no, not even with the writings of Calvin himself. If they concede to me the obvious and literal sense of the texts which I have mentioned, by this alone, without further effort, the error is dissipated: nor is it necessary to pass to other arguments: the dispute is at an end. —But if my petition find no favour, if they persist in denying that the divine scripture speaks what our eyes see, if they pretend that saying one thing, another thing is to be understood, &c. the error will go on for ever, and the dispute will last for ages.

⁵ *Note from Irving's Discourse:* A DEAR friend and brother in the ministry of Christ has just sent me the following Note, which I have much pleasure in adding to this Dissertation, not being able to embody it. —It should be affixed to that part of the Work which relates to Transubstantiation. "I think a few words would be desirable; merely observing, that the pious Author does not seem to have been aware that there is no word in Hebrew or Syriac which denotes 'to signify.' They always use *the thing* signified for *the sign*. *The seven lean kine, are seven years;* that is, signify seven years: *the seven golden candlesticks, are the seven churches;* that is, signify the seven churches, &c."

What I say of this error in particular, I say generally of all errors and heresies whatever, which have disturbed, afflicted, and scandalized the church. In the history and progress of seventeen centuries, I do not find one which has not had the same origin. The heart being once depraved, the understanding through its means doth easily become depraved also, and then it is most easy to wrest all authentic writings which might stand in the way. This wresting of the scriptures, which in all ages has been found so common, showed itself so far back as the time of the Apostles, and is alluded to by St. Peter in the third chapter of his second epistle, in these words, *which the unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, to their own destruction*. And from that time till now, there may be observed, in respect to such unstable men, one or other of these two things, either that they have falsified and corrupted the text, by adding or abstracting some word, or if that have not been in their power, they have at least with impunity persisted in denying that the text means that which it says, and which every one who can read it, reads plainly and directly. And for what all this straining, but for dread of the letter? Therefore it is not the letter which hath led them into error.

I do not speak here of another class of men, who have combated other truths, which, although not appearing expressly from the scripture, are not on that account the less to be relied on; whose whole argument is this —They do not clearly appear from scripture, therefore they are not true, but may be denied, and undervalued without any scruple. A most lame conclusion, we reply; for besides those infinite truths which clearly appear upon the letter of scripture, there have always been certain others, which the church received from the living voice of her masters, who received them in the same manner from the living voice of the Son of God, after the resurrection, when during forty days he appeared unto them, and spake unto them concerning the kingdom of God, Acts i.: as also by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, who dwelt in them. These truths, the church hath faithfully and constantly preserved from the beginning, always believed them, taught them, publicly and universally practised them, in all parts, and at all times, without interruption, and without any substantial alteration. Of which these are the five principal: 1. The Apostles' creed. 2. The seven Sacraments. 3. The Hierarchy. 4. The perpetual virginity of the most Holy Mother of Messiah. 5. The scripture itself, as we now possess it, without more variety than is indispensable in the versions from one tongue to another.

Some other truths the doctors point out, which either are not so sure, or are not so interesting, or may be brought under these five heads, which hold no lower origin than the apostles themselves. So that we say confidently with St. Ambrose; *away with arguments when faith is in question, now let logic be silent; not the reasoners, but the fishermen are to be believed*.⁶ It availeth, therefore, very little, that those truths are not found in the scriptures; and is sufficient that the contrary of them be not clearly and expressly found therein; which indeed would invalidate any tradition, or rather convict it of false tradition; it is enough that the church has always believed, has always taught, has always practised them. And they who will not yield to all this, do furnish more than sufficient ground to believe that the whole evil is in the heart: for whom, therefore, there remaineth no other remedy, save the most severe and terrible one, which is already entered in the gospel. —*And if he will not hear the church, let him be unto thee, a Heathen man, and a Publican*. —Matt. x. 17.

§ 3. With respect to pious Catholics, who have sometimes erred, more or less, we have to say nearly the same as of the heretics, with this great and notable difference, which is

⁶ Aufer argumenta ubi fides quaeritur, jam dialectica taceat; piscatoribus creditur non dealecticis.

all their apology; that if in any thing they have erred at a time, their error has been not in the heart, but in the head, which they no sooner came to know, than they instantly retracted with simplicity and truth. But if with moderate attention, we search into the true origin of those errors, far from finding it in the letter or literal sense of the scripture, we shall find it always, or almost always, in the very contrary. All the errors which are attributed to Origen, a man otherwise great, and famous for his learning and the sanctity of his life, are certainly to be attributed to no other principle than this; That he inclined his understanding, not indeed to that which the scripture says, but to something else very remote, which it saith not; so that every word must have another occult sense, which it was necessary to search out or to divine; and the scripture became in his hands nothing better than a book of enigmas.

For which he alleged that text of St. Paul, *For the letter killeth, but the spirit maketh alive*, 2 Cor. iii. 6; understanding it in the same manner, and with the same grossness of interpretation, as he had this other, *There are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake*, Matt. xix. 12. Proceeding upon a principle so false as was this, drawn from his understanding of *the letter killeth* —what wonder that he erred? The wonder would have been if he had not erred.

§ 4. Is not, then, that sentence of the apostle and teacher of the Gentiles true, *The letter killeth, but the spirit maketh alive*? Is it not true according to this sentence, that holy writ, being literally understood, kills the poor simple man who so understands it; but quickens the learned and spiritual man, who understands it spiritually? I reply to you, Sir, with all courtesy, that what St. Paul says is a truth, and a truth of great importance, while the interpretation you have just given of it is not so, but a gross and even ridiculous falsehood.

The letter, of which the apostle speaks, as any one who has eyes may see, is nothing but the law, *cut in letters upon tables of stone*, which God gave to his people by the hand of Moses, This letter, or this written law, being contrasted with the law of grace, is that which is said by the holy apostle to kill. For why? Not only because it ruled with rigour and with terrible threatenings, yea with death and all other chastisements and calamities, but because it neither gave the Spirit, nor had it to give; that is to say, when it was promulgated from Mount Sinai, there was not given along with it the quickening Spirit, whose time was not yet come. This God reserved for another and a more seasonable time, when Messiah himself, having concluded the mission of his eternal Father, and the redemption of the world, arose and was glorified; *For*, says St. John, *the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified*, John vii. 39.

The law of grace, on the contrary, was not, in the day of its promulgation, written *on tables of stone*, but *on the tables of the heart*; not with carved material letters, but by the quickening Spirit of the living God, which in that day was shed abroad abundantly by *Jesus Christ* in the simple and pure hearts of the believers, illuminating, instructing, and empowering them to embrace that law, and fulfil it in all its perfection; no longer in fear as slaves, but in love as the sons of God: whereof the same Spirit gave them testimony and sure earnest: *The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, &c.* Rom. viii. 16.

Now as the Spirit which was then given was not a passing thing limited to that day only, but permanent and stable, which was to be given in all times, and to all believers who should seek to entertain him, the apostle says, that the Spirit of the law of grace quickens, which the written law does not, but kills, because there was not in it such a spirit. This is all which is asserted by St. Paul, and this is in substance the explanation given to the text by judicious authors, when they come to it: having given the literal interpretation of a clear text in scripture, we oft-times find them calling it the interpretation *according to the letter which*

killeth, alluding no doubt to this expression of St. Paul, but in a sense which it neither hath nor can have. Read the book of St. Augustine, Concerning the Spirit and the letter, (*de Spiritu et littera*,) and you shall find, from the very beginning of it, the well-merited censure of those who pretend by this text to justify themselves in forsaking the proper sense of scripture, in order to escape away to allegory. Allegory is good, being used in moderation, and without prejudice to the letter, which must in the first place be preserved. This secured, allegorize how much you choose, extract figures, moralities, predicable conceptions, and whatever may be for the edification of the reader; provided always that you oppose no other place of scripture, taken in its proper and natural sense.

§ 5. It cannot be denied that we read many things in scripture, which taken according to the letter, and even studied laboriously in connexion with the whole context, we do not understand. And why is there much that we do not understand? Does it appear to you of fixed and absolute necessity that every thing should be understood, and in every time? If you look closely into it, this ignorance, or want of understanding in respect to many things in scripture, more especially in the prophecy, cometh of the one or other of these two causes; either that their time is not yet arrived, or that they do not accord well, but mainly oppose some ideas, or system of ideas, which we have already adopted as good. If the time for understanding many things be not yet arrived, and the substance of them were of no use, how should we think to understand them? How are we to understand that which the infinite wisdom of God hath sought to keep from being revealed to us, by the darkest veil of obscure metaphor, in order that it might not be understood before its time? The understanding of this kind doth not depend, my dear Sir, upon our ingenuity, nor upon our study, nor upon the holiness of our life; but dependeth solely upon God's pleasure to give us the key, to give us the spirit of understanding. And God is not accustomed to give this but in his own times, especially in respect to those matters which, out of their time, might be productive of loss rather than gain. The elders, it is undeniable, were dark on many points which at present we understand; and they who are yet to arise shall understand many more, which are at present unintelligible to us; because, in one word, they were not written without a determinate end in view, which end would not be obtained if they remained for ever hid.

After the same way, we reason concerning the second cause of this want of light. If some and not a few of the things we read in the scripture do not accord with those ideas, or that system which we have adopted, but clearly oppose them, how should it be possible that in such a case we should understand them? According as the system may appear to us complete, and our ideas evident, will the obscurity of those scriptures increase, which are clearly contrary, and even sometimes contradictory thereto. And in all times the utmost efforts of the greatest minds have been used to unite these two enemies, but all in vain. Wherefore in vain? For the very reason that we have just pointed out. Because our system appears to us the only one, and our ideas evident. And being so, all the efforts which can be made lead to no other result than this, to make the scriptures yield in order to accommodate our system, that it may rest victorious, without losing an inch of ground. But as God's verity is essentially immutable and eternal, and incapable of yielding to any efforts of the creature, this its unalterable firmness will come, by a natural consequence, to be the whole cause of its obscurity. As if we should say, This, and the like passages of scripture, will not, after all that we can do, accommodate themselves to our system; therefore they are obscure, therefore they must have another sense; therefore it will be indispensable to search for some other sense, more suited to the purpose of accommodating, or at least of not opposing, our system.

This mode of reasoning will appear to you far from just; and yet it is incredible what use is made of it. And who knows, my friend, (but keep this secret to your own breast) who knows, but those threats which they hold out, of error and peril in the literal sense of scripture, have respect solely to the things which will not square with the system they have adopted? These threats surely do not extend to all the scripture, seeing they themselves search into and admit the literal sense; as far as is possible for them. And why should they withhold from doing so in certain peculiar cases? And what are these,? They are those precisely, and, as it seems to me, those only, to consider and examine which, is the primary subject of this treatise, —all the things that pertain to the second coming of our Lord.

CHAPTER II.

OF THE EXTRINSICAL AUTHORITY OF THE LETTER OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

§ 1. IN the understanding and interpretation of those prophets, which in any way pertain to our great subject, it is very easy to remark, how the interpreters of scripture, having for a moment sought and followed after the literal sense, in which it was not possible for them to make much progress, in a short time betook themselves to the pure allegory, pretending that this is the sense *especially intended by the Holy Spirit*. For which, if we ask them their reason and grounds, their only reply is to refer us to authority wholly external; that is, to the other doctors of antiquity, who in like manner understood and explained them. This argument, *from authority* which, in other points of doctrine and morality, may and ought to be looked upon as good and legitimate, does not appear to be so in this point of which we treat. For as, without any disrespect to the more modern doctors, we may ask them a reason for their interpretation, when it is not agreeable to the letter of the text; so, in like manner, may we ask it of the ancients, for as much as the authority of these, however great and respectable it may be, cannot rest upon itself. This is a prerogative of the highest kind, which pertains to no one but God only. And therefore their authority must ground itself either on scripture itself, declaring it clearly so to be, or on universal, immemorial, sure, and constant tradition, or on some decision of the church, or on some good and solid reason.

This is in substance precisely what St. Augustine says to St. Jerome, in that celebrated epistolary dispute which was held between those two great doctors, upon the true meaning of the second chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians. The reasons which St. Augustine produced, and by which he impugned the sentiments of St. Jerome, appear most clear and decisive: insomuch that St. Jerome himself, finding no way of eluding their force but silently confessing it, was fain, as an ultimate resource, to betake himself to external authority; bringing in his behalf the authority of St. Chrysostom, Origen, and other Greek fathers, who had been of his opinion: to which St. Augustine replied in these words, well worthy of consideration: "For in the ear of thy charity I confess, that only to those books of scripture which are now acknowledged to be canonical, have I learned such deference and honour, as to believe most firmly that none of their authors hath fallen into error in any of their writings. And in this kind of writ, if I should fall upon any thing which seems to me contrary to truth, I do not doubt that it is either the error of the manuscript, or that the interpreter hath not

apprehended what was said; or that I have not understood it. But other authors, however great their attainments in sanctity and learning may be, I read not in the belief that the matter is true because they have thought it, but because they have succeeded in persuading me, from these canonical writers or from probable reasonings, that it is not repugnant to truth.”⁷

The same holy doctor, not to be inconsistent with himself, protests in another place, that he does not desire for his own writings that they should be otherwise treated than he himself did treat those of other doctors; that what appears agreeable to truth be adopted, and what appears contrary or foreign to the same truth, should be cast away or impugned. “The disputations of any, though catholic, and praiseworthy men, we ought not to hold in the same estimation with the canonical scripture; so as not to feel at liberty without offence to the honour due to them, to call in question, and even to refute any thing which we may chance to find in their writings disagreeing with the truth, as God hath enabled others, or ourselves to understand it. And as I feel in respect to the writings of other men, so wish I my readers to feel in respect of mine.”⁸

Since, however, in the particular things of which we are about to treat, external authority is the only enemy which we have to fear, and which at every step will occasion us the most terrible opposition; it appears proper and even necessary, to say a word or two thereon; presupposing always, and assenting to every thing in the subject which is sure and certain. The authority of the ancient fathers of the church, is doubtless of the greatest weight, and we ought not only to respect it, but to yield ourselves to it entirely; not blindly, or in all supposable cases, but in certain cases, and with certain precautions and limitations taught by the theologians. The following is a general proposition in which all agree: “When all, or almost all the fathers of the church unanimously concur in the explanation or understanding of any passage of scripture, such unanimous consent constitutes an argument of theology, and sometimes of faith, that this and no other is the true interpretation of that passage of scripture.”

This general proposition, though sure and certain, admits however, of some limitations not less sure and certain, and on which the doctors are equally agreed. The first, that the passage of scripture in question should directly bear upon the substance of religion, or the universal doctrines of the whole church, as also upon morality. Which limitation is expressly written in the decree of the council of Trent, Session 4th: whereby it is commanded that no one shall dare to interpret holy scripture, conforming it to his own opinion, “in matter of faith and morals, pertaining to edification in doctrines, contrary to that sense which hath

⁷ Ego enim fateor charitati tuæ, solis eis scripturarum libris, quæ jam canonici appellantur, didici hunc timorem honoremque deferre, ut nullum eorum auctorem, scribendo aliquid erasse firmissimè credo. At si aliquid in eis offendero litteris, quòd videbatur contrarium veritati, nihil aliud quam vel mendacem esse codicem, vel interpretem non assecutum esse quòd dictum est, vel me minime intellexisse, non ambigam. Alios autem (auctores) ita lego ut quan talibet sanctitate, doctrinaquæ perpolleant, non ideo verum putem, quia ipsi ita senserunt; sed quia mihi, vel per illos auctores canonicos, vel probabili ratione, quòd a vero non abhorreat, persuadere poterunt. St. Aug. Ep. 82. ad Hier. n. 3.

⁸ Neque enim quorumlibet disputationes, quamvis catholicorum et laudabiliurn hominum, velut scripturas canonicas habere debemus, ut nobis non liceat, salva honorificentia, quæ ipsis debetur, aliquid scriptis improbare atque respuere si forte invenerimus, quod aliter senserint quam veritas habeat, divino adjutorio vel ab aliis intellectæ, vel a nobis. Talis sum ego in scriptis aliorum: tales ego volo intellectores meorum.

been held, and is held by the holy mother church, whose prerogative it is to judge of the true sense of Holy Scripture, or even against the unanimous consent of the fathers.”⁹

A second limitation is; that the explanation or understanding which they give to the passage of scripture, be given by all, or the greater number of them, not as a mere suspicion or conjecture, but as a verity of faith. And the third limitation is; that the point in question should have been treated by all, or most of the fathers, not by the way, as in some sermon or homily, but on express purpose; determining, proving, affirming, and resolving that the thing which they assert is a verity, and the contrary of it an error. Some other limitations are laid down by the doctors, which however it is not material to mention here, these three, which are the chief ones, sufficing for our present purpose.”¹⁰

§ 2. Be not afraid, my friend, lest I should fail in respect for the authority of the ancient fathers, or desire to invade the just limits of that authority. For the points which I am about to treat, in the first place, do not bear directly upon doctrine or morals: in the second place, the ancient fathers do not treat of them on purpose, hardly touch them in passing, and that but a few: in the third place, the few who do touch them, do not agree in their sentiments, some affirming and others denying, which is a circumstance of the utmost importance: and in the fourth and last place, neither the fathers who affirm, nor those who deny (excepting St. Epiphanius, of whom we will speak in due time) treat the opposite opinion as erroneous. This censure is quite modern, and from the mouth of incompetent judges. St. Jerome, one of those who held the negative, says expressly, that he does not therefore, neither can, condemn those who hold the affirmative: “which things, though we follow not, we leave to the judgment of God, in consideration of the multitude of church men and martyrs who have so expressed themselves.”¹¹

From all which it clearly appears, that we are at liberty to follow some and forsake others: to follow, I would say, that opinion which all things considered and justly weighed, shall appear to us most agreeable to the tenor of the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

For the greater confirmation of what has been said, we conclude this point with the words of the great Bossuet. This wise and judicious writer, in the preface to his exposition of the Apocalypse, in order to smooth the way for a new course which he was to take, proposes certain difficulties, among which, the first is the authority of the ancient fathers, and the concurring sentiments of interpreters, who had seen in the Apocalypse, not the persecutions of the three first centuries of the church, but the last which are to precede the coming of the Lord, and to this difficulty he replies under his thirteenth article, after the following manner:

“But the mere novice in theology knows the resolution of the first difficulty. If it had been necessary, for the explanation of the Apocalypse, to reserve every thing to the end of the world, and the times of Antichrist, would it have been permitted, that so many learned men of the past age should understand by the beast of the Apocalypse, now Antichrist, in the person

⁹ In rebus fidei et morum ad edificationem doctrinae pertinentium contra eum sensum quem tenuit et tenet sancta mater ecclesia, cujus est judicare de vero sensu Scripturarum Sanctorum, aut etiam contra unanimem consensum patrum.

¹⁰ See upon this point Meichor Cano, *de locis*, lib. T: Petavio Prolegom ad Theolog, and Possevino Aparato Sacro, etc.

¹¹ Quæ licet non sequamur, quia multi ecclesiasticorum virorum et martyres ita dixerunt... iudicio Domini reservamus. (In cap. 19. Jerem.)

of Mahomet, now something else; or Enoch and Elias by the two witnesses of the eleventh chapter?...the learned ex-Jesuit Louis de Alcazar, who wrote a large commentary upon the Apocalypse from which Grotius has taken many of his ideas, makes it to be perfectly accomplished up to the twentieth chapter, and shows the two witnesses without speaking a word of Elias or of Enoch. When they oppose to him the authority of the fathers and of certain other doctors, who, with unbridled license, would make traditions and articles of faith out of the conjectures of some of the fathers, he replies, that other doctors have thought differently, and that the fathers likewise vary upon those points, or upon the greater part of them. Consequently, that there is not, neither can be, found in them a constant and uniform tradition, as it is also with many other points, upon which doctors, though catholic, have pretended to find it. In short, that it is not a question of doctrine nor of authority, but of pure conjecture. And all this is well grounded in that rule of the council of Trent, which placeth the understanding of the scriptures, neither in constant tradition, nor in any inviolable authority of the holy fathers, but in her own unanimous consent, and this only in matters of faith and morals.” The whole of this which Mr. Bossuet says, receive my friend as if I had spoken it all to you, in answer to the only difficulty which I see in my way. And now let us come to the subject.

CHAPTER III.

THE ORDINARY SYSTEM UPON THE SECOND COMING OF MESSIAH IS PROPOSED, TOGETHER WITH THE METHOD OF EXAMINING IT

§ 1. EVERY part of Divine Scripture hath so close a connexion with the adorable person of Messiah, that we may truly say, the whole of it speaks of him, either in figure, in prophecy, or in history; all beginning in him, and in him terminating as its true and ultimate end. Our Rabbis did not fail to perceive well enough this great and important truth; but among so many great and magnificent things which, as it were, at every step, they read concerning Messiah in the Prophets and the Psalms, encountering some others little to their mind, and which seemed to them unworthy of such greatness and majesty; nor wishing faithfully and sincerely to believe what they read, for the reason that they could not harmonize, in one and the same person, the grandeur of the former with the meanness of the latter; and would not distinguish nor admit, in the same person, those two states and times, infinitely wide of each other, which stood out so manifestly in the scriptures; it came to pass, that they took at length a side which was the side of our ruin and the root of all our evils, resolving to declare for the former and to forget the latter.

In consequence of which imprudent resolution, they did, almost without perceiving it, form a general system, which, little by little, they all came to embrace, one saying what another had said, and for no better reason than that the other had said it. And with great pains, they set themselves to accommodate to that system, which appeared to them the only one possible, all the prophecies, and whatsoever is said in them, resolving to give no quarter to any thing, be it what it would, unless it would yield compliance. A truly wretched system, which, in the end, brought the whole people of God to that miserable state in which they are found at this day. Leaving however these things, as now irreparable, and turning to our

purpose, we thence take leave to propose, and likewise to examine with attention, the ideas which the christian doctors give us concerning that coming of the same Messiah, which we still expect. They say, or suppose it as certain, that those ideas are derived from holy writ: but is it certain? And granting that it is so in the general, is it likewise certain that they are faithfully taken, without omission, addition, or any disguise, and every thing standing in its proper place? So it appears to me we ought to suppose, yielding our judgment to the authority of so many learned men, who have built upon this foundation, deeming it to be good, solid, and secure. And I do, for the present, desire to suppose it so, without setting myself unseasonably to deny or to dispute. Nevertheless, as the subject presents itself to me, as being one of the highest importance, and there is on the other hand nothing to hinder me, I desire to take the advice to drink the water in the fountain; to see and feel and prove for myself, the conformity which those ideas have, or may have, with the scripture itself, from whence they are taken; for it is a clear case that it will yield much greater satisfaction, to see Rome itself with our own eyes, than in a description or painting.

§ 2. All the things, general and particular, which we find written upon this subject in books, being reduced to a few words, form a system, of which the substance may be set forth in the following terms: —Jesus Christ will return from heaven to the earth in glory and majesty, not before, but exactly at, the end of the world, his coming being preceded by all those great signs which are written in the Evangelists, the Prophets, and the Apocalypse. Amongst which one will be most terrible, the persecution by Antichrist for the space of three years and a half. Authors do not entirely agree in every thing pertaining to this persecution. Some place it immediately before the coming of the Lord; others, and I believe the greater number, observing in this a very great inconvenience which might ruin the whole system, take to themselves the liberty of placing this great event some time before, in such a way as to leave a space of time, great or small, determinate or indeterminate, between Antichrist's end and Christ's coming. For which we shall see their reason in its proper place.¹²

A short while before the coming of the Lord, and immediately on his issuing forth from heaven, there will come on the earth an universal deluge of fire, which will consume all the living, without one single exception; this ended, and the fire quenched, in one moment will arise unto life the whole human race: so that when he arrives at the earth, he will find every child of Adam, who hath been, is, or is to be, not only risen, but likewise assembled in the valley of Jehoshaphat, which lieth close to Jerusalem. In this valley, they say, the universal judgment is to be held. And why? Because so the prophet Joel assures us, in the third chapter; and although the prophet speaks not of the universal judgment, as appears from all the context, yet so have certain of the ancients understood the passage, and so it has been received until now, without formal contradiction. And this, notwithstanding the exact measures which have been made by the curious, in order to see how, within the space of a mile and a half in length by a hundred paces in breadth, it were possible to accommodate those tiny men who must be assembled from all ages and from all quarters of the world, forasmuch as they will accommodate themselves as best they can; and the wicked and miserable people, says a learned man, can go into any room however small.

Then the Lord being come to the valley of Jehoshaphat, and being seated upon a throne of majesty, not upon the earth, but in the air, though very near the earth, and all the just being in like manner stationed in the air, according to their orders, after the manner of an amphitheatre, the books of the consciences of men shall be opened, and all the good and evil

¹² Phenom. 4.

of every one published abroad; whereby the cause of God being justified, the Judge shall pass the final sentence, on some of eternal life, on others of eternal death: whereupon instantly the sentence shall be executed, which casteth down to hell all the wicked to dwell with the devils, and Jesus Christ shall return once more to heaven, carrying all the good along with him.

This is the sum and substance of all we find written in books; but if we regard with any degree of attention what is spoken and declared to us throughout the scriptures, it is easy to perceive that many very substantial matters are here altogether wanting; and that those which are present, though true in part, are found out of their proper place. Whether this be so or not, it does not appear possible, within short compass, to clear up and decide; for not only must proofs be produced, but intricacies disentangled, and many knots unloosed and broken.

§ 3. It is known unto all, by the principles of mere natural reason, that the only mode of ascertaining the goodness and truth of a system, upon any subject, is to see and make experiment whether all the particulars which belong to it be thereby well explained. Let us give an example.

I wish to know for certain, if the ancient system of the heavens, commonly called the Ptolomean, be good or not. I have nothing more to do than to examine if it explain, in a natural, easy, and intelligible way, all the movements and phenomena which I clearly and distinctly observe in the heavenly bodies. I clearly and constantly observe, without change or variation, that a planet, for example, Mars, appears to my eyes much greater when it is in opposition to the Sun, than when it is in its quadratures. I observe of the same planet, that it does not always follow its natural course, but, at a determinate time, remains many days immoveable, and as it were nailed to the same spot in the firmament. I observe, with the same clearness, the planet Venus sometimes above the Sun, at others underneath, between the Sun and the Earth. I observe Jupiter encompassed with other planets, of which he is the centre of motion, and which, consequently, are found now above now below him, now on the one side now on the other, &c. In this way I observe a hundred other phenomena, of which, though I be in ignorance how they are, I cannot therefore doubt but they really are.

I seek then to explain these and other things upon the ancient system of Ptolemy; I ask this explanation of the most celebrated philosophers and astronomers, Egyptian, Greek, Arabian, and Latin. I see the vain efforts which they make to give some explanation of them. I hear the suppositions which they endeavour to establish, all of them arbitrary, improbable, and incredible. I contemplate with wonder the eccentrics and epicycles to which they are driven, as a last resource: and as the result of it all, being convinced that in reality they explain nothing—that all is inexplicable confusion and unintelligible gibberish, I am truly justified upon this ground alone, in pronouncing my definitive sentence, the most just which was ever given on any subject of pure physics: That the system cannot subsist, that it is manifestly false, that it ought to be for ever proscribed and rooted out by the learned; and that, number whom it may among its defenders and patrons, be they all the learned men who have flourished for two or three thousand years, let authorities be cited by the thousand from all the libraries in the world, still I am right in maintaining my conclusion sure and steadfast, that the system is false, that it explains nothing, and that the phenomena themselves destroy it.

But if in the room of this system another come forth, which, upon being well examined and confronted with the celestial phenomena, is found to explain them in a clear and natural way which satisfies all difficulties, and that without violence, without confusion, without arbitrary supposition - though this new system should claim no higher patronage than its own author, no more authority than the proofs it brings along with it; this authority alone

will weigh more in a faithful balance than all volumes however large, and all the learned men who wrote them; and any man of judgment, when he comes to possess sufficient knowledge of the question, will at once abandon them all; and for the pain of this step, and for the courtesy which on other grounds they might deserve, offer in good faith, as his just and reasonable excuse, that, in one word, there was in their time no other system, and so they wrought with this, on the supposition of its goodness. Now, my friend, forget not this, for it is a kind of parable.

§ 4. Without departing far from that propriety which a similitude requires, we may consider the Holy Bible as a grand and most beautiful firmament, adorned of the Spirit of God with so much variety and magnificence, that it appears impossible to open one's eyes without being held riveted in attention. This first view, though confused and general, naturally excites the curiosity and desire of knowing what things they are which they present, how they are to be understood, what connexion or tie they hold with each other, and to what determinate end they are all directed. This curiosity being excited, the first step that naturally presents itself, is to go and search in books what the doctors have thought and taught thereon, how they have explained these things, and what lights they have left us for arriving at the true understanding thereof.

If after many years of formal study in books of this sort; if after having sought a natural and clear explanation of some particular phenomena which appeared to us of high importance; if, after having confronted these explanations with the phenomena themselves, we find nothing but suppositions. and arbitrary accommodations, and those for the most part violent, confused, disjointed, and manifestly out of the question; what would they that we should do but seek another path, more direct, though not so much trodden: seek, I mean, some other system, on which things will work better: —and this is what I am now about to propose to your consideration.¹³ Perhaps you will say to me that before proposing another and a new system, I ought in due form to have impugned the old one, and shown its

¹³ One of the most learned men of the past age, well known for genius, erudition and piety, by his admirable sermons, proposed to have done what I now undertake, though by a method widely different. After thirty years of meditation, and of study in all kinds of ecclesiastical writings, he says, that it fared with him as with the dove of Noah, which, when she found no rest for the sole of her foot, returned unto him into the ark. Not finding in the interpreters any thing in the region of prophecy whereon the foot might surely rest, (because they have explained scripture only in a moral, figurative, or accommodated sense,) he felt himself constrained to return to the scripture itself, that he might seek therein the proper and literal sense in which to rest. This he endeavoured to do in a work which he never finished, and which on that account has never seen the light. Of this remarkable work I have read only a short extract, by which it is easy to comprehend both the system and its foundations. The system, though it contains some new views, seems in substance to be the same as the ancient one, with a proportion of novelty which appeareth to me improbable. Forasmuch as he finds himself forced to suppose things which he ought to have proved, or to have recourse to other senses widely different from the literal one, and likewise to cite some texts without paying much respect to the context. His system is, that the present church, which he calls *the kingdom of Christ on the earth*, shall at a future time reach over all the earth, embracing within itself all the individuals of the human race, of whom not one shall be without its pale. In this blessed time, which he supposes to be long before the period of Antichrist, the whole church with all its members shall arrive at so high a state of sanctity and perfection, as fully to verify iii itself all the prophecies of Messiah's kingdom. On which account he entitles his book, *Concerning the Consummation of Christ's kingdom upon the earth (De regno Christi in terris Consummatio)*: others entitle it the *Key of the Prophets (Clavis Phetarum)*. This system is entirely subverted by the single parable of the tares, which in the gospel are represented to be ever mingled with the wheat, and ever occasioning mischief, until the harvest. Although it is not my purpose to follow this system, either in a greater or less degree, it seemed to me good to mention it here, simply to show what so learned a man thought of the insight into the prophecies which is possessed by the interpreters of Scripture. In which particular I do agree with him.

insufficiency. I had myself thought of doing so; but afterwards it appeared to me better to take another way, shorter and incomparably less troublesome; which is, after having proposed the two systems, and cleared the second of certain embarrassments, to enter straightway upon the observation of some particular phenomena, and ask at the one system and at the other for a clear and just account of the same: by which means much labour will be avoided; whilst at the same time it will be visible at a single glance, which of the two systems is the best, or which should stand alone; for it is a clear case, that that system is the best which best explains the phenomena; and that ought to be regarded as the only one upon which alone they can be thoroughly explained.

CHAPTER IV.

ANOTHER AND A NEW SYSTEM IS PROPOSED.

BEFORE proposing this system, friend Christophilus, I desire in thee a certain degree of composure of mind; and that thou wouldest not readily give way to any disgust; or, without due reflection, raise the cry against an imaginary enemy, under a false alarm. This system, though set forth and followed out with novelty, is not so new as you may think, but is in the substance of it, I do assure you, much more ancient than the ordinary one; so that, when the latter began to make way, towards the end of the fourth century of the church and the beginning of the fifth, the former counted more than three hundred years of antiquity. Nevertheless, in consideration of thy weakness and preoccupation, I do not propose it in a dogmatical and assertory way, but as a mere hypothesis or supposition, which, whether it be arbitrary or not, we shall come to see by and by, and must not at present decide. But, be this as it may, it is without difficulty granted one to proceed after such a manner, even in respect to systems which at first sight may appear ever so incoherent for by such a permission with little hazard much progress may be made towards the discovery of truth.

GENERAL SYSTEM.

JESUS CHRIST will return from heaven to the earth, when his time is come, when those times and seasons are arrived, *which the Father hath put in his own power*, Acts i. 7. He will come accompanied not only by his angels, but likewise by his saints, now raised from the dead: by those I mean, *which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world and the resurrection from the dead*, Luke xx. 35. *Behold! the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints*, Jude 14. His visit will not be so short, but with more leisure than is thought. He will not come to judge the dead alone; but likewise, and in the first place, the living. And consequently this judgment of the quick and dead cannot be one and the same, but two judgments, widely differing not only in substance and manner, but also in time. Whence it follows (which is the principal matter to be attended to) that there must be a very considerable space of time between the coming of the Lord which we expect, and the judgment of the dead, or the universal resurrection.

This is the system. It will appear to you very general; —and yet I ask not any thing to be granted to me besides the space of time which I have just spoken of. By which alone I hold that all the prophecies will admit of an easy understanding and explanation. But is it possible to grant this space of time upon the system of the interpreters? And is it possible to deny it upon the system of the scriptures? This is the point which we have chiefly to examine and dispute throughout this treatise. For yourself shall be the judge, and to you it shall belong to give final sentence, after having seen and examined all the process; and to do so prior to such a view and examination, were a manifest violation of the sacred rights of nations.

And in the first place, I take upon me to deal with certain difficulties which stand in the way of admitting this system, and which you would immediately desire to submit to me: and all will go well by the blessing of God, if you will only hear me with good nature, and not condemn me before the time.

The first of these difficulties is, that the system which I have just proposed carries a great resemblance to error, and sounds like the fable of the Chiliasts or Millenarians, and so does not deserve to be listened to, not even for diversion.

The second, that I place the Lord's coming in glory and majesty long before the general resurrection, and besides, do say, and affirm, that he will come with his thousands of saints already raised up. Whence it follows evidently, that I must admit two resurrections, one, of the saints who come with Christ, the other long after of all the rest of men: which is contrary to the common sentiments of the theologians, who hold it as a thing most certain, and as a truth not to be disputed, that the resurrection of the flesh is to be *simul et semel*, that is, once only, and upon all the Sons of Adam without distinction, in one and the same time and instant. Other difficulties will spring up in their place.

CHAPTER V.

FIRST DIFFICULTY—THE MILLENARIANS—DISSERTATION.

I CANNOT deny, nor am I ashamed to confess, that there was a time when, to me at least, this was a cloud so dense and fearful, that oft-times it hath made me quit the subject entirely. Continually encountering as I read the commentators, especially upon the Prophecies, and the Psalms, these or similar sentences expressed in a decided tone, This place cannot be understood literally, or we shall have the error of the Millenarians. This was the heresy of Cerinthus; this the fable of the Rabbis, &c. I naturally thought it must be a point decided, that whatever had any relation, great or small, with the Millenarians, should be looked upon as a certain peril of error and heresy.

Under this fear I remained many years without almost daring to open the Bible, which on the one hand, I held in respect and admiration; and on the other, felt strongly tempted to regard as a useless and insipid book, and what was worse, dangerous to boot. Ah! what labour and anguish I had to endure at such seasons! This, verily, was the real error and the true peril, to think that God himself *whose principle of words is truth, and whose nature is goodness*,¹⁴ might sometimes conceal poison in the bread which he gives his children; and

¹⁴ Cujus principium verborum veritas, et cujus natura bonitas.

that they, seeking with simplicity the food of the soul, which is truth, and seeking that truth in its proper fountain, which is the Holy Scripture, might find in place of bread, a stone; for a fish, a serpent; and instead of an egg, a scorpion.

This reflection which at times occurred to me with great vivacity, at length restored me to some heart, and while not yet entirely re-assured, it occurred to me one day to think, that any way, it would be the lesser evil of the two to blame man rather than God, because as St. Paul saith, *Let God be true but every man a liar*, as it is written Rom. iii. 4. Whereupon there began to be renewed in me a suspicion, which for the time appeared to me just: That the interpreters of sacred scripture, and I may say the same of a proportion of ecclesiastical writers, having their minds extended over an infinity of various things, could not treat every one of them with that leisure and exactness, which haply some of them might require. And consequently it might very well come to pass, that in the weighty and very wide subject of the Millenarians, every thing which was stigmatized with that name, might not prove to be error or fable; but that with errors manifest and gross there might be found, intermingled, many truths of the highest importance. In which case it would be more agreeable to reason, to separate the true from the false, the precious from the vile, than to confound the whole in one and the same lump, and cast it all away in the apprehension of error.

With this in my mind, I began thenceforth seriously to study this particular point, and with a view to it did diligently search, with all the attention and reflection I am capable of, whatever authors ancient or modern I had access to, and in which I thought to find any light; but always confronting them with the holy scriptures, as I believe we ought to do; that is, with the Prophets, the Psalms, the Evangelists, St. Paul, and the Apocalypse. And after all the diligence which I could apply, I warrant you, my friend, that till this hour I have been able of a surety to find nothing save a great admiration, and along with it a true deliverance.

That we may be able in a matter so grave, and at the same time so delicate, to proceed with order and clearness, let us take it up by parts. Three principal points are here to be noticed: of which we should take such exact and patient observation, as to remain perfectly introduced to the knowledge of the cause, and consequently in a state to give righteous judgment. First, we ought to examine if the church hath decided ought, or spoken any word upon the issue. Secondly, we ought to know perfectly the different classes of Millenarians which have existed, what the doctors say concerning them all, with their mode of thinking in refuting them, and the reasons whereon they ground the condemnation of them all. Thirdly, and lastly, we ought faithfully to set forth that which these doctors themselves say, and the manner in which they endeavour to rid them selves of that great and terrible difficulty, which gave occasion to the errors of the Millenarians; that is, the explanation which they give, or pretend to give of the twentieth chapter of the Apocalypse. To the examination of these three points this dissertation reduces itself.

Before, however, proceeding to the first of these, permit me, my friend, to put one question to you, which is, Whether among so many doctors, ancient and modern, who have written against the Millenarians, you be acquainted with any one who has treated the point largely, and gone to the bottom of it? It is likely you will cite to me among the ancients, St. Dionysius Alexandrinus, St. Epiphanius, St. Jerome, St. Augustine, and among the moderns Suarez, Bellarmine, Cano, Natal Alexandro, Goti, &c. But this is to disregard, or not to pay much attention to, the words which I make use of, fully and to the bottom; whereby I understand nothing less than a formal and rigorous discussion of the whole point, and of whatever is comprehended under it.

This alone, as it seemeth to me, can be called handling a point fully and to the bottom, and I assert that I am ignorant of any one who hath so, treated it. In other ways diverse from this, I know that many have treated it, not only those whom you have just cited but innumerable doctors of every class. The commentators treat it, or to speak more correctly, touch it several times: very many theologians touch it, most of them by the way, few with any discussion: those who have written on heresies touch it, and generally all ecclesiastical historians, and withal I can assert that not one hath gone into it fully and to the bottom, in the true sense of these words. All, or almost all, agree to its being a fable, a delirium, a dream, a formal error; and this not only with respect to the accidents, that is, the relative and accidental circumstances (in which I could concur), but likewise as to the substance. But no one with distinctness and clearness gives us to know, wherein consisteth the error; no one shows us, as they ought to do, any clear, certain, and undoubted truth, which opposeth and contradicteth the substance of the millennial kingdom. But of this we shall speak in due form, after having concluded the first point of our controversy.

ARTICLE I.

Examination of the first point.

Has the church already decided this point? Has she condemned the Millenarians? Has she spoken one word upon the issue? No notice to this effect do we find in grave authors of the best class, but only in others of an inferior order, of whom some cite one council, some another, and the most part condescend upon the Roman council held in the time of St. Damasius. Let us begin with this.

St. Damasius held in Rome, not one only, but four councils. In which of these did he decide the point we speak of? The acts, of those councils, especially of the three first, are still extant, and may be seen in Labbé, in Dumesnil, in Fleuri, &c. The first council of St. Damasius took place in the year 370, in which were condemned Ursacius and Valens, obstinate and most dangerous Arians. The second in the year 372, in which Auxentius of Milan, the predecessor of St. Ambrose was deposed, and the consubstantiality of the Holy Ghost determined. The third was in 375, in which were condemned Apollinarius, and Timotheus his disciple, not for being Millenarians, concerning which point not a word is spoken, but for teaching that Jesus Christ was not possessed of a reasonable soul, and supplying the want thereof by his divinity. The fourth council was in the year 382, concerning the acts of which, according to Dumesnil and Fleuri, there is no certain memorial. It appears that the principal burden of the council was to decide, who was the true bishop of Antioch, Flavianus or Paulinus; and in the defence of the latter it would appear that St. Jerome, his presbyter, came to Rome, as certainly did St. Epiphanius, who both lodged in the house of St. Paula.

Granting then those notices which are found in histories, ask now those authors, whom we began by referring to, whence they have it, that the general question of the Millenarians was decided in the Roman council of St. Damasius; and you shall find that they have no better answer to give than that so they found it in other authors, and those again in others, who sometimes at last derive it from the annals of cardinal Baronius. But whence does

this learned cardinal derive it? If from any archives worthy of faith, why does he not distinctly say so? Why does he not assure us of it as a certainty, instead of speaking as one who suspects or supposes it to be so; a mode of speaking very suspicious, to say the least of it.

The truth is that the notice is evidently false in all its respects. First, because there is not any instrument which proves it; and a matter of fact, of such weight, cannot, in any way, be rested upon an arbitrary suspicion, or upon a *perhaps*. Secondly, because we have a positive foundation, and, in the present question, of the greatest weight, for affirming the direct contrary, that is, that St. Jerome, an *antimillenarian*, who wrote his commentaries upon Isaiah and Jeremiah many years after St. Damasius, (not less than twenty, as is affirmed by the learned Muratori, in his book of *Paradise*) says expressly, in the preface to the eighteenth book upon Isaiah, that in that time, which was the beginning of the fifth century, a very great multitude of Catholic doctors followed the party of the Millenarians: *Whom* (he is speaking of Apollinarius, a heretic and Millenarian, whose errors, pertaining to the person of Jesus Christ, we have just seen were condemned in the third council of St. Damasius, in the year 375) *Whom not only men of his own sect, but also a very great multitude of our people follow in this point only.*¹⁵ And upon the nineteenth chapter of Jeremiah, speaking of these same things, he saith: “Which things though we hold not, yet neither do we condemn, because a multitude of church men, and even martyrs, have spoken them; and let every one be fully persuaded in his own mind, and let all stand over till the judgment of God.”¹⁶ Think you that St. Jerome, after an express condemnation of the church just passed, would have been capable of speaking with such indifference? This is the reflection of the same Muratori himself, and is not the less strong in evidence against them, because it is the confession of their own party.

Other authors, perhaps reverting to what we have remarked above, have recourse, but with the same obscurity, to the Florentine council, celebrated in the time of Eugenius IV. in the year 1439. But in that council there is found this only laid down as a point of faith, that the souls of the just which leave this world without the guilt of sin, or which have been purified in purgatory, pass immediately into heaven to enjoy the sight of God, and are truly blessed before the resurrection. But what connexion hath this position with that which they would overthrow? The fourth Lateran council is another of those which they cite, and there are not wanting some who cite likewise that of Trent; and withal never mentioning the session, the canon, nor any thing else determinate. Why, think you, is this omission? If the church, in any council, had spoken any word in the question at issue, would they have failed to copy it with all punctual fidelity? And, in that case, could those grave and learned authors, who have written against the Millenarians, have been ignorant of it? or, not being ignorant of it, have dissembled? This single reflection is sufficient, and more than sufficient, to set my mind at rest that the notice is utterly false. Particular authors may well join together in thundering out anathemas against any thing clear and express in the scriptures, which may not square well with their ideas; but the Church gathered together in the Holy Spirit will not do so, hath never done so, and it is not possible that she should do so, because it is not possible that the Holy Spirit should abide to assist in it.

¹⁵ Quem non solum suæ sectæ homines sed et nostrorum in hac parte dumtaxat plurima sequitur multitudo.

¹⁶ Quæ licet non sequamur, tamen damnare non possumus, quia multitudo ecclesiasticorum virorum et martyres dixerunt; et unusquisquæ in suo sensu abundet, et cuncta judicto Domini reserventur.

There still remains to be examined another council, which they pretend expressly condemned the millennial kingdom, not only as to the accidents, but as to the substance of the doctrine, and consequently all Millenarians without distinction. This is the first of Constantinople, being the second Ecumenical, that which added to the Nicene creed these words, "Whose kingdom shall have no end." Which being granted, they argue thus; The church has determined that when the Lord shall come from heaven to judge the quick and the dead, his kingdom shall have no end. Now the Millenarians fix an end to it, by saying that it shall endure a thousand years, be that a determinate or indeterminate time. Therefore the church has decided that the opinion of the Millenarians is false and erroneous, and consequently the Millenarian reign.

Without having recourse to the council of Constantinople, which does not speak a word concerning the Millenarians, and only addeth those words in order to clear a truth, which was not express in the Nicene creed, they may construct the same argument by simply opening the Holy Bible; because it is one of those truths to which both the Old and New Testaments bear witness, and whereof the rudest of all the Millenarians is not ignorant. But those who proposed this argument in so decisive a tone, by that alone give us to understand with how much haste they have looked at this point, upon the surface merely. If any Millenarian had said, that the thousand years being concluded, Messiah's reign thereupon determined, the argument in that case would have been terrible and invincible; but if no one has said or dreamed so, to what amounts the argument? Nevertheless, we answer briefly, that the kingdom of Messiah, considered in itself, without any extrinsical relation, can have no end, is eternal as the king himself; but considered as a kingdom over the living, and the sojourners who have not yet passed through death, under this single aspect it must needs have an end. Why? Because the living and the sojourners over whom he is to reign, and whom, as king, he is to judge, have all once to die, without one being left who hath not passed through death. Now that state of things being arrived, in which all are dead, as infallibly it must arrive, it is clear that he can no longer be king over the living and the sojourners, because truly there are none. Therefore the kingdom, viewed in this single aspect, will have an end; because the universal resurrection immediately succeeding, the kingdom will then come to be over all the dead now raised, and that eternally and without end. This is in substance what the Millenarians asserted, and what the scriptures assert, as we shall see by and by. If any one, or the greater number of them, pass beyond this in the accidents; if they add any circumstances which are not manifest in the scriptures, or oppose them in any respect, I am the first to reprobate their conduct. But in order to give a just sentence, in order to know what things they have spoken worthy of censure, and what things really are not so, it is necessary to enter into a patient examination of the whole cause.

ARTICLE II.

The different classes of Millenarians, and the conduct of their opponents.

§ 1. IN those who impugn the Millenarians, speaking generally, one thing appears to me very blameworthy: that having impugned some of them, and convicted them in error upon certain things added by them out of their own fancy, and unsupported by scripture, they rest in this

alone as if they were masters of the field, and forthwith pretend that they have attacked and utterly destroyed the substance of the Millenarian kingdom, which in the same scripture is so clear and express. The pretension is certainly singular. Nevertheless, this question may be put to them: have all the Millenarians then, asserted those particular matters which with so much reason you impugn, and convict of fable and error? And though for a moment it were granted that all have asserted them, may it not be that these particulars are not inseparable from the substance of the kingdom whereof the scriptures speak? Such a serious and formal examination, it appears to me, ought to precede these confutations, in order to make sure that the tares are pulled up without injury to the wheat; but the confutations themselves, even the most diffuse of them, show clearly the very contrary spirit.

It certainly, and without doubt, appears that the authors who treat this point confound the errors of the ancient heretics, the gross ideas of the Jews, and the fables of the Judaizing Christians in the same confused mass, with that which many Catholic and pious doctors, and along with them, some holy fathers of the highest order have thought and spoke; and even which is more extraordinary, with that which the scriptures clearly and distinctly express. Everything being thus confounded and forcibly brought into the same question, the confutation is indeed a very easy matter.

In effect, we find in these confutations that St. Justin and St. Irenæus, two martyrs, fathers and pillars of the church in the second century, are noted as having miserably slidden (notwithstanding their doctrine and holiness of life,) into the error of the Millenarians. We find St. Papias the martyr, and bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia, represented as the patriarch and founder of this error, from whom they say, without any reason, that the rest took it (and he from his master the apostle John, whom he knew, and with whom he lived and conversed) by having imperfectly understood, as they are pleased to continue, or by having taken up in a confused way the literal meaning of his words. We find in like manner stigmatized St. Victorinus Pictaviensis the martyr, Severus Sulpicius, Tertullian, Lactantius, Quintus Julius Hiharion, and I might add in general, many Greek and Latin authors, whose writings have not come down to us; since, as St. Jerome testifies, “many churchmen and martyrs have been of this way of thinking,” whom in another place, he calls “a very great multitude.” And as Lactantius says, it was in his time, that is, until the termination of the fourth century, the common opinion of Christians: “*this doctrine of the holy fathers the prophets, which we Christians follow.*”¹⁷

To know what this goodly company thought upon the kingdom of Messiah, we have unfortunately no great opportunity to read their writings, which could not have failed to profit us if they had come to our hands. The few which have been left to us, to wit, of St. Justin, St. Irenæus, Lactantius, and a short passage of Tertullian, Lib. 3. adv. Marcian. c. 24. (for the book *concerning the hope of the faithful*, in which he treated expressly of this subject, is lost,) are sufficient to justify the verdict that the rest were Catholic and pious.

St. Justin, a Millenarian, impugns the errors of the Millenarians with so much vehemence, that he does not hesitate to say to the Jews, whom he addresses, that they do not think those Christians, who believe and teach those fables, neither do they hold them as Christians, although clothed with that name; which they dishonour so much by teaching things inconsistent with God and the scripture, which they have themselves invented, and which they treat with the reason of worldly and carnal men, who savour only the things of the flesh, (*qui solum ea quæ sunt carnis sapient.*) —(St. Just. in Dial. curn. Tryph. v. finem.)

¹⁷ Hæc doctrina sanctorum patrum et prophetarum, quam Christiani sequimur. —(Lib. 7. div. inst. c. 26.)

Almost in the same tone speaks St. Irenæus, and it is easy to see in the whole of his 5th book *against heresies*, when he touches this question, how far he was from admitting into the kingdom of Christ, any thing which should savour of flesh and blood: for that whole book seems to be pure spirit imbibed from the epistles of St. Paul and the gospel. St. Victorinus, a Millenarian, explains himself in the same way against the Millenarians, in these words quoted by Sextus Senensis: “Therefore are they not to be esteemed who agree with Cerinthus the heretic, in maintaining the kingdom of a thousand years, to be earthy.”¹⁸ Since then, these Millenarians are men who make war upon one another, what may be the cause of this contention? To this question, which is a very judicious one, I proceed to give a short reply.

§ 2. We ought to distinguish three classes of Millenarians, assigning to each what properly belongs to it, otherwise we shall never understand the scripture; for it is the joining and confounding of these three classes, by their impugners, which produceth that dense and obscure veil which keeps the scripture hidden and inaccessible. In the first class we have heretics, and those alone.

Eusebius and St. Epiphanius, (Euscb. lib. 3. hist. et St. Epiph. hæresi. 28.) name Ceriuthus as the inventor of many corruptions. That heresiarch being given up to the belly and the palate, placed therein the happiness of man. And so taught his disciples, that after the resurrection, before ascending to heaven, there should be a thousand years of rest, during which, to all who had deserved it, the hundred-fold mentioned in the gospel, should be rendered. When, accordingly, there should he extended unto all, un-bounded licence in every thing pertaining to the senses, and all should be continual merry-making, and jubilee to the saints, magnificent banquets, festivities, concerts, entertainments, theatres, &c. And what appeared most important, each would be master of an entire seraglio, like a Sultan; “and with whatever lusts he was himself led captive, for he was a man who, with the most exquisite refinement, followed after the desires of the body and the flesh, in those he dreamed that the blessedness of that life would consist.”¹⁹

What think you, friend, of such ideas as these? Does it appear to you probable or possible that the saints who are called Millenarians, or the other Catholic and pious doctors, would in any way follow this party? That they would adopt grossness so unworthy and so contrary to the gospel? Read with all your eyes the Millenarians which remain to us, and you shall find neither trace nor shadow of such follies: on which account, this class of the Millenarians at least, should stand to a side, and never come into consideration when the kingdom of Messiah is treated of.

In the second class, we enter in the first place, the Jewish doctors or Rabbis, with all those wretched ideas fatal to the whole nation, which they have held, and still hold concerning their Messiah, whom they look for, and expect in the form of a great conqueror, another Alexander, subjecting to his dominion by force of arms, all peoples and nations of the world, and obliging all men to observe the law of Moses. In this second class, I have given the Rabbis the first place, to signify, that by their means others have always entered, following their footsteps; or adopting some of their ideas. These are they, whom, with propriety, they call judaizing Millenarians, whose principal leaders were Nepos, an African

¹⁸ Ergo audiendi non sunt, qui mille annorum regnum terrenum esse confirmant, qui cum Cerintho hæretico sentiunt.—(Lib. 6. Bibl. Sta. ann. ad not. 347.)

¹⁹ Et quarum rerum cupiditate ipse ducebatur, quippe qui invitamentis corporis et carnis cum primis obsequeretur illecebris, in eisdem beatam vitam fore somniabit —(St. Dionis. Alexandr. lib. 7 hist. c. 20.)

bishop, against whom St. Dionysius Alexandrinus wrote his two books upon the promises, and Apollinarius, against whom St. Epiphanius wrote under the 77th heresy. These Millenarians knew well from the scriptures the substance of the reign of Messiah. They knew that his coming from heaven to earth, which we all look for, in glory and majesty, would not be with such expedition as is commonly supposed, they knew that not so speedily would all the living and sojourners come to an end, nor so speedily succeed the universal resurrection of the whole human race: they knew that Christ was to reign here on the earth, accompanied by very many consociates of his kingdom, that is, very many saints already raised from the dead. They knew, finally, that he was to reign over the whole earth, over all the men living and sojourning thereon, who would believe and confess him for their lawful Lord, and submit implicitly to his laws, in justice, in peace, in love, and in truth, as appears clear and express in the very scriptures themselves. All this these doctors knew, or at least they saw, as it were, from afar, in an obscure and confused way. Oh what a difficult undertaking it would have been to impugn them! All the scriptures would have arrayed themselves upon their side, and engirdled them as with an impregnable wall.

The misfortune was, that they would not content themselves with those limits which reason dictates and revelation prescribes. They added of their own, whether through ignorance, or inadvertence, or caprice, several other particulars, which are not clear from revelation, but manifestly opposed by it; asserting, and obstinately maintaining, that in those times of which we speak, all men should be bound to the law of circumcision, as also to the observance of the antient law and worship, regarding as necessary to salvation all those things, which were, as the apostle says, *our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ*. These ridiculous ideas, more worthy of a smile than a refutation, were nevertheless embraced by innumerable followers of Nepos and Apollinarius, and caused within the church great disputes, amongst which, it appears, the principal question was confounded and fell altogether out of mind.

We come now to the third class of Millenarians, in which we enter the catholic and the pious, and amongst them those saints already cited, with many others, of whom hardly a general notice is left to us: the many churchmen and martyrs who have held these doctrines. As to those of this class, whose writings remain to us, it appears most certain, that neither did they admit the indecent errors of Cerinthus, which they expressly detested and abominated; nor as little the fables of Nepos and Apollonarius, of which no trace is found in their writings. I have read St. Justin, St. Irenæus, and Lactantius, and have found no trace of such extravagancies. What, then, have they said, and wherefore are they branded with error? That which they have said is the same in substance with that which we read expressly in the prophets and the psalms, and, in general, everywhere in scripture, which they opened with its proper and natural key. If you ask me now, What key was that? I answer you, at once and resolutely, The apocalypse of St. John, especially the four last chapters thereof, which pass for the most obscure of the whole, and without doubt are so, being viewed with reference to the ordinary system. Among these is the twentieth chapter, which has been, in a certain sense, *the stone of stumbling and rock of offence*.

This precious and inestimable key had the misfortune to fall, almost from the beginning, into the impure hands of gross heretics; which appears to me to be the true reason why the kingdom of Christ, at his second glorious and abiding advent, should have fallen in time into the greatest contempt and oblivion, remaining like a precious pearl, confounded with the dust and hidden in it.

True it is that it hath not thereby remained wholly invisible: it hath been seen and well observed, although from a distance, by some, who, not daring to avail themselves of the true keys for entering into the inclosure of truth, vainly and obstinately set themselves to force her doors. The fathers and Millenarian doctors, of whom we have spoken, had no such fears: they took the key in simple faith and with intrepid valour; they cleared it of that mire and uncleanness which so much disfigured it, and with no more ado they opened the doors with great facility. This is all the offence —this is all their crime.

Nevertheless, it must be confessed, (seeing in this place we undertake not the apology of these doctors, nor the defence of what they said, nor purpose building at all on their authority,) it is undeniable, I say, that they have at least not explained themselves well; and, having opened the doors, they have not opened the windows. —I mean to say, they did not stay to take a leisurely survey, and attentively to examine in detail all the things which were within: they passed much too rapid and superficial a glance over the whole, esteeming of greater importance to those primitive times many other things, which called for all their attention. We observe the same with respect to the gravest doctors of the fourth and fifth centuries; who, although most wise and eloquent, did not always explain themselves upon some particulars so largely as we desire and have need of in this day. Likewise it is undeniable that many Millenarians, although both catholic and pious, but wanting in spirituality, not a little abuse this twentieth chapter of the Apocalypse, adding from their own fancy matters which the scripture expresseth not, and proceeding to write treatises and books, which appear more like novels, fit only to amuse the idle.

But, in one word, these novels, fables, gross and indecent errors, whether of heretics, Jews, judaizers, or ignorant catholics, have nothing to do with the question. Why? Because none of them are to be found in the scriptures. Nothing of this is found in the Prophets, or in the Psalms, or in the Apocalypse, from whence it is alleged that these novelties are drawn. Nothing of it, in short, is said or intended by these holy doctors, whom we have seen branded and confounded among the rest under the equivocal name of Millenarians. Why, then, do they stigmatize them with this error? why do they assert, in general, that they have slidden into the error or fable of the Millenarians? The reason why will discover itself by degrees as we proceed, for it appears impossible to discover it quickly or at once.

§ 3. Do not think, Sir, from what I have said above, that I likewise seek to confound among this multitude of writers those grave and learned men who have written expressly upon this subject; among whom there be many, who do a kind of justice in carefully distinguishing the opinion of the fathers and churchmen from the opinion of the heretics and judaizers: I see that they separate them, and with good reason, from the common herd of Millenarians, for this end giving them the name of innocent: but I likewise see, that when they come to censure and final sentence, they involve them all. The general sentence comprehended in these four words, —error, dream, delirium, fable, falls upon all without distinction or mercy. Of this, take the following example, and hereafter you will not fail to observe others of the same kind.

Sixtus Senensis, a learned and judicious author, (Bibliot. Sanct. lib. iii. annot. 233.) touches the subject of the Millenarians; and, after having spoken indifferently, hath these words, “there are, however, some who think that the two opinions differ very widely from one another.”²⁰ In order to prove this, to wit, that the opinion or doctrine of the good and holy Millenarians was very different from the opinion of the heretics, he translates a passage entire

²⁰ Sunt tamen qui arbitrentur utramque sententiam longissime inter se distare.

from Lactantius Firmianus, and ingenuously confesses that this doctrine is very different from that of Cerinthus and his followers; but, nevertheless, he blames it. And for what reason? I would not believe it, did I not see it with my own eyes. For the, self-same reasons, by which he impugns the heretics: —a manifest sign that he has no other weapons. These are his words, “Hitherto the opinion of Lactantius and others, which, though it be diverse from the dogma of Cerinthus, doth nevertheless contain error; inconsistent with the evangelical doctrine, —which teacheth, that after the resurrection there will be no connexion of male and female, no use of meat and drink; the Lord declaring, that in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; and St. Paul, that the kingdom of the Lord is not meat and drink”²¹ Is there no more confutation than this of the doctrine of Lactantius and of the others whom we shall mention? No, my friend, there is no more, for here the subject is concluded.

Doubtless it will appear to you a thing incredible, that an author of judgment should find nothing to oppose to the doctrine of Lactantius, but the two texts from St. Paul and the gospel, as if these destroyed or controverted it: one of two things is true; either Lactantius says that among the risen saints there will be such marriages and banquets (in which case his opinion differs not from that of Cerinthus), or he says it not; and so the whole refutation, with the text of the gospel and St. Paul, on which it rests, are out of the question, are a there confusing of the matter, and an endeavour to escape from the burden of the subject. Now it is certain that Lactantius, neither *directly* nor *indirectly*, utters such extravagance; and equally certain is it that neither St. Justin, nor St. Irenæus, nor Tertullian, have broached such an error, nor ever had a thought of it. Therefore they should look out for other arguments, or be altogether silent upon the subject. Their conclusion appears good, but has no bearing on the question.

What I have just said of this, you may extend to all who have written against the Millenarians; for I at least can find none who is not altogether, or in a great degree, guilty of the same conduct. They all distinguish one set of Millenarians from the others —the scandalous heretic from the judaizer, and both from the innocent; but the blow falleth alike on all, and this quality of innocence only availeth to bring the sad consolation of dying guiltless. In some measure to justify this cruel sentence, they quote the authority of four holy and much respected fathers, St. Dionysius Alexandrinus, St. Epiphanius, St. Jerome, and St. Augustine; whose writings having examined, we are left at a loss to know for what end they referred us to them. Although it may detain us a little in our research, it becomes necessary to clear this point, by seeing what these fathers have said, and also what they have not said.

§ 4. The most ancient of them is St. Dionysius Alexandrinus, who wrote towards the middle of the third century. This holy doctor wrote a work divided into two books, which he entitled, *Concerning the Promises*, wherein he impugns the gross errors of Cerinthus, and chiefly a treatise then in the hands of all, written by one Nepos, an African bishop. Now what was the principal or only scope of the refutation? What is it that he really impugns and convicts of falsehood? Although neither the book of Nepos, nor that of St. Dionysius, have come down to us, yet from a certain fragment of the latter, which Eusebius hath preserved in the seventh book of his history, the twenty-second chapter, it is to be clearly seen that St. Dionysius had in his eye nothing but the ridiculous excesses of Nepos, and his peculiar tenets

²¹ Lactantii et aliorum sententia, quæ licet a Cerinthis dogmate sit diversa, errorem tamen continet alienum ab evangelica doctrina, quæ docet nullum post resurrectionem fore maris ac feminae coitum, nullum cibi potusque usum, nullum denique carnalis vitæ oblectamentum, dicente Domino; in resurrectione neque nubent, neque nubentur, et juxta Pauli vocem, regnum Domini non est cibus et potus.

upon circumcision and the observance of the Mosaic law, with the addition of certain other errors much akin to those of Cerinthus. His words are as follows: “But forasmuch as a written book hath been objected to us, and that, as many are pleased to think, most powerful to persuade; and as the doctors of this sect hold in no value the law and the prophets, refuse to follow the gospels, and corrupt the epistles of the apostles, yet assert the doctrine of this work of which I speak, as if it contained some great and abstruse mystery; and forasmuch as they suffer not the simpler among the brethren, who are unskilled in the sublime and admirable work of our Lord’s glorious and truly divine coming, of our resurrection from the dead, conjunction and fellowship with the Lord, and assimilation to his immortal nature, to think deliberately; but endeavour to persuade them that in the kingdom of God there will be objects and mortal rewards, such as we in this life are wont to look after: I do certainly hold it to be a thing demanded of us to dispute against that brother, by name Nepos, with sharp argument, just as if he were present.”²²

Already you will perceive, from these words, what it was that Nepos held and Dionysius undertook to refute. If you desire now to see more clearly the whole substance of this refutation, and consequently the substance of Nepos’s book, read St. Jerome upon Isaiah, who, speaking of Dionysius, thus expresses himself: “Against whom a very eloquent man, Dionysius Alexandrinus, a father of the church, wrote an elegant work, to ridicule the Millenarian fable, the golden and gemmed Jerusalem on the earth, the renewal of the temple, the blood of victims, the rest of the sabbath, the cruel rite of circumcision, marriages, births, education of children, delights of the feast, and servitude of all nations, and the renewal of wars, armies, and triumphs, and slaughter of the vanquished, with the death of the sinner a hundred years old.”²³

If the book of St. Dionysius had contained nothing but the derision and confutation of all we have just read, it is certain that he doth in no way concern himself with the harmless Millenarians, but with the Jews or judaizers. It is true that those first words, “against whom,” in the text of St. Jerome, do not fall upon Nepos, whom he does not name, but upon St. Irenæus, concerning whom he is speaking: but this is a clear and manifest equivocation, not of St. Jerome, but of some of his ancient transcribers; for no one is ignorant, seeing it is a matter of fact against whom St. Dionysius wrote, and the saint himself says he wrote “against that brother whom I name Nepos.” You will perhaps say that it is the same thing to write against Nepos and against St. Irenæus, for they were both Millenarians. This would be good enough, if first it were proved that St. Irenæus had taught and maintained those same

²² Verum cum opus scriptum nobis objectum sit, illudque, Ut quibusdam placet, ad persuadendum valentissimum, cumque doctores ejus sectæ legem et prophetas pro nihilo putent, evangelica sequi negligant, apostolorum epistolas deponent, hujus tamen operis doctrinam, ut dixi tanquam magnum aliquod, et abstrusum mysterium, asseverant complectantem. Cumque fratres nostros aliquando simpliciores, et magis imperitos de sublimi et admirando opere, vel gloriosi vereque divini Domini nostri adventus, vel nostræ a mortuis resurrectionis cum Domino conjunctionis, consociationisque, et ad ejus immortalem natunam assimilationis, non aliquando cogitare sinant: sed illis persuadere conentur in regno Dei objecta, et mortalia præmia, quales et hominibus in hac vita spectare solumus, tandem futura; nobis certé necessum arbitror advensus istum, quem dico Nepotem, perinde ac si præsto adesset acuta ratione disceptare.

²³ Adversus quem vir eloquentissimus Dionisius Alexandrinæ ecclesiæ pontifex, elegantem scripsit librum, irridens mille annorum fabulam. Et auream, atque gemmatam in terris Hierusalem, instauracionem templi, hostiarum sanguinem, otium sabati, circumcisionis injuriam, nuptias, partus, liberorum educationem, epularum delicias, et cunctarum gentium servitutem, rursusque bella, exencitus, et triumphos, et superatorum neces, mortemque centenarii peccatoris, &c. D. Hier. ad præf. lib. 18.

absurdities of Nepos, which are expressly those that St. Dionysius impugns in his book. By a like equivocation it were an easy matter to bring an innocent man to the gallows.

The second holy father cited by them is St. Epiphanius, who wrote a hundred years after St. Dionysius of Alexandria. This holy doctor, in his book *against heresies*, certainly speaks twice of the Millenarians, and in both instances against them. In the first, *heresy 28*, he speaks of Cerinthus only; and having stated his particular errors, very easily confutes them from the gospel of St. Paul. In the second, *heresy 77*, he speaks of Apollinarius and his followers. And what is it which he here impugns? See it manifestly in his own words: "For if at last we are to be raised up, in order to be circumcised, why not anticipate the circumcision? To what end, then, is it said by the apostle, If ye be circumcised Christ will profit you nothing? Likewise, As many of you as are justified by the law are fallen from grace! And likewise that saying of the Saviour, In the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels."²⁴ All that follows is in the same tone, and conveys nothing different. So that the whole argument affects the judaizers only.

True it is, and may not be dissembled, that, before concluding this point, the saint pronounces sentence against all Millenarians in general, without distinction, and condemns the whole doctrine, without any reserve, as heresies, which is noted with great care by Father Suarez, as if it were some express decision of the church. Part 2, de Incar. disp. 5. sect. 8. But who is ignorant, says Father Calmet, upon the twentieth chapter of the Apocalypse, that St. Epiphanius terms many things heresy which in reality are not so, simply because they coincided not with his own opinion. The same remark concerning Epiphanius is made by many other learned doctors, whom there is no occasion to mention here, in support of a thing so currently acknowledged. Moreover, if St. Epiphanius condemns as heresy the opinion of the Millenarians, even of the holy and harmless among them; St. Irenæus does the same by those who follow the contrary opinion, calling them ignorant and heretical, whereof Natal Alexandro complains with good reason. Hist. Eccl. sect. i. disp. 27. According to him, we have two holy fathers, one of the second, the other of the fourth century, who condemn, as heresy, two opinions diametrically opposite to each another. To which of them should we bow? You will say to neither of them in this point, and I subscribe to your opinion with all sincerity, conforming in this to the conduct of St. Justin, who, although a good Millenarian, did not take upon him to condemn those who were not, but said to Trypho these words full of justice and charity "I am not reduced, O Trypho, to such wretchedness as to speak otherwise than I think; I have confessed to thee that I and many who think along with me, are of this opinion with respect to the future; but, at the same time, I have signified to thee, that many Christians of pure and pious sentiments do not agree with me in this."²⁵

The third holy father, who is cited against all the Millenarians without distinction is St. Jerome. But I know not why. For first, this holy doctor never speaks expressly upon the subject, but barely touches it by the way, now in this, now in that place, and always after a historical and discursive manner. Secondly, he never determinately explains of what class of

²⁴ Nam si denuo, ut circumcidamru resurgimus, cur non circumcisisnem antev entimus? Quorsum igitur ab Apostolo dictum est; si circumcidamini Christus vobis nihil proderit? Item qui in lege justificamini a gratia excidistis. Tum etiam illud salvatoris dictum: In resurrectione neque nubent neque nubentur, dum erunt sicut angeli.

²⁵ Non sum eo miseræ redactus, O Triphon, ut alia quam sentio loquar, confessus sum tibi, me, et plures mecum sentientes, id ita futurum arbitrari, multos vero etiam, qui puræ, piæque sunt sententiæ Chnistianorum hoc non agnoscere, tibi significavi.

Millenarians he speaks. Sometimes it would appear at first sight, that he speaks of all without distinction, but from the very context it is easy to be discovered that he speaks only of the followers of Cerinthus; for example, when he says in his preface to Isaiah, “whom I do not envy; if they love the earth so greatly, as to desire earthly things in the kingdom of Christ; and after abundance of meats and a glut to the belly, seek still lower gratifications.”²⁶ To whom but Cerinthus could this apply? In another place he speaks thus, “taking occasion from this opinion some introduce a thousand years after the resurrection, &c.”²⁷ If these words *after the resurrection*, signify the general resurrection, it can apply only to Cerinthus and his partisans, because to them alone belongs this particular absurdity: all the others, placing the general resurrection not before, but after the thousand years. Besides, that in the same place the saint explains of which sort of Millenarians he is speaking, when he says, “not understanding that though in other respects the promise of returns might be honourable, the baseness appears in the matter of wives, that he who shall have put away one for the Lord’s sake, shall receive an hundred in the future life.”²⁸ Search in any Millenarian except Ceriuthus who advanced this brutality, and certainly you shall not find it. Therefore it is clear that St. Jerome is speaking here solely of Cerinthus.

Finally, to be convinced that this holy doctor in no way favours those who seek to involve all Millenarians in one sweeping sentence, call to memory what we remarked in the first Article, as spoken by him upon the nineteenth chapter of Jeremiah, “which things though we follow not, yet neither do we condemn, because many ecelesiastics and even martyrs have so testified.” If the saint spoke here of the opinion of Cerinthus, or of the particular points in which Nepos and Apollinarius erred, it appears clear, that he not only might but ought to have condemned all these things, as St. Dionysius and St. Epiphanius had said and done before him. But by his saying, *we cannot condemn those things, because many Catholic doctors and among them many martyrs have thought the same*, we easily gather, that in this instance, he had in his eye no other Millenarians, but the Catholic and pious, who consequently do not deserve to be comprehended in the general sentence. Therefore upon this point, which is the only one we speak of at present, the authority of St. Jerome proves nothing, or if it prove any thing, the very reverse of that for which it is cited.

The fourth holy father is St. Augustine, who speaks of the Millenarians, (In lib. de civ. dei. c.7.) and does not wholly leave them till the tenth chapter. And, after all, we may say of him as of the other holy fathers, that he speaks against the errors of Cerinthus, and his followers. In the seventh chapter he recounts those errors, and brings forward the places of the Apocalypse which may have given occasion to them; and immediately adds these words, “which opinion were some what tolerable, if spiritual delights were believed as being about to be afforded to the saints from the presence of the Lord during that Sabhath: for we ourselves once had that notion; but when they say that those who are then risen shall lose themselves in most immoderate carnal feasts, in which meat and drink shall be so plentiful as not only to free them from all care on that account, but likewise the allowance of them shall

²⁶ Quibus non invideo, Si tantum amant terram, ut in regno Christi terrena desiderent, et post ciborum abundantiam, gulaque ventris ingluviem, ea quæ sub ventre sunt, quærant.

²⁷ Ex occasione hujus sententiæ quidam introducunt mille annos post resurrectionem, &c. (Lib. 3. in Mat. c. 19.)

²⁸ Non intelligentes, quod Si in ceteris digna Sit repromissio, in uxoribus apparcat turpitudine, ut qui unam pro Donno demisserit, centum recipiat in futuro.

exceed all belief; these things can in no way be received save by the carnal: and they, who are spiritual, name those who hold such dogmas, Chiliasts, from a Greek word, which being literally rendered into Latin, is Millenarians.”²⁹ This is all which is to be found in St. Augustine upon the doctrine of the Millenarians.

Now then what connexion hath all this with that which the Catholic and holy Millenarians hold? They likewise reprove, and with much more acrimony, what St. Augustine reproveth. This holy doctor says, that the opinion of the Millenarians in general would be tolerable, if they admitted or believed that the saints were to enjoy certain spiritual delights in the presence of the Lord. So that if the good Millenarians of whom we speak, should admit and believe in such spiritual delights for the saints already raised up, and even for the sojourners, their opinion would be at least tolerable, and not worthy of condemnation or censure. And can you, my friend, doubt of this? I do not now quote from St. Irenæus or St. Justin, for that would occupy a very large space; but I quote one short passage from Tertullian, in which are expressed those delights of St. Augustine. “For we also confess, that in the earth a kingdom is promised to us, but before heaven and in another state, as being after the resurrection for a thousand years, in the city of divine workmanship, the Jerusalem let down from heaven, which also the apostle designateth our mother that is above, and, pronouncing it to be our πολιτεμα or citizenship in the heavens, he elsewhere looks upon it as a celestial city. Which Ezekiel also knew of, and the apostle John saw, and to every one who agrees with us in believing the new prophecy of the Apocalypse, his discourse beareth witness, that the very effigy of the city represented beforehand, that which was hereafter to be revealed to his sight This we say is held out by God in prospect, for receiving the saints in the resurrection, and cherishing them with plenty of all good, yet spiritual things, as a compensation for those which in this age we have despised. Seeing it is just and honourable in God that his servants should also exult, in that place, where they have been afflicted for his name sake.”³⁰

Besides these four holy fathers whom we have just examined, as being cited against the Millenarians in general, we find yet another in the dissertation of St. Natal Alexandro, (In Ep. 4. Bas. ad Epis. orient.) taken from St. Basil, —and what says St. Basil? He complains of the absurdities of Apollinarius, and that is all; his words are these, “he wrote also upon the resurrection certain things, written in a fabulous, and even a Jewish style, alleging, that we should return again to the worship prescribed in the law, so as to be again circumcised, to

²⁹ Quæ opinio esset utcumque tolerabilis, si aliquæ delitiæ spirituales in illo sabbato affuturæ sanctis per Domini præsentiam crederentur: nam etiam nos opinati sumus aliquando; sed cum eos, qui tune resurrexerint, dicant immoderatissimis carnalibus epulis vacaturos, in quibus cibus sit tantus, ac potus, ut non solum nullam molestiam teneant, sed modus quoque ipsius omnem credulitatem excedat, nullo modo ita possunt nisi a carnalibus credi, hi autem, qui spirituales stint, istos ista credentes, chialistas vocant græco vocabulo, quod verbum e verbo experientes, nos possumus Millenarios nuncupari.

³⁰ Nam et confitemur in terra regnum nobis repromissum, sed ante cœlum, sed alio statu, utpote post resurrectionem in mille annos, in civitate divini operis Hierusalem cœlo delata, quam et apostolus matrem nostram sursum designat, et polyteuma nostrum, id est, municipatum in cœlis esse pronuntians, alioqui utique cœsti civitate ceum deputat. Hanc et Ezequiel novit et apostolus Joannes videt, et, qui apud fidem nostram est novæ prophetiæ seu Apocalypsis, sermo testatur, ut etiam effigies civitatis ante repræsentationem ejus conspectui futuram predicarit.hanc dicimus excipiendis, resurrectione sanctis, et refovendis omnium bonorum, utique spiritualium copia, in compensatione eorum, quæ in sæculo vel despeximus, a Deo prospectam. Siquidem est justum et Deo dignum illuc quoque exultare famulos ejus, ubi sunt et afflicti in nomine ejus. (Tert. lib. 3. in Marcion. c. 24.)

observe the sabbath, to abstain from meats forbidden by the law, and to worship in the temple at Jerusalem; and from being christians wholly become Jews again: —than which can any thing be affirmed more ridiculous, and more at variance with the truth of the gospel.”³¹

The complaint of St. Basil, is well founded, and just. And not alone St. Basil, but likewise St. Justin, St. Irenæus, St. Victorinus, St. Sulpicius Severus, Tertullian, Lactantius, and the rest of the great multitude of Catholic doctors, and saints, who were Millenarians, may complain, and with much more reason, of Apollinarius and Nepos, and all their followers; because the absurdities which they added, much more than the gross indecencies of Cerinthus, were the occasion and the cause, why in the end all was confounded together, and in their zeal to punish, and annihilate the guilty, they did not spare the many innocents, who concurred only in the general question.

In effect, those two legions of judaizing Millenarians, the partisans of Nepos and Apollinarius, together with the books which were published against them, by St Dionysius, St. Epiphanius, and others, appear to form the epoch of an entire and total change of ideas upon the coming of the Lord in glory and majesty (I speak of the mode, duration and circumstances). Till then, the Holy Scripture had been understood as it reads in its proper, obvious, and literal sense: and consequently, all which it announces to us upon the coming of the Lord, had been faithfully and simply received. And if disputes had occurred, they had not been so much upon the things themselves, as merely upon the indecent and worldly style of setting them, forth, which the heretics and Jews had used. But these two legions of judaizers, who held of both, coming after, and being much more learned and disputatious than the former, all became forthwith disordered and obscured, and the truth lay confounded with the error.

In these times of obscurity, the Catholic doctors found themselves fully occupied in withstanding and confuting the Arians, infinitely more dangerous than the Millenarians: forasmuch as they related immediately to the person of Christ, and the substance of religion. Therefore it was not possible for them to apply on purpose to the formal, and circumstantial examination of this point, nor to take upon themselves so great a labour as was required to separate, according to the scriptures, the precious from the vile, which in the judaizing Millenarians had become so mixed up with one another.

Yet, desiring to separate themselves, and to separate the faithful, as well from Judaism, as from the indecent ideas of the heretics, (for it would seem that the judaizers adopted a great part of both,) it appeared to them most safe, at that time, not to consent with them in any thing, but to cut the knot with the sword of Alexander, by denying the whole without any distinction or mercy; or, to speak more correctly, by leaving things in the state in which they found them, there being no need to insist on a point which was not controverted.

So far it was very easy; but the difficulty still remained, to unite and harmonize with the common opinion, the Prophets, and all the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. But this great difficulty did not then appear so insuperable as to be hopeless. Already, by this time, had the path which Origen discovered been opened up and well trodden; who, although by many he had been blamed for it, and still was so by not a few, did not therefore fail to be

³¹ Scripsit et de resurrectione quædam fabulosè, imo judaice composita in quibus dicit nos iterum ad cultum in lege præscriptum reversuros, ita ut iterum et circumcidamur, et Sabbatum observemus et cibis in lege prohibitis abstineamus, Sacrificiaque Domino offeramus, et in templo Jerusalem adoremus, atque prorsus ex Christianis judæi reddamur, quibus quidnam poterit ridiculum magis, imo alienum ab evangelica veritate dici?

imitated upon occasions, and in the present point this course appeared inevitable, for there was no other resource. It was necessary either to turn back, or to enter and make way by this path of pure allegory, so rough and insecure. And in effect it so came to pass, that from henceforth they began to leave the plain understanding of those things which are written in the Prophets and the Psalms, &c. for interpretations, for the most part spiritual, allegorical, or accommodative; trying with great pains, and not less violence, to accommodate some things to the first coming of the Lord, others to the primitive church, others to the church in the time of her persecution, others to the church in the time of peace; and when no better could be made of it, as must often have occurred, there remained a last refuge very plain and easy, to take a mental flight to heaven, in order to accommodate to the state of things there, what would not accommodate to them here. This they began to do in the fourth age, it was prosecuted in the fifth, and has continued even till our time.

§ 5. Let us now come to the thing next at hand. Be it granted with good will, I hear you say that the ancient Millenarian fathers, and other Catholic and pious doctors, did not adopt the gross errors of Cerinthus, nor the insufferable notions of the Jews and judaizers; still it is undeniable from their very writings, that they believed, taught, and maintained this proposition.

After the coming of Christ, which we look for in glory and majesty, there will still be a great space of time; that is, a thousand years, determinate or indeterminate, before the resurrection and general judgment.

And who does not perceive, you turn upon me and say, that this is not only a fable, but a positive and manifest error? To which I confess, I have for my reply only these two words: how and whence can we know that it is a fable, a positive and manifest error? The proposition certainly affirms a thing, not past nor present, but future; and we all know assuredly, that though the past and present may naturally come under the observation and knowledge of men, it is not so with the future, which belongeth to the knowledge of God only. Wherefore, if God himself declare to me clearly and expressly in the scripture, the same which is affirmed in the above proposition, in this case, were it not very wrong not to believe it? Were it not very wrong to doubt it? Were it not very wrong to wait before believing it, for the sanction of those who can have no insight into the future? Were it not wrong to affirm, though others should affirm it, that the very proposition which contains it is a fable and an error? and with what reason, and upon what foundation, can it be so affirmed? Because so it seemed some time since, to certain interpreters and theologians, on the system which they embraced. Weak foundation! We know well that they are never infallible but when solidly founded in the Holy Scripture, or in a constant and universal tradition of the church, as hath been said before. This only would bear upon the case, and not mere human authority. Let any passage of scripture be produced, any certain tradition constant and universal, any decision of the church condemning our proposition as erroneous and fabulous, and we will immediately condemn it ourselves: *bringing our understanding captive to the obedience of faith*. But for all your proof to produce the authority of certain doctors, and that too, for the most part, equivocal, (forasmuch as the doctors whom they cite, as we have just seen, do not dare to condemn that which is said and affirmed in the above proposition, but only the abuses which have been added to it,) to dare upon such a ground to give general sentence against the whole issue, as if it were found altogether convicted of error, fable, delirium, and dream, &c, such conduct appears to me to prove nothing more, than that they wish not even to hear with patience a proposition, which places in great hazard, or to speak more correctly, utterly destroys their whole system. Do you think that if there were any conclusive word, either of

the scripture, or of the church, they would have kept it hid and not produced it? I search that scripture, I search the councils for some authentic document, or good reason, whereon might be founded an opinion so universal as the contradiction of our proposition; and I formally assure you, that I find none which satisfies me, nor which can bring my mind even into hesitation. The instruments and reasons which are produced, do, it is clear, conclude, and well conclude against the heretics, against the Rabbis, against the judaizers, and in short, against all who fabricate any thing out of their own brain, and daringly add it to the general proposition, instead of deriving it from thence, or, which is the same, who fabricate any thing to the clear and manifest contradiction of the scriptures.

Now I perceive clearly that the Divine Scripture, and almost all of it which is prophetic, speaks of that interval between the coming of the Lord in glory and majesty, and the judgment and universal resurrection. I see that they declare and announce to me things distinct, things grand, things stupendous, things wholly new and unheard of, which are to follow upon the glorious coming of the Lord. Again, I see that St John, in his Apocalypse, repeats many of these things, almost with the very expressions with which the prophets set them forth, and sometimes in the very same words. I see that he makes frequent allusions and appeals to many places of the prophets and the Psalms, &c. inviting me to mark them with care. I see, in fine, that being come to the nineteenth chapter, he first, with the greatest possible vividness and magnificence, presents me the coming of the Lord from heaven to earth, with the destruction and utter ruin of all impiety. And, passing to the twentieth chapter, he lays completely open to me all the doors and all the windows, deciphers to me great mysteries, speaks to me with the greatest clearness and precision, tells me, in fine, expressly, that the space of time which is to follow upon the coming of the Lord, which the prophets do not particularly mark out, but simply call *the day of the Lord*, and more frequently, *in that day, in that time*, &c. will be a day and a time which shall endure a thousand years, repeating these words, A thousand years, not less than six times in that chapter.

All this, and much more, which we will observe in its proper time, we see clearly in the Holy Scriptures; and thereon do those build who hold the proposition above mentioned. And what do those, who censure and condemn it as false and erroneous, produce against it? On what foundation do they build? Search, Sir, for this foundation in all quarters, and it seems to me, you will weary yourself in vain. I at least find no other but the *vague* and *arbitrary* word, that the Divine Scripture ought not so to be understood, much less the twentieth chapter of the Apocalypse. How then should it be understood? This is what remaineth to be examined in the following Article.

ARTICLE III.

The Explanation which they offer of the Twentieth Chapter of the Apocalypse.

§ 1. As the proposition set down above is found expressed in formal terms in this chapter of the Apocalypse, it is clear that he who denies that proposition, who condemns it as fable and error, must either do the same by the text of this chapter, or ought at least, in terms which will leave us fully satisfied and convinced, to show that the thing affirmed in the holy text is widely different from that which is affirmed in the proposition. This then is the great

difficulty, in the resolution of which you are not ignorant that great minds in every age have laboured: whether the fruit have been commensurate with the labour, you shall come to know only by considering and examining this explanation, faithfully confronting it with the text and all the context; which we now proceed to do.

The interpreters of the Apocalypse, to facilitate, in some degree, the performance of so arduous an undertaking, prudently prepare themselves by a twofold labour —without which all were lost. The first is, resolutely to deny that the nineteenth chapter speaks of the coming of the Lord in glory and majesty, which Christians with one consent do wait for. The second consists in practically separating the twentieth chapter, not only from the nineteenth chapter, but from all the rest; considering it as a separate piece, as an island, which though near to other lands is not joined to any of them. If these two suppositions (for such they are till they be proved) be admitted as certain, or be allowed to pass as tolerable, no doubt the difficulty would be less grievous; but taking the holy text in connexion with all its context, are such suppositions admissible?

§ 2. You know already, Sir, the great event contained in the nineteenth chapter of the Apocalypse, from the eleventh verse unto the end: it is the coming from heaven to earth of a singular personage, terrible and wonderful in all his aspects. He comes in the front of all the armies which are in heaven, and he is represented as seated upon a white horse, with a sword in his mouth, with many crowns upon his head, with a royal vesture or mantle dipped in blood, on which, in various places, are written these words, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords; and his name is the word of God. Many particulars besides are there set forth, which you may read and consider for yourself. In consequence of the coming from heaven to earth of this great personage, there immediately follows, not so much a battle with the beast, or Antichrist, and with all the kings of the earth *gathered together to make war with him who sat upon the horse*, as the destruction, the entire and total ruin of them all, with all their mystery of iniquity: and so with these words the whole chapter endeth: *These two* (Antichrist and his false prophet) *were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone, and the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth, and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.*

Our doctors cannot altogether conceal the great embarrassment in which they find themselves upon this passage of the Apocalypse. If the personage spoken of be Jesus Christ himself, as appears by all his tokens, not only does he come directly against Antichrist, but likewise indirectly against the system they have espoused. Why? Because after Antichrist is destroyed follows the *twentieth chapter*, and in it many important matters wholly irreconcilable and opposed to their system. In so much that there appears no middle course between the two extremes, either of renouncing the system, or not recognizing Christ in the personage who is there represented. This last is the alternative which has appeared to them the least painful. This they show that they have no faith in their own eyes, but as it were taking into their hands a good telescope, that they may the better observe this great phenomenon, they confidently exclaim, “It is not Jesus Christ: there is no need for the Lord to remove from his heaven, to come and destroy Antichrist and all the potentates of the earth, which by a single nod he can beat down and annihilate. It matters not that he comes with such state and majesty. It matters not there should be seen upon his head many crowns. It matters not that there should be read upon his thigh, and upon various parts of his royal robe, these words; *King of Kings*, and *Lord of Lords*. It matters not that his name should be *the word of God*. All this is of no importance —it is not Jesus Christ.

“Then who is it? It is, say they, taking a look with their telescope, It is St. Michael, the prince of the angels, the patron and protector of the church, coming with all the armies of heaven, to defend her against the persecutions of Antichrist, to slay that wicked one, and to destroy the whole of his universal empire. True it is that to St. Michael are given a name, signs, and countersigns, which do not appertain to him but to Jesus Christ. But this is because he comes in his name, with all his prerogatives and with all his authority.” We do not stop at present, nor set ourselves prematurely to examine the reason which the doctors may have for affirming that the wonderful person of whom we speak is St. Michael, and not Christ. These reasons it will be necessary to divine, for they are not adduced. And who knows but they may all be reduced to this single one, the fear and dread of the following chapter. Let us however leave the plea undecided till another occasion, which will come when we treat purposely of Antichrist; but let us not therefore refuse to accept what they concede, to wit, that in this chapter Antichrist is spoken of, and consequently the latter times. This is enough for our present purpose; and however they may say and insist that this nineteenth chapter has no connection with the following, we shall be as though we understood not, while we hold that concession in hand for what may follow.

§ 3. The ruin of Antichrist, with all that is comprehended under that name, being entirely consummated, and the King of kings remaining master of the field, St. John immediately continues, in the twentieth chapter, which thus commenceth :—

And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand: And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again, until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. And when a thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison.

This, Sir, is that famous passage of the Apocalypse, in which they allege the error of the Millenarians originated. Ask them, now, what that error is? We know no other error of the Millenarians, than that which these same doctors have impugned, and with good reason condemned, in Cerinthus, Nepos, Apollinarius, and all their followers. But did the error of these men, or that which in them they condemn as error, originate in this passage in the Apocalypse? Turn and peruse it with more attention, and see if you can find one word which favours in any way the indecent ideas of Cerinthus, or those of Nepos, or those of Apollinarius: and, finding neither vestige nor shadow of such extravagancies, ask all the Millenarians of the heretical, Judaical, and fanciful schools how they dared to add to the sacred text, novelties so inconsistent with the same? how they considered not, nor dreaded that fearful commination which is written in the last chapter of this very Apocalypse? *If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues which are written in this book.* And, finally, aim your blows upon these daring men: but leave in peace those who add nothing to the sacred text, nor assert aught different from what the text itself asserteth.

But in this very thing, the error, the doctors reply, consisteth; that although they add nothing to the sacred text, they at least understand it too literally, thinking, in their simplicity, that it means what it says; whereas, under the sound of the words there lie concealed other mysteries, widely different, and incomparably more sublime, for the use of the more spiritual. And what are these? You shall now see what they are.

The three principal things, or, indeed, the only ones, which are found in this passage of the Apocalypse are these. —First, the imprisonment of the Devil, or Satan, for a thousand years, with his enlargement thereafter for a little season. Secondly, the thrones and judgment, or power, which is given to them who are seated thereon. Thirdly, all that relates to the first resurrection of those who live and reign with Christ a thousand years.

With respect to the first, they assure us, with all formality, that the imprisonment of Satan here spoken of, is not a future event, but one long since past; not a prophecy, but a history; and, that even when St. John had this vision, which was during his exile to Patmos, the thing had already happened, according to some, more than fifty years, according to others, more than ninety years before, about the time of St. John's birth. The last-mentioned of these teach us, that the angel who descended from heaven with the key of the abyss in one hand and the great chain in the other to bind the Devil, was not really an angel, but the very Messiah Jesus Christ, also denominated in scripture Angel; who, on the very instant of his incarnation, bound, chained, and imprisoned him in the abyss for a thousand years; that is, for as long as the Christian church should abide in the world: and the words, *that he should deceive the nations no more*, they would make to signify, that he should no longer deceive the elect. Observe here, in passing, that the same doctors who in the preceding chapter had just converted this very Jesus Christ, the very Word of God, the very King of kings, into the angel St. Michael, do in this chapter, with the same ease, convert an angel into Jesus Christ.

Other doctors are of opinion (and this seems the more common opinion) that the angel here spoken of is a true angel, who holds the superintendence of hell. This angel, they say, descended from heaven with his key and chain on Good Friday, at the ninth hour, the same instant in which the Lord expired on the cross; and executed by his orders this sentence upon the Devil, keeping him thenceforth chained and imprisoned in hell until a thousand years should be accomplished; that is, (taking that period not *determinately*, but *undeterminately*.) until the times of Antichrist, when he shall be loosed for a little season and although this happened on the day of the Lord's death, yet the beloved disciple who was there present did not see it then, but here in Patmos, sixty years afterwards.

With respect to the second point; that is, the thrones and the judgment which was given to those who sat thereon, we find in the interpreters two different opinions. —Some say, they are the episcopal thrones and the pastors who sit upon them, to whom is committed the judgment of things pertaining to religion. Others affirm, that by the thrones and judgment, nothing more should be understood than the places of honour and dignity which the souls of the saints occupy in heaven, where they live and reign with Christ, &c.

With respect to the third point; they assure us, as a truth clearer than light, that St. John does not here speak of the real resurrection, but of the new life, to which the martyrs and the rest of the just enter when they leave this world and pass into the heavens. This new and most happy life is that which the beloved disciple calls the first resurrection; —*this is the first resurrection*; —which is to endure a thousand years: that is, not till Antichrist, like the imprisonment of the Devil, but some time longer, wholly undetermined, until the universal resurrection; and then, resuming their bodies, they shall begin to taste the second resurrection. This is the sum of all we find in the doctors upon the twentieth chapter of the Apocalypse. I

doubt greatly whether this explanation have satisfied you, and I even dare to doubt whether it could have satisfied the very authors of it: but it was necessary for them to say something, if by any means they might succeed in saving their system. But since nobody obliges us blindly to receive their explanation, nor even the doctors themselves can require from us so great a sacrifice of our faith, a sacrifice due only to divine authority, they will not take it amiss that we look into it narrowly, and give way a little to reflection.

§ 4. In the first place; if the thousand years of which St. John speaks in this passage, and which he repeats six times, signify nothing else than the whole period of the Church's duration, either from the day of the incarnation of the Son of God, or from the day of his death, until Antichrist; we are actually living in that blessed season. Well, then; and do you believe, friend Christophilus, that, in this our age, (and I may say the same of the ages past,) the dragon is bound with a great chain, locked up or imprisoned in the abyss, the door of his prison shut and sealed that he may no longer deceive the nations? If you believe, with the authors of the first opinion, that this imprisonment of the Devil, with all the circumstances which are expressed in the sacred text, took place on the incarnation of the Son of God, you have against you nothing less than the whole history of the Church; wherein you shall find him so loose, so free, and so entirely master of his actions, that, amongst many other things, he could seek out and find Christ in the desert, elevate him to the pinnacle of the temple, thereafter convey him to a lofty mountain, whence to show him all the glory of the world, and require that he should worship him as God: how doth all this liberty comport with that imprisonment?

If, again, it took place on the death of Christ, as others affirm, you hold against St. Peter and St. Paul, who could not be ignorant of an event so interesting. The one exhorts all Christians to be sober, to live watchful and vigilant, *be cause your adversary the devil, like a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour*. Why caution and vigilance against an enemy chained and buried in the abyss? The other bitterly complaineth of an angel of Satan who troubled him: and in another place says, that he hindered him in a matter which he had purposed to do, *but Satan hindered us*. You hold, moreover, against the whole church, which, in her public prayers begs to be preserved from the snares of the devil, and useth exorcism, and holy water, *to put demons to flight*. (ad fugandos dæmones.)

My friend, be not so credulous, the devil is now as loose and free as ever; the only novelty, yet one most worthy to be noticed, which took place at the date of Messiah's death, and still holdeth with respect to the devil, is this, that neither does God grant him so much licence as he would have, nor are those who believe in Christ so unarmed, as not to be able to resist him, and put him to flight; seeing that by the merits of Christ, and by the virtue of his cross, are now granted unto us, and placed in our hands, excellent weapons where with to resist his assaults, and subdue him under our feet. If this stout resistance which Satan now findeth in some through the goodness of their armour, and through the grace and power of Christ, they would have us to call a chaining and imprisonment of him in the abyss, with the door of his prison shut and sealed, that he may no more deceive the nations; they might as well, and with the same propriety say so of a robber, who going by night to rob a house should find the people on their guard, and armed, so as to resist and put him to flight, and save their treasure from the hands of the unjust aggressor. Which were certainly a mode of speaking extravagant, and well worthy the name of a barbarism. But as the Holy Scripture is wont to speak in a dead language, that it may speak to the mind of any one who makes it speak; it is quite an easy thing to make it say what you please, by simply adding the word *that is*.

It being then with such good reason denied, that the imprisonment of the devil spoken of with such clearness and circumstantial detail in the 20th chapter of the Apocalypse, hath yet taken place, it seems necessary to say and allow that it will take place at its time. When? When the Lord shall come in glory and majesty; for the scripture very manifestly fixes it to that time, and no one has taken, or can take the liberty of changing times, or removing events from that determinate place and time to which God hath appointed them. Read the 24th chapter of Isaiah, which altogether bears the closest resemblance to the 19th chapter of the Apocalypse and the opening of the 20th; and there you shall find in the 21st verse the same mystery of the imprisonment of the devil, with all his angels and all the potentates of the earth. *“And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth, and they shall be gathered together as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison.”* And if you wish to see a clear enough intimation of the loosing of the devil and his angels, after a long time, as St. John says after a thousand years, you may observe it in the words which immediately follow; *and after many days shall they be visited.* This same prophet Isaiah xxvii. 1. speaking of the day of the Lord, declares, *In that day the Lord with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; &c.* And by Zechariah xiii. 2. The Lord declareth, *and also I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirits to pass out of the land;* (de terrâ, out of the earth:) which is the same with that declared by St. John, at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th chapter; whereby it is seen that the beloved disciple alludes here to those, and such like passages, of which we shall speak in their place, and gives the key for understanding them.

After the imprisonment of the devil, St. John says he saw thrones, and on them sitting certain ones whom he nameth not, to whom was given judgment and the power of judging. *And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them.* The explanation and understanding which they pretend to give of these thrones, and of those who sat on them, some saying that they are bishops, and others that they are the souls of the blessed in heaven, seems manifestly in the times here spoken of, to be out of the question. Nor is it to be believed that these two things, or either of them, should be revealed to St. John as two new things, and that in so obscure a manner, at a time when the world was full of bishops, and heaven peopled with righteous and holy souls. This single reflection is sufficient, and more than sufficient to set aside the interpretation.

§ 5. The holy text immediately proceeds to say, *and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again, until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.*

The explanation which the interpreters give us of this text is very revolting. They say that St. John speaks of the metaphorical resurrection, or of the new and blessed life to which the martyrs and the just do pass at death. And is it to be believed, that a truth so well known, and which was the consolation of the primitive church, should be manifested to St. John by so obscure a revelation, and under metaphors and figures so difficult to penetrate? Can it be, that a truth known to all believers should be manifested to the beloved disciple in the tone of prophecy sixty years after the death of his master? But the most weighty circumstance that this resurrection embraceth, those who had not worshipped antichrist, destroys all such explanations. St. John clearly marks the time of this first resurrection, when he says that those

beheaded for Christ, and those that did not worship the beast, lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years, and that the rest of the dead lived not then, but shall live when the thousand years are expired. Therefore, that the first resurrection may have place, antichrist must first be come: and therefore this resurrection is not the blessed life which the just obtain upon their departure out of the present life, because this they have already for some time enjoyed.

From all these reflections which we have made, be this the conclusion, that so long as they furnish us with no explanation, which will completely satisfy the text and all the context, we will abide by the text itself, taken in its proper and natural sense. And if any one will say that we err in so doing, he must prove it by such demonstration as the subject is capable of, and not answer by merely repeating the question. The latter it is very easy to do, the former neither has been, nor do I expect will ever be done. Till this hour have I never seen any thing beyond the refutation of the many gross absurdities which the heretics introduced; but these ought not to be confounded with the truth, which will ever remain unsullied, clear, and manifest, to all who without prejudice shall search for it; and, for his ignorance thereof, no one can allege any reasonable excuse. I say, reasonable excuse, for if you accurately observe the foundation of the contrary doctrine, it reduces itself to pure extrinsic authority; and that too not clear, but very equivocal: now we have already seen what weight should be given to this.

They will tell you, my friend, that it is necessary to break the rough shell of the almond, in order to come at the good fruit which is enclosed within. They mean, that you must break the letter of the Holy Scripture, in order to discover the treasure which is concealed in it. But what treasure do we expect to find within the letter of Scripture? Haply it is some piece of original matter? haply some treasure at the discretion, to the mind and interest of him who seeks for it? Will it not suffice to find that particular treasure, be it what it may, which the letter itself clearly indicates, and to rest satisfied therewith? Every child knows that the fruit of an almond, which he desires to eat, is not the rough shell which presents itself to his sight, but that which it encloses within; but he knows as well that the specific fruit, which he is to expect on breaking the shell, is not any which may appear to him the best, but that, and that only, which is called an almond. Whosoever, then, thinketh to find within the letter of the Holy Scripture, some treasure different from that which the letter itself points out, would be much like to one who should think to find a diamond within an almond shell.

As their last resort, the doctors observe, and set store by it as if it were the chief difficulty, that the word, a thousand years, in scripture phraseology, does not mean precisely and determinately a thousand years, but a long time or many years. This is all good, and I am of the same opinion. It has always appeared to me, that the expression, a *thousand years*, which St. John makes use of six times in this passage, signifies nothing else but a great space of time, perhaps equal to, or greater than, that which has run since the beginning of the world till now, comprehended together in the round and perfect number of a thousand. But what do they gain by this concession? Nothing, my friend. Be the thousand years of which we speak, in very deed twenty thousand or a hundred thousand, more or less, as may like them best. That which I intend, is simply, that those thousand years no single man, nor all juntos of men, shall place where it seems to them most convenient, but there precisely where holy writ placeth them; that is, after Antichrist, and the coming of Christ which we hope for. And if you can in no way harmonize this with your ideas, I pity your troublous case, and propose for your deliverance, one of these two alternatives. The first, that you deny your ideas, if you

would believe the Holy Scriptures: the second, that you deny the Holy Scriptures, if you would follow your ideas.

But I bear in mind, that it is not yet time to draw a conclusion so severe; and shall content myself; for the present, with another conclusion more just and less severe, which is all the fruit I seek from this dissertation; to wit, That the proposed system may be heard without alarm, received without apprehension, and permitted to have free course; that it shall not be reckoned a fault, either of a heavy or a venial kind, nor even an extravagance, to propose this system, as a true and proper key to all the Holy Scripture; and having made the supposition, to bring it to examination and proof.

This is all which at present we demand. If, after having proceeded with our proofs, it shall be found, that this system and key opens doors most strongly barred, and which heretofore appeared impregnable, that it opens them all, or almost all, that it opens them with ease, that it opens them without force or any violence; while the other key, claiming to be the only one, in place of opening, only leaves them faster than ever, &c; then we shall enlarge expressly upon the conclusions which ought to be drawn. But this will not be practicable, till after we have advanced far into the observation of those particular phenomena, which I denominate the barred gates of the Holy Scriptures: which we shall take care to do in the second part.

Do not ask me, Sir, to explain myself further upon this point of the millennial kingdom, because it is not yet the time. What I aimed at by means of this dissertation was not fully and fundamentally to treat that very grave point; for which, as is due, a dissertation of entirely another kind is designed; I have but proposed to open the way by removing a mighty obstacle which hindered my foot from stirring to make one step in advance, and to dissipate a very dark cloud which intercepted from my sight the observation of the heavens.

All, or almost all, the ancient Millenarians have either explained themselves but little on the subject, or have explained themselves before the time. They have not laid down firm foundations whereon solidly to build. They have moreover added many peculiar notions, some without form, others immaterial, others incoherent, according to their several talents, inclinations, and tastes. And thus all, or almost all of them have embraced many inconsistencies; wherefore I am determined not to explain myself before the proper time; that is, not to add any thing to our general proposition, till after having established with all possible firmness all the grounds which seem to me necessary. And, in the same spirit, I am determined to add no ideas but such as I shall find clear and express in the Holy Scriptures, and be able substantially to prove upon that infallible authority. Be patient, my friend, and, God willing, you shall not fail to see something in the Second Part, and the whole in the Third.

CHAPTER VI.

SECOND DIFFICULTY—THE RESURRECTION OF THE FLESH IN ONE COMPANY AND AT ONE TIME (SIMUL ET SEMEL)³². —DISSERTATION.

§ 1. AT length, my Christophilus, we have escaped with our life from that dense and pitchy cloud into which we had the courage or rashness to enter, and where we have tarried much longer perhaps than there was need. There is no reason why we should fear it any longer. It will go on clearing more and more the more closely we encompass it with our observation, and the more fearlessly we look into it.

It now remains that we should exercise the same diligence with respect to another cloud of the like nature, and which bears a close relation to the former. This is the resurrection of the bodies of the dead in one company and at one instant (*simul et semel*). For if it be true that the resurrection of the flesh, in which all Christians believe with hope, as an essential and fundamental article of our holy religion, is to take place in all the individuals of the human race together and at once, that is to say, by one single act, and in one and the same instant and moment of time; by this alone do all the ancient Millenarians, without distinction, remain convicted of error. By this alone should that twentieth chapter of the Apocalypse be eyed with great reluctance, as a deceitful and perilous place: and by this alone our system at once falls to the ground, at least in one of its parts, where a breach being opened, it shall be most easy to destroy the whole. But is this tenet certain? Is it so assuredly certain that a man who is a Catholic may not prudently doubt of it, or even examine it by the light of the scripture? This is what I now go to submit to thy consideration.

I know that the theologians who touch this point (consisting not of all nor, I believe, of many) are for the affirmation: but as well do I know, and with the same certainty, that they do not prove it. Some say that this tenet is a consequence of faith. Others more spirited, add resolutely that it is an article of faith. If we ask of them whereon it is founded, they produce in reply, from Holy Scripture, a great multitude of passages, whereof two parts prove clearly that there is to be a resurrection of the flesh, and nothing more; and the third proves the contrary of their assertion. If I should seem to you to exaggerate, it will be very easy to place the matter beyond doubt, by examining any theologians you please. In every library you will find wherewithal to satisfy your curiosity. The principal passages of scripture which they allege in their favour are the following: *So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep*, Job xiv. 12. *And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God*, Job xix. 25. *Thy dead men shalt live, together with my dead body shall they arise: Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead*, Isa. xxvi. 19. *But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living*, Matt. xxii. 31, 32. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice*, John v. 25, 28. *Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise. again*, John xi. 23. The whole vision of dry bones, in the thirty-seventh chapter of Ezekiel. *In a*

³² 'at once and together'

moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, 1 Cor. xv. 52.

This last passage makes some appearance for their opinion—in the proper time we shall show that it is appearance only, by examining the whole of the context. Of those passages of scripture one might cite, without much labour, well nigh a couple of hundreds. And the excellent and admirable part of it is, that, having quoted these and other similar passages, they conclude, with great satisfaction, that the resurrection of the flesh is in one act and instant (*simul et semel*), is either an article of faith, or at least a consequence of faith. When you have the inclination to imitate this mode of reasoning, you may easily prove the following proposition to be either a consequence of faith, or even an article of faith. *All men, who presently live, have to die, (simul et semel) in one act and moment.*

To prove this, you need to take no farther care than merely to open the Concordance of the Bible, and seek for the word *Death*; string together thirty or forty texts which make mention of it, as for example: *Thou shalt die the death. It is appointed to all men once to die. We all die, and are carried away like a flood. Who is he that liveth, and shall not see death, &c.* This done, thou mayest at once deduce thy consequence of faith: Therefore all men who presently live shall die, *simul et semel*, at once and in one act. There is no need to detain ourselves in applying this similitude.

§ 2. But that we may enter in good earnest into the examination of this point, and that thou mayest not believe me one of the sect of the Sadducees, take, my friend, in good part, this short and sincere confession of my faith, which I submit to thine inspection.

First, I believe, in the proper and natural sense, what those passages of scripture declare, which the doctors quote, and which go to build up that article of faith which is expressed to us in these two words of the Apostle's Creed, *the resurrection of the body*. And, to come to particulars, I believe that all the individuals of the human race, men and women, who have ever lived, who do now live, and who shall live hereafter, as they have all to die, except those who are already dead, have likewise all to arise from the dead, except those who have already risen. Likewise, I believe that there will come a day in which this general resurrection shall take place, and in which the sea and earth, limbo and hell, shall yield up their dead, without retaining one, however small he may be; John v. 28; Rev. xx. 13. I believe, that as Jesus Christ arose in his proper flesh, or in the same body which he had before death; so without any loss of parts, shall every one of the human race arise, however much decomposed his body may be, and mingled with the earth. I know not that thou canst require of me, touching the resurrection, any more substantial confession than this, which is all that believing Christians hold. If hereby you be satisfied of the purity of my faith, we shall proceed.

There is no occasion to go farther (methinks I hear you say), believing well that I stand convicted in terms of my own confession, because I have granted that there is to be a day and an hour in which the general resurrection of as many as have lived, live, and are to live, shall take place, so that there shall not remain one who riseth not. Yes, my friend, yes, I hold to what I said, and confess once more that all this is true and of faith divine. But what consequences do you mean to draw from my confession? Doubtless you have not well observed that word which I dropped, as it were casually, but declaring expressly, *As we have all to die, save those who are already dead, so we have all to rise again, save those who are already risen*. Wherefore it is certain, and of faith divine, that in that day and hour shall arise all who till then have died, and have not risen; but it does not thence follow, that they also have to rise at that time who have risen before.

Were it well that, among those who are raised in that day and hour, we should reckon the most holy virgin Mary, our Lady, of whom the whole church believes, and has believed, that she rose ere ever her sacred body could see corruption? for we must first make her return to death, if we would have her raised in that day. Were it well that amongst those who are raised in that day and hour, we should likewise reckon the many saints of whom we are told in the gospel, Matt, xxvii. 52. *that many bodies of the saints which slept arose?* It is true that there are not wanting doctors, to assure us by reasonings founded on the air, that those saints who rose with Christ, returned immediately to death: but whence have they this knowledge? The Evangelist clearly says, that they arose, not surely in appearance, but in reality, wherefore he useth the expression *many bodies*; and he saith not that they returned to death again: how then are they assured that they returned to death? Were it well that amongst those who in that day and hour shall be raised, we should reckon those two prophets or witnesses, whose death, resurrection, and ascension to heaven, are most clearly spoken of in the eleventh chapter of the Apocalypse, long before that day and hour, and this by the absolute confession of all interpreters?

Probably you will answer, that all these resuscitated ones of whom we have just spoken, will not rise in that day and hour, because it is clear that they are already raised, and that the two last will arise in their time before the general resurrection: And whence know we this? We know it, thou sayest, —of our Lady the Mother of God, because it is a most ancient and universal tradition; the whole church without any reasonable contradiction having believed and believing it: of those saints who arose with Christ, because it is so declared clearly and expressly in the gospel: and of the two last prophets, because so the apostle St. John announceth in the Revelation. All this seems to me a mode of speaking, at once religious and just, wherein revelation and reason go hand in hand. But now I would ask you, how all this comporteth with the multitude of passages of holy writ, which are cited to prove the resurrection, (*simul et semel,*) in one act and in one instant, of all the individuals of the human race, Without distinction? How doth all this comport with those words of Job? *When man lieth down he shall not arise till the heavens be no more:* or with the words of the gospel? *All who are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God:* or with the words of St. Paul? *in an instant, in the twinkling of an eye, for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible.*

So that, without prejudice of the general resurrection, which is to be accomplished in that day and hour whereof we speak, God could many ages before raise the most holy Virgin Mary, could raise many saints to attend upon the risen Christ, and shall raise the other two a good while before the general resurrection. Therefore, without prejudice to that general law, may God very well grant this same grace to many other saints, according to his own free and holy will. And who knows whether already he may not have granted it to many without asking our consent, or making us privy to his purpose? I know that some classical authors are of opinion that the apostle St. John may, and ought to enter into the number of the raised. Whether with reason, or without it, is not a question for this place. Only thus far it is in point, that according to these authors we might lawfully count one saint more, in the number of those raised before the general resurrection, and that without any prejudice to the general law.

This being granted, I advance a little, and ask, If that same God, who hath already raised our Lady, and many other saints, shall have promised to raise many more at a certain time prior to the general resurrection; may we doubt of his promise merely on account of the general law of the resurrection at the last day? I am sure you will say no. But where is this promise of God clearly given? It is clearly given my friend, in the same Divine Scripture,

understood in the proper, obvious, and literal sense, for there is no other means of coming at the truth. The whole of our controversy, thus now reduceth itself simply to this, that I should show you authentic and clear documents which I have for such a promise of God; and this I proceed to do.

§ 3. *First Document*, in the first place, we must recollect and re-consider with more attention, all that was observed already in the third article of the preceding dissertation, upon the very famous text of the 20th chapter of Revelation: to which we have nothing either to add or to take away. However much the doctors may cry out and contend, that it is not the proper and true resurrection of the body, which is there spoken of, but a spiritual resurrection of their souls to grace and glory, &c; however much they may say that the contrary tenet is an error and a dream; however much they may seek to persuade us that the imprisonment of the devil is already past, and that the King of kings is not Jesus Christ, but St. Michael, &c. unless they produce other reasons, we remain as was said, firm and sure, that the sacred text viewed in all its aspects, and with all the circumstances which precede, accompany, and follow to the end of the chapter and even to the end of the whole prophecy, is an authentic and faithful document, from which it most clearly appeareth to be a promise of God, binding himself to raise many other saints before the general resurrection; consequently this is an undoubted document, which we cannot, and ought not to hide.

§ 4. *Second Document*. The apostle St. Paul, writing to the Thessalonians, says to them, “But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, (the promise of God follows) that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore, comfort one another with these words.”

From these words of the apostle, which he himself gives us to know, that he spoke by the word of the Lord, we derive two truths of the utmost importance; first, that when the Lord returns from heaven to earth, upon his coming forth from heaven, and much before his arrival at the earth, he will give his orders, and send forth his commandment as King and God omnipotent; which is all signified in these words, With a shout, [in the vulgate, *jussu*, i.e. by the order] with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God. At this voice of the Son of God, those who shall hear it, shall forth with arise, and, as saith the Evangelist St. John (chapter v. 25.) “those who hear shall live.” But who are these? May it not be all the dead, good and bad, without distinction? It certainly and evidently appears not, otherwise St. Paul would not have taught us, upon the word of the Lord, the great novelty of two things absolutely incomprehensible, as well as contradictory, to wit, that all the individuals of the human race good and bad should rise, which could not take place unless all had died; and after that resurrection, that some should still live and remain until the coming of the Lord.

Besides this, it ought to be remembered that the Apostle in this place is speaking of the resurrection of the dead *who are in Christ*, or of those who sleep in Jesus, and not a single word does he speak of the other infinite multitude; doubtless for this very reason, that their time is not yet come. In the same way speaketh the Lord in the Gospel, and pray consider it. *And they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with great power and*

glory; and he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds. Matt. xxiv. 30.

If you compare this text with that of St. Paul, you shall find no other difference than this, that those who are to arise on the coming of the Lord, the apostle nameth those *who are dead in Christ*, who sleep in Jesus; and the Lord nameth them *his elect*. But in both places the resurrection of these only is spoken of, and not a single word said of the rest. And it is well worthy of remark, —that when the Lord said these words, he was not talking with the common people, nor with the crowd, nor with the scribes and pharisees, with whom he was wont to speak in parables. He talked with his apostles, and them only, in the solitary retreat of mount Olivet: he talked not incidentally, but on purpose, concerning his coming in glory and majesty, and the principal circumstances thereof: he talked, at the request of these same apostles, who sought to know more in detail, what in general he had publicly declared to all: he talked, in fine, with those very men to whom, upon another occasion, he had said, *to you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven; but to others in parables.* Luke viii. 10. This observation is very important: for those doctors, who set so little store by this passage of the gospel, do much exaggerate what in other places is spoken generally.

The second truth, which we derive from the text of St. Paul, is, that after the raising up of those dead *who are in Christ*, the living who in that day likewise belong to Christ, (who, according to other notices which we find in the gospels, cannot be many, but will be very few, as we shall see in the proper place,) all those of this class then living shall be joined to the dead in Christ already raised, shall ascend from the earth and go to receive Christ; “then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.” Though the interpreters and theologians up to this hour have taken all pains to elude or soften down the force of this text, they have said nothing which is even tolerable. Some say that the saints shall arise first, not in respect to priority of time, but of dignity: meaning thereby that good and bad shall all arise in one and the same moment; but that the saints shall take in the resurrection the priority of place, and be more worthy and honourable than the wicked. And is this the great novelty which St. Paul announceth to us, by the word of the Lord; —that the saints shall be thought more worthy of honour than the wicked? the apostles more honourable than Judas the traitor? St. Paul more honourable than the executioner who beheaded him? and to tell us this truth, could the Apostle find no other words than these? —*the dead in Christ shall arise first, then we who are alive.* Read, my friend, the holy text, and do more honour to the Apostle and your own reason.

Other authors, less rigid, (and this is the more common opinion,) do frankly concede that the Apostle without doubt speaks of a priority of time; but, as if that time were their own property, as if it were money in the hands of an usurer, they serve it out sparingly. They grant, however, in order to verify in some way the clear and express words —*shall rise first*, that the saints shall really be the first to rise; but then, with an extreme economy, they add, that for this a few minutes will suffice —five or six, which, in a time so tumultuous, will pass insensibly, and may well be regarded as nothing. This appears a greater miracle, than to satisfy five thousand with five loaves. And yet behold the admirable facility with which it is accomplished.

Christ comes from heaven to earth in the glory of his Father with his angels: at the first sound of his voice forth with arise those who hear it that is, all his saints, *the dead in Christ shall rise first*. These, being arisen, shall immediately ascend through the air, to receive the Lord and enjoy his bodily presence: together with them shall likewise arise, or be caught up, the living saints who are upon the earth. —These living saints, who have not

passed through death, shall in a moment die, —there, in the air, before arriving in the presence of the Lord; or, according to the opinions of others, they may, perhaps, die and revive in a moment, before being caught up.

While the risen saints are ascending through the air, and in the brief instant that succeeds the death and resurrection of the living who accompany them, all of them being now far distant from the earth, there shall come down upon it that great and universal deluge of fire, which shall destroy every thing that liveth, —from men to cattle, and from the birds of heaven to the fish of the sea; notwithstanding that in Ezekiel xxxix. 4. and in the Apocalypse xix. 17, 18. we see the birds feasted in the day of the Lord, *at the great supper of the Lord*; that they may eat and be filled with flesh of all degrees of people, whom the Lord in his indignation is to offer up. —But of this elsewhere. The living being all killed by the deluge of fire, this conflagration is in the next moment all quenched, and in the next arise all the dead from all parts of the round world, and take their way, and, in a *moment of time*, are conveyed to Jerusalem. In fine, when the Lord arrives at the earth, with all his company, he finds the whole human race already raised up, and gathered together, the great and small, into the valley of Jehoshaphat. This is, in substance, all which the expositors and theologians set forth to us upon the text of St. Paul, whereof we are speaking; and, however many libraries you may visit, rest assured, my friend, you shall find nothing different from what you have just heard.

§ 5. *Reflection.* Having seen what the doctors say to us upon the text of St. Paul, and considered their very great economy and niggardliness in the partition of instants and moments; tell me, my friend, to what end such economy serveth? to what end such great haste and driving to extremities? peradventure some one followeth us with a naked sword? It is, in simple truth, that they may by any means save the system: that they may be able to maintain and carry forward the idea of one single resurrection, and that (*simul et semel*) in one act and instant; which system would stand convicted of falsehood, if a thousand years were interposed between the first resurrection of the dead *who are in Christ*, and the resurrection of the rest of men; and which truly stands convicted of falsehood, by the interposition of some hours or moments: for, once admit any intermediate time, and the resurrection of the human race cannot be *simul* in one company, nor *semel* at one time; and still less can it not be *in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye*.

Moreover it would be good to know, upon what authority this usurious serving out of instants and moments proceedeth: on what ground they assume that the righteous still alive, who ascend in the clouds to meet Christ in the air, are to die and be raised there in the air, before coming into the Lord's presence. For which you will not mention nor allege to me pure extrinsic authority; for this were to fall into that great fault which the logicians call, answering with the question. We know that many doctors have thought so, but we know not from whence they could have drawn their knowledge. St. Paul assures us upon the *word of the Lord*, that the just who shall be found alive at the coming of the Lord, shall mount up into the air, in company with the saints who are already risen to receive him. This particular minuteness might have been well spared, if to appear in the presence of Christ, they had first to die and rise again, whether there in the air, or here upon earth before ascending; for by simply saying the dead in Christ shall arise and mount up to receive him, all would have been said: but to tell us expressly that not only the saints raised up, but that likewise the saints alive should arise from the earth, and go together with them to receive Christ, without making any mention, the slightest, of a death and a resurrection to them, appears a clear and manifest proof that there will be no such instantaneous death or resurrection. It is very easy to see, my

friend, why these doctors make such speed to hurry over the matter whereof we treat. It is the idea which they have formed to themselves (upon grounds which we shall examine by and by), that the Lord is to come from heaven to earth with the like speed, and consequently, when he comes to the earth, he must find the whole human race dead and raised again, and collected into a certain place for universal judgment. This idea, taken as they pretend from the parable, *When the Son of man shall come, &c.* in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, without caring to bear in mind that it is merely a parable; —this idea, I say, contrary to the whole scriptures, which do, at almost every step, cry aloud against it, has been, and till this hour is, a true veil, which has covered, and left in a condition of little less than total blindness, every one who is found possessed with these contradictory notions. But of this we have a time to speak, and there will not be wanting to us hereafter, occasions more appropriate.

Let it suffice then for the present, to draw from all that has been said, this important conclusion. Notwithstanding the efforts made by the most learned and ingenious doctors, to explain the text of St. Paul in some softer way, which might be more compatible with their system; notwithstanding the great and even extreme economy in the subdivision of instants and moments, they find themselves compelled, at length, to concede something to us, as we have just seen. They concede to us, first, that the dead in Christ, who appear identically the same with those whom we read of in the twentieth chapter of Revelation, shall arise before all the rest. They grant to us, in the second place, that after the resurrection of these, the saints who may be found alive shall die, either on the earth or up in the air, and that these likewise shall rise before the rest. They concede to us, in the third place, that after these again, all who shall then be living upon the earth shall die, or be destroyed with a deluge of fire. They concede to us, finally, after the death of all the living, and of every thing which is found upon the earth, after the assuaging or dissipating of this boundless sea of fire, (which will, one should think, require some minutes,) there shall be raised up, at last, all the dead who remain, and who doubtless will be the more numerous company.

Let us be content for the present with the little which they will give us, (in due time we shall ask some little more,) and let us draw now this important and legitimate conclusion; That the resurrection of the flesh in one act and instant, far from being an article, or a consequence, of faith, is quite the contrary, and ought to be regarded as a false assertion, and that by the confession of the very parties who maintain it.

§ 6. *Third Document.* The same Apostle and teacher of the Gentiles treats diffusely of this matter, in the fifteenth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians, and coming to the 23rd verse he speaks thus, “But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet.”

Let us take these words in order. The first raised is Christ himself, who is the first-fruits of the resurrection: *Christ the first fruits.* After Christ follow those who are his: *then those who are Christ’s:* compare in passing these words with those others, *the dead in Christ shall rise first,* and you will see how all proceeds in perfect conformity. After the resurrection of those who are Christ’s, shall come the end: *then the end.*

Here let us pause a moment to make two observations. First, where, in this passage, is the resurrection of the rest of men placed? If, as they think, they are to be raised in one company with those who are Christ’s, why doth St Paul speak never a word concerning

them? The dead who are in Christ being raised, the end follows: *then the end*: and the rest of the dead, who are the greater part, are not yet raised. How can we conform this with the *simul et semel*, the *at once* and *together*? Secondly, Is this end of which the Apostle speaks, to follow immediately, upon the resurrection of the saints? Yes, you will necessarily say, because it is indispensable that we should attend to economy, and not lose a moment of time. But St. Paul, who doubtless knew better, gives us clearly to understand, that there will be time, over and above, because between the resurrection of the saints and the end, he places great events, which require time and no little of it to bring them about. Attend to his words, and his manner of speaking: *Christ the first-fruits, then those that are Christ's, then the end*.

The doctors commonly suppose that here the text of the Apostle concludes, and that the remainder of it will take place after the end; that part has already taken place, and has been accomplishing ever since the Lord ascended to heaven. Let us consider the part of the text which remains; "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down [in the Vulgate, *cum evacuaverit*, i.e. *when he shall have cast out*] all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy which shall be destroyed is death." The text, thus cut and divided into these two parts, means, as they explain it, merely thus: The first raised is Christ: *Christ the first-fruits*. Afterwards, when he cometh from heaven, those who are his: *Then those who are Christ's*. Forthwith, the next instant, comes the end, the universal deluge of fire: *Then the end*. In another instant arise the rest of the dead, though St. Paul speaks not a word of them. Lastly, comes the evacuation of all rule, authority and power. What does this mean? It means, that the whole empire of Satan and his angels shall be destroyed, who, they add with much complacency, still preserve the name of that company to which they belonged before their sin and fall. Very well; and are there not evil angels of other orders than these three only? and are there not in our earth also rules authorities and powers? Are there not at present, and have there not been, and shall there not always be, in the hands of men, the rule, the authority, and the power, or force to make themselves to be obeyed? Why then have recourse to the evil angels, and to ideas so very uncertain, doubtful, and obscure, as are the orders to which they belong?

Next follows in the text of the apostle, the delivering up of the kingdom, which Christ shall make to God and his Father. "When he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God even the Father." And when is this to be? It will be, say they, when, having concluded the universal judgment, the Son, with all his own people, shall return to heaven. So that, according to this scheme, the delivering up of the kingdom will come to be the last event in the whole mystery of God. And yet St. Paul after this, places still three great events; and last of them all, the destruction of death, which is nothing else than the universal resurrection. The last enemy which shall be destroyed is death. And where, with any propriety and decency, do they place that great event, which the apostle places in the midst of the text? *For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet*.

I observe in all this, and it appears to me that any one may observe, a kind of disorder, obscurity, and confusion; with a transposition of ideas so extraordinary, that to prevent myself from being utterly confounded, I have found it absolutely necessary to read the text over and over several times. My friend, wilt thou not say to me, what reason is there for placing the end immediately after the resurrection of the saints? Is it, perhaps, because without the intervention of another word, it is said, *then the end*? But the same is said of the resurrection of the saints with respect to that of Christ; and already thou knowest how many ages have past, and perhaps are to pass, between the one and the other resurrection. *Christ the*

first fruits, then they who are Christ's. Wilt thou not say, what reason have they for not joining the words, *then the end*, with those that immediately follow; seeing in the holy text we read them united, and no sense, not even grammatical, can be made without uniting them? Then the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom, when he shall have put down all rule, all authority and power. Then those who are Christ's, saith St. Paul, being raised, the end shall come. But when? When the Lord shall give up, or shall have given up, when he shall put down, or shall have put down, when... whereas it is clear that the end will not come until all these things shall have taken place which we find expressed in the holy text.

In like manner, it appears clear, that Jesus Christ, being the head of the human race, and having taken upon him its recovery, cannot make to his Father the oblation or offering of the kingdom whereof he is constituted heir, without having first emptied it of all foreign domination, till after he shall have wholly destroyed all rule, all authority and power —till after he shall have subjected the whole world, not merely to sterile and lifeless faith, but to the proper fruits of faith, which are piety and love. In short, till after he have converted all the various kingdoms of men into the proper kingdom of God, worthy to be called by that name. For which end, pursues the apostle, it is necessary that the same Son reign effectively, until he hath subjected all enemies and put them under his feet. "For he must reign until he hath put all enemies under his feet." When all things shall stand subjected to this true and legitimate king, then will he be able to offer the kingdom to his Father in a style worthy of God. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

That it may not be imagined, as they give us to understand, that this has all been, or can be, fully accomplished by the preaching of the gospel which began with the apostles, these two things ought chiefly to be noted and well considered. First, that the thing here spoken of, is not the conversion of the principalities and powers of the earth to the faith, but on the contrary, the thing spoke of clearly is, the putting down or avoiding of all principality and of all power. And it is certain, and a thing allowed by all christians, that the preaching of the gospel is so far from drawing on, even indirectly, any such evacuation, that on the other hand, it is one of its capital points to subject us to all principality and power; and to put these principalities and powers into greater security of our obedience and fealty, to which it not only exhorts but indispensably obliges us: "Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's." Matt. xxii. 21. "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers." Rom. xiii. 1.

The second thing which should be observed is, that the evacuation of all rule, authority and power, with every thing else which we read in the text, must come to pass, not before, but after the resurrection of the saints *who are Christ's*, consequently after the coming of Christ. Read the text over an hundred times, and turn and read it over a thousand times more, and you shall find it no otherwise. After this hath all come to pass in the order which St. Paul lays down, he concludes the whole mystery by saying, *the last enemy which shall be destroyed is death*, in which, behold the end of the whole to be the universal resurrection; whereby death shall be conquered and entirely destroyed in such a way, as that then, and then only, shall that come to pass which is written, "Oh death where is thy sting? Oh grave where is thy victory?"

§ 7. All which we have observed in the text of St. Paul, we find in like manner in the same order, and with even somewhat more clearness, in the twentieth chapter of the Apocalypse. Let us make a parallel of the two texts, and it will be of great service towards giving us still more clear ideas. First, St. Paul speaks in this place, not only of the

resurrection, but expressly of the order according to which it will take place: *But every man in his own order*: saying that the first of all is Christ. *Christ the first-fruits*; then after the resurrection of Christ will follow that of his saints, *they which are Christ's at his coming*; and even in this place, he does not mention the precise time of this resurrection of the saints, which in the fourth chapter of the first epistle to the Thessalonians he mentions, by saying, that it shall come to pass when the Lord himself shall return from heaven to earth; *he shall descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ shall rise first*. Now this very thing St. John likewise declareth, with somewhat more enlargement, and with more individual description; to wit, "that they who have been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God, and they who have not worshipped the beast," &c. these shall live, or be raised at the coming of the Lord, which is the first resurrection: that they shall be blessed and holy who have part in the first resurrection; that the rest of the dead are not raised then, but after a long time, signified by the name of a thousand years; that this time being passed, the destruction of Gog shall succeed, and fire shall fall upon Magog, &c. I suppose that you have the whole of the twentieth chapter of the Apocalypse before you, and that you will actually consider it with more attention. Among other things, you will find in it this very remark, which of its own accord starts out before our eyes: That those beheaded for the testimony of Christ and the word of God, and who have not worshipped the beast, &c. not only rise at the coming of Christ, but that they reign with him a thousand years. *And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years*. This evidently supposes, that this same Christ will reign throughout the whole of that space of time, during which there shall be visible thrones, and certain ones sitting on them with the office and dignity of judges.

And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them. In sum, St. Paul places after all, and in the last place, the destruction of death, which is nothing else, as we have said, but the general resurrection: *the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death*. St. John does the same, after his millennial kingdom, and after the fire which falls upon Gog and Magog; whereby are comprehended the east and the west, with all who live upon the whole earth, saying, "And the sea gave up the dead which was in it, and they were judged every one according to his works; and death and hell were cast into the lake of fire." All expressions most proper for explaining the entire destruction of death in the general resurrection. *But the last that shall be destroyed is death*.

§ 8. *Fourth Document*. The fourth instrument which we present for the promise of God concerning which we treat, is to be found registered in this same fifteenth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians, towards the end of the 51st verse: where the apostle solicits our entire attention, as being about to reveal to us a hidden mystery, of the greatest interest to those who would profit in the knowledge thereof. "Behold I show you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

You will wonder greatly that I should cite this text in my favour, when it appears so clear against me: the like wonder have I to see the doctors cite it in their favour, after having yielded, though with such economy of time, that the saints shall really rise sooner than the rest of men. The understanding which they have of this last passage of St. Paul, it is difficult to harmonize with that concession. Nevertheless, all are agreed, that the apostle is here speaking of the universal resurrection: But is this certain? By what reasoning can it be made out, seeing the whole context exclaims, and cries out against this understanding. Will you dare to say that St. Paul, or the Holy Spirit, who spoke by his mouth, can contradict

themselves? There is no remedy, if you would have it that the universal resurrection is here spoken of, but that you should grant, that he falls irresistibly into two or three manifest contradictions, which are as follow.

First Contradiction. If St. Paul here speaks of the first resurrection, all men without distinction, good and bad, believers and unbelievers, &c. must rise in one and the same moment, in the opening and shutting of an eye. Therefore, that is false which he says to the Thessalonians, the dead in Christ shall rise first.

Second Contradiction. If St. Paul speaks here of the universal resurrection, all men without distinction, must rise in a moment. Therefore, before that moment, all without distinction, must be dead, since the dead only can rise; therefore there neither are, nor can be; any alive to mount upon the clouds and receive Christ, as he assures the Thessalonians that there will be. "Then we which are alive," &c. Thess. iv.

Third Contradiction. If St. Paul speaks here of the universal resurrection, all men without distinction, of good or bad, of spiritual or carnal, of pure or impure, &c. ought to rise incorruptible; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible. Therefore, all without distinction will, from that moment, possess incorruption or incorruptibility. Therefore, that is false which the same apostle says in the preceding verse, "Now this I say brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." You will say nevertheless, that even the wicked will be raised incorruptible to inherit incorruption, because being once raised, their bodies will no more change or be dissolved, but must continue entire, for ever united with their sad and miserable souls. Well, and would you call this incorruption or incorruptibility. Certainly this is not the sense of the apostle, when he formally assures us, yea even threatens us, that corruption cannot inherit incorruption. *Neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.* What then may this singular expression mean? This is what it manifestly means. That no person, whoever he may be, without any exception, who possesseth a corrupt heart and corrupt actions, and therein persevereth unto death, shall have reason to expect in the resurrection, a pure, subtile, active, and impassible body. He will arise. Yes. But not to life: but to what St. John calls the second death. Not to the peculiar joy of incorruption, but to the grief and peculiar miseries of corruption.

When all these things, which to our slender capacity appear irreconcilable, shall be harmonized in a natural, clear, and perceptible way, then shall we consider what is to be said. Meanwhile we say resolutely, that St. Paul neither does, nor can refer in this place, to the universal resurrection: the very context throughout the whole chapter, though there were no other discordance, evidently proving the very contrary. Study it all attentively, especially from the 41st verse. "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." &c.

See now, whether you can accommodate the whole of this to the resurrection of all men, without distinction of holy and unholy. Then of what resurrection does the apostle speak? He speaks, my friend, undeniably of that same resurrection of which he speaks to the Thessalonians. In both place he speaks to recent christians, exhorting them to purity and sanctity of life; and holding forth to them a full recompence in the resurrection. In the one and the other passage, he speaketh exclusively of the resurrection of the saints, when the Lord shall come. In the one passage and in the other, he speaks of the saints not dead nor risen, but

who are still alive in that day; therefore he adds these words; “The dead shall rise first and we shall be changed,” which evidently correspond to these others: “we who are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them into the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.” That those alive may pass through the air to receive the Lord, there must needs, before that assumption, have passed upon them a great change.

The interpreters and other doctors who touch the point, recognize in the words of the apostle, no other mystery but, that all the dead, without distinction of good or evil, shall arise incorruptible; and that they shall not all be changed, nor all be glorified, but only the good. Sure am I, my friend, that if the apostle intended no more than to reveal to us this secret, he might well have omitted, or have reserved for some more seasonable occasion, that grand salute with which he communicates it, *Lo I tell you a mystery*. This convinces me still more, and even forces me to believe, that St. Paul here speaks not here of the universal resurrection, but solely, and exclusively, of the resurrection of the saints, which will take place at the coming of the Lord, as we read in the twentieth chapter of the Apocalypse. Whence we conclude, that the resurrection at one time and in one company, the resurrection in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, of all the individuals of the human race, has no better foundation than anciently had the celestial system of Ptolemy.

§ 9. There still remain several other instruments or documents to be brought forward, but I perceive that I enlarge beyond bounds. Nevertheless, I will point to them as with my finger, showing the passages where they may be found, and praying for them a judicious consideration. First: In the first Psalm I read these words: “The ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.” This text I find quoted in favour of the simultaneous resurrection in one company and at one time, but I know not for what reason: this proves, they say, that there is to be but one judgment, and consequently but one resurrection. Now, the contrary appears to me the manifest inference, for if sinners are not to arise in the judgment and congregation of the righteous, it follows, either that they are not to arise at all (which is against the faith), or that there is to be another judgment in which they shall arise, and consequently another resurrection. Secondly, in the twentieth chapter of the gospel of St. Luke, 35th verse, I read these words of the Lord, “but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, [αἰών, *seculum*, age], and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage, neither can they die any more; for they are equal unto the angels: and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.”

Now if in the whole of sacred scripture there were no other text than this, I confess I should not dare to quote it in my favour; but this text, taken in connexion with the others, appears to me to carry with it somewhat more force. And from it I infer, that in the coming of the Lord, with which certainly that other age is to commence, there will be some who shall be thought worthy of it and of the resurrection, and others who shall not; and, consequently, there will be some who shall then be raised, and others who shall not till another time, according to the word spoken by St. John, *the rest of the dead lived not, until the thousand years were finished*; this is the first resurrection.

Thirdly: St. Matthew says, that when the Lord shall return from heaven in glory and majesty, *he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds*, Matt. xxiv. 31. These, it seems clear, are no others than the saints who are to arise. And if you ask to be shown, in the same passage, the living who are to ascend in the clouds to receive the Lord, observe that which is immediately added in verse 40th: *Then shall two be in the field, the one shall be taken and the other left. Two grinding at the mill, the one shall be taken and the other left, &c.* What do these two sayings

last quoted signify? What meaning can they have? Unless you would consent to use the utmost violence, you must allow that it is here manifestly spoken of persons alive and sojourning, of whom when the Lord shall come, some shall be lifted up on high, and others not: *some shall be taken*, because they shall be worthy of this assumption, and *others* not worthy, are therefore *left*. You may say that the sense of these words is, that from the same office, state, and condition of life, some men shall be saved, and others not: wherein you have spoken a truth, but so general a truth, as to be out of the present question. I ask, When shall this general truth have its entire accomplishment, according to your system? Not, you answer, till after the general resurrection. Then, friend, this is enough for me to conclude that the words of the Lord could not be spoken with a view to this general truth which you hold out, nor will admit of that meaning. Why? Because they manifestly speak of persons who are not raised, nor yet dead, but alive and sojourning: they speak of persons who, in that day of his coming shall be found off their guard, working in the field, in the mill, &c. This is the particular truth to which attention should be given, and which we pray you to confront with that other, *He shall descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we who are alive, &c.* and, it appears to me, that you will find St. Paul and the Gospel speaking one and the same thing: *He shall send his angels and they shall gather his elect from the four winds; who can be no other than those very ones who are in Christ, who sleep in Jesus.* This done, and there shall immediately befall the living, that which the Lord addeth; *One shall be taken and another left*, and that which the apostle addeth, *we who are alive, &c.*

Fourthly: Read these words of Isaiah. "Thy dead men shall live; together with my dead body shall they arise [Vulgate, *interfecti mei resurgent*, i.e. *my slain shall arise*]. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust, for thy dew is as the dew of herbs [Vulgate, *ros lucis*, i.e. *is the dew of the light*]; and the earth shall cast out the dead [*et terram gigantum (sive impiorum, LXX.) detrahes in ruinam*, i.e. *the earth of the giants (or the wicked) shalt thou bring to destruction*]. For behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain," Isa. xxvi. 19-21. They say that in this place the universal resurrection is spoken of; but, after attentively considering all its expressions, we do not find a single one of them which will apply thereto. On the contrary, they do all perfectly agree to the resurrection of those upon whom they immediately bear, to wit, the saints, the elect, those slain by Egypt, those who have fallen asleep for Jesus and for the word of God, &c. Observe, that he speaketh not in this place concerning the dead without any distinction, but only concerning those who have suffered violent death by the shedding of blood or otherwise, and for God's sake, whom, on that account, the Lord himself calleth *my slain*. Observe, that the resurrection of these, of whom exclusively it is spoken, is to take place when the Lord cometh *out of his place*, to visit the iniquity of the inhabitants of the earth upon it: and then, says the prophet, the earth shall disclose her blood, and no longer cover her slain, who are the Lord's. Observe, lastly, that to the dead, to whom this passage refers, words are spoken certainly unsuitable to all the dead. *Awake ye who dwell in dust, because the dew of light is your dew, and the earth of the wicked shall thou bring unto destruction*; which harmonizeth with that text of the Apocalypse, *And the souls of those beheaded, and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years*; and still more clearly with that other text of the same Apocalypse, *And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star*, Rev.

ii. 26, 27, 28. By the morning star let others think as they please; I understand nothing else than the first resurrection, with the beginning of the day of the Lord.

Lastly: In the sixth chapter of the Gospel of St. John, I read the promise of the Lord four times repeated —*And I will raise him up at the last day*: a very remarkable promise, which Jesus Christ certainly makes not to men without distinction, nor even to all Christians, but to those expressly, and those alone, who should profit in his doctrine, his example, his counsels, his death, and, above all, in the sacrament of his body and blood. Now, if all men, without distinction, are to arise, in one company and at one time, what particular grace is this which he promises to those with whom he holds discourse? If it be the resurrection to life only which is promised, then as little would that grace be so specially theirs, as that very many, to whom certainly he did not refer, shall not share it along with them: for example, the innumerable company, who die after baptism before the dawn of reason, and all who at the hour of death find room for repentance, though they have before lived far from his law and doctrine. If all these are likewise to rise to life eternal, what special grace doth he promise to the former?

The instruments or documents which we have presented in this dissertation, if they be seriously considered and combined with one another, appear more than sufficient to prove that God hath promised in his word, to raise many other saints besides those already raised, before the general resurrection; consequently, the idea of the resurrection of the flesh, in one company and at one time, in a moment, in the twinkling of any eye, is an idea which is so far from being just, that it appeareth absolutely indefensible. This is all which at present we aim at, and thus I leave the second embarrassment to our progress cleared out of the *way*, and the second difficulty resolved.

CHAPTER VII.

THIRD DIFFICULTY —A TEXT FROM THE CREED OF ST. ATHANASIUS. — DISSERTATION.

§ 1. I REMEMBER well, venerated friend Christophilus, that in other times thou didst propose to me this difficulty, as a thing so decisive of the question, that it ought to induce me to alter my mind. I likewise remember, that being taken unawares and unprovided, I found myself embarrassed in my reply: but now that I have had time to think over it, I proceed to answer you with all brevity. For, as the difficulty is an obvious one, especially in respect to the priests, who have to repeat this creed many times in the year, I must not pass it over.

It is founded upon these words of the creed, called the Athanasian, —“From whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. At whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies, and shall give account of their own works,” &c. These words, you will say to me, should be understood as they read in their proper, obvious, and literal sense, out of which there is no reason for taking them; —for all the things which are said in this creed are true in that obvious and literal sense. Before replying expressly to this difficulty, I advert to one thing not to be despised, and which may be of some use to us; to wit, —that though all the matters contained in this symbol be true and of faith divine, as being taken in part from the

apostles' creed, and in part from certain general councils, which so explain them; nevertheless, some theologians who have handled this point do not admit, nor acknowledge as legitimate and just, the following expression, which is used in this symbol; —“For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ.” This similitude, they say, cannot be admitted without great impropriety; for this reason, —that the rational soul and the flesh exist and form man in such a way, that the one without the other cannot naturally subsist and the man subsist at the same time; the flesh being for the soul, and the soul for the flesh.

On the contrary, God in such a manner is man, and man in such a manner is God, that, without any natural violence, God might well enough subsist eternally without becoming man; and, in the same manner, could man subsist without the hypostatical union to God in the person of Christ: therefore that similitude may be regarded as very improper, and consequently admit of some restriction. If now, I should say the same of that other expression, —*at whose coming*; if I should say that it is not so natural and so just, nor so agreeable to scripture, as that a better could not be found in its stead, would I in this say any thing false? The certainty is, that neither that nor this are expressions taken from those general councils from which the substance of the doctrine was taken; but that they are put (*ad ornatum*) for ornament, and according to the particular discretion of them who arranged this symbol as we now have it. With this answer, which is sufficient, our dispute might terminate.

Nevertheless, if you ask and insist that the words, *at whose coming*, should be understood with all rigour exactly as they read, I grant it to you, my friend, without great difficulty: but upon this condition, not less just than easy, and therefore altogether indispensable, that the same favour should be conceded to me of a literal and obvious interpretation, for the four words which immediately precede that same expression, which are these, —*from thence he will come to judge the quick and the dead*. These four words are not only part of the symbol of St. Athanasius, but likewise without wanting a syllable of the symbol of the apostles, and of other places of scripture, on which account they are entitled to a little more equity.

§2. This condition, then, so reasonable, being admitted, I ask now, what sense thou wouldst give to the expression, —*at whose coming*. Thou wilt say, —that sense which the words obviously and literally convey; to wit, that on the coming of the Lord from heaven, while yet he is on his way to the earth, the instant before or after, will take place the universal resurrection of all Adam's children, without wanting one: *at whose coming all men shall arise*. And these four other, which immediately precede these, —*thence he will come to judge the quick and the dead*: what sense wilt thou give them? Thou wilt say, in like manner, that sense which they bear, and no other; which is, that the same Lord shall come in person, at the appointed time, to judge the quick and the dead. Very well. According to this we then hold these two propositions, both true in their obvious and literal sense. First, Jesus Christ shall come from heaven to earth, to judge the quick and the dead. Second, At the coming of Jesus Christ from heaven to earth, there shall take place therein the resurrection of all the Sons of Adam.

It appears to me, good Sir, that all the logicians in a body, after uniting the whole force of their wits, shall not be able to reconcile these two propositions, so that they shall not war with and mutually destroy each other. Behold how evident it is.

Jesus Christ shall come from heaven to earth to judge the quick and the dead. — Thence follows this consequence, clearly and forcibly: that when Jesus Christ comes to the earth, not only shall he judge the dead, but likewise the living; therefore there shall not only

be found dead, but also living, whom he may judge. If he finds living men to judge, then are they not all risen; therefore they have not all died, and therefore the second proposition is manifestly false, —which affirms, that all the sons of Adam, without exception, shall rise at the coming of the Lord. *At whose coming all men shall rise again.*

Not being able to reconcile these two hostile propositions to one another, nor to perceive how both can be true in a literal and obvious sense, it is absolutely necessary that one of them should give way. And in this case, which of the two should yield? Does it appear to you decent, that in order to defend the expression, at whose coming, which neither the Apostles have set down, nor even any general council, an article of faith should have to give way which is clearly and expressly set down in the Apostles' creed. Then what reasonable sense without violence, proper, obvious, and literal, shall we give it. That sense, friend, which it is capable of, and which alone it can admit, and be in harmony with its own context: *thence he will come to judge the quick and the dead; at whose coming all men, &c.* Jesus Christ shall come from heaven to earth to judge the quick and the dead, and at whose coming, or by the occasion of his coming as a condition *sine qua non*, all men shall arise: some forthwith upon the instant, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, to wit, all those saints of whom we have spoken in the preceding dissertation, and the rest at their proper time when they also shall hear the voice of the Son of God, if this sense does not quite content you, think of any other which to your mind may be more obvious and literal, so that it destroy not the truth of the first proposition, which at every expense must be preserved, though it were by life itself.

§3. I am not ignorant, Sir, of the reply which you may make to me on this point. Methinks I see you turning over the theologians and examining the catechisms to know what they say upon the judgment of the quick and dead. If however, you would save some labour, and make use of that which I have taken, you have here in a short space what is to be found upon this point in the best Theologians, and what the catechisms have taken from them. The difficulty must be very great, seeing to resolve it, they are divided into four opinions. All four differing from each other, but harmonizing and uniting perfectly in one single point, which is, to deny our article of faith (so far as it speaks of the living) in its natural, obvious, and literal sense; doing it the utmost violence that it may give way to their system: and if I may be allowed to say so, not admitting it as an article of faith, unless it will yield and stoop, unless it will suffer itself to be bent into their system. This will appear to you somewhat hyperbolic, and, nevertheless, you shall now see it to be truly so.

The first opinion, and the most creditable to its ingenious inventor, says, that by the living, are to be understood all which actually were alive in the world when the Apostles composed their symbol of faith, and by the dead, those who had already died from Abel till that time. And as this symbol was to speak in the church, in all ages, years, and days that the world should last, it always has said, and always will say with truth, that Jesus Christ will come to judge those who have lived, are living, and shall live, and those who before them should have died, consequently the quick and the dead. It appears to me that this sentence, being looked to attentively, means in good language this only, that the word quick, which the Apostles, full of the Holy Spirit set down, is a word altogether useless, which might without loss have been omitted, and that it were enough to have set down the word *dead*: for by that word alone is the whole expressed, and with much more clearness and brevity. Let us suppose for a moment that the Apostles had omitted the word *quick*, and set down only the word *dead*. In this case, according to the reasoning of that doctor, our article of faith would remain to us entire and perfect, even as now we have it, with this simple explanation, Jesus Christ shall come from heaven to earth to judge the dead only: those dead have been once

alive, otherwise they could neither be, nor could be called dead, therefore Jesus Christ shall come from heaven to earth to judge the quick and the dead. —(Suar.t.1. in 2.p.d.50.s.2. Lugo de fide d.13.s.4.n.108.)

The second opinion says, that by the quick are to be understood, or as Cardinal Bellarmine says in his large catechism, may likewise be understood, all those who are actually alive when the Lord shall come, and who shall die at once, consumed by the deluge of fire which will precede his coming. But it is clear upon this opinion, that no judgment of the living will take place, seeing that at the time of the judgment they will all be dead. The third opinion, ridiculous in every sense, is, that by the quick, we are to understand the souls, and by the dead, the bodies, so that Jesus Christ shall come from heaven to earth to judge the quick and the dead, means nothing more than that he shall come to judge the souls and the bodies. And when he cometh, he shall already find all men raised, and consequently, all the souls united with the proper bodies in one person. He shall proceed by dividing that person asunder, and consequently kill him another time, in order to take account first of the soul and then of the body, as if the body were any thing without the soul. Truly admirable philosophy! Oh to what shifts a bad cause will reduce one!

There still remaineth the fourth opinion, common and nearly universal with the theologians and the catechisms, which is, that by quick and dead are to be understood good and evil, righteous and sinners. Do not ask me, friend, upon what foundation this opinion rests, because I cannot find any given by its own authors. I know only that they quote the authority of St. Augustine, and upon this as their foundation, pretend to rest it solidly and securely. I had believed this report upon the good faith of those who quoted him, but having read that passage of St. Augustine, which they quote, I am fully satisfied that he teaches no such thing; for I neither find it positively stated, nor from his words can it be inferred. To two places of St. Augustine, the doctors refer us for this opinion, the first in the book *de fide et symbolo* (concerning faith and the creed), chapter 8. The second in the *Euchiridion*, chapter 55. In these two places it is certain that the holy doctor touches the point very briefly, but it is likewise certain that he comes to no decision, and takes no side. In the first he says “We believe that he will come at the time most suitable, and judge the quick and the dead, whether by these names be signified the just and the unjust, or whether those be called the quick whom he shall then find alive in the earth before our death.”³³ “In two senses,” he says in the second place, “it may be taken, whether we understand by the quick those whom he shall find not yet dead, but still living in the flesh, or by the quick, the just, and by the dead, the unjust.”³⁴

By these two passages of St. Augustine, it is to be clearly seen that the holy doctor determines nothing, but that he speaks rather in passing, and without taking a side either the one way or the other, taking the word quick either in that natural sense, in which all living men understand it as a bodily life, or taking it only by way of similitude, and applied to the life of grace which the just live in virtue of their justification. So that the only foundation, upon which they pretend to found their opinion, falls of its own accord, or totally disappears, by St. Augustine’s own confession, in the very passages which they quote from him.

³³ Credimus inde venturum convenientissimo teinpo, et judicaturum vivos et mortuos, sive istis nominibus justi et peccatores significantur, sive quos tunc ante mortem nostram in terris inventurus est, appellati sunt vivi.

³⁴ Duobus modis accipi potest, sive ut vivos intelligamus, quos hic nondum mortuos sed adhuc in ista carne viventes inventurus est ejus adventus, sive vivos justos, mortuos autem injustos.

Nevertheless, if the book, de Eccl. dog. is St. Augustine's, his opinion is very clear in those words of the eighth chapter, "Now what we say in the Creed, that, upon the coming of the Lord, the quick and the dead shall be judged, not only signifies the just and the unjust, as Diodorus thinks, but we believe also those who are found alive in the flesh, and who, it is believed, have still to die."³⁵ This is also what I believe, because this alone is agreeable to what is said in the symbol of my faith. The other opinions, let their patrons and defenders hold them in what reverence they please, I hold to be improbable and false; because they are not agreeable but violently repugnant and contrary to this article of faith.

It is a very extraordinary thing, that Theologians being agreed that the articles of the Creed should be understood by the letter, because only thus are they articles of faith, should except this only, *the quick*, and give a sense to it after their will and pleasure. Likewise, they say that the explicit confession of this article of the Creed is not necessary, in as far as regardeth the word *quick*—that no one is under obligation to know certainly what it signifies; that it is sufficient to believe, in general, that all men, without exception, shall be judged by Jesus Christ, when he shall return from heaven. Ask them now, if we might do the same thing by other articles of the Creed; and I know not what they can reply so as to save evil consequences. If there be no obligation to know what is signified in the Creed by the word *quick*, which appears so clear, as little obligation will there be to know what is signified by the word *dead*, or what is signified by the words *resurrection of the body*; or what is signified by being born of the Virgin Mary; or what is signified by *crucified, dead, and buried*; for what should make the difference?

I allow, indeed, without difficulty, that to know the true signification of the word *quick*, or to have clear ideas of the judgment of the quick, of which the scriptures speak to us so much, is not a necessary obligation with respect to the commonalty of believers; but it appears to me as a thing most inconsiderate, to extend this indulgence likewise to all those persons who hold the key of knowledge, and who ought to abstain from giving us to understand that the word *quick* means nothing, that it is useless, and that we can do very well without it. I do not say they teach so expressly; but what else doth it amount to, if they will go about to seek for that word another and another meaning by accommodation; seek for it senses improper, violent, and even ridiculous; and absolutely deny the proper and literal one? Doth it appear to you, my friend, that this short word was placed in the Creed, without the inspiration, without the teaching, without the express command of the Holy Ghost. Does it appear to you, that to understand it, or not to understand it, is a thing of little or no consequence?

§ 5. It appears certain that the doctors think so, who excuse us from the obligation of knowing what is signified by the particular word, *the quick*. But I cannot think so, because I perceive the extraordinary and terrible consequences which have followed from not admitting in its proper sense this word which seemeth as nothing: yes, which appears nothing, and yet holds a great and close relation with almost all the scripture as it respects the second coming of the Lord. It appears nothing, and it is one of the clearest lights which shines upon the most obscure and difficult passages of the same scripture. It appears nothing, and it is a master key which opens a hundred doors. This is the true reason why the interpreters are forced to use violence in the exposition of the Holy Scripture, in order to bend it whither it refuses to be

³⁵ Quod autem dicamus in Symbolo in adventu Domini vivos et mortuos judicandos, non solum justos et peccatores, significant, sicut Diodorus putat, sed et vivos eos qui in carne inveniendi sunt, credimus, qui adhuc morituri creduntur.

bent. This seems to be the true origin of all those senses, so many and so diverse, of which they make so much use or abuse in the exposition of the scripture. This, in short, is the true root of the greater part of those rules which have been established as certain and as necessary, according to their way of speaking, for the understanding of the Holy Scripture; but perhaps they would speak better, if they said, for never coming to understand it. All, or almost all, in my opinion, has been derived from this, of not having sought to understand the word *quick*, as every man understandeth it who is quick; of not having sought to believe words, according to the scriptures, that there is to be a judgment of the quick (or, which is the same thing, a reign of Christ over the living), very different from the judgment of the dead, or the reign of the same Christ over the dead—as widely different as the dead are from the quick.

There is no need of great talents or great penetration, but only of a little study free from prejudice, in order to know that a great part of Holy Scripture, in that which respects prophecy, clearly speaketh of the judgment of the quick, and of Christ's reign over the quick. To this judgment, and to this kingdom, almost all the prophecies are directed, and in it they terminate as their principal object; while, of the judgment of the dead, it is spoken with clearness only in the New Testament. Give me, my friend, a man who believes truly and sincerely, as the Christian religion teacheth, that after the coming of the Lord and King Jesus Christ, there is to be on this earth a judgment of the living: give me a man who does not confound this judgment of the quick with that of the dead: give me a man, who, to the one judgment and to the other, grants, in good faith, that which to the one and the other is proper and peculiar; and by this alone doth he hold the understanding of the greater part of the Holy Scripture. By this alone he understands very many passages of the prophets, which appear obscurity itself. By this alone he understands many or most of the Psalms, which appear impenetrable enigmas. By this alone he understands many difficult passages of St. Peter and St. Paul, of the Apocalypse, and even of the Gospels, which places, the doctors assure us, cannot be understood but in an allegorical and analogical sense; which is the same as to say, that they cannot, nor ever shall be understood, or that they shall be understood only in heaven above.

CHAPTER VIII.

FOURTH DIFFICULTY. —A TEXT FROM THE GOSPEL.

§ 1. IN the Gospel of St. Matthew we read these words of our Lord: “When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left,” &c. Matt. xxv. 31.

This passage of the Gospel is one of the chief, if it be not perhaps the only foundation, on which the ordinary system rests, and from which it lays claim to its strength. For they say, here the universal judgment is spoken of designedly, and even the very manner in which it shall be holden is described; and it gives no room for, but entirely excludes, any considerable space of time, between the coming of the Lord and the judgment and universal resurrection. In such a manner, that according to the proper meaning of the sacred text, or according to the

pretended meaning of the doctors, when the Lord shall come to the earth, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: then, that is, immediately thereupon shall be gathered into his presence all nations already raised up. Then shall take place the separation between the good and the evil, those being placed on the right hand and these on the left. Then sentence shall be passed in favour of the one class, and against the other. Then finally shall that sentence be executed; some pass to heaven and others to hell; and all this shall take place that very day in which the Lord shall come, *when he shall come, then, &c.*

To resolve this great difficulty, and discover the very great weakness of the foundation on which it rests, it is necessary to advert to two things of very easy remark. First, that the whole of this passage of the gospel (and indeed the whole of the 25th chapter of St. Matthew) can admit of no more exact sense than is proper to a parable. Secondly, that even granting the passage not to be a parable, but a true prophecy and description of the universal judgment, it would not thence legitimately follow, that all which is here announced to take place at the coming of Christ, must succeed immediately, without allowing sufficient time for very many things besides, not less great and notable, which are announced in the scriptures. These two points we shall now briefly consider.

§ 2. The whole text of the gospel, which begins, *When the Son of Man shall come*, to the end of the chapter, we hold to be as much a parable as are the two which immediately precede it. Consequently, this, as well as those, can admit of no other sense than that which is proper to a parable. That is to say, not the exact counterpart of that figure which is made use of, but that particular and determinate object or end to which it is directed. This particular object or end, is evidently one in these three parables; and on this account, perhaps, it is that they are placed by the Evangelist together in the same chapter, without a single word to indicate a difference, because all the three are directed to the same end, and contain a doctrine substantially the same, which is to exhort all believers, especially pastors, to works of charity, watchfulness, and zeal, and to the constant practice of the maxims and counsels of the gospel; thereto proposing, in general and very shortly, the recompense and the punishment which when he cometh to judge the earth, he will give to every one according to his works.

So that although in these three parables, and in some others, the Lord speaks of his coming; although he speaks in them of the general judgment; forasmuch as this is not his direct and immediate object, he makes no pretence of relating his coming, or the circumstances of it, or the mode in which the judgment is to take place. These things he touches by the way, and only indirectly as they bear upon the doctrine which is his chief end. And all other particulars attendant or consequent on his coming, the Lord cuts off in this passage and in all the other parables. In those which speak indirectly of his coming in glory and majesty, it is easy to observe that he does not always speak after the same manner: sometimes he uses one similitude, sometimes another: sometimes he concludes his discourse in one way, at other times in another: sometimes it appears that he speaks only of the universal judgment, as if nothing else were to happen upon his coming: at other times, and that most frequently, he would seem to speak of persons not dead but living, not raised up but way-faring, whom he should find when he comes. Consider among other parables, that of the ten virgins, that of the talents, and that of the servants who should have watched to open the gate promptly unto the Lord, and you shall find that all these conclude without leaving us in possession of any clear or definitive idea of the universal judgment.

In the gospel of St. Luke (xix. 11 and 27.) we read a parable, aimed at those, who, upon our Lord's coming to Jerusalem, when he actually came to suffer, thought that he was now about to manifest at once the kingdom of God; *because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and*

because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear. To these, therefore, the Lord said, “A certain nobleman went into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us. And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading,” &c. See now what this king does when he returns, *having received the kingdom*, and you shall not find any idea of the universal judgment. The first thing he does is to reward the servants who occupied their talent, one with ten cities, and another with five cities, to punish one of them whom he found idle, and after this manner to bring and slay in his presence those enemies of his who had not desired him for king. “But those mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.” Dost thou find in all this any idea of the resurrection of the dead, or the universal judgment? Dost thou not find on the contrary an idea widely different? How is he to give to his servants the government of five, or of ten cities in the universal judgment, when all the cities of the world shall be reduced to ashes? What enemies that affected not his kingly government can he have to slay, when those enemies, like all the rest of Adam’s children, are dead, raised from the dead, and in a state of immortality? Thou wilt say, doubtless, that this is all said in parables or similitudes, to the fitness of which it is not necessary that they should apply in every thing, but only in that particular to which they are directed. And I, allowing that you have reason on your side, do beg that the same thing be adverted to in the passage of the gospel of which we now speak: *When the Son of Man shall come, then, &c.*

§ 3. If, notwithstanding, thou wouldest rather that this passage of scripture should not be a parable but a prophecy, a notice, a description, as well of the Lord’s coming, as of the universal judgment, I am very far from troubling myself much to maintain the contrary opinion. This would be to enter into an embarrassing question of very little or no profit. If I call it a parable, it is because I find it placed among other parables; and because having read the text, with all the context, it appears to me to be all spoken in the way of similitude, not of propriety; neither does it appear probable, that the universal judgment will be brought within that short compass which the Lord here gives it; nor that all the good on the one hand, and all the wicked on the other, will be judged and sentenced simply for the reason which is there pointed out; nor that they shall in reality say, both the one class and the other, these words, *Lord when saw we thee hungry and athirst, &c.* nor that the Lord shall make answer to them, *Forasmuch as ye did it unto one of these, the least of my little ones, ye did it unto me.* Nevertheless, I am ready to concede, in this particular point, all that you desire. Be it not a parable, but a prophecy, which directly foretells the coming of the Lord and the universal judgment. And what dost thou infer from this? That when Jesus Christ shall come in glory and majesty, all these things shall succeed instantly and at once? That in that day, (which the Prophets, and St. Peter, and St. Paul, call the day of the Lord, and which, according to your strange understanding of it, must be a day of ten or twelve hours,) no other things shall be done save those which are here pointed out? But those other which the Psalms announce besides! And those, moreover, which the Apocalypse announceth in the three last chapters! These must all be excluded for the word *then!* Certainly this is a very singular conclusion and way of reasoning.

But what proper meaning, true and agreeable to the scriptures, will you give to the word *then*, and to the whole text of the Evangelist? To answer this question, no way occurs to

me so easy as to make use of a similitude, which method hath often more weight than a prolix discourse. Read the 9th chapter of Genesis, and you will find (verse 20) that when Noah went forth from the ark, he began to till the ground and to plant a vineyard, and having drunk of the wine he was drunken. *And Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard, and he drank of the wine and was drunken.* Now if any one should understand that in the same day in which Noah went out of the ark, in that very day he had planted the vine, had taken the vintage, had intoxicated himself with the wine, what wouldst thou say? Doubtless thou wouldst contend that it was a very gross and indiscreet construction of the text of Genesis. Apply now the similitude. As, then, to every one of these things which Noah did thou givest the appropriate time, so that it pass not out of that epoch, notwithstanding that they are all related together, so likewise oughtest thou to do with these which the Lord relates in St. Matthew, though we read them joined together: And, as between the planting of the vine and Noah's drunkenness various other things occurred, though they be not written, so likewise, between the coming of the Lord and the general sentence which St. Matthew, gives us, will be accomplished in their time the things which he there announces, and those besides which the Prophets have predicted, and reserved for the day of the Lord. If we do not contract that day as the ordinary system does, but give unto it, without any fear, that magnitude and enlargement which is so due to it *according to scripture*; we shall find time for every thing.

CHAPTER IX.

LAST DIFFICULTY.

THE Apostle St. Peter, speaking of the day of the Lord, (2 Pet. iii. 10.) says, that that day will come suddenly, and adds, that in it there shall be a deluge of fire so great and devouring, that the elements themselves shall dissolve, and the earth and all the works which are upon the face of it shall be burned up and consumed. "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." If this is true, we can have no ground to hope in the day of the Lord, either the accomplishment of that which the prophecies would seem to announce for that time, or yet the judgment of the quick, if this word be understood as it meets the ear; because it is not possible that any living thing should remain after a fire so universal, which is to enwrap the whole surface of the earth. Consequently, the judgment of the quick, as well as the other prophecies, cannot be understood *according to the letter*, but in other senses widely different from that which appears the obvious and literal one.

In order to resolve this great difficulty, which has been regarded as decisive of the question, we have only to ask, Does St. Peter here declare, that at the coming of the Lord from heaven to earth, this universal deluge shall take place? Neither doth he say nor announce such a thing, nor from his words and manner of speaking, can such a novelty be drawn, so great and so contrary to the ideas which are given us in all the scriptures. The only thing which he saith, is, that it will take place in the day of the Lord; a timing widely different; and, that without determining whether it will be at the beginning, or in the middle, or at the end of that same day: *But the day of the Lord shall come as a thief; in which &c.*

Now, my friend, if thou still thinkest that the day of the Lord, whereof St. Peter speaks, and of which speak almost all the prophets, is any natural day of twelve or twenty-four hours, I say to thee with all good friendship, thou judgest not well. This understanding of thine were very like that other concerning the day in which Noah went out of the ark, in which he prepared the ground, in which he planted a vineyard, in which he reaped the vintage, in which he drunk of the wine and was drunken.

The day of the Lord whereof the scriptures speak so much, will doubtless begin with the coming from heaven to earth of the King of kings. But that we should measure that day which shall then dawn, by hours and minutes, there is not any reason obliging us, but on the contrary the whole of scripture gives its voice against such an idea. It always speaks to us of the coming of the Lord, as an epoch the most famous of all epochs, upon which there shall ensue a season of time wholly diverse from all which till then shall have passed: which season of time is frequently call in the Prophets *the day of the Lord, that day, that time, the world or age to come, &c.* Therefore in that day, in that age to come, there will be doubtless time enough and to spare for the full accomplishment of whatever is written; there will be time for the judgment of the quick, which the creed speaks of and requires us to believe; there will be time for all the announcements of the prophets of God, and there will be time for the full accomplishment of that which is spoke by St. Peter, all, within the same day without passing beyond it. St. Augustine says, (Libi. de civil Dei. c.1.) “over how many days this judgment will extend is uncertain; but that a day in the scripture style is wont to stand for time in general, no one who will read those writings, however negligently, can remain ignorant.”³⁶

Direct your eyes a little to the twentieth chapter of the Apocalypse, and there you will find (verse 9) that St. John likewise speaks of the fire which is to be rained from heaven; but he places this event at the end of his day of a thousand years, *when the thousand years were ended*: in which thousand years (be the number determinate or undeterminate) there has been time more than sufficient for many and great things which the scriptures clearly announce to us. This is the whole solution of the difficulty; nor is there any occasion to be more determinate on the point. Other difficulties of equal or greater magnitude, we hope to resolve in their proper place as they shall occur.

ADDITION.

By that which we have just said, we mean not to deny that there shall be fire from heaven at the very coming of the Lord, because we find it so expressed in certain passages of scripture, especially in the 97th Psalm. “A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about. His lightnings enlightened the world: the earth saw, and trembled. The hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth, &c.” This text, especially the last words, [in the Vulgate they are, *a facie Domini, omnis terra*; i.e. the whole earth from the presence of the Lord,] appears to tell of an universal deluge of fire, which is immediately to precede the coming of the Lord. But it is well to observe that these last words, *whole earth at the presence of the Lord*, which carry this

³⁶ Per quot dies hoc iudicium tendatur incertum est: sed scripturam diem poni solere pro tempore, nemo qui illas literas quamlibet negligenter it, ignorat.

apparent application, read not so in the other version, but *of the whole earth*, and so they have a sense altogether different; it is not the whole earth which melts like wax at the sight and presence of the Lord, but it is the mountains which melt in the presence of the Lord of the whole earth; from *the presence of the Lord, the governor of all the earth*, says the Chaldee paraphrase. *From the sight of the face of the Lord of all the earth*, says the very ancient Arabic version. Besides, it is confessedly a figurative expression like that of the following Psalm. "Let the floods clap their hands, let the hills be joyful together before the Lord, for he cometh to judge the earth:" and that of the 114th Psalm: "The mountains skipped like rams, and the little hills like lambs."

To this likewise we should advert, that the text quoted, as also the whole context of that Psalm, gives us an idea very foreign from an universal deluge. The first words are an invitation to the earth, and to the numerous isles thereof, to be glad and rejoice in the knowledge that the kingdom of the Lord is at hand. "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice, let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof." This mirth, it is clear, pertains not to the earth, not to the insensible islands, but to the inhabitants who dwell therein and through the earth, and the isles were capable of mirth; how could they rejoice over the instant expectation of a fiery deluge which should make them dissolve like wax? In the preceding Psalm it had just been said, with reference to the coming of the Lord, "Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof. Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord; for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth." How suits this joy of the fields and the trees, with the announcement merely that they were to be devoured by fire? All these reflections force us to believe that it will not be an universal deluge which is to precede the coming of the Lord. *A fire goeth before him*, but this is a particular fire directed solely against his enemies, as immediately follows in the text. *And burneth up his enemies round about*.

The same idea is given to us in the Book of Wisdom, which, speaking of the terribleness of the day of the Lord to the wicked, among other things hath the following: "His severe wrath shall he sharpen for a sword, and the world shall fight with him against the unwise, Then shall the right aiming thunderbolt go abroad, and from the clouds, as from a well-drawn bow, shall they fly to the mark," chap. v. 20, 21. What necessity were there for this aiming of the rays at a certain place and determinate persons, if the fire were to be like an universal deluge? How should that possibly be an universal deluge of fire, which comes with Christ, or precedeth him? When, (Apoc. xix. 17.) at the coming of the Lord in glory and majesty, all the fowls are invited to a great supper, which God prepareth for them upon the carcasses of all those enemies who were slain with the sword of him who sat upon the horse; which sword proceedeth out of his mouth. How is it possible that any fowl should be left in the world after an universal deluge of fire? How is it possible that this should be an universal deluge, when, by Ezekiel, the same invitation is given, not only to the fowls but to all the beasts of prey, to come to the same supper which the Lord prepareth for them? "And thou, son of man, thus saith the Lord God; Speak unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the field: Assemble yourselves, and come; gather yourselves on every side to my sacrifice, that I do sacrifice for you, even a great sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel, that ye may eat flesh, and drink blood. Ye shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth, of rams, of lambs, and of goats, of bullocks, all of them fatlings of Bashan." How is it possible that it should be an universal conflagration, when, by Isaiah, it is said, that after that terrible day there should still remain some men alive upon the earth, though not

many. "Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left. When thus it shall be in the midst of the land among the people, there shall be as the shaking of an olive tree, and as the gleaning grapes when the vintage is done. They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing for the majesty of the Lord, they shall cry aloud from the sea," &c. It is clear, therefore, that all this preparation is made against the enemies, and against them alone.

THE COMING OF MESSIAH

IN
GLORY AND MAJESTY.

PART II.

WHICH COMPREHENDETH THE OBSERVATION OF CERTAIN PARTICULAR PHENOMENA IN THE PROPHECY OF DANIEL, AND THE COMING OF ANTICHRIST.

THE preparations which seemed to us necessary being now made, the principal embarrassments taken out of the way, and the air sufficiently cleared, the time seems to be come for beginning to observe many great and wonderful phenomena, which either wholly lay hid amidst the clouds, or appeared but confusedly. There needeth only observant and unprejudiced eyes, which, away from all bias, shall desire to behold them, and shall continue fixed for some moments in the examination of each severally, in the combination of them one with another, and in the contemplation of the whole system. This is what we now desire to do. Which labour, to facilitate and to assure ourselves of better success, it hath seemed to us convenient, not only to keep constantly before us the system proposed in the fourth chapter of the first part, but likewise the ordinary system of the doctors; and having made the exact and faithful observation of any particular phenomenon, to see or hear the explanation which each of these two systems gives or can be made to give. If after having seen, heard, and seriously examined the explanation which one of those systems gives, it should not be found so proper, so clear, so natural, as that which the other system gives; but, on the contrary, violent, obscure; full of embarrassment, and perhaps manifestly out of the question; then it shall pertain to righteous judges to give final sentence. This method, as it is the simplest of all, appears the best fitted for the end which we have exclusively in view; to wit, the discovery of the truth. Let us then not lose the time, but enter on our observations.

PHENOMENON I.

The statue of the four metals, from the second chapter of Daniel.

Preparation.

§ 1. THIS I propose in the first place, as being one of the most illustrious prophecies which is to be found in scripture; upon the perfect accomplishment of which we should look with a religious admiration. Under the figure of a great statue of terrible aspect, composed of four different metals, are represented to us, the four great and famous kingdoms or empires, which in different times were to afflict the world, and rule in it. To each of which is given its proper and peculiar distinction, whereby it may be recognized with entire certainty. And the end and termination of all of them is represented in the same way, as taking place through the falling of a certain stone, which is to be cut out of a mountain, and fly directly at the feet of the statue; by which terrible blow it becomes reduced to small dust, which the wind carrieth away. In consequence of this great event, the stone itself which smote the statue, increases and becomes a mountain so great that it occupies and covers the whole earth. “Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. This image’s head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and he came like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.”

The explanation which is given by the same prophet of the whole of this vision, reduces itself to this; That the four metals whereof the statue is composed signify four empires or kingdoms, which, one after the other, should appear in the world. The first, symbolized by the head of gold, he marks with its proper name, that it is the same which Nebuchadnezzar had just founded by his prodigious and rapid conquests whereof that same Nebuchadnezzar was actually the head. The other three he does not name, saying only that the second kingdom should be of silver, and therefore less than the former. The third of brass, which should command the earth, and the fourth of iron mingled with clay, &c. “Thou art this head of gold, and after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise.” In its place we shall copy the rest of the text of this great prophecy, according as we shall require it.

We betake ourselves to examine two points in it, which we deem of very great importance. The first is, whether the subdivision, which till now has been given of these four kingdoms, be just and agreeable to the text and to history; or not. The second is, to learn what stone is this which is to fall in its time upon the feet of the statue, and convert the whole into dust and ashes. Whether this stone be already fallen from the mountain, or is still to be expected: and consequently, whether that be come to pass in the world which is to follow its fall; to wit, the foundation of another kingdom, incorruptible and eternal over the whole earth; or is it not yet come to pass.

§ 2. *The appropriation of these four kingdoms which has had currency till now, is proposed and examined.* The wonder with which the subdivision universally agreed upon has ever filled me, has very oft made me consider, what the real cause might be, which has forced the doctors to unite in an opinion which opposes, not only the Holy Scripture, but likewise history and experience itself. And, my friend, I will tell you sincerely what has occurred to me. The cause appears to me substantially no other than the fear and dread of the kingdom of Christ. This kingdom, with all its circumstances, so clearly and particularly laid down in this prophecy, and which will be found in a thousand others as we proceed; this kingdom, I say, they cannot endure, on their ordinary system; it troubles them, it frightens them, and sometimes makes them fall into a kind of fury, which although religious does yet not restrain them from trampling under foot so many passages of scripture, and from taking away by manifest violence their proper and literal sense.

This kingdom, I say again, makes a terrible resistance to all their ideas. They dare not admit it, save in a spiritual or metaphorical sense. The avenues to evil, which on considering it, present themselves before their mind, cannot be shunned; and the only means which they have devised for escaping so great impurities, is to invert, a little, the order of the four kingdoms. To apportion them so as to free themselves from inconvenience; and neglecting very notable circumstances to prepare the way for altogether spiritualizing the fifth kingdom, that is, the kingdom of our Lord.

Another thing I likewise observe, which is, that our doctors, imagining that the fourth kingdom was doubtless that of the Romans, and not encountering between this and Nebuchadnezzar any other empire besides that of the Greeks, fell upon the expedient of dividing the first into two parts, in order that they might keep proper count; so that they called the first the empire of the Babylonians, the second of the Persians. Now let us see how unfounded is this division, which for so long a time has been commonly received.

Consider then, briefly, the order of these four kingdoms as it is found in the doctors, without losing sight of the text of Daniel. The first kingdom they say, is that of the Babylonians and Chaldeans, whose founder was Nebuchadnezzar; to whom succeeded Evil Merodach, and to him Belshazzar, in whom the kingdom came to an end. The most common notion is to confound Evil Merodach with Belshazzar, making of the two only one person; and in case this were true, which appears very far from being the case, there would be two kings, father and son, in the first kingdom. What kingdom so short? It ought, one would think, to continue much longer, being of gold! *The head was of fine gold.* Now, I inquire, if this first kingdom, which they call that of the Babylonians or Chaldeans, was limited to Chaldea only? Evidently not: in Chaldea was the heart of the kingdom, where was the great city of Babylon; but her dominion extended to all the particular kingdoms, principalities, and lordships, which were in Asia; including in the reckoning, the whole of Egypt. Without recurring to prophane history, Divine Scripture itself declares so clearly in prophecy and history, that all the peoples of Syria, Mesopotamia, Palestine Tyre, Egypt, the Arabias, &c. were conquered by Nebuchadnezzar; and though Media and Persia, had particular and immediate princes of their own, they did yet all acknowledge the great king of Babylon, as supreme prince, and as such obeyed him, and paid him tribute as his vassals. The captives whom that prince took from Jerusalem and Judea, were conducted, not only to Babylon, but also to Media and to Persia, as provinces of the empire. Concerning those who were in Media, the whole book of Esther informs us; and concerning those who were in Persia, two words of the second book of Maccabees, *When our tribes were led captive into Persia.* These remarks will all very soon be of service: and let us now proceed —The second kingdom

represented in the statue, by the breast and arms of silver, they say, was that of the Persians, who united with the Medes, under the two heads of Darius the Mede, and Cyrus the Persian, conquered Babylon, and becoming masters of the empire, crowned themselves one after the other, in the very city of Babylon. They do not stop long at a great difficulty which occurs here; to wit, that this new kingdom, (which they call the Persian in order to distinguish it from that of the Chaldeans,) either grew or became much greater, by the aggregation of the Medes and Persians, or at least continued as great as it had been; and yet the prophecy declares, that the second kingdom should be less than the first: *and after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee*. To this great difficulty they reply, that the true sense of these words should be inferior not in extent, nor in people, but in valour and military glory; and as if this (though trenching most violently upon the sense,) could not be doubted or proved false; they pass on with great satisfaction to show, that Persia was anciently very rich in silver mines, and is on that account symbolized by that metal. And why then should Chaldea, which had no mines of gold, be symbolized by gold.

The third kingdom figured in the statue, by the belly and thighs of brass, they would have to be that of the Greeks, founded by Alexander. But how? Will the kingdom of the Greeks, confessedly the least of all, answer to that distinctive peculiarity with which the prophet characterises the third kingdom, to wit, that it should rule over all the earth: *which shall rule over all the earth*. You will say, yes; showing me as the ground of your answer, (1 Maccabees 1. 3.) which, speaking of Alexander, says, *that the earth was quiet before him*. But first, these words speak of Alexander, not of the kingdom of the Greeks, neither can it be said with propriety of Alexander, that he founded the kingdom of the Greeks, but that he destroyed that of the Persians. Secondly, these words of scripture do not say that Alexander ruled over all the earth, but that the earth was silent in his presence. A most lively expression for unfolding the terror and affright which Alexander caused over all the earth, comprehended within the empire of the Persians; to which he came like a thunderbolt, ruining it entirely, and whom nothing could resist. As we proceed, we shall examine more in detail, the distinctive peculiarity of the third kingdom of brass, and submit to any one who will give us a more pointed application.

Finally, they say, that the fourth kingdom of iron, mingled with clay, can be no other than the Roman empire, in which is properly verified that which is spoken in the prophecy concerning the fourth kingdom: “And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron, forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things, and as iron that breaketh all these shall it break in pieces and bruise.” Hitherto there is no difficulty. The similitude might very well apply to the Roman empire, if the text of the prophecy ended here, without the other signs and distinctive properties which cannot apply to it. The part of the text which follows is the great difficulty, and this is doubtless the true cause why the doctors vary so widely in the explanation or accommodation to the Roman empire, of the things here contained. Here is the text at full length, for we shall soon have to return to it. “And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron; forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters’ clay, and part of iron; the kingdom shall be divided, but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay. And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom,

which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.”

§ 3. Another order and another explanation of these four kingdoms is proposed.

FIRST KINGDOM.

THE first kingdom figured in the statue by the head of gold, is doubtless that of the Chaldeans or Babylonians, of which Nebuchadnezzar, who had founded it with his rapid conquests, was actually the head or king. It is evident, not only from the Holy Scriptures, but likewise from prophane history, that king Nebuchadnezzar did not found the particular kingdom of Babylon or Chaldea; which particular kingdom inherited by him from his fathers, reckoned as many years or ages of antiquity as had passed till then, from the time of Nimrod, who was its founder and its first sovereign, as is set forth in the tenth chapter of Genesis. This then is not the kingdom of which the prophecy speaks. What then is that first kingdom? It is that which the same Nebuchadnezzar founded by his victorious arms, subjecting in a short time to his dominion, all the individual kingdoms and lordships then known in all the east. Therefore, the prophet himself calls him a king of kings. *Thou art a king of kings*; which perfectly agrees with what the Lord says by Jeremiah (xxvii. 6.) that all kindreds, peoples, and nations, (meaning of the east) whom he had just named, were given into the hand of this same Nebuchadnezzar. “And now have I given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant; and the beasts of the field have I given him also to serve him. And all nations shall serve him, and his son, and his son’s son, until the very time of his land come: and then many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of him.” This passage of scripture appears sufficient, without recurring to history, clearly to demonstrate the first kingdom of gold, in all its extent.

In the same manner, it appears evident from scripture and history, that the kingdom, or empire, founded by Nebuchadnezzar, was not destroyed, changed, or altered in any material point, when Darius the Mede, and Cyrus the Persian, shook off the yoke of Belshazzar, the son, or nephew of the same Nebuchadnezzar, and obtained possession of the capital of the empire. The only novelty which then took place, was to change the government of the head or king; Darius the Mede, taking the throne, instead of Beishazzar the Chaldean. Thus Daniel, who was an eye witness, declares expressly at the end of the fifth chapter, *That same night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain, and Darius the Median took the kingdom*. Which is the same, as if we should say, Charles the Second, king of Spain, of the house of Austria died, and Philip the fifth, a Frenchman, of the house of Bourbon, succeeded him in the kingdom. In which kingdom? In no other but that same kingdom of Spain. So that, if Philip the fifth, by seating himself in the throne of Spain, did not found another and a new kingdom, but ruled over the same with his predecessor; no more did Darius the Mede, by

seating himself in the kingdom of Babylon; but merely ruled over the kingdom which Belshazzar had governed before him. Daniel himself afterwards speaks in these precise terms, in the beginning of the ninth chapter: *In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans.* And as Cyrus the Persian, and all his successors till Darius Comanus, did not rule over any other kingdom, than that which was left to him by Darius the Mede, the immediate successor of Belshazzar, it follows legitimately, that, till Darius Comanus, who was conquered by Alexander, the first kingdom of gold continued, which Nebuchadnezzar had founded. Whether you call it the kingdom of the Chaldeans or of the Medes, or of the Persians, is of very little or no consequence, for names do not change things.

Besides this, it is a matter of certainty, that neither Darius nor Cyrus his nephew, nor any other of his successors, destroyed Babylon, but seated themselves there as in the capital of the empire; and Babylon was for a long time the court of many kings, descendants of Cyrus; who were called indifferently, kings of Media and Persia, and even kings of Babylon. In the thirty second year of Artaxerxes, about a hundred years after Cyrus, Nehemiah the priest, who was his cup bearer and favourite, calls him by no other name but king of Babylon: *but in all this time was not I at Jerusalem, for in the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes king of Babylon, came I unto the king, &c.* Neh. xiii. 6. In process of time, it appears that the court removed to other places, according to the pleasure of its king, but the kingdom or empire remained always the same, without any revolution, until Alexander. Neither in the government, nor in the laws, nor in the customs, nor in the religion, doth it appear that there was any change worthy of consideration. Darius quitted Media and passed to Babylon. Cyrus also followed him thither, and Cambyses and Artaxerxes, &c. After some years, the name of Persia became permanent, because the court had transferred more of its presence to the province called Persia, which at that time was much greater than what has since been called by that name. There is no reason then for dividing the kingdom of the Persians from that of the Chaldeans or Babylonians, because it is evidently the same kingdom of gold, founded by Nebuchadnezzar, which by time, changed its name, but nothing more. Above all (and this is a circumstance which we ought not to hide), the kingdom of the Persians, which they will have to begin in Cyrus, never was less, but equal to, or greater than the kingdom of the Chaldeans, founded by Nebuchadnezzar: therefore it cannot be the second kingdom represented in the statue, which the prophecy expressly states was less than the first, and perhaps as much inferior as silver is in respect of gold: *and after thee shalt arise another kingdom inferior to thee, of silver.*

SECOND KINGDOM

§ 4. THE second kingdom figured in the statue, by the breast and arms of silver, they say, can be no other than that of the Greeks; as well by the distinctive peculiarity given to it by the prophet, of its being less than the first, as of its very constitution; that is to say, its being composed wholly of breast and arms. In the breast we may regard the principal kingdom of the Greeks, which was afterwards called that of Syria; and in the arms, the two branches, which were extended likewise by the Greeks, the one towards Macedonia in Europe, the other towards Egypt in Africa; whence arose two separate kingdoms independent of the rest. This kingdom then, or this famous empire of the Greeks, we cannot regard as already formed in the days of Alexander, who did only destroy and build nothing up. We may scarcely, with any propriety say, that he dug the foundation, and laid one or two stones, upon which the building might afterwards be reared.

In this he laboured ten or twelve years, passing through Asia like a flash of lightening, or rather, we would say, as a ferocious madman, killing men in all parts, robbing and destroying cities which had in nothing offended him, all as it were without system or settled purpose: so that at his death he divided all his conquests into as many parts as he had favourite captains, who after his death, were all intent on calling themselves kings, and as such crowning themselves. "And he parted his kingdoms amongst them while he was yet alive, and his servants bear rule every one in his place. And after his death they all put crowns on themselves," 1 Maccab. i. 7,9. True it is, that the division or testament of Alexander took not effect, nor was it possible that it should under such circumstances. In a few days began discord and rancorous war amongst the new kings, knocking down of heads and crowns together, whereby the number of pretenders was reduced to four, to wit, Antigonus, Seleucus, Ptolemy, and Cassander. The last of whom came to Macedonia, where he made but a miserable appearance. Ptolemy fortified himself in Egypt, where Alexander had left him governor; Antigonus and Seleucus came to blows, and long disputed upon the breast of the statue, until Seleucus, by the death of his rival, remained absolute master of the principal part of the kingdom or empire which he had just overthrown. I say the principal part, and not the whole, because it is most certain that not all comprehended in the empire of the Persians was subject to the dominion of Seleucus. In Asia Minor, there stood up other kings, who in the end made themselves independent, and all Egypt remained entirely free under another separate head. In this way was fully verified the characteristic which the Prophet gives to the second kingdom, saying, that it should be inferior to the first, as is silver with respect to gold.

This kingdom or empire, which began in Seleucus, is properly the kingdom of the Greeks, altogether diverse from the first, in extent, in riches, in people, in laws, in customs, in gods, and even in language itself: which in all Asia, as in Egypt, soon began to be adopted by the new masters of the world.

THIRD KINGDOM.

§ 5. THE third kingdom or famous empire figured in the belly and thighs of the statue, is evidently the Roman. The circumstances or distinctive peculiarity that *it bare rule over all the earth*, is not only a feature of very high aggravation, but one which makes it change its kind, and as it were, marks it by its proper name. Of what other empire can it be said with truth, that it bear rule over all the known world, save of the Roman only? Consider this empire in the time of Augustus, or Trajan, or Constantine, or Theodoseus; and you shall see it to be so great, and of such vast capacity, that it doth enclose within its womb whatever kingdoms, principalities, and powers were then known in the old world; that is, in Asia, Africa, and Europe, without leaving at liberty even the isles of the sea. Consider the very metal which represents it, brass not only hard and most strong, but sonorous withal: because these so great and diverse people it subjected, not only by the rigour and force of its arms, but also, and perhaps much more, by the sound and echo of its name. The Prophet speaks of the third kingdom, that it should be brass even to the thighs, *the belly and thighs of brass*: another manifest characteristic of the same empire, which stood so long divided into the empire of east and west.

At this point, Sir, methinks I see you not a little impressed by this novelty. This being so, you answer me, where will the fourth kingdom of the prophecy come, figured by the legs, feet, and toes, of the statue? To this question I make answer, that as the empire of the Greeks built itself upon the ruins of the first empire, and that of the Romans upon the ruins of the second, so precisely the fourth empire of which the prophecy speaks, built itself upon the

ruins of the Roman empire, which had gorged itself with them all. In order to see this fourth and last empire, with all clearness and all its countersigns, it is sufficient to open our eyes and look with some reflection upon the present state of that great extent of territories, which the statue shut up within its womb; Portugal, Spain, France, England, Germany, Poland, Hungary, Italy, Greece. In short, almost the whole of Europe, Asia Minor, with all its kingdoms, Syria, Mesopotamia, Palestine, the three Arabias, Chaldea, Persia, Egypt, all the coasts of Africa from Egypt to the Moroccos, &c. All this the Roman empire comprehended. All this was the Roman empire. But now, and for some centuries, what is all this become? Turn your eyes to prophecy and study it well and at once you shall discover the fourth empire of iron with so much clearness and distinctness, that it shall not be possible for you not to recognise, though you do the utmost violence to your eyes, and to your reason.

FOURTH KINGDOM.

§ 6. The fourth kingdom or empire of iron, began to be formed from the fifth century of the Christian æra, by the eruption of the barbarians; which, like an impetuous and universal torrent, soon inundated and ruined all the provinces of the Roman empire, or to use the very similitude of the prophecy, as iron subdues and breaks all things in pieces, however hard they so did this innumerable multitude of nations, some by the way of the east, others of the west, leave almost nothing which they did not break in pieces. *And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron:* forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things, and as iron that breaketh all these shall it break in pieces and bruise. This is the first characteristic. In consequence, therefore, of this universal destruction, these same nations divided among them the whole earth, and formed together a kingdom or empire, wholly new and very different from the other three. And what kingdom is that? The same which we actually behold and which we have seen for many ages. And this is the second characteristic, *the kingdom shall be divided!* A divided kingdom, a kingdom of many heads. A kingdom composed of many particular kingdoms, wholly independent. A kingdom whose parts border upon one another, like the toes upon the feet traffic with one another, have intercourse, and minister to each others help; yet never unite so as to form one mass. In a word, these parts compose a whole, while they do at the same time scrupulously preserve their separateness and entire independency.

The three former kingdoms of the statue, although composed of different parts, or different people and nations, were all reunited under one single headship, physical or moral which they acknowledged, and at whose orders they were moved. The fourth kingdom is not so. It is composed, it is true, of many parts diverse from each other; but each as being absolute and independent, acknowledges its own proper and peculiar head. Notwithstanding this disunion, they all at length reunite, almost without perceiving it, in the same principles, in the same interest, in the same general laws, necessary for the preservation of the whole composite body, which together form that proper and necessary equilibrium, whereby the parts do not destroy, but mutually sustain each other for the common behoof of all; and so the system is preserved unhurt, through the very division and independence of its parts. But for this, it were with reason to be feared that some of the parts by the aggregation of others would become so great as to rule over all; and in this case we should have another kingdom or empire similar to the three first; which would falsify the prophecy. But as God hath spoken it, the very parts which compose this singular whole, shall exert the care, as hitherto they have done, to maintain their independence and keep themselves divided; *The kingdom shall be divided.*

Moreover, says the prophet of the Lord, and this is the third characteristic, that this fourth kingdom, though taking its origin from legs of iron, [Vulgate, *de plantario ferri*,] of such very strong iron as, by force of repeated blows, shall make the statue to regorge all that it had devoured and held enclosed in its belly, shall yet not be solid and hard like iron, but partly solid and partly brittle. This, he adds, is signified by the iron being mixed with clay in the feet of the statue; *and as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken.* And what else, to this day, hath experience shown us? In the agitation and movement of the various parts of this kingdom, it hath constantly come to pass, that the part which was of iron, has remained of iron, hard and solid, and the part which was of clay has necessarily suffered several breaches, uniting now with one, now with another, according to the greater or less force of the part which struck against it.

In fact, the solid parts, or particular kingdoms, far from uniting together, after the blows which they have inflicted upon each other, have hardened and consolidated the more, and remained divided and independent. What bloody and obstinate wars! What plots! What contrivances! What preparations! It hath oft appeared that parts of the kingdom were inevitably about to be destroyed. It hath appeared as if one, or more of them, would notably increase, and convert the others to its own substance. But the fact very soon demonstrated the truth of the prophecy; *the kingdom shall be divided, partly strong, and partly brittle.*³⁷

Finally, the prophecy concludes, by remarking the last characteristic; these parts, or particular kingdoms, which comprise the fourth kingdom, or famous empire, shall often unite in that kind of union, which appears the closest and most indissoluble, that is, matrimony; but nevertheless they shall remain as much divided as before. *They shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another.* This characteristic appears so clear and so confirmed to the event, that it has no need of any other explanation, than a moderate knowledge of history. For example, all who saw Philip the second, king of Spain, contract a marriage with the hereditary queen of England, would have thought that, without doubt, these two hard and solid kingdoms were about to unite together, so as to form out of the two, one kingdom; but in a short time the event showed quite the contrary; In like manner we might, were it necessary, go over the innumerable unions, which history presents to us, amongst the several parts of this divided kingdom.

In sum, from the very time that this fourth kingdom was founded, it was founded a divided kingdom. The parts which compose it, although having the same origin, which is iron, *de plantario ferri*, though all contiguous to each other, as are the toes of the foot, set out by being divided, and have continued divided, without interruption. Neither has it been possible, nor will it ever be possible, to form out of them all, a kingdom, or an empire, similar to the three first; which acknowledged and were subject to one head: *The kingdom shall be divided: they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another.*

As the knowledge of this fourth kingdom is absolutely necessary to our understanding the second part of the prophecy, we ought to bear in mind what is found written of it by the doctors, and the manner in which they pretend to accommodate to the Roman empire, the four characteristics of which we have just spoken. After this we shall be able easily to

³⁷ What observation more appropriate could the Author have made here, though he had seen the universal empire to which Napoleon aspired, and which politicians believed inevitable, vanish like smoke? (Note by the Spanish Editor.)

compare the one explanation with the other, and weighing them both in impartial scales, to make a prudent choice.

First characteristic. And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things, and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. This resemblance, they say, will apply to the Roman empire only, which we know grew and waxed so great, by breaking in pieces and subduing all other kingdoms, peoples, and nations, as iron subdueth and breaketh all other things in pieces. Whether this be true or not, those can decide who have a competent knowledge of Roman history. To us it appears clear, that the two words, *bruise, and break in pieces*, are very improperly applied when speaking of the Romans and their conquests, and do not truly signify, or represent, the character of these actions. With what propriety, and with what reason, can it be said of the Romans, that they subjected other people to their dominion by the forcible and strong blows of a hammer? that they broke them, that they bruised them in pieces, that they ground them to powder, as iron, which breaketh and subdueth all things? A very different idea doth history, and even Holy Scripture, give us, saying of the Romans, “Now Judas had heard of the fame of the Romans, that they were mighty and valiant men, and such as would lovingly accept all that joined themselves unto them, and make a league of amity with all that came unto them: and what they had done in the country of Spain, for the winning of the mines of the silver and gold which are there.” 1 Maccab. viii. 1,3. Compare these last words, the Romans possessed every place with their counsel and prudence, with these words, they possessed it by striking, breaking, bruising, and grinding to powder, and you will see the difference and contrariety. How much more suitable is all this to the innumerable multitude of barbarians, who assaulted the Roman empire on all sides, and destroyed it. Of them it may be said, with all truth and propriety, that they subdued all, breaking, bruising, and grinding to powder; and likewise, that they possessed all, and with no more prudence or counsel, than their own fury, their own natural barbarity. Now, friend, if it be found, that this first distinctive feature of the fourth kingdom, which carries with it some resemblance, will not accommodate to the Roman empire, what will become of the three which remain?

Second characteristic. *The kingdom shall be divided.* This was verified, according to some, in the two empires of east and west, of which the former endured longer than the second; for the reason, doubtless, that it was of iron, and the latter of clay: according to others, it was fulfilled in the leaders of the parties who, with such obstinacy, fomented the civil wars, of whom some were broken like an earthen vessel, and others endured like iron.

Third characteristic. *The kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly brittle.* This was verified, according to some, when the Roman empire was divided into the eastern and western empires: according to others, and those the greater number, in the time of the civil wars between Marius and Sylla, between Cæsar and Pompey, between Augustus and Antony; when the Roman empire was a divided kingdom.

Fourth characteristic. *They shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another.* This was verified, according to some of them, when Cæsar and Pompey were reconciled and made friends; and that the friendship might last, Pompey gave Cæsar his daughter in marriage. The same thing afterwards did Augustus by Antony; and notwithstanding these unions, division and discord went on. I do not stay to make any new remarks upon the accommodation of these three last characteristics, because I would leave something to my reader. I content myself with simply asking all the interpreters of scripture, that they would point me out, in the Roman empire, and that with distinctness and clearness, the feet and toes of the statue, *partly iron and partly clay*, so as that all of them should be

joined, coexistent, and in a state to receive, at the same time, the blow of a certain stone, which is to fall upon them and grind them to powder. This, my dear Sir, is the great burden, the great difficulty, the chief embarrassment. What hath been already seen and observed, is really nothing to that which remains.

SECOND PART OF THE PROPHECY.

The falling of the stone upon the feet of the statue, with the foundation of another and a new kingdom upon the ruin of all the former.

§ 7. I would not have insisted at so great length upon the former part of the prophecy, did I not perceive the necessity there is of its being fully understood, in order to enter into the latter part, which alone beareth directly upon our subject. "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever." This last kingdom, saith the prophecy, shall be founded by a certain stone, cut out of a mountain without hands, that is, cut out of itself, which shall in its time descend right against the statue, and inflict a terrible blow upon its feet of iron and clay (where the whole of it shall actually be, having gone or descended from the head to the breast, from the breast to the belly, and from the belly to the legs and feet), and at the first blow shall break them, and even grind them to powder. "Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces." Then shall the whole of the colossus come to the ground, being reduced entirely to small dust, which the wind shall carry away. "Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them." And the stone itself which gave the blow shall immediately grow into a mountain so great as to fill the whole earth. "And the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth." This is the fact announced in the prophecy. Let us now see the explanation.

All interpreters of scripture, so far as I have had it in my power to examine, regard this prophecy as fully accomplished, and this great event as verified. They all take for granted (or if they cite a proof, it is the authority of one another), that the stone of which mention is made, descended from the mountain centuries ago, when the Son of God descended from heaven to earth, and was incarnate of the Virgin Mary by the Holy Ghost. This incarnation of the Son of God of the Virgin Mary by the operation of the Holy Ghost, they say is signified in that expression, *the stone cut out of the mountain without hands*; that is, according to them, *without the knowledge of man*: which then struck the statue, and converted it all into dust and ashes. When? When by his doctrines, by his imprisonment, by his death upon the cross, by his resurrection, by the preaching of the gospel, &c. he destroyed the empire of the devil, of idolatry, and of sin. They suppose that this same stone at that time began to increase, and little by little, has gone on increasing, so that it hath now become a mountain of immense size, and well nigh filled all the earth. What mountain is this? No other than the Christian church; which is the fifth and last kingdom, incorruptible and eternal.

It is not to be denied that this is all very well discoursed. And here you may already perceive what we stated at the beginning, as the true reason which forced our doctors to give the Roman empire the fourth place in the order of the kingdoms which this scripture figures forth. But upon this I would not at present reflect, my attention being called to the sudden leap which the interpreters make from the material to the spiritual, with respect to which two difficulties present themselves, whereof a solution hath ever appeared to me most desirable. The first is: What feet and toes, part of iron and part of clay, were there in the Roman empire in the time of Augustus, which the stone might break, according to the prophecy of Daniel? The second is: Do the four metals of the statue —gold, silver, brass, and iron, represent four kingdoms purely metaphorical and spiritual, or four kingdoms material and visible, which were physically to appear in the world? If the first; why do we weary ourselves, and why have so many doctors wearied themselves, in seeking for these kingdoms among the Chaldeans, Persians, Greeks, and Romans? Has not this been labour lost? If the second; these material and visible kingdoms, which are the only things spoken of, ought to have already been broken and pulverized by that stone: not the metaphorical and spiritual kingdom, of which there is no mention. *It shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms*, says the prophecy, when speaking of the stone; and straightway adds, *it shalt break in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver and the gold*. It seems a mode of explaining Holy Scripture very easy and convenient, to take the one half of a text in one sense, and the other half in another sense, differing as widely from the former as the east is from the west, While they are preparing a reply to these two difficulties in some way which shall be at least intelligible, I go on to examine another, and to show the equivocation upon which it is founded.

§ 8. ***Examination of the explanation of the stone of which the prophecy speaks.*** The stone of which this prophecy speaks, they tell us, is evidently Messiah Jesus Christ himself, the Son of God, and the Son of the Virgin. This general proposition is certain and indubitable. But as all Christians know and believe, not one coming of the same person of Jesus Christ, but two comings infinitely different, that we may not confound that which belongs to the one with that which belongs to the other, we hold it to be a certain and indubitable rule, dictated by the light of reason and of faith, that if any thing announced in a prophecy of the coming of Christ have no application, nor can have, to the first coming, we surely expect it to be accomplished by the second. It is a verity of faith, that the stone, *that is Christ*, hath already descended from heaven *into the womb of the Virgin*, that he preached, that he taught, that he died, that he rose again, that he enlightened the world by the preaching of the gospel, which, little by little, has gone on destroying in the world the empire of the devil, &c. All this is certain and undeniable: but all this pertains merely to the first Coming of Messiah, which is already past. Besides this we expect another not less wonderful, in which shall infallibly come to pass what pertains to it alone, and stands announced of it; and, among the rest, all which is announced in this great prophecy, which we are in the act of considering.

Of Messiah, in his first coming, it is clearly spoken, in very many passages of scripture, where are announced his most holy life, preaching, and doctrine, his miracles, death, and resurrection, the perdition of Israel, the calling of the Gentiles, &c. But these mysteries, however great and admirable they may be, are not always, neither is there need that they should be always, spoken of; there being others equally great and admirable, which demand their own proper and natural place. Under the similitude of the stone, we even find in the twenty-eighth chapter of Isaiah, the first coming of Messiah, “Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a true foundation.” And in the eighth chapter, it is foretold, that Messiah should become to Israel, through their unbelief and their

iniquity, as a stone of offence and of scandal, as a snare, and a destruction to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. "But for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin, and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem." But this precious stone, which descended into the womb of the Virgin, descended not with noise and terror, but with wonderful gentleness and suavity; not to do evil to any one, but rather to do good to every one. "For God did not send his Son that he might condemn the world, but that the world through him might have life," John iii. 17. are the words of the Lord himself.

"Did you never read in the scriptures," saith the Lord unto the Jews, "the stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: and whoever shall fall upon this stone shall be broken, but on whomsoever it shall fall it will grind him to powder," Matt. xxi. 42. Thus you see clearly the two comings of Messiah, and the immediate consequences of the one and of the other, in such a way represented, that having come the first time peacefully with out tumult or alarm, and suffered with infinite patience every blow which they chose to give it, it was therefore placed as the foundation stone of the great and everlasting house which was to be raised upon it. He who believes and desires in good earnest to adjust himself upon this foundation stone, is certainly saved, becometh a living stone, and shall for ever be a part of the holy building. "To whom coming as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious: Ye also as living stones are built up a spiritual house," So saith St. Peter to the first believers; 1 Pet. ii. 4. On the contrary, he who believeth not, much more who persecuteth the foundation stone, and setteth him self against it, shall bear all the blame, and should impute to himself all the evil, if he be crushed, head, hands, and feet. *Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken.*

This is exactly what befel my nation the Jews. After having rejected and cast out that stone, so precious, and, notwithstanding their rejection, seen it become the head of the corner; —after that they had seen the new and admirable edifice which so speedily arose thereon, being filled with zeal and diabolical fury, they began to inflict more and more blows upon the foundation-stone, thinking to break it, to crumble it, and to bring down upon it the edifice which it supported; but in a short time was seen verified, upon those first persecutors, the former part of the prophecy of the Lord ; —*Whoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken.* From which encounter they came forth so mauled, that with your own eyes you see still, yea, and the whole world hath seen and doth see, the miserable estate in which they have remained for so many ages, unable to help or even to recover themselves.

The Gentiles followed in the same encounter, armed with all the power of the Cæsars; and, having struck it at different times, and every time with fresh fury, they obtained this only as the consummation, —that they broke themselves to pieces, and assisted, without perceiving it, in the construction of the work, building in stones by the thousand, and perfecting the work more speedily. After this, how many machines have they not invented and brought into play, in order to subdue the hardness of this stone? Even as many as there have been heresies started: but all in vain; the stone has remained incorrupt and immovable as the edifice which it sustains. And what past ages have seen done upon it, the same shall future ages see. The stone which came from heaven into the womb of the Virgin, agreeably to its nature, has done harm to no one, for it came only for the good of all, "that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." If many have broken their head upon it, the blame has lain wholly with themselves, not with the stone, "for the Son of man came not to destroy, but to save souls."

The prophet Isaiah, speaking of Messiah in his first coming, says, "The bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench," xlii. 3. expressions very

appropriate for explaining the peaceful way in which he came into the world, in which he lived amongst men, and in which he hath carried himself towards all until this hour, without doing violence to any, without depriving any of that which is his own, and without concerning himself in any thing but how he might do all possible good to every one who would receive him; bearing at the same time most patiently with ingratitude, injuries, and persecutions. But the time will come, will infallibly come, when the measures of suffering and silence being filled up, this same stone shall descend the second time, with the greatest tumult, terror, and rigour imaginable, and direct itself right against the feet of the great statue: “the Lord shall go forth as a mighty man; he shall stir up jealousy like a man of war: he shall cry, yea, roar; he shall prevail against his enemies. I have long time holden my peace; I have been still and refrained myself: now will I cry as a travailing woman; I will destroy and devour at once.” Then shall be accomplished in its fulness the second part of that sentence,—*upon whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder*. And then, in like manner, shall be accomplished the second part of our prophecy, whose observation and true understanding has held us till now in suspense and occupation, “till that a stone was cut without hands, which smote the image upon his feet, that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces.”

There is not therefore any reason for confounding the one mystery with the other: although the stone be in itself the same, its comings to our earth are two things widely differing from each other, the one as much a matter of divine faith as the other. And what is not verified, nor can be verified, in the first, will infallibly be verified in the second. This is the thing which the doctors labour to avoid, in order, doubtless, not to expose their system to so evident a danger. This has forced them to invert the order of the kingdoms; assigning the last place to the Roman empire, in order that it might be found at least in existence at the first coming of the Lord; and to this end they have directed so many ingenious accommodations, which at first sight strike one as being arbitrary, violent, and out of the question. It is very manifest what they are afraid of; for, excepting danger to the system, no one can know either why they fear, or what it is that they do fear.

The stone therefore descending from the mountain, and having shivered and crumbled the great statue into dust, will itself become, says the text, a mountain so great as to cover and occupy the whole earth. —*And the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth*. Which enigma the prophet resolves in these words: (see if you can accommodate it to the present church,) “and in the days of those kings, (those he had just spoken of, represented by the toes of the statue, or, if you please, by the whole of it,) shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.” Now tell me in passing, Is the present church really that famous kingdom which has already ruined, shivered, and pounded into dust, and utterly consumed all the kingdoms figured in the statue, or in the toes of its feet? For the prophecy assures us of that famous kingdom, *that it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms*. Though there were no other proofs but these alone, it were sufficient to make known to us the small worth of your explanation and of your system.

Now, finally, compare these words which are spoken of the stone when it descends from the mountain, *it shalt break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms*, with that ejection spoken of by St. Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 24. *when he shall have put down* [Vulg. *evacuaverit*, i.e. emptied out, ejected, or evacuated,] *all rule, authority, and power*, and you will see the same event foretold in different words. St. Paul, speaking of the resurrection of the saints, Says, that when the Lord cometh, he shall empty the earth of all principality,

power, and dominion. —Daniel says, that he shall destroy and consume all the kingdoms represented in the statue. Do not the apostle and the prophet speak one and the same thing? Compare likewise those two passages with that which is spoken in the hundred and tenth psalm, spoken to Christ himself, *the Lord on thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath*, with that which is spoken in the second psalm, *then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure*, with that which is in various parts of Isaiah, *in that day the Lord shall punish the kings of the earth upon the earth, and they shall be gathered together in the pit*, xxiv. 21. and with that which is spoken in Habakkuk, third chapter, *because thou hast spoiled many nations*, and with that which is spoken of all the kings of the earth, in the nineteenth chapter of the Apocalypse. All this, and much more, which is in scripture, must one day be verified, for till now they have not been verified; and they must be verified when the stone descends from the mountain, because they all stand manifestly announced for that time. Then shall begin another new kingdom upon the earth, altogether different from all those which we have already seen, which shall be founded by that same stone, which has destroyed and consumed the whole statue.

—*And the stone which smote the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.* To which event St. Paul doth visibly allude, when he adds, immediately upon the evacuation of all principality, and power, and rule, *for he must rule till he hath put all enemies under his feet.* And you see here, my dear Sir, that judgment of the living clearly begun, which the symbol of our faith teacheth, and which the scriptures so constantly announce and preach to us.

Conclusion.

The serious consideration of this great phenomenon, after having been observed with so much exactness, may be very useful for those religious and pious persons who far from contenting themselves with appearances, or delighting themselves in ingenious and artificial discourses, search after truth alone, being able to rest in nothing else. Much more useful may it be with respect to other persons with whom our age so much aboundeth, who affect a sovereign contempt for the scriptures, especially the prophecies, publicly alleging that they are nothing better than words spoken to the air, and having no other sense than that which interpreters are pleased to give them: both of these classes should be possessed with the most religious dread, and with the most profound respect for God and his word, when they compare it with history.

From Nebuchadnezzar till this day, which is a space of more than two thousand three hundred years, hath that which this most ancient prophecy comprehends and foretells, gone on verifying itself punctually. The whole world has seen the great revolutions which have taken place, while this statue has been forming and completing itself from the head to the feet. The formation of the statue, that is to say, the empire and dominion which first rested in the head, has continued to come downward in the sight of all, from the head to the breast and arms, from the breast and arms to the belly and thighs, from the belly and thighs to the legs and toes, where it is now actually found. And there now wanteth only the last epoch, or the very great revolution which this same prophecy announceth to us, to which we shall see very many other prophecies perfectly accordant. Why then do they not receive this last also as it is found written? Why will they go about to equivocate and confound the fall of the stone upon the feet of the statue, the end and termination of all empire and dominion, with that which happened at the first quiet and peaceful coming of the Son of God.

I know not, my friend, what it is that drives us back! Perhaps we fear the fall and descent of the stone, the coming of the Lord in glory and majesty! But such a fear belongeth not to the servants of Christ. Rather on the contrary, should they cry day and night, with the prophets, *Oh that thou wouldst rend the heavens and come down*, Isaiah lxiv. 1. For to them he thus speaketh in the gospel: “And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.” Luke xxi. 27,28. And to them, finally, doth St. Paul refer, *For our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself*, Phil. iii. 20,21. Such then, ought to cast away all fear, and leave it to the enemies of Christ, to whom alone it belongs, seeing that it is against them that he cometh.

Perhaps we fear the consequences of the fall and descent of the stone? That is, that the stone should become so great a mountain as to cover the whole of this our earth; or to speak in the terms which are almost always used throughout the whole of Divine Scripture, we fear the kingdom or judgment of Christ upon earth! But why? Are not the creatures, yea, even the insensible creation invited *to be glad and rejoice, because he cometh to judge the earth*? Are we not assured that he shall judge the world in *equity*, and the people with his truth? (Psalms xcv. and xcvi.) Do not the Prophets give us wonderful ideas of the goodness of this King, and of the peace, quietness, justice, and holiness of all the inhabitants of the earth under the peaceful Solomon? Why then should the guiltless fear a King infinitely wise, and a Judge perfectly just?

Perhaps we fear for the affliction, the trouble and injury, which is to come on the sacred and respectable heads of the four kingdoms of the statue. Oh ill grounded fear! To tell plainly and sincerely, all the existing sovereigns, that their kingdoms, principalities, and lordships, are manifestly represented in the feet and toes of the statue, and to induce them with their own eyes to look, into the scriptures of truth. To tell them that their very kingdoms are the same which are immediately threatened with the blow of the stone. Can this be regarded as want of respect, and not rather as a service of the utmost importance? And to speak this truth, there is no need to take into your mouth the names of the sacred persons who actually reign, for these two things are not the same, the actual kingdom, and the actual heads of the kingdoms. For the heads change being mortal, while the kingdoms remain the same; therefore, as no one knows when the stone shall fall, seeing God hath not revealed it, so no one can know who shall then be the heads of the kingdoms, nor what changes may arise in the ages to come, wherefore the Lord himself exhorts us in the gospels to vigilance at all times, because we know not when he shall come.

Nor to the present sovereigns, nor to their successors, nor to their ministers, nor to their counsellors, nor to their grandees, can this notice be of the least prejudice, but on the contrary, may be of infinite profit should they believe it, and endeavour to shelter and guard themselves from the blow of the stone; from which, it is certain, that friends have nothing to fear, and that enemies alone are threatened. But whether they will believe, or whether they will despise the intelligence, what have we to say but that which is spoken by the Apostle of the coming of the Lord? “For yourselves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape,” 1 Thess. v. 2,3. The prophecies will not fail of being accomplished, because they may not be believed,

or because they are held in little esteem. Nay, for that very reason shall they with all fulness be accomplished.

PHENOMENON II.

THE FOUR BEASTS OF THE SEVENTH CHAPTER OF THE SAME BOOK OF DANIEL.

§ 1. THE mystery of these four beasts, say all the interpreters of scripture, is the same with the mystery of the statue, being merely represented by different symbols or figures. Acting on which supposition, they use no further diligence than to endeavour to accommodate all which is here spoken of the four beasts, to the four kingdoms of that statue. With this single difference, most worthy of particular observation, that they do not conclude this mystery of the statue, as they did the other, at the first coming of Messiah, (as in some way they might have done,) but extend it till the second, and consequently, till that time they continue the Roman empire, brought down from the moon or raised from the dead. This Roman empire, they go on to say, is that which is represented here under the figure of a strange and most ferocious beast, which is the fourth, crowned with ten fearful horns, which the Prophet explains by saying, that they signify other ten kings, whom, although no one has been able to point them out in the Roman empire while it lived in this world, yet it is very easy to point out in times which are still future.

These ten kings then, which are not yet come into the world, but shall infallibly come towards the end, although the Prophet places them in the fourth beast, shall not on that account, they say, be kings of the Roman empire, but are to issue out of that empire; and having issued out of that empire, shall go to reign in other parts, and then occasion all those evils and terrible slaughter which the prophecy announces. This is the same as if you should say, that the horns which come out in the head of a bull, are not in reality horns of the bull, but horns which went forth from the bull, and having gone forth of him, did grievous mischief and slew much people, but that the bull had no part therein; which would not fail to appear a very strange novelty. How they should think on the one hand, that the fourth beast of ten horns is the Roman empire, which they suppose still alive; how they should think on the other hand, that all the sovereigns of Europe, and Asia, and Africa, where antiently Rome ruled, are kings of the Roman empire; how they should think, in short, in the same way as was thought in the fourth century, when the Roman empire stood in the greatest splendour and greatness; here it is they find themselves involved in a thousand contradictions. But leaving these things which appear of so little gravity, let us give ourselves to the observation of our phenomenon.

This mystery containeth two principal points, which demand all our attention as much as the mystery of the statue. The first is the beasts themselves, or the knowledge and true understanding of that which is symbolized by them. The second, the coming in the clouds of

heaven of a certain personage, who appeared to the Prophet like *the Son of Man*, with all the consequences of his coming. Though this second point is the principal one, and that which bears immediately upon our proposition, it does not therefore cease to be important, and even necessary, that we should understand the former.

The description of the four beasts, with the explanation of this mystery, as it is found in the expositors.

§ 2. “I SAW in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea. And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another. The first was like a lion, and had eagle’s wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man’s heart was given to it. And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it, between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh. After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it. After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it, and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things, &c.” (Daniel vii.) This is the text of the first part of the prophecy, let us consider the common explanation of the interpreters.

The first beast was like to a lion with the wings of an eagle. Upon, this beast, the prophet adds, he continued looking with attention, until he saw that the wings were plucked, that it was raised from the earth and stood upon its feet like a man, and a man’s heart was given to it.

This first beast, the interpreters say to us, corresponds to the head of gold upon the statue, or to the first empire of the Chaldees: it is represented under the figure of a lion with wings, on account of its generosity, valour, and the extreme rapidity with which it made its conquests. For the rest which is said of this lion, that is, the plucking of his wings, the raising him from the earth, his standing like a man upon his feet, and his having given to him the heart of a man; they say, that all this signifies no more, than that most signal and just chastisement which the Lord inflicted on Nebuchadnezzar, the first monarch of this kingdom, taking his wings by force from him, which is the kingdom itself, transforming him into a beast, and after some time bringing back his judgment, giving him a man’s heart, and restoring him to his ancient honour and dignity.

This explanation, there can be no doubt, carries with it many specious appearances; and there may be observed in it some very visible improprieties and breaches of connexion, of which I am content to point out to you one which can not be hid. You surely know the precise time, at which the prophet had this vision, which was, as he himself informs us, *in the first year of Beishazzar, king of Babylon*. Whereby, it is evident, that the trouble of Nebuchadnezzar was long anterior to this vision. This trouble continued somewhat less than seven years, after which he returned once more to reign, (we know not how long,) until by his death, Belshazzar was seated on the throne, when the vision took place. Now, does it appear to you credible, that God should reveal to this prophet, under a symbol, or figure so obscure,

a public event which had passed some years before? An event which the same prophet had seen with his eyes, as being at Babylon, and an officer in the palace? An event, in fine, which Daniel himself had announced to the king from the mouth of the Lord a year before it came to pass? The thing is really hard to be believed.

Some authors confess that they perceive this difficulty, but reply, that the vision of this first beast, with all the circumstances with which he is described, was not given to reveal any new event, secret or future; but only to take up from the beginning the thread of the mystery of the four empires, I greatly doubt whether so violent a solution will much content you.

The second beast was like a deformed bear, which raised itself up on one side. It held in its mouth and in its teeth, three ribs [vulg. tres ordines, i.e. three rows]: and they said unto it these words, —Arise and devour much flesh. This beast, they tell us, represents the empire of the Persians, which corresponds to the breast and arms of the statue: —how and in what? What similitude can there be between the empire of Persia, (granting for the present that it was a different empire from that of the Chaldeans,) and a beast so fierce and terrible? With what propriety can it be said of the empire of the Persians, that it raised itself upon the one side? To what purpose is it said to this empire, arise and destroy much flesh? Behold this is all which is to be found in the most ingenious and learned of the interpreters. The resemblance to a bear they say, does not hinder it from squaring well with the empire of the Persians; because, as Pliny says, the bear brings forth its young so formless, that there is nothing about them of the figure of a bear, or even of an animal at all, until the mother, by force of licking and rubbing them with her tongue, succeeds in giving them form and figure. In this way, they add, did Cyrus, the founder of that empire, perceiving the Persians, barbarians, and savages, give them by his tongue, (that is, by his exhortations and instructions,) the form and figure of rational men; thereafter making them soldiers, full of valour and military courage, and by their means, conquered three different sorts of prey or food, figured by the three ribs between his teeth, [rows of his teeth] that is, Chaldea, Media, and Persia itself. Admirable account of the matter! Even though you were certain of all which is here alleged concerning Cyrus, taken mostly from Xenophon his panegyrist (whom no well informed man ever considered as an historian in this respect). Is it credible to any man of understanding, that the Holy Spirit would contemplate the bringing forth of the bear, or the supposed instructions of Cyrus, in order to figure by that beast the empire of the Persians? And would it be possible to count only three ribs, when, besides Chaldea, Media, and Persia, he subdued also Asia Minor, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, the Arabias, and a considerable part of India.

The third beast had the appearance of a leopard or tiger, with four wings like a fowl, and four heads, and power was given to him. This, they say, is the empire of the Greeks, corresponding to the belly and the thighs of the Statue: which is here figured by a leopard or tyger, for the variety of governments, as well as of arts and sciences, which flourished among the Greeks: for as, according to Aristotle and Pliny, the leopard attracts towards itself the harmless beasts by its sports, diversions, and pretended fawnings; so the Greeks by their eloquence, their industry, their public games, their poetry, their arts and sciences, which they were daily inventing, did attract to themselves the other simple and innocent nations; and in security drink their blood, that is, their wealth. Then the four wings of this leopard, and his four heads, signify one and the same thing, viz, that the empire which Alexander founded, would after his death be divided into four heads, and towards the four winds, as it happened, or to speak more correctly, as it did not happen; for the successors of Alexander were only

two, Seleucus and Ptolemy, whom the same Daniel calleth the king of the north and the king of the south. But this seemeth nothing in comparison with the thousand other improprieties, which I leave to your own reflection. Turn and read what was observed in the preceding Phenomenon, upon the empire of the Greeks.

The fourth beast, finally, as it is the most terrible of all, so doth it likewise the most obstinately resist the explanation of the ordinary system. As all the things which are spoken of it manifestly pertain to the last times, by the confession of the doctors themselves; as on the other hand, it is some short while since the Roman empire disappeared from the earth, and no one can now tell where to find it; it is a natural and forcible consequence, that the accommodation to the Roman empire should be infinitely difficult and embarrassing: but to be plain, there is no other resource, consequently, not only must that empire be still extant, in that remnant of it which they seek in Germany, but it must continue till the end of the world. In effect, they all suppose it so. Ask them now, upon what foundation? and you will be full of wonder to find that their only reply is, to refer you to this fourth beast; and they point you out the slaughter which is to arise in the last times, its punishment, its death, and burial, &c. And have they no foundation but this? No, friend; no other. And what if unfortunately this fourth beast should not signify the Roman empire, but something very different? In that case, the system would fall: but there is no reason to fear this; because, as certain ancients suspected, that the Roman empire, which in those times was in the greatest grandeur and splendour, would endure till the end of the world, believing that it was figured in this fourth beast, our doctors stick to that which they believed.

Notwithstanding this common persuasion, I now submit to you one reason which I have for not believing the fourth beast to represent the Roman empire (waving for the present the question of its actual existence or non-existence). This same reason comprehends the three former beasts, and concludes as well against their being the representatives of the three other kingdoms. I argue thus, and request all your attention. If the fourth beast prefigures the Roman empire, and the three others the three preceding empires, not only the Roman empire but also the other three, the Chaldean, Persian, and the Greek, ought to be living and co-existent in the last times. Let them either grant this proposition or deny it. If they grant it, they will have to cause these three empires, hardly now remembered in books, to come forth from their sepulchres. If they deny it, let them instantly be shown the express texts, for it is in this very prophecy, at verses 11,12: *I beheld till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed and given to the burning flame. As concerning the rest of the beasts they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time.*

According to the text the last beast shall die a violent death in the last times, his body shall perish and be cast to the fire, and the ten horns which he hath on his head shall not be able to deliver him. And after this justice is executed, the other three beasts shall be despoiled of their power. "I beheld until the beast was slain....As concerning the rest of the beasts they had their dominion taken away;" therefore the three first empires, not less than the Roman, shall at that same time be alive, co-existing, each with all its power, or if not, what power could they be deprived of?

To examine this argument a little farther, if the three first beasts signify the three empires of the Chaldeans, Persians, and Greeks, as the fourth is the Roman empire, it appears necessary that these three first empires should not only endure as long as the Romans, but that they should survive it, and overreach it certain days. Why? Because the prophecy says expressly, that the fourth beast being dead, the power merely, and not the life, was taken from the other three; and a certain season or time is marked out to them, during which they are still

to live. *As concerning the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away; but their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.* Now, I ask you, what do these words mean? How can they possibly be accommodated to the four empires in the last times? It were an undertaking truly difficult. Some of our classical authors touch this point, and make as if they would resolve the difficulty. But what is the answer they give? Hardly would I have believed it, but that I have seen it. They say, that although the prophet saw these things after the fourth beast, although he saw that the three first were then despoiled of their power, and a certain span of life marked out for them, it does not therefore follow that the things should be fulfilled in that order. From these beasts, they continue, the power was taken away, not from all at one time, but from each in his own time. From the first, that is, the empire of the Chaldeans, it was taken away in the time of Darius and Cyrus. From the second, that is the empire of the Persians, in the time of Alexander. From the third, that is the empire of the Greeks, in the time of the Romans; and from the Roman empire the power shall be taken away in the last times. That which the prophet adds, that to the three first beasts thus stripped of their power there was marked out a farther duration of life, for a season and a time, contains no other mystery save that these three first empires, like all other frail things of this world, had their time of life fixed and limited by Providence from eternity. Read the texts over again, and pass judgment.

The little store which is set, or which they affect to set by this text, some omitting it as a matter of little consequence, others giving it the unheard of explanation which you have just listened to, cannot, my friend, be without its mystery. No. This of killing the fourth beast, and leaving the three first without power, but with life, and that which immediately follows, of giving the power, and the kingdom, and the empire, to him who cometh in the clouds, and to the people of the saints of the Most High, are things which lie like a heavy burden upon all such, as think that the Lord shall come to the earth for a very short time; that at his coming he shall find the whole human race raised from the dead; that without a moment's delay he shall judge the quick and the dead, and before it be dark return again to heaven with all his saints, &c. And accordingly their best way is not to apply themselves to the understanding of these small matters; but to give them any sort of explanation, the first which may occur, and which the pious and good-natured reader may take for all that can be given.

Another explanation of these four Beasts is proposed.

HAVING seen and considered what the Doctors say to us upon this mystery, and being by no means satisfied with their explanation, it is reasonable that we should seek for some other more probable, and which may be more agreeable to the sacred text and context of the prophecy. One which appears so to me I am now about to propose. If, after having been well looked at and examined, it shall not be found worthy of the grandeur of the metaphors which the Holy Spirit makes use of in this passage, it is an easy thing to cast it away, adding it to the number of so many others, which in similar subjects have merited the same censure. I know already that it will be difficult for me to prove it by the authority of Holy Scripture, because it treats of an obscure metaphor, which scripture itself does not explain. Wherefore I do propose it as no more than a mere suspicion, most vehemently brought home to my own mind; as founded in good and congruous reasonings, whereof the examination and decision does not belong to me, but to the reader. Even on the supposition that this explanation shall not be admitted, our system will not thereby sustain any substantial loss; for whether the beasts signify what I think they do, or whether they signify something else, every thing will proceed,

and come out at last perfectly the same, with respect to the second part of this prophecy, which is that which hath immediately to do with my principal subject.

I cannot agree that the mystery of the four beasts is the same with that of the four metals of the statue; and that no particular circumstance is added sufficient to change its kind. The prophet himself, verse 15, says otherwise, when finishing the narration of the latter vision. *I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me.* If he had but seen the same mystery, what occasion for this horror and astonishment? Had he not known this mystery many years before? Had not God revealed it to him in his youth? Had he not explained it in person to Nebuchadnezzar, without exhibiting any sign of horror or astonishment? Why then should he be horrified and grievously troubled by another vision of the same mystery? Either the mystery then is not the same, or at least, in this second vision, the mystery is shown under an aspect very different, and reveals other things of greater consequence, capable of troubling and horrifying a prophet, now waxed old and accustomed to great visions.

We do not hereby affirm that the four beasts do not symbolize four kingdoms; which the prophet expressly says they do, in the middle of the vision; —*these great beasts, which are four, are four kingdoms, which shall arise out of the earth.* What we affirm is, merely that they symbolize four kingdoms, regarded in another and a very different aspect from that in which they are regarded in the statue. In this the kingdoms are looked upon solely in a material or physical aspect; —in the beasts, on the contrary, the kingdoms are regarded in a formal and religious aspect: more clearly thus, —in the mystery of the statue there is a positive withholding of the religion of the kingdoms; and mention is made only of their conquests, their disputes, the domination of certain men over others, force, violence, destructions, enmities, marriages, &c. and all this figured out by the metals of the earth, in themselves cold and inert. But, in the mystery of the beasts it is not so. —We may perceive in them certain indications, by no means equivocal, of religion, or relationship to the Divinity: for example, —the heart of a man which is given to the first beast, the blasphemies against the true God, the persecution of his saints, the oppression and humiliation of them, —finally, the extraordinary assize and tribunal of justice which is held, and in which the *Ancient of days* presides, in order to determine a religious cause which pertaineth to God only.

In short, in the mystery of the statue, the kingdoms of the earth are spoken of only in that part by which they hold of the earth and earthly things, and without any higher respect or relation than they bear to the earth itself. But in the mystery of the beasts, these kingdoms are represented with spirit and life, in that respect and relation which they bear to the Divinity. These two things, of which we speak, appear necessary and essential in any kingdom whatever; that is, the material and earthly; being the whole which pertains to political and civil government, and the formal or spiritual, which pertains to religion.

Agreeably to this, we may now unfold our idea, that these four beasts, great and different from one another, signify nothing else than four great and false religions, which were to be established in the different kingdoms of the earth represented by the statue: all four, great in extent —all four, different in themselves—but all four much alike and nearly related, in being wholly false, brutal, deformed, and ferocious; which, like so many other beasts that have issued from hell, would make their prey of the miserable race of Adam, would commit amongst them the greatest slaughter, and conduct them to their utter, irremediable, and eternal ruin.

Here, according to my opinion, it is no longer the Chaldeans, Persians, Greeks, or Romans in particular, which are treated of. This is not the aspect of the kingdoms which is

here considered. That aspect had already been considered in the mystery of the statue. But now the consideration is of all kingdom in general, all principality, all power, all government of men, comprehended together in the four celebrated kingdoms or empires which have been seen in our earth, without alluding to any thing in them besides the predominant religion.

These false and deformed religions, though in accidents and modes they have been and are innumerable, may all be easily reduced to four only, which are great and different from one another. The prophet of God represents them here with the greatest possible exactness and propriety; —the three first, under the similitude of three beasts, familiar to all, and known as the most savage, the most fierce, the most to be feared and dreaded: the fourth, under the similitude of another beast, altogether new and unheard of in former ages, most diverse from all the others, and uniting in itself the ferocity of all the rest.

EXPLANATION OF THE FIRST BEAST.

§ 4. “THE first was like a lion, and had eagle’s wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man’s heart was given to it,” Daniel vii. 4.

This first beast appears a proper and natural symbol of the first and oldest of all false religions, which is Idolatry. This false religion is here represented as a terrible lion, to which, though active in itself, are added the wings of an eagle; that it may not only be capable of running with fleetness, but of flying with swiftness: expressions quite appropriate to signify the rapidity with which idolatry did fly and spread over all the earth, as well as the horrible slaughter which it caused amongst all its inhabitants, subjecting them to its stern, tyrannical, and cruel empire. Even the small people of God, even the holy city, and the temple itself, the most venerable and most sacred place then upon the earth, were not at times inaccessible to its eagle’s wings, nor exempt from its voracity, as the divine scripture beareth testimony.

The vision stopped not here. The prophet continued contemplating this beast till another time, when he saw that the wings of it were plucked up by the roots, itself raised from the earth, and made to stand upon its feet like a man, and a man’s heart was given to it. Here you see exactly what came to pass in the world at the commencement of the blessed epoch of the vocation of the Gentiles. The first thing that happened to Idolatry by the preaching of the apostles, was forcibly to pluck its wings out of root, that it might never more thenceforward fly: —*the wings thereof were plucked*. These two wings appear to me the proper symbols of ignorance and fable, the two principles upon which Idolatry rests. Ignorance of the true God, from whom the brutal and corrupted nations had removed themselves so far away; and fable, which had substituted so many false and ridiculous gods, of whom they recounted so many prodigies. Upon these two wings the apostolical men made the first assault, by giving to the world the knowledge of the true God, with clear and palpable ideas of the Divinity. They exposed, on the other hand, the falsehood and absurdity of all those foolish and vain Gods, who till then had held men in terror, and in whom they placed their hope: by which act of theirs the beast remained incapable of flying, and began to sink into so great contempt among the nations, that, ashamed and abashed like an eagle without wings, it continued to retire to the most remote and secret corners of the earth.

The wings of the lion being plucked, all the rest, which the prophet saw, would immediately follow without much difficulty, and actually so came to pass. One very great and considerable portion of the human race, over whom this beast had the rule, was raised from

the earth, the apostles reaching forth their hands to help them: and by this succour they were placed upon their feet like reasonable men, and a man's heart given immediately to them, taking away from them the substance and even the accidents of the beastly government. Read the Acts of the Apostles, and the Ecclesiastical History of the primitive ages, and you shall see this verified with all propriety. It may not be useless to observe here a circumstance which will prove of good service in its proper place; that the life of the first beast was not taken away, but only his wings, and therewith the power of flying: by which, although he lost a great part of his dominion, he still remained alive, and liveth still, and shall doubtless abide till after his power is entirely taken away from him; which, according to this very prophecy, will not be till after the death of the fourth beast.

SECOND BEAST.

§ 5. “AND behold, another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh.”

The second beast was like to a bear; it had no wings to fly and spread all abroad over the earth like the lion; for this, creature raised himself only on one side, or had a determined place where he fixed his habitation, not to be removed from thence. He raised himself up on one side, [Vulg. *in parte stetit*, he stood in one part], or, as Pagnini reads, he stood towards one side (*ad latus unurn stetit*); but, instead of wings, he had three rows [tres ordines] in his mouth and in his teeth. These three rows seem most naturally to signify three ways of eating, or three sorts of arms, with which to take his prey and provide for his sustenance and preservation.

These circumstances, so specific, do all naturally carry our attention towards another great and deformed religion, which arose upon the earth about the time that the former was without wings. —I would say, Mahometanism. To this false religion the emblem applies with all propriety. First, its resemblance to the bear, the most shapeless of beasts, and the most horrid to look on: secondly, the circumstance, or distinctive peculiarity of placing itself towards one quarter, or towards one side of the earth: for it is certain that this beast has never had the rule over the whole earth, like the lion; but only in that part, and towards that side, where it established itself from its youth; that is, towards the south of Asia, and the northern part of Africa. In this part, or toward this side, has Mahometanism stood for more than a thousand years, without, as it were, taking a step or movement beyond; for although the Ottoman princes, who professed that religion, have made great conquests in Asia, Africa, and Europe, Mahometanism has made few or none. All the dominions of the Grand Seignior are full of Christians and Jews, who compose the larger part of his subjects; both of which classes are far from embracing that religion. But though Mahometanism has made no more progress than it made in its youth, it has lost some considerable part of its dominions: thirdly, in Mahometanism are properly verified those three rows which the prophet saw in the mouth and in the teeth of the second beast : that is to say, the three modes of eating, or the three, sorts of arms, which this brutal religion has made use of in attending to its preservation. The first row, or the first of its arms was *fiction*, —sufficient for its first beginnings, while yet it preyed upon and devoured a troop of robbers and vagabonds, at once ignorant and gross: but, as it was not only difficult, but impossible, that the *fiction* should long endure without being discovered, two other rows were necessary for the beast to gain its living; these are, in my opinion, *the sword* and *licentiousness*; —the former to make that by force to be believed,

which by persuasion appears impossible; to defend the fiction from all insults, and by the same means to reply to every difficulty: the latter, in order to make the faith of that monstrous religion attractive. The beast being thus armed with this triple row of weapons, and endued with these three ways of eating, they might well say to it, and actually have said to it these ironical words, “Arise, thou fierce beast, eat and devour much flesh.”

It appears to me more than probable, that this second beast, or this false and monstrous religion, of which we speak, will continue in that same condition, in which for so many ages it has been beheld, until, at the same time with the first and third, it shall be stripped of all its power. —*As concerning the rest of the beasts, their power was taken away.*

THIRD BEAST.

§ 6. “AFTER this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it.”

The third beast was like to a leopard or tiger, on whose skin or exterior surface there is to be seen a certain kind of beauty in the variety of its colours. Upon this beast were seen four wings as of a fowl, and likewise four heads; and power was given it. These signs and distinctions appear, as with the finger, to point out and invite our greater regard and attention to the object which is under our eye. This third beast, Sir, (who would believe it?) is Christianity. —Think not that I speak of true Christianity, of that which is the only true religion; and hath no resemblance whatever to beasts, but converteth beasts into men. I speak then exclusively of false Christianity —of Christianity merely on the surface, in appearance, in name. Observe now the propriety of the symbol.

First, this false Christianity is very various in the surface, like the leopard; and there is to be seen upon it a great diversity of colours. Secondly, false Christianity has flown towards the four winds of heaven, and extended its dominion in all the four quarters of the earth: for this is signified by the four wings of a fowl which are seen upon this beast. Thirdly, there are seen in false Christianity four heads: —the beast had four heads. What mean four heads upon the same beast? What they mean is manifestly this: —that although it appears a simple creature, it is in truth composed of four, very diverse; all united in one body, covered with one skin, under the sacred and venerable name of Christianity. Let us now consider these four beasts, or four heads of false Christianity, apart.

The first of all is that which is called *heresy*, in which should be comprehended as many particular heresies as have been seen and heard of in the world since the foundation of Christianity, which are all parts of this beast, and belong to this head. The second is *schism*, which every one knows to be widely different from heresy, and which has devoured all Greece, Asia Minor, Armenia, Georgia, Palestine, Egypt, in a word, all that was anciently called the Eastern Empire, where true Christianity flourished in the primitive ages; and, besides all this, a very vast empire towards the north of Europe and Asia. The second head of the beast consists of all this portion of Christendom which is gone astray.

The third kind of false Christianity is *hypocrisy*. I give it here this equivocal name, because it doth not seem to me convenient to give it the true one. As we are now actually speaking of false religion, figured by beasts, no one can persuade himself that the vice of hypocrisy in religious matters should not have a place. Of which I say, that the apostle hath announced it in the last times: —“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy;” or, as it is in the Syriac version, ‘Who shall practise under a

feigned garb.' 1 Tim. iv. 1. To this he returns, and speaks in another place of it thus: —“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come: for there shall be men...having the form of godliness, but denying the power thereof;” 2 Tim. iii. 1. And thus hast thou the third head.

It now remains that we should show the fourth and last head of false Christianity. Notwithstanding that it is the most ancient, and, as it were, the mother of the three former, which, one after another, it hath produced; notwithstanding that it is the most full of harm and cruelty, it is, at the same time, by reason of a fawning appearance and a smiling face, the least known, and therefore the least feared of all. Weary not yourself, my friend, in searching for this beast out of doors; he is a very sociable and domestic animal. Cast one look upon the whole Christian world, and you will see, with wonder and astonishment, that those things which the gospel reproveth and contravenes are every where received as things indifferent.

Does it not feel to you, my dear Sir, after having read the gospels, and been instructed in the doctrines of the apostles of Christ, a very hard thing to give the name of true Christianity to all that, in which hardly any thing is to be discerned except what is pleasant, viz. these three spoken of by St. John, *the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life?* 1 John ii. 16. Doth it not seem to you a very hard thing to give the name of true Christianity to all that, where hardly any thing is to be seen besides a little faith, and that faith either dead, entirely without a sign of life, or so corrupt and dormant as hardly to work any good? Seemeth it not, finally, a very hard thing to give the name of true Christianity to all that, in which, instead of the fruits of the Spirit of the Lord, hardly any thing is to be seen besides the works proper to the flesh?

If they require us to give to all this the name of true Christianity, merely for the reason that it takes place within the true church of Christ; merely because *they who do such things* believe, at the same time, the principal mysteries of Christianity; whose dry and barren faith doth nothing hinder their sensuality and vanity: I dare not myself give it this name; nor doth it appear to me that conscientiously it can have it; because I know of a certainty that the faith which true Christianity prescribeth, is that only *which worketh by love*. It is therefore a Christianity evidently false, inasmuch as it is foreign and contrary to the institution of the Son of God. It is true that now it stands mingled with truth, and in so great a proportion mingled, that it troubles it, oppresses it, and hinders it from growing; not otherwise than do the tares in the midst of the grain; and we know the end and destiny of both.

It appears very difficult to explain by one word only, by one single name, this fourth head of false Christianity. Sure thou knowest how many things are comprehended in the lusts of the flesh, when it is not denied and crucified, as true Christians are required to do! Surely thou knowest how many things are comprehended in the lust of the eyes, whereby enter in the vain glory of the world, all its pomps and ornaments, which we Christians renounce at baptism! Sure thou knowest how many things are comprehended in the pride of life, which makes men true sons of the devil, whose principal character is pride! No other name can I therefore find more appropriate, or more suitable to this fourth head of false Christianity than that which we have just declared, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, which may be with all propriety comprehended under the name of *libertinism*.

The third beast, with her four heads, of which we have just finished the account, will, it appears certain, continue to live, every day doing more injury, until the Lord shall come to remedy it all; seeing it is expressly said by the Evangelist, that the servants having offered to root out the tares which grew with the wheat, he answered, *Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them; let both grow together to the harvest*. Now the

Lord likewise explaineth what is to be understood by the tares, *but the tares are the children of the wicked one*, as also by the good seed, *they are the children of the kingdom*.

FOURTH BEAST, DREADFUL AND TERRIBLE.

§ 7. “AFTER this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly: and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns.” &c.

I see my friend under a great curiosity to know what this beast is. If the three first beasts symbolize three false religions, what false religion can still remain to be figured by a similitude so terrible? To this question I cannot reply particularly, because I have no clear and definite ideas of what this beast shall be, in those times for which it is announced; but upon that which it is at present, I can offer two or three words. This terrible beast appears to be the legitimate daughter of the two last heads which went to form the leopard, and to these one would say that it owes its being; but I discover in it already a nature so impious, so fierce, so inhuman (although, in another respect, full of humanity), that although still in its first infancy, it already neither respects nor acknowledges those who begat it. Elevated by the contemplation of self, and regarding itself superior to all things, it already thinks that it is unique in its kind, and that it holdeth obligation of no one, that every one is beholden to it or to the foundation of its reason, and is indebted to it for every thing. By this character so unexampled, which it discovers even from the cradle, it is easy to infer what it will become when it arrives at mature age. It is at present still like a whelp within its den; and if it sometimes looks out at the door, and sallies forth, it ventureth not far, considering its tender age, its weak arms, and the multitude of enemies which may assail it. At present it is still without teeth; for though it is to have them of iron, great and very hard, they are but beginning to appear, and are not in a condition to assault every thing without discretion. Again the ten horns which are to grow upon his head, and with which he shall make the whole world to tremble, he yet possesseth not, so as to exercise them freely and to his satisfaction.

Nevertheless, even in this state of infancy, he already draws to himself the attention of people of every kind. Already are they seen to quit their camp, and hasten to pay him the tribute of their obedience, and to offer him their services. And principally you will observe that from all those four heads, which compose the leopard, deserters pass every day by hundreds, whereby the whelp grows apace, and becomes the sooner strengthened for what he meditates. If already, then, without issuing from his den, without his great teeth, without his hard and full grown horns, he accomplisheth so much mischief; what think you he will do, when he shall openly show himself, full of courage, vigour, and hardihood, well armed with his great teeth of iron, and with his ten terrible horns, which he shall use at his pleasure? And what shall he not do when the eleventh horn is sprung up, when that horn takes root, grows, and becomes strong!

Truly, from what we now observe, every thing which is spoken of this same beast (although then re-united with others), from the thirteenth chapter of the Apocalypse to the nineteenth becomes not only credible, but even visible; as well as every thing which is announced to the same purpose in the Prophets, in the Psalms, in the Epistles of Peter and Paul, and in the Gospel itself. And that also becomes not only credible, but even visible, which is spoken to the Prophet in the midst of his vision, “he shall devour the whole earth,

and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces.” Read what follows, from verse 24, and you shall find only horrors and destructions.

Perhaps you will ask me, And what is the proper name of this fourth beast, or of this monstrous religion? It is years since, in all quarters, public papers were read, whereby the whole human race were invited to this gentle, humane, sweet, and convenient religion of nature. Should you incline to give to this natural religion the name of Deism or Antichristianism, it seems to me that you might do it without any scruple. Nevertheless, it calls itself religion; first, because it does not deny the existence of a God, though a God indifferent to all which passes upon the earth; a God without providence, without justice, and without holiness; a God, in short, with all the attributes necessary for the convenience of this new religion. Secondly, it calls itself religion, because it does not impede, but rather recommends, a certain internal worship to be offered unto God, who, all goodness, is content with this alone, and does not desire to inconvenience his worshippers. They even say, that their God has given them no other law nor rule of faith but their own reason; and yet, if we may believe our eyes, it does appear that they hold a peculiar doctrine and a fundamental law, to which all must assent and yield actual obedience: which doctrine and law consist of every thing included under the word Antichristianism, taken in its utmost extent. That is to say, there is professed in this religion not only the total abandonment, but contempt, mockery, hatred, and open warfare, both against the false religions whereof we have spoken, and also against the true religion, real Christianity; and every thing in it, which is venerable, holy, and divine, *it devoured*, saith the Prophet, *and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with its feet*.

False Christianity with its four horns gives little pain to this fierce creature, and Mahometanism, and idolatry, still less. These it very well knows, that its teeth of iron, though still small, will suffice to break in pieces and convert to its own substance. But true Christianity is of such adamant hardness, that neither brass, nor marble, nor the diamond, may be compared with it; and teeth of iron are of no effect to subdue its hardness; so that there is no other weapon which can have any effect upon it, as there is none more easy to manage, than the feet. Of these, therefore, already has the young beast begun to make use in his den; he has begun to trample down with great labor, true Christianity, to burlesque it, to ridicule it, without sparing the thrice holy and adorable person of Jesus Christ. So we have seen it in our own age; and hence we may legitimately infer what this beast will be, when he shall have come to his full growth. Jesus Christ himself, speaking of this epoch, says, that there shall be need to shorten it, and that in fact it shall be shortened, out of love to the elect. “And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake, those days shall be shortened,” Matt. xxiv. 22. Such, my dear Sir, is what I understand with respect to this mystery of the four beasts, of which I may say with truth, that I have studied it for many years with all the care and attention of which I am capable. If the interpretation which I have proposed be in reality not the true one, it may at least serve as an attempt to think more in conformity with the prophecy, with history, and with other passages of scripture, which we are about to observe upon. You are not to suppose, however, that I have concluded my observations upon these four beasts, or that I have nothing further to say upon this topic. You will see them come before us anew, in the following phenomenon, when being combined with the beast in the Apocalypse, they shall come out more distinctly to view. This must at least appear evident, that the mystery is not the same with that of the statue, both for the reasons which we have pointed out, as also and much more for reasons which are to follow.

DEATH OF THE FOURTH BEAST AND THE CONSEQUENCES THEREOF.

§ 8. It only now remains that we should shortly take an observation of the more clear part of this vision, that which bears immediately on our great subject, to wit, the end of the beasts, especially the fourth, with all that happens thereupon. That which the Prophet saw of the fourth beast, in the times of his highest ascendancy, in the times when he was openly seen armed with all his weapons, in the times when he furiously persecuted the saints, or true Christianity, and *prevailed against them*, &c. what he saw was, that the seats or thrones were placed as for judges, who proceeded instantly to take knowledge of the cause, and to bring the seasonable remedy to such grievous evils. "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit," &c. (This same assize or tribunal, with the same circumstance, and with others still more particular, you will find set for the same ends in the fourth chapter of the Apocalypse, as we shall observe in its place.) Then God himself being seated, and with him other assessors of judgment, and the whole cause being set forth and declared, final sentence is immediately given, of which the execution is likewise shown to the Prophet. The sentence was this, that the fourth beast, and every thing connected with him, should die a violent death; that his body should be wholly consumed and delivered up to the flames: *given to the burning flames*; that from the rest of the beasts should be taken away only the power which till then they had held, but not the life. A certain space being granted unto them *for a season and a time*.

This irrevocable sentence being passed, (and before its execution, as appears from other passages of scripture which we shall observe by and by) the Prophet declareth that he saw coming in the clouds of heaven a wonderful person who appeared to be the Son of Man; who, entering into that venerable assembly, advanced even to the throne of God, before whose presence he was presented; whereupon he received from the hand of God himself, power, honor, and a kingdom, that in virtue of this investiture, all people, and tribes, and languages should serve him as their only and lawful sovereign. "I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: "but further on, in verse twenty-sixth, when explaining the evils which the fourth beast shall cause in the world, especially by means of his last horn, there is revealed unto the Prophet the end for which this assize so majestic and solemn shall be held. "But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to 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, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him."

§ 9. Now, my friend, after having read, and attentively considered this text, and the preceding, and the whole context, tell me sincerely what you think of that which is announced here with so much clearness. Is all this at some time to be verified, or not? Are we to believe and hope it all as here written, or shall we blot and tear the Bible in pieces, not only as a useless, but as a dangerous thing, which may confirm the errors of the Millenarians? Are we to believe, that in those times which are here spoken of, and by the confession of all the doctors, they are the times of Antichrist, God will hold a kind of solemn assize for stripping men of all the power which they have received at his hand? "But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end." And as the

counsels of God and his decrees cannot remain without effect, it appears that we should likewise believe, that in these same times, the power shall be entirely taken from those who held it; to which event manifestly alludeth that evacuation of all principality, power, and rule, whereof the Apostle speaks, 1 Cor. xv.

Are we to believe likewise, that the power, being taken out of the hands of men, shall by the same counsel of the Highest be placed in the hands of the Son of Man, or of the man-God, Jesus Christ? And that not by right, as he now holdeth it, but in actual occupation and exercise? *There was given unto him, dominion, and glory, and a kingdom*: Are we to believe that all the power thus taken from men, over the whole earth, shall then be given under Jesus Christ, the supreme king, to many other consociates of his kingdom, even to the people of the saints of the most High? “And the kingdom, and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High.” Which event is clearly alluded to in that famous text of the Apocalypse, when speaking of the martyrs, and those who worshipped not the beast, he says, “and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years”.

Are we to believe, likewise, that possession being taken of the greatness of the kingdom which is under the whole heaven, for Christ and for his saints, all people, tribes, and languages, shall thenceforward serve him? “that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him.” Are we to believe, in short, that after the coming of the Son of Man, which, with all Christians, we believe and expect; after the punishment and death of the fourth beast, or of Antichrist; after the overthrow and ruin of the whole mystery of iniquity, there are still to remain on this earth, peoples, and tribes, and languages, to serve and obey the supreme King and his saints? Yea, and kings also placed without doubt by his hand in different parts of the earth, and entirely subject to his laws? And all dominions [vulg; *reges*, kings] shall serve and obey him.

All this is clearly and expressly written in this prophecy, and in a thousand other places of Sacred Scripture, which we are about to observe; and if all this be certain, it appears necessary, in good faith, to confess and to admit, that great space of time which our system interposeth, between the coming of the Lord and the universal judgment. It appears necessary, to consider with more attention, the nineteenth and twentieth chapters of the Apocalypse, where this matter is revealed with still greater clearness. It appears necessary to reflect a little more upon the great mystery of the stone, which is to destroy and annihilate the whole statue, and thereafter to cover the whole earth. It appears necessary, in fine, to distinguish well between the judgment of the quick and of the dead, and to assign to each its proper place: for if this distinction be not preserved, it cannot be known nor understood how, or in what, all peoples, and tribes, and languages, can serve Jesus Christ, after he is come from heaven to earth; how, or in what, all kings of the earth can obey and serve him. Nor can it be known nor understood, for what prolongation of life, (not certainly of brutal but of rational life) should be permitted to the three first beasts, after taking from them that power, which till then had been given and permitted to them. On the contrary, if the due distinction be preserved between the one judgment and the other, i.e. of the quick and of the dead, all is at once intelligible without further trouble than to take the key and open the door.

Thus will the whole seventy-second Psalm, and all the things which are there spoken of Messiah, in their due order be cleared up, without leaving the shadow of a doubt. “He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; (or as the Chaldee paraphrase reads, *the nobles shall be humbled*,) and his enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles

shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him.” By this Psalm, and other similar passages which are encountered at every step in the prophets, the Jews have defended their unbelief, and absolutely denied the coming of Messiah; because, till this hour, the things therein announced, have not been verified in him. And what answer to this do christians give? Only words uttered in a decisive tone, to the effect that this Psalm, and the other passages of the prophets, are to be understood only in a spiritual sense; and in that sense are already accomplished in the kings and nations which have believed, and remain to be accomplished when the rest of the earth shall believe. And if these passages of scripture, regarded along with all the context, speak plainly of a time subsequent to the coming of the same Messiah in glory and majesty, as we have just seen it to be with the text of Daniel, and shall yet see in very many others; then what kind of an answer have they rendered to the Jews?

Oh! how well would it have been for those men, how well henceforth may it be, if so much of what they believe and hope for were conceded, or not flatly denied, in order that they on their part, might likewise acknowledge that which christians believe—that which is so necessary and essential to their salvation and recovery! If all were conceded, or not so flatly denied, which pertains to the second coming of Christ in majesty and glory, which they view as the only one, in order that they, on their part, being undeceived, might embrace that which pertaineth to the first! All this, it seems to me, would be harmonized and made smooth, by simply distinguishing the judgment of the quick, from the judgment of the dead.

Conclusion.

To all the reflections which have been made upon the second part of the prophecy, I am not ignorant of the only reply which can be given. That although every thing declared by the prophet be certain and indubitable, yet ought it not, neither can it be understood as it is written, but in another and a different sense, according to the common interpretation of the doctors. Which is the same as to say, that it neither ought, nor can be understood as the Spirit of God commanded it to be written, but as it seemed to this, or to that particular man, whom others have followed, embracing the same system, as if there were no other, or as if it were stamped with the signet of truth. What can we say to such a decisive reply, but deplore the captivity in which we are held, without being allowed to make a step in advance, though invited to do so, by the times, and by all the circumstances of the times. And shall we yield our understandings to the shackles of a system, manifestly discordant with the facts? And shall we see the truth within two paces of us, and not be able to embrace it, by reason of the tyrannous bonds of mere human regards? “Whether it be right in the sight of God,” says St. Peter to the chief priests, “to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye” Acts iv. 19.

PHENOMENON III.

ANTICHRIST.

It appears, not only to be convenient, but even necessary, that we should form to ourselves the most clear idea of Antichrist, which is possible; otherwise we may with good reason fear, that he may enter into the world, that we may see him with our eyes, hear his voice, and receive his law and his doctrine, and admire his works and miracles, without recognizing him as Antichrist, or having the least suspicion thereof. St. Paul speaking of those times, tells us that they shall be perilous, *And this know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.* 2 Tim. iii. 1. And in another place he threatens those who would not receive the love of the truth, with the terrible chastisement which God would send unto them, in permitting the operation of error, in order that they might believe a lie; “because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved, and for this cause God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie.” 2 Thes. ii. 10, 11. And Jesus Christ himself assureth us that the danger will be so great, and the seduction so general, that it shall be necessary to shorten those days, that all flesh perish not, that at least some few of the elect may be saved; “and unless those days should be shortened, all flesh should perish.”

Now, my friend, does it appear to you easy that the whole world should fall into this snare, and give in to a universal seduction, if they had beforehand clear ideas and sure notices of Antichrist? Does it appear to you credible, that, seeing him and knowing him, the whole world should yield themselves to him, the whole world should suffer themselves to be deceived? I, for my part, protest that I do not understand, nor can conceive it. The perdition and ruin of christians shall infallibly come to pass in the days of Antichrist; so it is clearly announced in the Holy Scriptures and confirmed in a thousand ways by the Son of God himself: the christian world shall be already ripe for that terrible chastisement, by the malice and iniquity with which it shall be full in the sight of God. But the immediate cause of that perdition, can, it appears to me, be nothing else than the not knowing this Antichrist. Wherefore, it will be most convenient to labour in time, to acquire sure knowledge respecting him, whereby we shall be able most certainly to know him, to reveal him, and to make him known to many others: *saving them and pulling them out of the fire.* Jude 23.

The notions which till these times have been held concerning Antichrist.

ALTHOUGH this point may appear somewhat foreign to my main subject, which is the coming of the Lord, I adverted, at the beginning, that my intention was to handle all the chief topics which bear to it an immediate relation. Of which Antichrist is one; for as St. Paul says, the Lord will not come, “unless there should come a falling away first, and the man of sin should be revealed.”

The notices which till now we hold of Antichrist, are to be found scattered up and down in the expositors of scripture. Some learned men have written on purpose upon the subject, amongst whom are Thomas Malvenda, Leonardo Lesio, and Augustin Calmet. In these three doctors is found collected, whatever has been thought upon Antichrist; nor does it appear that there remains any other information to be added. And yet we dare say, that from

the whole there results a tissue of ideas, so strange, so incoherent, and so confused, that it appears impossible to find any thing solid, on which the foot may rest.

This Antichrist is universally represented as a king, or most potent monarch, and, at the same time, a notable seducer; who, as well by arms as by feigned and apparent prodigies, shall subject to his dominion all the peoples and nations of the world; exacting of them even the adoration of worship to himself as God. It is commonly said, that he will take his origin from the Jews, and from the tribe of Dan. Many doctors, cited by Malvenda and Calmet, are of opinion that he shall have no father, but a mother only, the most wicked of all women; even as Christ, in as far as he was a man, had only a mother, the purest and holiest of all creatures; and as the mother of Christ conceived him by the operation of the Holy Ghost, so the mother of Antichrist shall conceive him by the operation of Satan himself. Some add, that Satan shall unite himself in such a way to him, that Antichrist shall not be purely man, but a man-devil: this opinion, however, is contrary to all sound theology, and consequently rejected by the catholic doctors. Others conceive that he will be purely man, with a father and mother, but conceived in adultery, and incest, and sacrilege; to which they say that St. Paul alludes, when he calls him *the man of sin*.

Although he shall be endowed with free will, like other men, he shall, according to some, have no guardian angel, but Satan himself; of whom Antichrist shall learn all kinds of divinations and magic, by which he shall perform prodigies in the world. Others allow him a guardian angel, who will abandon him so soon as he begins to claim divine honours.

The place of his birth, and the beginning of his greatness, will, they say, be Babylon, in whose ruins, and in whose neighbourhood, shall be settled, if not all the tribe, at least some family of Dan, from whom this singular plant shall spring. There, in Babylon, Antichrist, being arrayed at man's estate, shall feign himself the Messiah, and begin to perform so many and such stupendous works, that the fame thereof being soon spread abroad, the Jews shall fly from all parts of the world, and from all the tribes, to join themselves to him, and offer him their services. Seeing himself acknowledged as Messiah, and adored by all the tribes of Israel, leaving Babylon, his native country, he will set out with that formidable army to the conquest of Palestine; which shall instantly surrender, with little or no resistance. The twelve tribes shall return, and establish themselves in the land of their fathers, and in a short time shall build for their Messiah the city of Jerusalem; which shall be the capital, or court, of his universal empire. After Antichrist shall have conquered Jerusalem, he shall, with great ease, conquer the rest of the earth, if, indeed, he have not conquered it before going to Jerusalem, which others think, and with equal foundation.

The ambition of this miserable and vilest Jew, shall not rest satisfied, by becoming universal king of the whole earth, with all peoples, tribes, and languages, subject to his sway, but he shall immediately enter into the impious and sacrilegious thought of making himself the God, and the only God of all the earth. With this view, he shall prohibit, by the severest penalties, not only the worship of false deities, but chiefly the worship of the true God of his fathers, and above all, the exercise of the Christian religion. Whereupon shall arise, the most terrible, the most cruel, and the most perilous persecution against the church of Jesus Christ; and it shall last for three years and a half. In this time shall Enoch and Elias be permitted to be seen by the world, being reserved by the Divine providence to resist Antichrist, and, in some way, to restrain that torrent of iniquity. These two prophets shall cause him such great opposition, and bring him into such conflicts, that they shall draw upon themselves all the indignation and fury of this monarch, who shall persecute them with all his power, and also with great industry, till, at the end of forty and two months, he shall get them into his hands,

and put them to a most cruel death, in the very city of Jerusalem, as is written in the eleventh chapter of the Apocalypse. In a few days the death of Antichrist will follow, which some relate in one way, and others in another, as if it were a past event, written by various historians. Upon his death the church, and the whole world, shall begin to breathe again, every thing reverting to a perfect calm, and a universal joy. The Bishops, who had concealed themselves in the mountains, shall return and resume their sees, accompanied by their clergy and some other Christian families, who had followed them in their voluntary exile. At this time shall come to pass the conversion of the Jews, according to the universal opinion of the interpreters, who, upon their system, do not find, neither is it possible to find, any where else to place this event, so clearly announced in all the scripture; and then they say, that the gospel shall be preached over the whole earth, and the Lord shall come to judgment at the time determined.

This is a compendium of the whole history of the future Antichrist, as we find it in the best historians; and to this may all the information which we possess concerning this great personage be reduced. Several things remain which are not so interesting, as his name, his character, his physiognomy, his particular miracles, and the precise time in which he is to appear in the world, which many have dared to define. Time has already falsified the most of those prognostics, amongst which one still remains to be falsified, to wit, that of Juan Pico Mirandulano, who promises Antichrist against the year 1994. In all these notices, and others, which, for brevity, I omit, and which may be seen in Malvenda and Calmet, I find nothing better founded than that which the latter says towards the end of his dissertation. “Concerning which most wretched man, we have seen that the certainties are scarcely even a few, that the uncertain and problematical things are almost innumerable; wherefore his advent, his stated time, country, origin, parentage, infancy, name, extent of empire, kind of death, &c. are all doubtful.”³⁸

The foundation of these notions is examined.

The tedious examination of all the notices which we have just gathered together, would be well nigh labour lost. It is certainly known, and even confessed, by the parties interested, that the most part, or almost all of them have no other foundation, than the lively imagination of the men who meditated that it would be so; and, after their meditation, had also the boldness to write it out, certain and secure that, in those ages in which every thing passed, they had no reason to apprehend contradiction. Nevertheless, in this multitude of notices, there are some few things which come with an air and appearance of truth, whether from the authority of certain fathers who adopted or inclined to them, or by the almost universal consent of the doctors, or even by their resting on certain passages of scripture. Father Calmet would seem to allude to these few, when he says, *Certainties scarcely a few*; a mode of speaking by no means equivocal, but demonstrative of the author’s mind.

These few things, then, reduce themselves to four chief heads, whence all the rest may have arisen; 1st. The origin of Antichrist; 2nd. His country and the beginnings of his greatness; 3rd. His court in Jerusalem, as the proper king of the Jews, believed on, and received, as the true Messiah; 4th. His universal monarchy over all the earth. In these four articles, all the doctors, who have treated of Antichrist, seem to be agreed; and upon this supposition, as if it

³⁸ De quo perditissimo viro certa vix pauca: incerta et problematica fere innurera vidimus: quare eius adventus, statutum tempus, regio, origo, parentes, infantia, nomen, imperii spatium, mortis genus &c. dubia omnia.

were indubitable, the interpreters of scripture are wont to speak. We do not deny, that the authority of so many learned men is of great weight; and if it concerned things past, instead of things future, it would be a folly not to give credit to so many witnesses worthy of all estimation. But as things future belong exclusively to the knowledge of God, and not of men, no one can with reason complain, that, in an affair of such great importance, we should suspend our assent, until we have assured ourselves, as we can, of the truth; until we have seen if the intimations, of which we speak, have been given by him who only can know them; if they be conformable to what we find in the sacred books.

ARTICLE I.

The Origin of Antichrist.

IT ought to be set down as a truth, that no man can know the origin of Antichrist, but by express revelation of God; forasmuch as no one would have known that Antichrist was to be, if God had not deigned to reveal it. The very authors who have made Antichrist to come of the Jews and the tribe of Dan, have tacitly consented to the truth of this supposition. For, not satisfied with mere extrinsic authority, which, in such questions, proves nothing, they take their foundation in divine revelation, citing three passages of scripture, the only ones which they could cite.

The first is in the forty-ninth chapter of Genesis, where Jacob, in blessing his children upon coming to Dan, hath these words: —“Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel. Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward. I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord.” From this prophecy of Jacob it would be difficult to draw any inference; and therefore they appeal to the authority of the holy fathers, who unanimously understood this prophecy of Antichrist, and to Antichrist applied it. And if in this point there should not be such an unanimous consent of the holy fathers, if only some few should be found to touch upon it at all, and if of those few, some should understand the prophecy differently, if these very persons who apply it to Antichrist should not speak dogmatically, but in the way of mere conjecture, —in this case might it not be permitted to deny that conclusion? Then, my dear friend, it is exactly so. The fathers who have touched upon this point have two different conjectures, without pledging themselves much for the one or for the other. Some suspect that Antichrist is spoken of: others, following the letter more closely, think that it is Sampson. St. Jerome is one of the latter class, and he has been followed by very many interpreters, —among whom are Lira, El Tostado, Pereira, Delrio, &c.

Now if this text be looked into with some degree of attention, though it be found very obscure, it will with much less difficulty bear to be accommodated to Sampson than to Antichrist; because we know for certain from the scripture itself, that Sampson was of the tribe of Dan, and that he judged his people, as the prophecy declares, —*he shall judge his people*: and we know, in short, other particular events of Sampson’s life, which have a great resemblance to that which is mentioned in the prophecy. It being so, what necessity is there to refer for the accomplishment of the prophecy to a future thing, highly uncertain.

The second passage of scripture which is alleged in proof of Antichrist's origin from the tribe of Dan, is the eighth chapter of Jeremiah, where we read these words at verse 16: "The snorting of his horses was heard from Dan: the whole land trembled at the sound of the neighing of his strong ones; for they are come, and have devoured the land, and all that is in it; the city, and those that dwell therein." I invite any one to read this chapter with moderate attention, and would then ask him what mystery is here spoken of? —and he would answer me, without an instant's delay or doubt, that it manifestly speaketh of Nebuchadnezzar's coming against Jerusalem; and says, that from Dan is heard the neighing of the horses, and the voice and formidable din of arms and soldiers, *for the city of Dan, which was originally named Lais*, was conquered by six hundred men of the tribe of Dan, who gave to it the name of their father, and dwelt there till the day of their captivity; Judges xviii. 29. Now this city of Dan was the furthest towards the north, by which the Chaldean army must needs enter the land: and this is all the mystery of that clear and palpable prophecy. The expositors themselves understood it so; although they do not hesitate to add, (wherefore I know not,) that in the allegorical sense it does or may extend an application to Antichrist; whereby we perceive, that the allegorical sense is a sense at discretion; —so that with any text of scripture you may prove whatever you please, by simply saying, —that this text, taken in the allegorical sense, so declareth it.

Now that we are upon this point, we cannot lose the occasion of saying a word more upon it. It is of very great importance for our guidance, well to understand and keep in mind what is meant by the allegorical sense. As *allegory* and *figure* are two words of two languages, of one and the same signification; so allegorical sense is nothing different from figurative sense. Wherefore whoever says, This is to be understood allegorically; —means to say, This is a figure, or a shadow of that: —to which mode, among other conditions, this one is absolutely necessary and indispensable; to wit, that the thing figured be actually, have been, or shall be, some real, true, and existing thing; and that real existence should be clear on other grounds, and be known for certain. Without this, as it cannot be ascertained that the thing itself hath a being; much less can it be ascertained that it is shadowed forth by another thing. With what reason, for example, could it be said, showing me a picture, This is the image, or figure, of Pope Pius XX. You must first prove, any one would answer, that there is to exist in the times to come a pope of that name; and, after this is proved, we shall proceed to try the conformity of the person figured with the figure. In this way, it appears to me, they ought to proceed with respect to Antichrist. It ought to be proved, in the first place, with such proof as a future event requires, that Antichrist is to be born of the tribe of Dan: which being proved, they may then show the figures of him, and make out their conformity with the original. But to produce, as the only proof of a future event, that this or that prefigures it, appears to expose both the figure and the thing figured to an equal risk. By this single reflection it would not be very difficult to make several other figures and the things figured return to that nonentity out of which they proceeded.

The third passage of scripture which is alleged for Antichrist's coming of the tribe of Dan, is the seventh chapter of the Apocalypse; where, in numbering all the tribes of Israel, and drawing out of each twelve thousand chosen or sealed men, not one is taken from the tribe of Dan, which is not so much as named. This, they say, can arise from no other motive, but that Antichrist is to come out of this tribe. To which I reply, that if in this omission of Dan there be any particular mystery, no one can know what it is; as no one can know why, while the tribe of Manasseh is named, the tribe of Ephraim, his brother, is not, but the tribe of

his father, Joseph, in his stead; it being certain, that in the tribe of Joseph are comprehended his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh.

I say, if there be in this any particular mystery, —because perhaps there is nothing more in it than an error or substitution of some of the ancient copiests, who, instead of Dan, have written Manasseh. This suspicion is not entirely without foundation, if the whole context be considered. —First, St. John, before numbering the tribes in order, says, that those sealed with the seal of the living God, were of every tribe of the sons of Jacob, *of all the tribes of the children of Israel*: and thereupon immediately adds, that of each one of the said tribes giving to each its proper name, there were sealed twelve thousand: wherefore, if the tribe of Dan be excluded, can it be true that the sealed ones were of all the tribes of the children of Israel? Secondly, Manasseh is found numbered in the sixth place among the sons of Bilhah, immediately after Napthali, precisely where Dan should have come; for Napthali and Dan were sons of Bilhah, Rachael's servant. Thirdly, Manasseh was not the son, but the grandson of Jacob; and the text says, that the sealed ones were of all the tribes of the sons: on which account the tribe of Joseph, who was a son, is named, and not that of Ephraim, who was only a grandson. You will say, that Joseph being named, Ephraim should be understood as likewise named; because the tribe of Ephraim and of Joseph, his father, were the same: but as well might we add, that Joseph being named, Manasseh his other son might be understood; for as much as we read in the forty-seventh chapter of Ezekiel, that Joseph had a double portion, —which alludes certainly to the donation which his father had given him of one portion beyond what he ought to have had amongst his brethren. —*Moreover I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren.* Gen. xlviii. 22. According to this it would appear clear that, Joseph being named, it was not necessary to name Ephraim, as, in fact, he is not named; as little was it necessary to name Manasseh: consequently, in this passage of the Apocalypse, according to our notion, it would appear that there is one thing less than enough, and another thing more; —Manasseh more, Who was not Jacob's son, but grandson; and Dan less, who was properly his son, like all the rest who are named. In the forty-eighth chapter of Ezekiel, where all the twelve tribes are named, with the same view, the tribe of Dan is named first.

If you are not inclined to give way to this observation, we answer, that the silence of the Apocalypse in respect to the tribe of Dan will prove nothing in the question: for though it were certainly known that Antichrist were to come of this tribe, it should not thence be inferred that he would on this account fail to be named. Surely all the children of that tribe would have reason to complain of being rejected, merely because one of their descendants was to prove so wicked: even though Dan himself; the father of the tribe, had been a man as perverse as they suppose Antichrist is to be, it is not therefore without rashness to be believed, that God would have visited a chastisement so terrible upon all his progeny; how much less shall we presume upon the same chastisement for the iniquity of one of his sons.

Perhaps you will say that the rejection of this whole tribe, is not precisely owing to their being about to produce Antichrist, but to their all declaring for him, and entering into his projects of iniquity: but besides that this is said without foundation, we observe that on the same account, all the rest of the tribes should be rejected, because as the same doctors commonly assure us, they shall all not less than Dan declare for Antichrist, and shall all accompany and serve him against the true Messiah. If this be as they suppose, there remains no special fault in the tribe of Dan for which it should be excluded and rejected, than that of having produced Antichrist. Hitherto we have spoken under the supposition that Antichrist's origin from the tribe of Dan, was a thing well confirmed by the other party; but what if it should rest upon no other foundations than what we have just seen? If it have other and

better, it is clear that they would not fail to produce them. Whether these be sufficient or no, it will be easy for any one to decide. Father Calmet, speaking of this very matter, at last confesses the truth ingenuously, *from these various conjectures concerning the origin and rise of Antichrist, we confess that nothing certain can be derived.*³⁹ and nevertheless, in our most classical interpreters, you shall find these Danites frequently spoken of as the brethren of Antichrist, as if the notion were sure and indubitable.

ARTICLE II.

The country, and first beginning of Antichrist.

WE have just seen the foundation which they have endeavoured to find in Holy Scripture for making Antichrist a Jew of the tribe of Dan: now for his being born in Babylon, and setting up his kingdom there, in the midst of prodigies and miracles, what foundation have they found? I seek for them every where and find none. The learned Father Calmet in his dissertation takes up, and sets himself to study this very embarrassed question, and confesses that in reality he finds not any foundation in Revelation; and he adds that, were it not for authority extrinsic, or the common opinion of so many writers, modern as well as ancient, the notice would not deserve any attention. But as extrinsic authority should rest upon some real, solid, and firm foundation, we are still left in the same embarrassment, as if we should reply by repeating the question. Extrinsic authority, though it be a common opinion, especially when any thing future is treated of; cannot in any way rest upon itself: this is the privilege of God alone. The inquiry then is, what is the foundation of this common statement, in a subject so foreign to man's knowledge as the future. The same author has undertaken this, and, though with some reluctancy, he points to the true foundation, telling us, that they who have written since St. Jerome, took the notion from him. "Wherefore those who have written since Jerome, subscribe to the same opinion."⁴⁰

If then, we ascend from author to author up to St. Jerome, and reverently ask the holy doctor, whence he derived a notion so singular, he will immediately reply to us with all sincerity and truth, that he has never asserted that the notion was certain, nor given it as his opinion, but as the opinion of other doctors of his time who thought so. "Our interpreters refer all these things to Antichrist, who is to be born of the Jewish people, and to come out of Babylon;"⁴¹ whence it follows, that there is no other foundation but this, that in the beginning of the fifth century St. Jerome wrote that it was so thought. But if at that time it was thus thought, it is certain that in all times anterior thereto, no such thing was thought. More than a hundred years before, in the time of Dioclesian, Dioclesian himself was thought to be the Antichrist. The same was thought in the time of Marcus Aurelius of Trajan, of Domitian, and above all, of Nero. For even after his death the Christians thought that he was not dead, but that he was concealed, afterwards to come forth and prove the Antichrist, but when they saw that he delayed long, they changed their mind, and thought that he would soon rise again in order to become the Antichrist. All these, and other such things, were thought before the

³⁹ Ex variis hisce de origine et ortu Antichristi conjecturis, certi nihil hauriri posse fatemur.

⁴⁰ Quare qui post Hieronymum scripsere eidem opinioni subscribunt.

⁴¹ Nostri interpretantur hæc omnia de Antichristo, qui nasciturus est de populo Judæorum, et de Babylone venturus.—(Sup. Dan. c.xi.)

fourth age, and is clear from ecclesiastical history, yet no one will say that they were not dotings. Wherefore, that it is thus thought in one age, and differently thought in another, proves really nothing, unless some other foundation be alleged, and leaves us in perfect liberty to think differently from both.

On which principle, what I think is, that Babylon shall not only not be the birth place of Antichrist, but that it cannot; and among other things, I rest my judgment on the prophecy of Jeremiah, which is directed purposely against Babylon. "Therefore the wild beasts of the desert with the wild beasts of the islands shall dwell there, and the owls shall dwell therein; and it shall be no more inhabited for ever, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation. As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighbour cities thereof, saith the Lord, so shall no man abide there, neither shall any son of man dwell therein." Jer. 1. 39,40.

ARTICLE III.

The Antichrist shall be believed in, and received by the Jews, as their true Messiah; by which being incited, he shall remove his court from Babylon to Jerusalem.

WHAT foundation may there be for this notion, believed and received as true among the interpreters of scripture? No other shall you find but a supposition, upon which, as if it were indubitable, they truly proceed with great security. And what is this supposition? The same which we have examined and denied in the first article, to wit, that Antichrist is to be a Jew. On which hypothesis considered as certain, the consequences are so natural, that they make way for themselves in the imagination, one after another. Behold how.

Antichrist a Jew! Therefore in behalf of the Jews he ought to set out, and in order to make a great figure amongst them he ought to persuade them that he is the true Messiah whom they look for; and he ought at the same time to hide from them, I say, under the most profound secrecy, his origin out of the tribe of Dan; for if that came to be known, all would be ruined without hope of remedy, because there is not a Jew, of the lowest of the people, who does not know and believe that their Messiah is to come of the tribe of Judah, and of the family of David. Let us go on with our consequences.

Antichrist a Jew, believed to be Messiah, and acknowledged as such by the Jews! Then all the Jews scattered through all the nations of the world will fly instantly to seek him, and join themselves to his standard. Then his first thought and his first expedition ought to be the conquest of the land of his fathers, to empty it of all usurpers, to return and establish in it all the tribes of Jacob. Then it is most natural that he should forget Babylon, and establish his court at Jerusalem, where heretofore was that of David, of Solomon, and of all the kings, their successors. Then this city ruined first by the Chaldean, and afterward by the Roman, should come to be rebuilt anew with greater grandeur and magnificence. Consequences how natural! But if unfortunately the supposition, upon which they have been building with such confidence, should prove false and should fall, would it not likewise be a most natural consequence that the whole building should fall above it?

This fear which it is not easy to hide, has obliged several doctors to search in the scriptures for some pillars to sustain so vast a structure. But those which they have as yet

found, want the requisite solidity. Let us inspect them. All these intimations we are speaking of turn upon two main points.

First, That the Jews will believe in Antichrist, and receive him for their true Messiah. Secondly, That Antichrist, being received as the Messiah, will plant the court of his empire at Jerusalem. The first point claims for its support these words of the Lord, which we read in the Gospel of St. John: "I am come in my Father's name" (he is speaking to the Jews) "and ye receive me not, if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive," John v. 43: which words, although they do not expressly name Antichrist, it is easy to perceive both speak of him, and foreshow that the Jews will receive Antichrist as their Messiah, as a punishment for not having chosen to receive Christ.

Very well; and if these words or this prophecy of the Lord should have already received their full accomplishment, would it be right to quit the certain for the uncertain, that which we know for that which we are ignorant of, that which hath already happened for that which may happen? Would it be right to hide the real and true accomplishment of the prophecy, and to expect a thing most uncertain, in order that the prophecy may be fulfilled? And if there should be no such Jewish Antichrist, no such Antichrist the false Messiah, how would it fare with this prophecy of the Son of God? It would be left convicted of falsehood, without the power of being accomplished through all eternity. This most grievous evil is avoided, by saying and avowing what every body knows, viz, that the prophecy of which we speak has been already accomplished with such entire fulness as to leave nothing further to be expected. I set to a side the crowd of false and insignificant Messiahs, who, at various times, have deceived, the Jews, occasioning them new and increased troubles. In the Acts of the Apostles, xxi, 38. mention is made of one, and in history of many.

But although there had been no other than that famous Bar-Cochebas, who appeared in the time of Adrian, in him alone was the prophecy accomplished. That false Messiah came so entirely in his own name, that all the titles, or credentials which he presented to the Jews, reduced themselves to the mere signification of his name, for Bar-Cochebas means the Son of a Star. By being named, or by naming himself so, he claimed to be believed in and received as Messiah, according to the prophecy of Balaam, which says, *a star shall arise out of Jacob*, Num. xxiv. And, in fact, he was so received by all them who dwelt in Palestine; and instantly the word spread throughout all the provinces of the Roman empire, and in all parts the Jews arose, conceiving high hopes of shaking off the yoke of the Gentiles. And the thing got to such a head that it put in requisition the whole strength of the empire; all the vigilance and power of Adrian was called upon to keep down and restrain the Jews of the eastern provinces, while he prepared for the regular war which it was necessary to wage against Bar-Cochebas.

This pretender had gained so much, not only upon the Jews who dwelt in Palestine, but upon the great multitude of others who daily resorted to his standard, that he had become master of the strong places of Judea, putting the whole of the Roman garrisons to the sword, and strengthening himself by all the arms and all the riches of the country, until it required three years of hot warfare, and not a little Roman blood, to subject these rebels, who despised life in defence of their Messiah. Being at length killed, and with him not less than four hundred and eighty thousand Jews; those who remained alive were sold for slaves, and scattered anew to all the winds.⁴² Such were the benefits which accrued to our nation from this son of a star. Terrible chastisements, yet fully merited. "I am come in my Father's name, and ye received me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive." We

⁴² See the History of Adrian, by Chevier, Scaliger, Filemonti, &c.

have no need then to expect a Jewish Antichrist, wholly imaginary, and in him another false Messiah, incomparably greater than Bar-Cochebas, in order to verify this prophecy of the Lord. Seeing that in this false Messiah, known of all, we have seen it fully verified.

This first point of their opinion, that Antichrist is to be believed in and received by the Jews as the true Messiah, being fallen; the second falls of its own accord. Whence is it proved that Antichrist shall plant in Jerusalem the court of his empire? Wouldst thou know whence? From this, sure, that he is to be received by the Jews as their king and Messiah. So all these notions have no other foundation than themselves; they all rest upon themselves, and mutually support each other. The first is the foundation to the second, and the second to the first. These rest upon those which follow, and these which follow on those which went before. And the whole appears no better than a magnificent castle built in the air, and miraculously preserved, out of which our Antichrist appeareth, a terrible phantom, a spectre, a creation of the fancy.

But with respect to this court of this royal Antichrist, to be held in Jerusalem; does the whole of Divine Scripture contain no passage, from which it is clear, or may be inferred? My friend, know for certain that it does not. But if you seek from other fountains, from other books which are not canonical, you shall easily find a supply in case of need. And what are those foundations? *Come and see*. They are those prophecies most favourable to Jerusalem, which till now have not received nor been able to receive their accomplishment. These prophecies, are so many, so clear, and so expressive, and announce to Jerusalem such greatness, such prosperity, and, at the same time, such justice and sanctity, that on this account alone they become incredible, on the ordinary system of the doctors. These prophecies, I say, they contrive to accommodate (I know not in what sense) to the times of the supposed kingdom of Antichrist, but without alleging any reason. These prophecies of which we speak, favourable to Jerusalem, form a very great phenomenon, which we shall have attentively to observe in its proper time; and with which to detain ourselves now would be pure disorder, and occasion us more loss than profit.

ARTICLE IV.

Universal Monarchy of Antichrist.

AFTER that this very remarkable man, this miserable Jew, this notorious seducer, beholdeth himself seated in the throne of Israel, received as Messiah, beloved and adored of all the tribes, he shall forthwith conceive the purpose of subjugating to his dominion, not only the circumjacent nations, but all kingdoms, principalities, and lordships of the earth; in order, doubtless, to verify in himself those prophecies which fore-show such greatness to the true Messiah, the Son of David. To carry into effect a project like this, he shall have to send through all parts of the earth preachers full of zeal, and likewise wise innumerable and most valiant armies, that, partly by persuasion and mighty miracles, partly by threats and open force, he may constrain the whole, human race to yield to him, and to receive his yoke. And with such happy success shall he ever proceed, that in a few years his great undertaking shall be concluded and perfected, and he shall behold himself served, honoured, and even adored as the God of all the nations of the earth.

Well now: and who will stand surety for all this history, or for the substance of it? From what public or private archives hath information so marvellous been derived? It is granted, that there neither is, nor can be, other sources than revelation, which is the only history of the future. What then is that revelation? Let us examine it closely and carefully.

Two passages of Holy Scripture are commonly alleged in proof of this universal monarchy of Antichrist. The first is the seventh chapter of Daniel; in which they point out to us one of the horns in the head of the fourth beast, which is the stoutest of all, and of which things, by no means ordinary, are declared and foretold. But after reading and considering all that is here announced of this terrible horn, as we find not the slightest ground for suspecting that this remarkable horn, power, or king, shall be a Jew or a false Christ, so do we find as little for believing or suspecting his universal monarchy. What we do find is simply that this power, or king, shall be greater than the other ten, which are along with him in the head of the beast; that he shall humble three of those ten kings; that he shall be full of haughtiness, pride, and sovereignty, shall speak blasphemies against the Most High, and persecute his saints; in short, that his presumption shall be so great, as to make it seem to him an easy matter to change times and laws, &c; in all which he shall be permitted for a certain time. This is what we read of that power, or king, in the seventh chapter of Daniel. All of which, as it may happen in Asia or Africa (where, in fact, most interpreters place it), so may it happen in Europe Or in America, without its being necessary that this king, be he who he may, should be universal monarch of the whole world. Besides this, how is it proved that this remarkable horn which springs up, grows, and strengthens itself; in the head of the beast, and not the beast himself, is really the Antichrist whom we expect? But of this we shall speak more hereafter.

The second place which is alleged, is the thirteenth chapter of the Apocalypse, where Antichrist is manifestly spoken of, under the metaphor of a terrible beast, with seven heads and ten horns. And there it is said, that to this beast shall be given power “over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations;” and that all the inhabitants of the earth shall worship him: “And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him.” I believe firmly what is announced in this prophecy, which appears to me most clearly to apply to the matter of which we now treat. But at the same time, I observe two equivocations in their interpretation of it. First, the text does not say that the power over *all kindreds, and tongues, and nations*, should be given to a king, or to an individual and single man, which is the point it is intended to prove. It only says, that such power shall be given to the beast, of which we are speaking; and that beast, by all its signs and countersigns, is infinitely far from symbolizing a king, a single person, or the head of monarchy. The second equivocation is, that the text does not say all the inhabitants of the earth shall worship this beast like a God, with formal service and ritual of worship; it only says simply, that they shall bow down to him: and we all know that it is lawful to bow down to a creature, though not lawful to adore him as God. Our Father Abraham, for example bowed down to the judges of the city of Heth.

And Abraham stood up, and bowed himself to the people of the land, even to the children of Heth. Oh how far would the father of all believers have been from adoring another God than the God of Abraham! This point we touch at present with so great brevity, as being most easy of comprehension, from a simple hint, for we shall soon have to return to it when we consider the beast of the apocalypse.

Among so many reasons for not believing that this universal monarchy, is not clear from revelation, another thing may aid us much, which is clear from revelation itself; that is to say, the statue of four metals, which we studied at length in the first phenomenon, where

only four monarchies, kingdoms, or famous empires, are spoken of, as about to exist upon our earth, the last of which continues until the falling of the stone, or the second coming of Messiah, as we there proved. Now if, besides these four empires, there is to be another, and this greater than them all, it seems natural that some word would there have been spoken of it, and that an event so marvellous, would not have been passed over in silence. Besides this the stone is to fall directly upon the feet and toes of the statue, that is to say, upon the fourth and last kingdom, then subdivided into many, and to grind it to powder, along with the rest of the statue. Wherefore this fourth kingdom ought to be existing, and entire, when the Lord cometh, for, otherwise, the stone would miss its blow, and the prophecy could not be accomplished. If this kingdom remain in being, and entire, until the coming of the Lord, when will Antichrist reign? How can he be universal monarch of the earth? They say, that all the kings of the earth, without ceasing from their state, shall submit themselves to his will, or, by force, be subdued of him, and that they shall serve him with all their power. For which they allege the seventeenth chapter of the Apocalypse, where, speaking of the ten kings, it is said, "These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast... For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled." But are we sure, that the beast, here spoken of, to whom the kings shall give their power, (not by force but voluntarily, as we gather from the same text,) shall be another king like themselves, that is, some individual, and single man?

This were, first, necessary to be proved with good reasons, for if the Antichrist, with which we are threatened, is not to be an individual, and singular man, but something very different, this, of itself, will make the universal monarchy to disappear; this, of itself; will falsify all the notions which we have been considering, and make the terrible phantom to vanish entirely.

Another System is proposed on the subject of Antichrist.

§ 3. That there shall be an Antichrist; that he shall be revealed, and publicly declared, towards the last times; and that he shall commit in the world the greatest evils, making formal war against Christ, and all that pertains to him; —these are three certain things, of which no Christian can doubt. But what particular and determinate thing we ought to understand by this word, Antichrist; what kind of evils he is to work, and what means he will avail himself of; these are three other things, which cannot be so clear in Scripture, as the first three, because the notices or ideas, which the doctors give us thereon, are so various, so obscure, and so ill founded, as we have just been observing. Who knows, but all this variety of notions (certainly incredible) may have originated in some false principle, which, without design, has been looked upon, and received, as true? Who knows, but all the evil may have originated, in having imagined this Antichrist a singular and individual person, and sought to accommodate to him all the general and particular things which we find in scripture? This supposition, which the doctors have adopted as certain, is the thing which has rendered very many of the notices, we read in the scriptures, obscure, inaccessible, and incomprehensible, to my understanding: which has made things and notions innumerable, to be imagined, divined, and added, which do not appear from revelation, in order to supply the place of those which do appear. This, in short, has made Antichrist to be sought, yea, and found, and with the eyes of the imagination beheld, where no Antichrist was, and, at the same time, neither to be seen, nor recognised, where he actually is.

There hath not, perhaps, been any king, remarkable for his cruelty and tyranny towards the people of God, in whom the doctors have not seen Antichrist, to be either

prophetically or figurately, showed forth. Pharaoh, for example, Nebucodonosor, Shalmaneser, Sennacherib, Nebuchadnezzar, Antiochus Epiphanes, Herod, &c. in every one of whom they saw Antichrist in a figure. The king of Babylon, who is the only one of them spoken of *in parable*; (Isaiah xiv.); the king of Tyre; the prince of Gog (Ezek. xxviii. and xxxix.); the eleventh horn of the fourth beast; the spiteful king (Dan. viii. 11.); the foolish shepherd (Zech. xi.); in all these they see Antichrist prophesied of. And what results from all this? It naturally results that, with this principle, with this idea and hypothesis, in our mind, we come to read those passages of revelation, where Antichrist is really declared to us, and perceive him not therein, but they appear to us full of confusion and darkness, and we pass over them without having understood, or even suspected, that which they really announce to us.

Having already considered the notions and information which proceed upon this principle, and found in them nothing whereon to rest the foot, no one can impute it to an evil motive, that in a point of so great importance we should seek for another system, and endeavour to lay down another principle, upon which the notices given us in revelation may be accordant with each other, and rest as upon a solid foundation; submitting it, merely as a proposition, for the examination and judgment of those interested in this question.

System.

ACCORDING to all the signs given in the Holy Scriptures, and others, not equivocal, offered to us by time, which is wont to be the best interpreter of the prophecies, the antichrist, or the contrachrist, with whom we stand threatened in the times immediate upon the coming of the Lord, is nothing but a moral body, composed of innumerable individuals, diverse in themselves, but all morally united and animated with one common spirit, *against the Lord and against his Christ*; Psalm ii. This moral body, after it is grown and feeleth itself strong, robust, and furnished with abundance of all necessary arms; after it feels in a condition no longer to fear the powers of the earth, now become its principal partisans; this body, I say, in this state is the true and only Antichrist which the scriptures announce to us. This antichristian body shall fight with the greatest fury against the mystical body of Christ, which in these times will find itself greatly weakened; shall bring upon it the greatest and most lamentable slaughters; and if it succeed not in destroying it, this shall not be for want of will, but of time; for, according to the promise of the Lord, *those days shall be shortened...and unless those days should be shortened, no flesh should be saved*. Wherefore our Antichrist, when least of all he thinks of it, shall come to the end and termination of his days, in the beginning of the day of the Lord. He shall come to it from the hand of Christ himself, who descendeth from heaven with that grandeur, majesty, and power so wonderful and terrible, which is described in the nineteenth chapter of the Apocalypse, in St. Paul, in the Gospel, in the Psalms, and in almost all the Prophecies, as we shall see in the proper place.

To examine this system and make sure of its soundness, we have no more to do than read with moderate attention those passages of scripture, where Antichrist and that last tribulation are spoken of; especially those few where the subject is treated, not by the way, and as it were incidentally, but determinately, and on purpose. If all these passages, being applied to a moral body, make good sense, and easily resolve themselves, without need of violence and laboured expositions; and, being applied to a single person, cannot at all be explained even in an intelligible manner, there will be need of nothing more to terminate the dispute.

Definition of Antichrist.

§ 4. THE first thing, which is very intelligible of a moral body, and which not in any way intelligible of a single person, is *the definition of Antichrist*. In the whole Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, the word Antichrist is not found except two or three times in the first and second epistles of the apostle St. John, and there also we find its definition: —“And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that Spirit of Antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.” 1 John iv. 3. [According to the Vulgate, upon which the reasoning of this section proceeds, *Every spirit which dissolveth (the bonds of) Jesus: qui solvit Jesum.*]

It will without question appear to you that I am about to employ some sophism, in thus giving to these words of St. John the name of a true definition of Antichrist, when he is speaking only of the spirit, and not of the person of Antichrist. But if you consider this text with greater attention, and at the same time consider the explanation which is given of it, methinks you will rest satisfied. In this place the apostle clearly declares two things to all Christians. —First, that the Antichrist of whom they had heard that he should come in his season is wholly a spirit, which dissolveth (the body mystical of) Jesus (*qui solvit Jesum*). The expression is certainly very singular, and so worthy of singular regard. *Solvere Jesum*, according to its proper and natural signification, means nothing else than a true and formal apostacy from the Christian religion before professed: for this manifest reason, —that all Christians, whether pertaining to the true or to the false Christianity, are in some way linked to Jesus, and have Jesus in some way linked to them, the binding of two things being necessarily mutual. This tie is nothing else, generally speaking, than faith in Jesus; which as it may be and really is very strong, when accompanied with hope and charity, so may it be a weak and insufficient tie, when found alone, without works; and so likewise may it be a very weak and useless tie, if in any part it be already corrupted with rottenness. But whether faith in Jesus be strong, like that held by a good Catholic, or weak, like that of a bad Christian, or very weak, like that which a heretic holdeth, still, in all these cases, it is a true tie, and in some way unites them with Jesus, and forms between them and Jesus a certain relation.

Now then, from whom is Jesus wholly disunited? and who disunites himself from Jesus? He alone who, being in any way joined to him, or holding with him any relation, entirely renounces that faith in which the relation is founded; and if heretofore he believed in Jesus, believes in him no longer; if heretofore he believed that Jesus is the Son of God, the Messiah, the Anointed of the Lord promised in the scriptures, doth now believe nothing of this, doth now turn it all into ridicule, and is ashamed of the Christian name. This is what is properly called apostacy from the Christian religion, which no one can doubt is in very clear terms announced against the last times. —“And now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith,” saith St. Paul, 1.Tim. iv.1; and in another place, that the Lord should not come till after that apostacy had first taken place; “Except there come a falling away first,” 2 Thess. ii. This St. Peter announces throughout the whole second chapter of his Second Epistle; and likewise St. Jude; and, to cut short, Jesus Christ himself announces it. When in the form of a question he says, “Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth,” Luke xviii. 8. This apostacy from the Christian religion, this dissolution of the bonds of Jesus, this *solvere Jesum*, when it is become public and almost universal; when it is shown in formal war declared against Jesus; when many, not content with having disunited their own respect from Jesus, endeavour with all their might to disunite likewise the respect of others; this, saith the beloved disciple to us, is the true

Antichrist, concerning which ye have heard that he should come. *This is that spirit of Antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come.*

The second thing which the apostle declares to us on this passage is, that this same Antichrist of whom we have heard that he should come, was even in his time in the world; — *and even now already is it in the world.* Because even in the time of St. John, that unquiet, cruel, and terrible spirit which dissolves the bonds of Jesus, was already beginning to show itself in the world: already many were apostatizing from the faith, renouncing Jesus, and turning into his greatest enemies, to whom this same Apostle gives the name of Antichrists. *And now are there many Antichrists.* And that no one might suppose he spake of the Jews or Gentiles, who in that time persecuted Christ, he immediately adds, that those Antichrists had gone forth from the Christians. — *They went forth from us.* The same in substance doth St. Paul declare, when speaking of the apostacy of the last times, saying, that in his time this mystery of iniquity was already beginning to work. — *For the mystery of iniquity doth already work.*

From this definition of Antichrist which is the most clear and express that is to be found in the scriptures on the subject, it appears that we may legitimately draw this conclusion, that the Antichrist of which we have heard that he is to come, cannot be a man, or singular person, but a moral body, which in the time of the apostles had begun to constitute itself by the side of, and along with the mystical body of Christ; and which from that time began to exist in the world, *and now already is in the world, for the mystery of iniquity doth already work;* which has existed till our times; which existeth at present well grown and robust; and which in time end will let itself be seen in the world, perfect and entire in all its parts, when the mystery of iniquity is entirely accomplished. This conclusion will come out more clearly in the observation which we are about to make, of the ideas which the scripture giveth us of this same Antichrist, wherewithal it hath threatened us.

The ideas of Antichrist which are given to us in Holy Scripture.

§ 5. IF we read with attention the whole of the Divine Scripture, resolved to search in it for Antichrist, and to go to the bottom of this great and important mystery, it appears to me, my dear Sir, and I am fully persuaded of it, that no where shall we find so many notices, nor so clear, nor so circumstantial, as in the last of the canonical books, which is, the Revelation of St. John. This divine book, let others call it what they please, is an admirable prophecy, directed wholly to the times, immediate upon the coming of the Lord. In which are announced all the principal matters which shall immediately precede: in which is announced, in a manner the most magnificent, the very coming of the Lord in glory and majesty: in which are announced the admirable and stupendous events which shall accompany that coming, and which shall follow it. The title of the book shows well to what it is all directed; what is its argument, and what its determinate end: *The Apocalypse of Jesus Christ - the Revelation of Jesus Christ.*

This title till now has been taken only in an active sense, as if it only meant a revelation which Jesus Christ makes to another of certain occult and future things. But I read these same words very often in the epistles of St. Peter and St. Paul, and never find them in an active sense, but always in a passive sense, and capable of no other than this — *The revelation or manifestation of Jesus Christ in the great day of his second coming.* Only once with a different object in views doth St. Paul say, that he received the gospel which he preached, *not from man, but by revelation of Jesus Christ.* Gal. i. 12. With this single exception, the word revelation of Jesus Christ, always signifies the coming of the Lord,

which we are expecting: *in the day of his coming, or in the day of the revelation of Jesus Christ*, are two ordinary words which the apostles use indifferently, as signifying one and the same thing. And why may they not retain this same sense in the title of a book, directed wholly to the coming or revelation of that same Jesus Christ.

I say that this divine book is wholly directed to the coming of the Lord: which although in a great part the expositors allow, yet in the whole, it becomes difficult to them. Forasmuch as they have always striven, some in one way, and others in another, to verify some, or many prophecies of this book, in the events of the church already passed; thinking that every thing should be announced herein, though under obscure metaphors. But the little or no fruit, which these their efforts have produced, is the proof, that in reality, there is in the book nothing of that which they have been seeking, or which they pretend to have found. A prophecy, after it has had its accomplishment, has no need of force or ingenious discourse, to make out its meaning. The event itself being compared with the prophecy, bringeth a clear and effectual persuasion that thereof it was spoken, and thereto directed.

The truth is, that, recalling to our mind certain great events which have happened in the world since the Apocalypse was written, they turn our observation to certain passages of this book, where they pretend that they are announced. They call to our recollection, it may be, the preaching of the apostles, the propagation of christianity, the persecutions of the church, and the multitude of martyrs who shed their blood for Christ; the scandal and horrible tribulation of the heretics, and likewise the foundation and propagation of Mahometanism; for all which they refer us to the sixth chapter, directing our observation to what is said in the opening of the four first seals of the book.

They call to our recollection, the confusion and decay of the Roman empire, the irruption of the barbarians over all its provinces: the fall and destruction of Rome, for which some refer us to the plagues of the eighth and ninth chapters, others to the phials of the fifteenth chapter, and all to the harlot, and her punishment in the seventeenth and eighteenth chapters. They call to our recollection the foundation of the mendicant orders of religion, and the great services which they have done to the church, and refer us to the seven trumpets of the eighth and ninth chapters.

But if to ascertain the truth, we go and read those passages; and keeping present to our minds these events already passed, we confront them with the text of the prophecy, and with all its context, we are forced to say, that those events bear no reference to the prophecy, and that neither address nor violence has been sufficient to accommodate them thereto; because there are essential and very weighty circumstances left out, which openly resist it. This you may see clearly in those who have explained the Apocalypse at greatest length, such as Luis de Alcazar, Tirinus, Alapides, Arduinus, Calmet, and even the very wise Bossuet, of whose system we shall speak hereafter.

It is then, my friend, not only probable, but as it were, evident that the Apocalypse of St. John, omitting at present the three first chapters, is a prophecy wholly directed to the coming or the revelation of Jesus Christ. The very words with which, after the salutation to the churches, the prophecy begins, carry a very sensible proof of this truth. "Behold he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen." Rev. i. 7.

All this is said by the way, and we now return to Antichrist. Seeing this prophecy of the Apocalypse, as we have just observed, has for its primary and principal object, the revelation of Jesus Christ, or his coming in glory and majesty, we find therein collected, united, explained, and with wonderful wisdom cleared up, all the things which are to be met

with in the scriptures, pertaining to this revelation or coming of the Lord. There is no need of great ingenuity, or of much study, to catch in the Apocalypse, those most frequent and most vivid allusions, which are made to the books of Moses, especially Exodus, to the book of Joshua, to Judges, to the Psalms, to the Prophets, and particularly the four larger Prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel; from all which are taken, not only the mysteries, but the expressions, and many times the very words themselves, as we shall observe in our progress.

Now, as the tribulation of Antichrist ought, by the confession of all, to be one of the principal events, or the very principal of all those events, which are immediately to precede the coming, or revelation of Jesus Christ, it is to be inferred, that in this wonderful prophecy, all the notices of Antichrist will be brought together which lie scattered over the whole of the Sacred Scriptures: and it being really so, as we shall presently see, let us now search for Antichrist in this the last of the prophecies.

Almost all the interpreters of the Apocalypse agree as to a general truth, that the terrible beast with the seven heads and ten horns, of which so much is said from the eighteenth to the nineteenth chapters, is Antichrist himself. How then can this beast, and all the particular things spoken of it, be accommodated to, be possibly conceived of, an individual and singular person? Observe the difficulty of such an accommodation, by merely reading the words of the eighteenth chapter.

And I saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast. And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If any man have an ear, let him hear.

Explanation of this Mystery upon the supposition that Antichrist is a single Person.

§ 6. THE explanation of this great mystery, which is commonly found in the expositors, is doubtless another and a greater mystery, more impenetrable than that which it would explain. In the first place they say, that the beast here spoken of, is nothing else than Antichrist, whose reign and chief operations are announced to us by this terrible metaphor. But as this Antichrist, on their system, must be an individual and singular person, it becomes necessary for them to accommodate this person with seven heads, and to explain what is signified thereby; and at the same time it is necessary to accommodate him with ten horns, every one of them crowned; and it is necessary to apply to him other characteristics, which are read in the holy text. At present, I shall ask only the explanation of the three following, without a previous understanding of which, all the rest appear to me inaccessible. First, the seven heads of the beast; second, his ten horns; third, the head wounded to death, with its miraculous cure.

As to the first they assure us, that the beast, as a whole, is Antichrist: but as this Antichrist is to be universal monarch of all the earth, and, in order to arrive at this greatness, is to make formal war upon all the kings, of whom, in that time, there shall, they say, be but ten in all the world, and as of these he is to kill three and to subject the other seven to his dominion, therefore these seven kings, now subdued by Antichrist and subjects of his empire, are represented in the beast as his heads: *having seven heads*. Now of the death of these three kings by Antichrist, and of the conquest and subjection of these seven to his dominion, there ought to be an indubitable notification appearing expressly in revelation; seeing they found thereupon the explanation of the seven heads of the beast. Yet when we read the only place of scripture, to which they refer us, we are left in grief and disappointment, at not finding there such a notification; or at least, not such as the explanation requires, the only circumstance that could have served them, being exactly that which fails them in the text. I will explain myself: we find, in the seventh chapter of Daniel, a terrible beast with ten horns, which, as is declared by the prophet, signify as many kings; we find that amongst these ten horns springs up another, small at first, but which, in time, waxes greater than them all; we find that before this last horn, now grown to be robust, three of the ten fall and are rooted up; which, as is explained in the place, signifies that this horn or power shall humble three kings (Vulgate, *tres reges humiliabit*, he shall humble three kings). Now to humble is not the same as to kill. We then seek what is to happen to the other seven which are left, and we find not a word spoken of them. How then come they to this certainty, that Antichrist shall kill three kings, and subject to his dominion the remaining seven? The text merely says that this eleventh horn shall humble three kings, and if the other seven are overcome and obliged to receive the yoke of foreign dominion, what greater humiliation can they suffer? Therefore it ought to have been written, that he shall humble all the ten. Besides this, with what reason can it be said, that this terrible horn is the Antichrist, and not the beast itself, terrible and strong exceedingly, which hath it in his head, using it, and tossing it about, at his pleasure.

It adds much to the embarrassment of this explanation, when, looking at the beast of the Apocalypse, we ask them to show distinctly and clearly in it the very person of Antichrist. On one hand they tell us what the beast is; on the other they tell us, that his seven heads are seven vassal kings, whom he has conquered and put under, and holds in readiness to execute all his will and pleasure. And the very person of this Antichrist, which is it? He is either the bare trunk of the beast, without any head, (which cannot, without very great impropriety, be called the beast,) or there wanteth for him another head, greater than all whom he hath subdued, and over whom he keepeth rule. The embarrassment, in which the doctors here find themselves, is more than visible; to meet which, they do not stop to advance a species of contradiction, saying, that one of the seven heads of the beast is the very person of Antichrist, while on the other hand, the seven heads of the same beast are the seven kings who remain still alive, though conquered, and subject to the dominion of Antichrist; so making the very person of Antichrist the same with one of the kings whom Antichrist had subdued. Therefore these kings being seven, as heads of the beast, are at the same time only six. An enigma certainly difficult and inexplicable. According to this reckoning, there is either the person of Antichrist too much, or there is one of the seven kings too few.

The second thing which they ought to explain, is the ten horns all crowned, which the beast likewise hath: *having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns*. The text merely says, that the beast had ten horns belonging to him, but does not say whether the ten were in one head only, or if they were divided over all the heads: this circumstance is not expressed. Nevertheless, the doctors place all the ten, that is, they take for granted they are all

placed, upon one head only, to which they give the person of Antichrist; and so they say that the ten horns are the ten kings then in the world, all subdued by Antichrist. Whence follows another species of contradiction, or another enigma not less obscure and difficult to be resolved, which is, that Antichrist should hold at his disposal ten kings, crowned, consequently living, and actually reigning, and, at the same time, that he should hold only seven. Why? Because, according to what has been just said, in the explanation of the seven heads, these signify the seven kings who shall remain alive, subject to Antichrist, after the death of the other three. It may be said, that in place of the three slain, Antichrist will set up other three. But besides that there is no foundation for this, there would then be ten heads of the beast, seeing, according to this explanation, the heads signify the same with the horns. Therefore if the horns are ten kings, because of the three new ones, who have come and occupied the place of the three dead ones, for the same reason there ought to be ten heads also.

The third thing which remains to be explained is, the deadly wound of one of the seven heads, his marvellous healing, and that which thence resulteth over all the earth. Upon this the interpreters are divided between two opinions. The first of which holdeth, that one of these seven kings subject to Antichrist, shall either really die, or be sick unto death, without any hope of life, and that Antichrist shall, publicly and in the sight of all, raise him up, or heal him, by the art of the devil. The second and more common opinion is, that the head with the deadly wound shall be Antichrist himself, who is one of the seven, and who shall die, and rise again on the third day; that is, feign to do so, to imitate thereby the death and resurrection of Christ. Whence there will arise in all the earth a great admiration, and all the inhabitants thereof shall adore, as God, this same Antichrist, who did the miracle, and likewise the dragon, or the devil, who gave him the power. Oh how ignorant, how rude and brutal, must all the inhabitants of the earth then be, that the sleight-of-hand trick of an impostor should be sufficient to fill them all with admiration, and to make them bend their knees, as to a God! It is to be believed that, in these times, there will be in the world, neither philosophy nor criticism, nor common sense. What wonder that among people so barbarous, the cunning Jew should make himself universal monarch of all the earth!

Now what need should Antichrist have for such an imitation of the death and resurrection of Christ? Peradventure that they may take him for the true Messiah promised in the scriptures? Yes, for that reason precisely. And to practise upon whom? All the inhabitants of the earth may be reduced to four classes of persons; Christians, taking that word in its widest sense; Heathens, Mahometans and Jews. For which of these four classes might such a miracle be appropriate? Which of these would it persuade that Antichrist is the true Messiah? The Christian? Certainly not; for with respect to them the miracle would prove the very reverse for they know "that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him." Rom. vi. 9. The true Christ having died and revived once, cannot return to death or revive again. Peradventure the miracle may be for the heathen, or the Gentiles? As little will this answer. For having no idea of Messiah, nor of what is written concerning him, they may wonder, more or less, at seeing a dead person revive, without proceeding, therefore, to adore him as God, as the Messiah and the Christ promised in the scriptures, which to them, being Heathens, are of no consideration: and the same I say of the Mahometans.

There remaineth then only the last class of people, to wit, the Jews. And so this death and resurrection of Antichrist can be only for the end of deceiving them, who from their scriptures may possess some light concerning the death and resurrection of their Messiah. But

notwithstanding that light, which in other times of less darkness ought to have dawned upon them, it is certain that the death of the true Messiah was to them, *as a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence*, the scandal of which could neither be removed nor mitigated, by declaring and proving to them, that he must have risen according to the scriptures. To Messiah himself, when he spoke plainly of his death, they replied, as men who were scandalized. "We have heard out of the law, that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, the Son of man must be lifted up." John xii. 34. This shows how far they were from thinking that Messiah could die, although it were to revive immediately. And can we believe that they will receive Antichrist for their Messiah, because they see him die and rise from the dead?

To all this another reflection may be added, which is, that in the time of this wound and cure of one of the heads of the beast, most of the doctors suppose Antichrist to be already universal monarch of the whole earth, three kings already dead, and all the rest subject to his dominion; and consequently they suppose him already, and long before believed on by the Jews, and received as their King and Messiah; for according to them, this is to be his great enterprise, even before issuing from Babylon. What end then would be served by this fiction of dying, and that not by natural but violent means, *as it were wounded to death*, seeing already the Jews have adored him as their Messiah, and the rest of the human race, as their King and their God? Truly the explanation viewed under all its aspects, appears very difficult of comprehension. On one hand the beast with seven heads and ten horns is the Antichrist; on the other, the Antichrist no more than one of the seven heads: on the one hand, the seven heads are seven kings conquered by Antichrist; on the other, Antichrist himself is one of the seven: on the one hand; the ten horns are ten crowned kings, living, and in health, who serve Antichrist; on the other hand, there cannot be reckoned more than seven, since Antichrist himself killed three who cannot serve him as horns, &c. What obscurity! The cause of all which, appears to be nothing but the system or principle upon which they set out, of regarding this Antichrist as an individual and single person.

Another explanation of this whole mystery is proposed.

§ 7. LET US NOW conceive Antichrist after another and a different way; no longer as a miserable Jew, received by his brethren as their king and Messiah; no longer as universal monarch of all the earth, nor yet as a single person; but as a great moral body, composed of a thousand persons, diverse and distinct from one another, but all united and of one mind, and animated with the bold, audacious, and terrible spirit [*qui solvit Jesum*] which dissolveth (the mystical body of) Jesus, all armed and in battle array against *the Lord and his anointed*. On the supposition of such an Antichrist, we shall with great ease understand all the matters which the scriptures announce in general for the last times, and in particular, the whole mystery of the beast concerning which we now speak.

In this Antichrist, is easily comprehended the metaphor of seven heads in one beast; for it is conceivable that seven false religions should unite to make war against the body of Christ, and against Christ himself, not in any determinate part of the earth, but in the whole of it, and at the same time. The metaphor of the ten horns all crowned is also comprehensible; for it is conceivable without difficulty, how ten or more kings may enter into the same system or mystery of iniquity, and render to the beast all their authority and power for such an undertaking, in like manner as the horns of the bull aid him in wounding and terrifying. It is conceivable in fine, how one of the seven heads, or one of the seven united beasts may receive some mortal blow, and yet the metaphorical wound be healed by the solicitude of his fellows. All this is conceivable without difficulty, and if we cannot assure ourselves of it with

all certainty, we may at least suspect it as very probable, and from that strong suspicion pass to a more attentive observation. This is what I propose to do in the course of this inquiry.

Not to repeat here what has been said in another place, it may be convenient to read over again the whole seventh section of the preceding phenomenon, recalling likewise to remembrance what we said upon the four beasts of Daniel. These four beasts have so close a relation with the beast of the Apocalypse, that it rather appears identity than affinity. The mystery is certainly the same without any substantial difference. So that these four being once known, open to us the meaning of the last beast; and this last being known by means of those four, explains them, illustrates them, and gives them so natural an appearance of life, that it seems morally impossible not to recognize them. The only difference which I find, is, that Daniel takes up the beasts each one by itself, regarding them separately from the time of their birth, whereas, on the other hand, St. John takes them up all joined and united in one and the same body; regarding them in that state of brutal maturity and perfection which they shall have reached in the last times; —because these last times are the immediate and only object of his prophecy. For the rest, the Prophet and the Apostle perfectly coincide.

St. John says that the beast which he saw, had seven heads, which is to say, that he saw seven beasts, diverse from each other, united in the same body, and animated with the same spirit. Daniel names only four, but these four are seven in reality, because the third which is the leopard, is composed of four, *and the beast had four heads*; and these four, with the two first, the lion and the bear, and the last terrible creature make seven. St. John says of his beast that it was like to a leopard, with the mouth of a lion, and the feet of a bear; “and the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were as bear’s feet, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion.” Whereby he compares it, and likens it, at once to a lion, a bear, and a leopard. Which are exactly the three first beasts of Daniel, we should rather say the six first, because in the leopard are included four, as we have seen. For the beast which remains, no resemblance is found with ether known beasts, and therefore no name is given to it either in the Apocalypse or in Daniel: only the Prophet says that it had no resemblance to the others; “and it was unlike all the beasts which I had seen before it.”

St. John says of his beast that he saw it come forth from the sea; “and I saw a beast coming up from the sea.” The same saith Daniel of his four beasts, and almost in the same words, “four great beasts came up out of the sea.” St. John represents his beast with ten horns all crowned, “and upon his horns ten crowns.” The same in substance says Daniel, with this difference only, that he places the ten horns in the head of the last beast, because he regarded that one by itself, and as separate from the rest. But St. John, who considers it as united with the others, and forming together with them one single body, or one single beast, places all the ten horns in this beast or in this composite creature, without telling us in particular if they were all in one head, or shared among all the heads, or all in every one of them. The ten horns, says Daniel, and St. John says the same, signifying ten kings, those ten horns Daniel saw in the head of his last beast, that which is to have the lead, and to play the principal part in this tragedy.

But when this beast attracteth the others to himself; that is, when he attracteth to his party a sufficient number of individuals belonging to the other beasts; when he hath brought them over to his impious ideas; when in all parts of the world he hath formally declared himself against Christ, to many heathens, to many Mahometans, and principally to very many Christians of such as belong to the false Christianity, “whose names are not written in the book of life;” when, in fine, all these form with him but one body, and are animated by one spirit (which is the state that St. John regardeth him in); then all the horns will be

common to all the heads, or to all the beasts united: all will wound and strike terror with them: and it will be as it were a necessary consequence that the whole creation should tremble in their presence; that its inhabitants should submit and bend the knee, saying, “Who is like unto the beast, and who is able to make war with him?”

The Eleventh Horn.

§ 8. HITHERTO it appears that the two prophecies proceed in conformity with each other, there being no difference found between them, save, as hath been said, that the one considers all the beasts in one body, and the other considers them divided. Besides this, it is easy to remark another difference, which might occasion some embarrassment. If the mystery of the four beasts of Daniel (it may be objected) is the same in substance with that of the Apocalypse, why doth St. John make no mention of that remarkable horn which causeth such tumult in the head of the fourth beast; that being an event so notable, that the doctors commonly judge this horn to be Antichrist himself. To this difficulty it is replied; First, That though the mystery should be in substance the same, it is not necessary that in both places all the circumstances of it should be noticed. This is very frequent in all the prophecies which have all eye to the same object; —that in some, certain circumstances are pointed out which in others are wanting; and even in the four Evangelists this economy is practised almost continually. The second answer which we make is, That this same silence of the Apocalypse, respecting the eleventh horn is a clear proof that this horn is not Antichrist; since St. John, speaking on purpose of Antichrist, and giving so many and such particular notices of the great tribulation caused by him, omits that particular event, as if it were not necessary to the mystery of iniquity. Whence it would follow, that if this last horn, or this king, or this power, is truly Antichrist, then, is not the beast of the Apocalypse he: and if that beast is Antichrist, as appears undeniable from the context of the whole prophecy, then the eleventh horn, of which Daniel speaks, is not he.

This Antichrist, my dear Sir, neither is nor can be a single horn of the beast, nor even all of them united. The perfect and complete Antichrist, as St. John considers him, is the very beast of the Apocalypse with his seven heads and ten horns. The seven heads are, as we have just seen, nothing but the seven beasts united into one body, and animated by the same spirit. The horns are only the arms of the beast for defence and for offence, and can signify nothing else. If Daniel then numbers another horn besides the ten, if he says “that it had eyes, and a mouth speaking great things,” that it should be greater and stouter than its fellows, and bring down three of them, &c.; he meaneth thereby to tell us, that his fourth beast, in whose head this horn was seen, shall make use of it, and cause more damage by means of it alone than by all the other ten. Perhaps the beast himself shall make use of this horn, to humble three of the ten, which he sees not to be so well rooted in his head, nor so prompt to serve him as he desired. Let us speak it all out. Who knows, my friend, if this terrible horn, this power, this peculiar production of the fourth beast, be not already in our earth, though, from still seeing him in his infancy, we know him not. For we do not set ourselves up for prophets. This time will declare.

It remains now that we explain on our principle the most obscure and difficult part of this mystery, that is, the deadly wound which the beast received in one of his heads; and his miraculous and unexpected cure, to the admiration of the whole earth. You do not expect, Sir, that I should deliver to you, upon this point, any thing certain, or which can be proved upon any foundation of reality. Not only is the mystery future, but hid beneath a metaphor not less obscure than wonderful, which is neither explained in this prophecy, nor in all the Holy

Scripture is there any other place which might open to us the meaning of it. If you desire to receive and, for the present, to be content with mere conjectures or suspicions, yet vehemently strong, this is all which, in the present state of things, we can offer. In a matter of such importance, it seems suitable to stand always on the alert, in order that the event may not find us so careless, as not to have apprehended it before its arrival, by some of its signs.

The wound and the healing of one of the heads of the Beast are explained.

§ 9. I OUGHT to take it for granted, my friend, that you have now pretty correct ideas of the fourth beast of Daniel, and of the evils which he threatens to the miserable race of Adam. I ought likewise to take it for granted, that you are not so shortsighted as not to see and know, in the midst of so many signs, that this beast is already born, and existing in the world, although still covered with so smooth a skin as to hide not a little of his natural ferocity. Nevertheless, by the little which is seen, it is easy to observe in him a certain peculiar quality standing out conspicuous upon his very skin, and discovering his proper and natural character to be the systematic hatred of Christ and his body. Other religions, whatever they be, whether cloaked or not cloaked with the Christian name, he regards with the utmost indifference, neither hating nor harming, nor insulting them, because they do not in any way hinder, but rather may prove helpful to his emprise.

The difficulty and repugnancy which he finds is to unite to his own body the body of Christ, and to his lofty and proud spirit the sweet and pacific spirit of Christ. This fourth beast therefore finding no repugnancy, nor any great difficulty in uniting the other beasts with himself, or a sufficient number of individuals from all of them; and taking, as we know, on the other hand, great pains to compass this end, we may, without being prophets, prophesy that at length he will succeed, and the time arrive when the world shall see, entire and perfect, one monstrous beast composed of seven, according to the description of St. John, in the thirteenth chapter of his prophecy. With this single and clear idea before us, it is at once conceivable how the particular circumstance spoken of by St. John may naturally happen; “and I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death, and his deadly wound was healed.” For this beast, composed of seven, may receive a terrible blow in one of his heads, and, after some time, recover, to the terror of all the earth.

For this imagine; that some one of the united beasts doth not amalgamate pleasantly with this mixture; that he resists, in some way, or will not yield himself to be governed by that restless and tumultuous spirit which must animate the whole body; that, at length, discontented and undeceived, he shows signs of desiring to hear the truth, and of being dissolved from that body, and that he is in effect dissolved. You can see how, by this alone, the whole beast would be provoked, and disconcerted, and stand in peril of losing all. You can see hereupon, how earth and hell would be set in motion to discover the mode of curing this wound and remedying this evil. You can see how hereupon all those ingenious machinations would be set in motion, which till now have been in action, and do not cease to act, for the purpose of bringing back into union with the common body that head, which is as it were dead with respect to the body of iniquity. If this succeed, then have we the miracle which is to excite the admiration of the whole earth, and fill it with fear and trembling, causing its inhabitants to say, “Who is like unto the beast, and who can make war with him?” “This wounded head may perhaps be one of the four false heads of Christianity; for example, the second; however, this it is not possible to ascertain, it may be as likely one as another.

Moreover, from certain signs (taking the mystery by another way, which I believe more direct), I incline to suspect that this severe and terrible blow will be dealt by the omnipotent hand of the living God upon the head which is the most guilty of all, the most impious, the most audacious, that which shall move the whole machine; and, it appears to me, that it should happen towards the beginning of the impious union. Perhaps this terrible blow will be given by means of these three kings which are to be humbled before the eleventh horn; and perhaps this humiliation of these three kings may be a result of their fidelity and zeal for religion. And, finally perhaps this very same humiliation of these Christian and pious kings, who offered opposition, may be all the balsam necessary, and which will be found effectual for curing this wound. In all this I see neither inconsistency nor un-likelihood; for, on this supposition, it seems a necessary consequence that, the principal head of the beast being wounded, that whole body of iniquity should at once dissolve, and for a time disappear; that the other heads should conceal themselves while the impious head is healing, that is to say, until philosophy, aided by all the powers of hell, find means to remedy that evil, and set it to work anew, upon a more solid and a more infernal foundation.

Thus in some way may be understood another text, and most obscure enigma in the seventeenth chapter of the Apocalypse. "The beast which thou sawest, was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition, and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast who was, and is not, and yet is...And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven." For the better and more clear understanding of this enigma, it behoves us to have constantly in mind a thing observable in very many prophecies, that the prophets do often speak of a future event as if it were present, and as if they themselves were present in the very time of its coming to pass, and were eye witnesses of it. I do not stop to quote examples of this, which is so frequent and obvious as to be perceptible to any one. This admitted, we may now imagine that these enigmatic words are spoken by the angel to St. John, during that space of time which should run between the wounding of the beast, and his healing, as if they had been eye witnesses of that mortal blow. In this time and in these circumstances would be verified, in the first place, that the beast was and is not, "the beast which thou sawest was and is not." For the terrible blow which falls upon the principal head, must necessarily astound the rest, and the sudden and unexpected fright will naturally make them flee.

And in the second place, would be verified, that the same beast which had disappeared, under the mortal blow of one of its heads, should come again from the bottomless pit, where upon there would ensue much hot debate upon his restitution and re-establishment, "and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit," and immediately upon his issuing from the bottomless pit and re-appearing once more in the world, "they that dwell on the earth shall wonder when they behold the beast that was, and is not) and yet is." And in the third place, it would be verified and be easily conceivable, that this beast wounded and re-established in full health, issuing from the bottomless pit, and showing himself anew in the world, should appear as it were a new beast; wherefore being the same, and one of the seven, he may with all truth and propriety be called the eighth, "he is the eighth, and is of the seven," because he shall come from the abyss with new valour, with new projects, with new and greater fury, and armed with new hardihood. You will doubtless say, that although all this may happen in this way, there being no apparent inconsistency, it is still at the least uncertain, and may happen in another way, which at present we cannot discover. I allow it, my friend, without hesitation. What certainty can we have, in things which although revealed,

God has sought to keep hid until his own time, under metaphors so obscure? But it does not therefore follow that it should be wholly cast away, when nothing is endangered by having these ideas present in the mind; and on the other hand, much profit may accrue, from our being set upon the outlook to observe, on which side the day light will break upon this mystery, which so greatly concerneth all who have any dawning of faith, and desire to make sure of eternity.

Furthermore, if you compare the explanation which has just been given of the enigma, with that which is found in the interpreters of the Apocalypse, you must observe the great and notable difference. All the explanation which they give us “of the beast which thou sawest, which was, and is not,” is as follows: This signifies, they say to us, the short duration of the universal monarchy of Antichrist, which shall only be for three years and a half, a space of time in reality so short, that it may be accounted nothing, so as it may be said with truth; “he” was, and is not, and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit. These words, they continue, do not mean that Antichrist shall issue the second time from the bottomless pit, seeing he already hath been, and is no longer, but simply that he will come from the bottomless pit, that is to say, at the first. Read the text a hundred times, and you shall find quite the contrary.

“He is the eighth and is of the seven,” means, they conclude, that Antichrist, in his character of particular king of the Jews, shall be one of the seven heads of the beast; but in the character of universal monarch of the earth, shall be the eighth. But as they tell us in another place, that the seven heads of the beast are seven kings subdued by Antichrist, and subject to his dominion; we might legitimately conclude that Antichrist in quality of universal king of all the earth, should have conquered and subjected to his dominion this same Antichrist in quality of particular king of the Jews, which could not fail to be a very remarkable thing.

Reflections.

§ 10. RETURNING NOW TO OUR SUBJECT; this at least we may legitimately conclude from what we have said upon the beast of the Apocalypse; that seeing this beast is by the confession of almost all the doctors, the Antichrist whom we look for, and seeing by this terrible and wonderful metaphor are announced so many things, so novel, so grand, and so stupendous, as about to happen in those times over all the earth, this Antichrist ought to be something infinitely different, and incomparably greater, than what a single man can be, even though he should be imagined and feigned an universal monarch of all the world. There is no doubt that in those dark times shall he seen, now one king, now another, now many at one time in various parts of the world, cruelly persecuting the small body of Christ. But neither shall this king, nor that, nor all conjoined, be any thing in reality but the horns of the beast, and the arms of Antichrist.

If we expect to see this singular man, this Jew, this universal monarch, this God of all the nations; if we expect to see accomplished in this man, all that is said of the beast, with all that is announced to us in so many other parts of scripture; it is much to be feared, that all which is written will take place, and such an Antichrist not appearing, we shall be looking for him when he is already in the house. Likewise it is to be feared, that this idea which we have formed of Antichrist, and which we find in every kind of book except the Holy Scriptures, may prove the chief cause of the very great carelessness in which men shall be found, when the day of the Lord arrives. My friend, make this short and important reflection. This day is called by the very Son of God, “a day unlooked for,” and he adds, “which shall come as a snare upon all the inhabitants of the earth,” Luke xxi. 35. And he says in another place, that it

shall be at his coming, as at the coming of the deluge. “And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.” Whosoever, on the other hand, doth read in the Prophets, in the Apocalypse, and in the Evangelists, those great signs which are immediately to precede the coming of the Lord, and among the rest, the tribulation caused by Antichrist, will naturally be at a great loss to conceive, how so great a carelessness can possibly exist in the midst of such manifest signs.

From what hath been already said in explanation of the beast of the Apocalypse, some one may perhaps imagine that there remaineth no other part of this moral body of Antichrist worthy of our consideration. And doubtless, the above is enough to give us, concerning this last tribulation, an idea most fearful, and most suitable to the expressions of scripture. And truly, what greater can be imagined, more terrible, more dreadful, than the union in one single body of seven beasts, every one of them most fierce in itself. Consider apart, the mischiefs which they have severally inflicted. Of what mischiefs hath not idolatry been, and is it not even now the cause! And this for the space of so many ages! What mischiefs hath not Mahometanism caused, is it not now causing in a great part of the world! What evils in the bosom of Christianity have not been produced, are at present produced, and shall further be produced by heresy, and the system of religions hypocrisy and libertinism! Above all, what evils have not begun to proceed from the last terrible and wonderful beast, which is pure deism, apostacy, the proud and scornful spirit which dissolves the bonds of Jesus.

When therefore all these beasts shall make with each other a formal league, or solemn treaty of friendship, union, and companionship; when this seven-formed beast shall appear in the world armed with claws and teeth of iron, and with ten terrible horns, when he shall open his horrific mouth “in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name and his tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven;” when, finally, that dark and dreadful cloud is gathered, and directeth its course “against the Lord and against his Anointed,” with the fixed determination of not leaving on the earth any vestige or memory of Christ, &c. What tempest! what fear! what tribulation! rather to be imagined than uttered in words.

Nevertheless, I dare to say, that if the Antichrist we are threatened with could be wholly reduced to the fury of this terrible beast, we certainly should not have any reason to fear him so greatly. The great sorrow is, that the Antichrist announced to us in the scriptures is not merely the beast with seven heads and ten horns, but there is besides, for the completion of this machine, another essential piece, without which the machine would remain without effect, and would not long delay its dissolution. This important piece requires a separate observation.

The beast with two horns, of the same thirteenth chapter of the Apocalypse.

§ 11. “AND I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not

worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he caused all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, and in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred threescore and six.”

This beast with two horns, say the interpreters of the Apocalypse, and with great reason, is to be the false prophet of Antichrist. But as they make Antichrist an individual and singular person, so they conceive of his false prophet. Many think that he will be an apostate bishop, seeming to see in his two horns as of a lamb a proper symbol of the mitre. This novel and extraordinary man shall win the entire confidence and love of Antichrist, shall be ever at his side in quality of his counsellor and prophet, and shall proceed with him in all his expeditions. Which confidence of the sovereign the faithful minister shall well requite; now by his admirable eloquence, now by his exterior of sanctity, now by unheard-of and continual miracles, now by promises, and now by threats; inducing all the inhabitants of the earth to believe that Antichrist is their true and legitimate king. And, not content with this, he shall beguile them to believe that he is likewise the true God, and cause them all to worship him as such, and always to mark in their hand, or in their forehead, a certain sign or character, which may show them to be faithful worshippers of this new God; and shall bring it to pass that no one shall be admitted into society or human fellowship, to buy or to sell, unless he publicly receive this same sign; and the few who have the boldness to resist the force of his ministration, he shall put to death with violence.

In short, a single man, by a ministry of less than four years, shall accomplish what thousands of men have not accomplished in many centuries: shall convert to a new religion all peoples, and tribes, and languages: bringing it about, that in all the four parts of the world Idolaters should renounce their idols; Malmometans, their prophet; Jews, the God of Abraham; and Christians, Christ: which were a fervour and spirit more than apostolical. The twelve apostles of Christ, full of the Holy Ghost, and working true and continual miracles, could accomplish no such work in Judea alone. This, Sir, is the idea which the interpreters of the Apocalypse give us of this second beast. This is, according to them, the mystery shut up in this metaphor: nor is there any thing else to be thought of, or even suspected in it. But how shall we, who cannot conceive of Antichrist as an individual person, because such a notion exceeds all bounds of probability, conceive of his false prophet under this form? How shall we, who behold in the first beast a moral body, and a great machine composed of many different pieces, without inconsistency, conceive otherwise of the second.

It may be well to remark here, that in the whole prophetic history of Antichrist, which we read in the apocalypse and other parts of scripture, we find not a single word concerning sorceries, magic, or that power of doing miracles, which the doctors attribute to the person of their Antichrist. St. John places this power in the false prophet only, or in the second beast, not in the first. It is true that St. Paul, 2 Thess. chap. ii. says of his *man of sin*, that he will reveal or manifest himself to the world in *signs and lying wonders*. But this may well enough be fulfilled without his performing any; because certainly there shall not be wanting in those times many false prophets, who shall discover and well employ that talent received from the Father of Lies. So I find it expressed in the gospel: —“And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many:” and, further on, “For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders, insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.” These words of the Son of God are the most natural and clear explanation both of the passage of St. Paul, (concerning which we shall speak on purpose in

the last section,) as also of the beast with two horns, which we are now considering. This, far from signifying a particular bishop, or an individual and singular man, signifies and foretells, according to the clear explanation of Christ himself, a most wicked and dangerous body, composed of many seducers. —*Many false prophets shall arise, and shall do great signs and wonders.*

Now this new beast, this moral body composed of many seducers, will doubtless in those times prove infinitely more prejudicial than all the first beast, composed of seven heads, and armed with ten horns, every one of them crowned. Death, and the torments and the threatenings inflicted by the first beast, shall not so greatly terrify the flock of Christ, as the had example and persuasion, the falsehood, the insinuations, direct and indirect, of this second; all done with an air of piety and under the mask of religion; all confirmed by false miracles, which the generality of believers are not capable of distinguishing from true ones.

+ It is more than evident to every one who gives himself seriously to consider this metaphorical beast, that the whole of it is a prophecy of the miserable state in which the Christian church shall be in those times, and of the peril in which the greater number of believers shall be. Consider, my friend, with some degree of attention, all the general and particular matters which are mentioned by St. John of this terrible beast, and it seems to me you will find no difficulty in understanding what he means. The respect and veneration with which I regard, and with which all faithful Christians ought to regard our priesthood, obliges me to proceed by these round-about methods; and sure I am I would not dare to touch this point, were I not fully persuaded of its truth, and of its importance, and even of its extreme necessity.

Yes, my friend, our priesthood: this it is, and nothing else, which is here signified, and announced for the last times, under the metaphor of a beast with two horns like those of a lamb. Our priesthood, which like the good shepherd should defend the flock of Christ, and for it lay down their own lives, shall prove in those times its greatest scandal and most perilous snare. Why do you hold that this proposition is extravagant? Are you haply ignorant of history? Are you ignorant of the heinous and loud scandals of the Hebrew priesthood? Who utterly undid the Jews, but their priesthood? It was they who in every way resisted Messiah himself, notwithstanding that they had him before their eyes, heard his voice, and admired his miraculous works. It was they who, shutting their eyes to light, obstinately opposed the desires and calls of the whole nation who were ready to receive him, and with shouts hailed him as the Son of David and the King of Israel. It was they who shut the eyes of all, by fears, by threatenings, by persecutions, and by gross calumnies, so that they should not see him who stood before them, nor acknowledge the hope of Israel; but utterly forget his virtues, his doctrine, his benefits, his miracles, whereof all of them were eye witnesses. In fine the priesthood opened the mouths of the people to deny and publicly reject him, and with great cries to demand for him the punishment of the cross.

Now say, was this haply the priesthood of some idol, or some false religion? Had they formally apostatized from that which they professed? Had they lost the faith of their ancestors in the hope of their Messiah? Held they not in their hands the scriptures? Could they not behold therein as in the clearest mirror, the true image of their Messiah, and compare it with the original which was before them? Yes, all true. But at that time, and in these circumstances, all this was not sufficient. Why? Because the iniquity of that priesthood, generally speaking, had reached the highest pitch. They were for the most part corrupt, full of malice, of guile, of hypocrisy, of avarice, of ambition; and consequently full likewise of fears, and of respects purely human, which are what is called in scripture, *fleshly wisdom*, and

the *friendship of this world*, incompatible with the friendship of God. This was the true cause of the rejection of Messiah, and of all its wicked consequences, which indeed that wicked priesthood were not ashamed to avow in full council. "For this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation." John xi. 47. Why should we then stand amazed at the thought, that the christian priesthood may yet in part imitate the iniquity of the Hebrew priesthood? Why do we stand amazed, that it should be symbolized by the beast with two horns? Those, who now wonder at this, or are scandalized to hear it, or regard it as an incredible absurdity, there is much reason to fear when the time comes, will be the first to be taken in the net: and for the very reason, that they regard such iniquity as incredible in persons so sacred, they will likewise regard the iniquity itself as goodness. What is there to be wondered at after such experiences. As in all times, true and inestimable benefits which have built up and comforted the church of Christ, have proceeded from the christian priesthood; so likewise have innumerable and most grievous evils which have scandalized and afflicted it. Did not the whole christian world groan in the time of the Arians? And whence come all that mischief but from the priesthood?

Has not the church of God in all times groaned under the load of many heresies, schisms, and scandals, engendered among the priesthood; and by them obstinately maintained? And what shall we say of our times? Consider the matter well, and you shall not count it strange, that the beast with two horns should commit so many evils in the last times. You shall understand how the priesthood, even now, in a great degree, corrupt, may in that time corrupt and ruin all, as did the Hebrew priesthood. You shall understand, in short, how the very priesthood of these times, by its very bad example, by persuasions, by threatenings, by feigned miracles, &c. may darken the greater part of believers, may dazzle them, may blind them, may bring them to disavow Christ and to declare at length for his enemies: *many false prophets shall rise*, and beguile many....and *they shall shew many signs....and because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold*. Oh what times shall those be! What obscurity! What fear! What temptation! What peril *Unless those days were shortened no flesh could be saved alive!*

How think you shall it be, when the simple sheep of Christ, of every age, sex, and condition, seeing themselves persecuted by the first beast, shall betake themselves to the shelter of their shepherds, imploring their help, who shall meet them sword in hand, and force them to yield obedience? How think you shall it be, when turning their eyes to their shepherds, as to their only refuge and hope, they see them trembling with still greater fear than themselves, at the sight of the beast and his crowned horns? When consequently, they see them practically approving the whole conduct of the first beast, and counselling all to yield to the times, for the sake of peace; and when, for the good end of peace, (fatal to the truth) they receive the mark of the beast, that is, publicly declare for him, feigning miracles and wonders, to attain the end of bringing them over by the appearance of religion? How think you it will be, when many believers, upright and well instructed in their duties, knowing clearly that they can not in conscience obey the orders which shall then proceed from the secular power, determine to obey God, and risk all for God; and thereupon behold themselves abandoned of all, cast out of their houses, spoiled of their goods, separated from their families, deprived of society and human converse, without finding any one to give or any one to sell to them; and all this by the order and mandate of their proper pastors? Well said St. Paul, that *in the last days perilous times should come*.

The church of Christ endured from the emperors the most terrible persecutions, almost without interruption, by the space of three hundred years; and nevertheless they were preserved in such numbers, as to be reckoned—not by hundreds, nor by thousands, but by millions. These times of persecution, far from being perilous for the church, were, on the contrary, most beneficial and most conducive to the growth of the church, to her taking root, to her strengthening and enlargement over the whole earth. It was not necessary to shorten those days, for fear that all flesh should perish; but it was good to lengthen them, to produce the opposite effect. And the Lord did prolong them for about three centuries, very certain and sure that from this quarter there was nothing to fear. But in the horrible persecution or tribulation whereof we are speaking, it is clearly announced to us by the mouth of truth itself, that the very opposite shall come to pass. *And there shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time no, nor ever shall be; and except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved.* Think, my friend, what should be the true cause of so great a difference, and hardly shall you find another than this new beast with two horns, or which is the same, the christian priesthood, aiding the persecutors of the church, and at one with them, through the abounding of iniquity.

In the first persecutions, the believers found in the priesthood, or in their pastors; not only good counsels, just and holy instructions, fervid exhortations, &c. but likewise the practice of their doctrine. They saw them go forward as their examples, they saw them become the foremost in the battle. if you read the Roman Martyrology, you shall hardly find any day in the year, which is not ennobled and consecrated by the sacrifice of these holy pastors. But in the antichristian persecution, in which the priesthood will be far the stronger and most numerous part, *enemies to the cross of Christ*, in which they shall be worldly sensual, and therefore, *provoking the Lord to spue them forth*, as St. John clearly announceth, it will be impossible that the faithful shall find in them that which is not in them, viz, spirit, valour, disinterestedness, contempt of the world, and zeal for the honour of God; but verily they shall find seduction, a stumbling block, scandal, and peril. Not, that there shall not therefore be in those times some good pastors. Yes, there shall be such: for less cannot be believed of the goodness of the chief shepherd. But these good pastors shall be so few, and so little regarded in comparison with the others, as Elias was in respect to the prophets of his times, that as these did, so shall they obstinately resist and persecute the prophets of God; as these so shall they render their zeal unprofitable, and their preaching fruitless; as these, so shall they become the immediate cause both of the corruption of Israel and the over throw of Jerusalem.

If still it appears too difficult to believe, that the christian priesthood of those times should be the only thing figured by the terrible beast with two horns, reflect with new attention upon all the words and expressions of the prophecy, because nothing can be more distinct. St. John says, that he saw this beast issue or arise out of the earth, *And I saw another beast coming out of the earth which had two horns like a lamb*: but his voice or manner of speaking was as a malignant or cunning dragon; he *spake as a dragon*, by which appearance, of a gentle and peaceful lamb, he persuadeth all the inhabitants of the earth, to adore, bow down, and take part with the first beast; and for that purpose did great signs and miracles, all in appearance only, and feigned; by which, as well as by his dragon voice, or seductive words, he did deceive all the earth, and at length oblige all the inhabitants thereof to inscribe publicly upon their foreheads, or in their hands, the character of the first beast; under penalty of neither buying nor selling, &c. Tell me now, my friend, to what will all these things apply, think as you please, save to a wicked and perverse priesthood, such as that of the last times

shall be? The doctors themselves acknowledge it to be so, they concede it in part, and this part once acknowledged, entitles us to ask the whole. Not finding any thing else to which they can apply what is said of the second beast, (besides that in the sixteenth and nineteenth chapters, the name of the false prophet is given to him) they commonly agree, that this beast or false prophet, will be some apostate bishop, full of iniquity, and diabolical malice, who shall stand on the side of Antichrist, and accompany him in all his undertakings.

But shall this singular bishop be capable of darkening, by his false miracles, and perverting by his persuasions, all the inhabitants of the earth? and that, too, in the short space of three years and a half? Does not this manifestly shock common sense? Does it not pass beyond the bounds of the credible? if in the Holy Scripture there were any revelation to this effect, express and clear, I would submit my understanding to the obedience of faith, but finding no such revelation, and finding, on the other hand, this notion conflict with all the ideas given to us by the scripture itself, it appears absolutely necessary to take up another view. That which cannot be conceived of a single person, may very well be conceived, and is at once conceivable of a moral body consisting of many individuals scattered over all the earth, is at once conceivable of the priesthood itself, or the chief part of them, in that state of lukewarmness and relaxation in which they shall be found in those unhappy times.

There is no need from this to say that the priesthood of those times will persuade the faithful to adore the first beast, with the adoration of religious worship, as if he were God. The text says no such thing; nor is there in the whole of it one single word from which it can be inferred: it speaks only of simple adoration; and no one is ignorant what that general term signifies in the scriptures, when God is not named. So that the making them adore the first beast can signify nothing more than causing them to be subject to him, to obey his orders, however unrighteous they may be; not to resist, however much they ought to do it; to give external signs of their respect and submission; and all out of the fear of his horns. As little is it necessary to say that the priesthood of whom we speak, should already have apostatized from the Christian religion. If there should be among them some formal and public apostates, as really there will be, these should be regarded as members, not of the second, but of the first beast. Sufficient then will it be, that the priesthood of these perilous times should be found in that same state, and with those same dispositions, in which the Hebrew priesthood were found at the time of Christ; that is to say, lukewarm, sensual, and worldly, without other desires, without other affections than belong to the earth, to the world, to the flesh, to self-love, wholly forgetful of Christ and of the gospel. All this seems intimated to me in that metaphorical expression which the Apostle makes use of, saying, that he saw this beast proceed or arise out of the earth.

He adds that he saw it with two horns like those of a lamb; a similitude which, pursuing the metaphor, appears a very proper characteristic of the priesthood. In such a manner, that as the crowned horns of the first beast signify the potency, the force, and the arms of the secular power, which this beast shall employ for inflicting wounds and terror upon the earth; so the horns of the second, like those of a lamb, can signify nothing else than the arms or the force of the spiritual power; which although in themselves little appropriate for striking, for forcing, and for affrighting men, are, by reason of their quiet and peaceful aspect, fitted to conciliate the respect, the love, and the confidence of the nations, and therefore infinitely more influential and efficacious in bringing about obedience.

But this beast in appearance quiet and pacific, this beast to appearance unarmed, hath yet a weapon most fearful and secret, to wit, his tongue; which was not that of a lamb, but of a dragon. *And he spake as a dragon.* That which is meant by this similitude, and to which it

manifestly alludes, you may see in the third chapter of Genesis; whence you will understand what his tongue is, and comprehend that as the dragon spake in the beginning, *and beguiled* the woman, so shall the beast with two horns in the last times, or the dragon himself by his means, speak to beguile men. He shall speak with sweetness, with fawning, with promises, with artifice, with subtilties, with good appearances, abusing the simplicity of the poor sheep, to entice them to the wolves, that they may be rendered up to the first beast. And if any amongst them shall be found so enlightened as to perceive the deceit, and so inspirited as to resist the temptation, (as certainly there shall be,) against these they shall proceed with the arms of the spiritual power, or with the horns of a lamb, forbidding every one to buy or sell who hath not the mark of the beast. They shall be separated from the society and fellowship of others, and nothing shall it be possible to procure or to buy for them, without publicly drawing down some mark of apostacy; for, says the Evangelist, “the Jews had agreed together, that if any should confess him he should be thrust out of the synagogue.” Apply the similitude.

Mark of the Beast, his Number, and the Number of his Name.

§ 12. The beast, whereof we have just concluded the observation, will persuade men, says St. John, to receive upon their hand, or upon their forehead, the mark of the first beast, or his number, or the number of his name, under the penalty of not being permitted to buy or to sell, which is the same as to say, hinder the penalty of death. The same Apostle, to give us some light and some hope of understanding this whole metaphor, concludes the chapter with these enigmatical words: “Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and his number is six hundred threescore and six.

Almost from the very times of St John, as St Irenæus testifies (Lib. 5, advers Hæres), the greatest diligence has been applied to the decyphering of this enigma, and the right understanding of this great mystery; the doctors being firmly persuaded that herein was shut up the name of Antichrist or some distinctive, properly his own, whereby he might infallibly be known. The pains are without doubt laudable, and very good the intention; since the number or proper characteristic of that man whom they call Antichrist being once known, it will be very easy to know him when he appears in the world; and, knowing him, it will be very easy to escape falling into his snare This reasoning Just in itself, is not so much so in the system of the doctors. For to them who expect Antichrist in the form which they suppose, what necessity can there be for knowing his number or any characteristic properly his own, whereby to recognize him. What new light will this add for distinguishing him from other men. Recall, friend, to your remembrance some of those particular notices of which we have already spoken, and tell me whether by them alone, without any other distinction, you could not discover Antichrist. Is there any man however rude he may be, who, having such notices, would not know him at once?

Imagine, for example, that, in these our days, there should issue from Babylon, or from any place which you may judge fitter, a new prince, of whom no one knew any thing; that this new prince, accompanied by an infinite multitude of Jews, who acknowledge him for their king and Messiah, should go directly to Palestine, conquer the whole of it, establish there the tribes of Israel, and build again Jerusalem, to be the court of his empire; that from thence he should issue with innumerable troops, make war on all the kings of the earth, kill three of them, and subject the rest to his dominion; carry away with him a great prophet, who should do continually stupendous miracles; that, in short, this new prince, whose number all the while appeareth not, has made himself, in a short space, universal monarch of the whole

earth; and that all nations, tribes, and languages, acknowledge and obey him as sovereign. What think you, friend, of this great personage? Is he not Antichrist whom we look for? Are these not the notifications of him which we read in our books? What necessity have we then to know his mark, or his name, or the number of his name; without which we know the Antichrist, and all the world knoweth him. This universal monarch of all, whose court is Jerusalem, is certainly Antichrist. From this, one of two things follows. Either that the proposed enigma and its interpretation is the most useless thing in the world; or that the Antichrist whom we expect must be something infinitely different from that which till now we have imagined. If the latter be granted, it appears that no small progress may be made in the understanding of the enigma, as we shall by and by endeavour. Let us see what progress has been made on the ordinary system.

In the first place, the doctors have thus reasoned: the numerals used by the Greeks, they say with truth, are nothing but their letters: these numeral letters united and combined together ought to form some word, seeing they are at last but letters: therefore, the number six hundred and sixty six expressed in Greek letters (in which the whole Apocalypse is written) should necessarily form some word, which word they conclude, is certainly the name, or the mark, or the distinctive peculiarity of Antichrist. Well, and if the Greek letters which are necessary to express the number 666 can be combined in thirty different ways, which of them would be the proper name, or the peculiar distinctive of that man whom they call Antichrist? Either he will have all the thirty names and characteristics, or if he is to have only one, this cannot be particularly designated with these numeral letters. In fact the words or names of Antichrist which have been derived from the number 666, expressed in Greek letters, are so diverse and indeterminate, as may be seen in a few of them which I set down here for an example.

<i>Greek word.</i>	<i>Latin word.</i>	<i>English word.</i>
1 Teytan.	1 Gigas.	1 Giant.
2 Lampeitis.	2 Lucens.	2 Bright shining.
3 Lateynus.	3 Latinus.	3 Latin.
4 Nichetes.	4 Victor.	4 Conqueror.
5 Evantas.	5 Floridus.	5 Floridus.
6 Kakos odegos.	6 Parous dux.	6 Small leader
7 Aletes blaberos.	7 Vere noxius.	7 Truly noxious.
8 Palebaskanos	8 Diés invidus.	8 Woeful day.
9 Amnos adikos	9 Agnus injustus.	9 Unrighteous lamb.
10 Oculpios.	10 Trajanus.	10 Trajan.

Some have found in it Genseric, and others in Mahomet.

The learned Calmet, who in his dissertation upon Antichrist brings forward the most of these combinations, explains in the same place, the opinion which he had of them, in these words. “Verily a vain study, and profitless marks, to which perhaps we should repent of having given so much of our attention.”⁴³ Notwithstanding this just censure, the same author in his literal exposition of the Apocalypse, upon the thirteenth chapter adopts as legitimate and preferable, the celebrated combination of that most illustrious man Bossuet, who abandoning the greek letters as not being appropriate, nor capable of being made appropriate to his system, makes use of the latin letters, commonly called Roman numerals, from which

⁴³ Studium utique vanum, et inanes notæ, quas hic tantum recensuisse nos forte pœniteat.

he derived out of the number 666, these two words, *Diocles Augustus*, which is the same as to say that *Diocles Augustus* in Roman numbers, or in their numeral letters, yields the precise number of 666. Here is the ingenious device.

This operation has appeared to some, I know not what kind of triumph to the system of M. Bossuet and Father Calmet, whose systems are almost the same. These two learned men pretend to accommodate almost all the Apocalypse to the first persecutions of the church, especially to the last and most terrible of all, which was that of Dioclesian. For which system, whereof we shall soon speak, this combination seems a discovery of the greatest importance. There could not be desired or imagined any thing more appropriate. Diodes, (for so they say Dioclesian was called Diodes Augustus, in Roman numerals yields the sum of 666. Therefore this is the whole of that great mystery which the proposed enigma incloses. Therefore the book of the Apocalypse, especially when speaking of the beast's seven heads and ten horns, announces to us, by these metaphors, nothing save the terrible persecution of Dioclesian; Dioclesian being even named under an enigma, &c. To see, Sir, the great weakness of this reasoning, and the small, or rather no cause that they have for proclaiming victory, I shall propose by the same Roman numerals another operation or combination, much more easy and short than that of M. Bossuet, who requires to cut off the half of Dioclesian and add Augustus, as we have seen. But the combination which I propose, requires neither to cut off nor to add, and so I prove in the same manner, and by the same form, that the terrible beast of the Apocalypse, points out a great prince, either past or to come, of the name of Lewis, or in the latin, of Ludovicus.

D	500
I	001
O	000
C	100
C	050
L	000
E	000
S	000
A	000
U	005
G	000
U	005
S	000
T	000
S	005
U	000
S	000
Sum	<u>666</u>

Mon. de Chettardie, cited by Calmet, derives it by the same artifice from Julian the Apostate; and it would not be very difficult to find a hundred other names forming the combination, which would be in the end as wide of the purpose, and as useless as those which we have pointed out. Nevertheless the doctors agree, and Calmet himself, though interested for Dioclesian, confesses that the solution of the enigma should be sought in Greek letters, in

L	050
U	005
D	500
O	000
V	005
I	001
C	100
U	005
S	000
Sum	<u>666</u>

which, and not in Latin, the Apocalypse was written. And accordingly the solution of the enigma has been sought in Greek numeral letters almost from the beginning of the second century of the church; for St. Irenæus, who wrote towards the 70th year of that century, brings forth several combinations which had been made before that time; and since then the labor has not ceased, nor have any pains been spared. And what has followed from them? The only thing which has followed is, that we find ourselves in possession of many names that Antichrist is to have. Which of them is the true one? No one knows. And is it known even whether the true one be amongst them all? As little is this known. And though many other combinations should be made, we would still be left in the same perplexity. How then shall we know the beast, or this Antichrist, by his name, mark, or characteristic?

From this I draw a consequence which appears to me very natural, that so long as the name or characteristic, (whether by Greek or Latin letters,) of an individual or single person, shall be sought for, the enigma will remain without solution. The sacred text speaks of the name or character of a metaphorical beast of seven heads, and ten horns; so that if the said beast do not signify a single person, as appears more than probable, all the efforts which they

make on this principle will certainly lead them astray, and can never bring them to the end which they have in view. And so experience has proved until this day. After great pains applied by men of the greatest genius, we find ourselves still where we were at the beginning; as the judicious among the doctors honestly confess.

No reasonable hope therefore remaining to us of understanding the enigma on the ordinary idea of a single person, it surely seems convenient to change the course, and work upon another idea, in order to see if thereby any thing may be advanced which may satisfy the mind and prove of some advantage. This is what we now proceed to attempt, desiring at least to open the tract wherein others may labour, and make new discoveries in a subject which certainly is not one of mere curiosity, but of the greatest interest. There is no doubt that the interpretation will be given by God; but it would be truly rashness to expect that God should give the interpretation to one who is at no pains, neither performs what falls to his share, and hardly even knows that there is in scripture any such enigma, &c.

The idea of Antichrist then being for a moment changed from a single person to a moral body, that we may proceed with order and clearness in the study of the enigma, I prepare the way by this general reasoning. I consider first, what should be the character most appropriate to a moral antichristian body, composed of many individuals. If I find this, I pass onward to a second not less necessary; which is to compare what has been found with the text itself, and with the context, and for the greater assurance, with those other ideas and intimations which the scripture furnisheth besides. If after this attentive and patient examination, the said mark or character be found perfectly conformed to the idea which the scriptures give, I ought not to rest fully satisfied with this, much less to exclaim victory; for there still remaineth a last occupation of our diligence, without which nothing can be concluded. It will then remain to me, I mean, to examine if the said mark corresponds likewise with the number 666, or with the Greek numeral letters which compose that number. If all this be found perfectly consistent, if it all proceed naturally without artifice and without violence, without difficulty, without any embarrassment, it appears to me that in this case we may conclude, with all the certainty the subject is capable of, that this is the true solution of the enigma, and any considerate man ought to receive and rest content with this solution, while no other is offered which, all things considered, hath a better claim.

This general method being laid down, we now proceed to our operations. And thus I reason. In the idea of a moral antichristian body, composed of very many individuals, it suggests itself at once, that this body, whatever it be, ought to be all animated with the same spirit. Without this it were impossible that it should subsist, even as happens in a physical body. How could a republic exist, or how, with propriety, could it be called a moral body, if the persons who composed it were not united together, and all animated by the same spirit of liberty and independence? This general spirit, therefore, or this principle of life, which unites, animates, and preserves a moral body, whatever it be, is that which, with all propriety, we call the mark, or the proper characteristic of that same body.

Now then what other spirit can unite and animate a moral antichristian body, but that same principle which we pointed out, in the fourth section, as the proper definition of Antichrist? viz, *the spirit which dissolveth the body of Jesus*. In all the Holy Scripture we do not find concerning Antichrist another word which characterizes him better; and all that we find therein corresponds, and is perfectly conformable, to this definition. The very word Antichrist, or Contrachrist, signifies nothing else. Whence it manifestly follows, that the mark, or peculiar characteristic, of this moral body should be wholly answerable to the word *Antichrist*, and can be nothing different from *dissolving the body of Jesus*, which, in an active

or a passive sense, can be nothing but the systematic hatred of Jesus, standing out against Jesus, persecuting Jesus, seeking to destroy him, or to root him out of the world, blotting out of all things his name and his memory. This seems most clear, and there is no occasion to detain ourselves longer upon it. The only thing wanting is, that this proper characteristic of the beast, as we have recognised it, should be likewise found in the number 666, according as it is written in greek; that is, that the greek letters which compose the said number should, at the same time, give this same mark clear and express. If this should so turn out, will it not, at least, lay the grounds of a probability and moral certainty, as great as the subject is capable of? Here then it is. Among the various combinations, which have been made out of the greek letters which compose the number 666, there is one, to wit, that of Primatius, to which as little value has been assigned as to the rest, doubtless, because on the ordinary idea of Antichrist, no use could be made of it; that combination exactly yields the greek word, ARNOUME, or ARNOUMA, which corresponds to the latin word, ABRENUNTIO, and to the Spanish, RENIEGO, and to the English word, DENY, or RENOUNCE. This word being found, Let us now compare it with the text of the prophecy, and with all the context, to see if it corresponds, with propriety, in all points. St. John says, first, that in the times of Antichrist, men shall be obliged, under the penalty of neither being permitted to buy nor sell, to trace upon their hand, or their forehead, the mark of the beast, or his name, or the number of his name. Upon which, to shun hereafter all equivocation, we ought to remark, and hold ever present in our minds, that all these expressions made use of by St. John, such as the mark of the beast, the forehead, the hands, &c. are purely metaphorical, as is the beast himself, and his head, and his horns. Nor does that appear credible, or even sufferable, which has been thought by many authors, and set forth with great formality, that in those times, by order of Antichrist, or his prophet, men shall be constrained to suffer on their foreheads, or on their hands, the impression of a burning iron; or as others, of a more merciful character, imagine, the impress of a seal, dipped in some fixed and permanent colour; on which seal shall be engraved, according to some, a dragon, and according to others, a beast with seven heads and ten horns, and according to others, the image or the name of the monarch. Others think, with equal foundation, that all men in all the world, shall be obliged to wear, publicly, on the forehead, or on the hand, some medal with the image, or arms, of Antichrist, by which to betoken that they are his faithful worshippers. Now all these modes of thinking, which are the only ones vulgarly entertained, appear very far and foreign from the proper and literal sense, admitted of by a pure metaphor, in which always it is always spoken by resemblance, and not by propriety. Would not the whole world laugh at me, were I to say, for example, that the 144,000, of whom it is written, in the seventh chapter of the Apocalypse, that they were sealed on their foreheads, shall be sealed with some material seal? Would not the whole world laugh at me, and with reason too, if I were to say, that Antichrist and his false prophet would be two men with the exterior figure of beasts, as St. John describes them. Apply then this similitude; or point me out the disparity: as much is the one a metaphor as the other. The whole, then, being a pure metaphor, it appears clear that the mark, or name, or characteristic, whereof the prophecy speaks, can clearly and naturally signify no other thing, than a public and shameless profession of that ABRENUNTIO, or renunciation, the profession of being a renegado, which appears to be the character, or spirit, or distinctive peculiarity, of the whole beast. So that the taking of this mark, would be nothing else than taking the side of liberality, a public and manifest quitting of Jesus, (solvere Jesum,) a formal apostacy from the Christian religion which was heretofore professed. It is said that this mark will be carried upon the forehead, or the hands, to denote the publicity and shamelessness with which antichristianism

will then be professed; the forehead and the hands being the most public parts of man, and at the same time, the two most appropriate symbols, the former of the manner of thinking, the latter of the manner of acting. Being disunited from Jesus, there is no doubt that the forehead and the hands, that is, the thought and operation, shall remain in the most entire liberality; that is, the freedom, not of rational creatures, but of brutes.

It is said that those who do not bear this mark, will not be allowed to buy or sell; to denote the lamentable state of contempt, ridicule, odium, and abandonment, wherein they shall abide who seek to preserve their faith entire. And likewise to denote the terrible temptation, and the extreme peril, which shall come upon them, from this contempt and abandonment, when they see themselves excommunicated from all the human race. This temptation and trial must, doubtless, be very great; because, to those who persevere, and escape victorious, there is announced and promised so remarkable a reward. “And those which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years: but the rest of the dead lived not.”

It is said, finally, that the second beast, with two horns, shall be the immediate cause of this great tribulation: and he shall cause all to receive the mark of the beast, in their foreheads, or in their hands. From which may be drawn two good conclusions, that as the beast with two horns is wholly metaphorical, like the first beast, so the mark, or the action of taking this mark, and of bearing it on the foreheads, and on the hands, are expressions purely metaphorical; which can be true only in the way of similitude, not of propriety. The second thing to be inferred is, that the taking, and publicly wearing, this mark will be a free and voluntary, not a constrained act; for this reason, that the power of the beast can lie no where but in his arms, which are not proper for constraining by force and violence, but for moving and sweetly persuading. In sum, the thing which we are taught by all these resemblances, appears to be simply this, that the second beast will bear the chief part in the perdition of Christians.

Now, my friend, this *abrenuntio*, this *solvere Jesum*, this departure from the faith, and formal apostacy of the Christian nations, seemeth it to you some imaginary phantasm like your Antichrist? seemeth it to you, at the best, an uncertain and doubtful opinion? seemeth it to you that I advance it here loosely and without foundation, merely to make way for my ideas? The thing is so certain, and so oft repeated in the Holy Scriptures, that it cannot altogether be denied (though they seek to mitigate it what they can) by those very doctors, who with the best intentions are engaged in passing all manner of benedictions upon the people of God at present collected from among the Gentiles, and in announcing to them the perpetuity of their faith. Of this we already spoke, though in passing, in the fourth section, and we shall speak more on purpose in the sixth phenomenon —At present let it suffice to bear in mind that question of the Lord, *Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?*

Reflection

§ 13 ALL these ideas which we have just given of Antichrist, and of his whole mystery of iniquity, may be very useful to all Christians, if they should deem them worthy of any particular attention, and regard them from henceforth as at least probable. Being thereby prepared, and possessed at least with some suspicion, it would become very easy to them to study the times, and to compare them with the scriptures; to be alive to the true danger, and consequently not to perish in it. They would not be undone in such numbers as now they are,

and certainly shall be, and they would stand in greater watchfulness against false prophets; above all, they would join themselves more closely to Jesus, certain that there is salvation in no other. Finally, they would address themselves more seriously to redouble and strengthen that cord so absolutely necessary, wherein consisteth the being of a Christian, to wit, faith. But the misfortune is, that these not being the ideas of Antichrist which are held by the doctors, we have no great reason to expect such good fruit of our labour, and much less ought we to expect it from those who shall have adopted as sound, the system which M. Bossuet has proposed with his substantial eloquence, and which Father Calmet has followed, searching out, as he says, the literal sense of this prophecy. These doctors, on so many grounds great and respectable, maintain, with a great array of erudition, that the said prophecy is altogether, or almost altogether accomplished in the ancient persecutions of the church; especially that part of it which is contained between the twelfth and twentieth chapters inclusive. —That is, the woman clothed with the sun, the mysteries of the beast so many and so great, the vials, the harlot, the coming of the King of kings with all the armies of heaven, the entire ruin of the beast, imprisonment of the devil, the living and reigning of the beheaded for a thousand years, &c. All this they say was accomplished in the last persecution of Dioclesian, and in Dioclesian himself. This emperor, they say, it is, who is here signified and announced by the beast with seven heads and ten horns.

If we ask, what seven heads in one emperor may mean? They answer, that they mean seven emperors, who, either jointly with Dioclesian, or after his death, persecuted the church of Christ during the continuance of the same persecution. These were Dioclesian, Maximian, Galerius, Maximinus, Severus, Maxentius, and Lycinius. Here consider two important things: —first, that in this list Constantius Clorus is wanting, who was emperor conjointly with Dioclesian, Maximian, and Galerius, and who ruled in the most westerly provinces of the empire, that is, Spain, France, England, &c. Why then do they omit this emperor? Is it perhaps, because he did not choose to admit the edict of formal and declared persecution? Yes, friend, for that very reason. Then this cannot well comport with what is said of the beast in the sacred text; *power was given him over all kindreds and tongues and nations, and all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him.* We remark, secondly, that if the seven heads signify the seven emperors who persecuted the church conjointly with Dioclesian and after him, then the persecution endured much longer than it ought to have done according to the prophecy, which says, power was given unto him *to continue forty and two months.* Nothing can be concluded by proving to us with so much erudition, that the public edicts for persecution endured only forty and two months. If the persecution endured twenty years, what matters it that the edicts did not endure so long? Is it credible that prophecy should have for its object, the circumstantial of an edict, and not the great outline of the persecution?

Furthermore, what do the ten horns of the beast signify in this system? Here we stumble upon a still greater embarrassment, and more insuperable. The text says clearly that they signify ten kings, *who should give all their power unto the beast:* and this system says, they signify, or may signify, the barbarous nations who destroyed the Roman empire, who, as many authors affirm, were ten. But did these nations destroy or assail the Roman empire in the time of Dioclesian? Did these nations give to Dioclesian and his six companions all their power? Can these nations, who appeared not till after Dioclesian, be said to serve him, as the horns serve the beast to which they belong? But what does the beast with two horns, which makes such a figure in the prophecy, signify? It signifies, or may signify, either the philosophy, or the philosophers who in those times wrote against the Christians and impugned Christianity; or, also, it may symbolize Julian the Apostate, who, with the voice of

a dragon, that is, with artifice and guile, obliged the Christians to take the mark of the first beast; that is, he excited persecution, and in this sense did that great miracle of curing the head wounded to death. And of Julian may be understood the other enigma: he is the eighth, and is of the seven; because he was the eighth, in respect of the same emperors above mentioned, who persecuted the church; but, in his character as a persecutor, he may reckon as one of the seven, &c. Lastly, the enigma set forth in the number, 666, contains no other mystery in this system, than the name of Dioclesian, with the slight addition of Augustus; which appears as if you should say, that the mark of seven emperors, who partly with Dioclesian, and partly after him, persecuted the church, was the name of the same Dioclesian.

It is not to my purpose to enter into a tedious investigation of this system. Whoever will read those authors, and compare what they say with the text of the prophecy, will find it, in my opinion, impossible not to perceive at every step the utmost impropriety of the accommodation; the total omission of very many notable circumstances; and, finally, the slightness with which some points are touched, if they be touched at all, and forthwith left as if they had been sufficiently explained. Besides which, I have this short reflection to make. — All the mysteries of the beast of the Apocalypse were verified, according to his system, in the persecution of Dioclesian; and yet no one understood them at that time, nor even in the following age, which was so fruitful in doctors. The enigma of which we have spoken, contains nothing but the name of the principal persecutor, for the reason, doubtless, that the faithful might know him, and by this knowledge be forewarned; and yet the faithful at that time knew not what the enigma contained, and perhaps had not even a hint of it; because it never came to be understood till more than thirteen hundred years after it was needed, when the understanding could be of no advantage. Is this probable? is this credible? Is this worthy the greatness of God, his wisdom, his goodness, his providence?

The very wise author of this system has in his preface taken up this difficulty, and endeavoured to clear it away; saying, that a prophecy might very well be accomplished, without its being understood at the time that it was accomplished, or without its coming to be understood till long after. And, as if some one might deny this general proposition, he proves it by a fact, which is this, —that when Jesus entered into Jerusalem sitting upon an ass, the prophecy of Zechariah, chapter ix. 9. was fulfilled, wherein the same was announced; and nevertheless the evangelist St. John says, “These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him,” John xii. 16. Well, and because the disciples, who were simple and ignorant men, did not know at that time that those things were written of Messiah, were they therefore unknown, or ought they to have been unknown to the priests, the learned, and the doctors of the law? Did they not know, or should they not have known, that that loudly proclaimed event, which they had just seen with their eyes, was written concerning him? Should not that very event have been to them one proof more, among so many others, that he was the Messiah? Did not the Lord himself on that day say to them, when they insisted that he should impose silence on the multitude, who with shouts proclaimed him Son of David and King of Israel, “I tell you, that if these, should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out,” Luke xix. 40. How then can it be said with truth, that this prophecy of Zechariah was fulfilled without any one understanding it?

As well might we say, that the rejection of Messiah, his death, his resurrection, &c, whereof it is written in the Prophets and the Psalms, were accomplished without any one perceiving it. But this want of understanding was one of the most grievous faults of the priesthood; who, having the scriptures in their hands, being able to compare them with what

was before their eyes, chose not to do so, because of the malice and iniquity which blinded them: which iniquity and malice, together with the false and culpable ideas which they entertained of Messiah, were the true cause why they perceived not the plenary accomplishment of many prophecies, in that wonderful person who was present with them. All this which hath been said, was, it clearly appears, not competent to the Christians at the time of the persecution of Dioclesian, with respect to the understanding of these metaphors and enigmas whereof the Apocalypse is full; though it was a time when so many very holy and wise doctors flourished. Besides which, to speak of the disciples alone, it cannot be said that the prophecy was accomplished without their knowing of it in time; because though they came not to know it till after two months, that was precisely the time when the knowledge was important for the greater confirmation of their preaching, which demonstrated to the Jews as well the prophecy as its full accomplishment, whereof all Jerusalem was witness.

The same author, like one so learned and considerate, not only saw quite through the disparity of the two cases, but had the goodness not to dissemble it, doing us the great favour of ingenuously avowing his true sentiments. Accordingly, he there says, and repeats it three or four times, in other parts, that the understanding or sense which he labours to give to the Apocalypse, on his system, does not impede or oppose itself to another secret and hidden sense, which the whole prophecy may have, and according to which it will be verified in its time. This confession, certainly worthy of a truly learned man, does high honour to the great Bossuet, and a service of the utmost importance to the Apocalypse.

The general reflection which we have just made upon this system, you will apply with much more reason to that of the most learned Arduinus, who, with no less appearance of erudition, pretends to accommodate the whole of the Apocalypse to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. And this same general reflection you may extend, with great facility, to any other system whatever, which does not acknowledge in the Apocalypse a prophecy immediately directed to the second coming of the Lord, embracing the chief things which are to precede, accompany, and follow it; of which, its primary intention, we are fully persuaded, by all the signs, circumstances, voices, and allusions of the prophecy itself, from the beginning to the end, which also almost all the doctors acknowledge and confess.

In the last place (and this is what should be principally attended to); what real and solid fruit can be expected from all these accommodations? I doubt not the good intention of their authors, who perhaps propose to themselves the object of destroying the enormous abuse, which certain heretics of their time made of the Apocalypse. But withal the results may be very prejudicial. If the very great matters announced to us in this prophecy, and so agreeable to the Evangelists and many other scriptures; if these great things which themselves alone are capable of infusing into every one, who reads and considers them, a holy and religious fear; if these things have been already accomplished, in the first ages of the church, then have we nothing to fear; then may we live without any careful respect to other woeful annunciations; then may we live tranquilly; then have we before us nothing of moment to interrupt our repose; then —What consequences! And they will always appear the more wicked, the more we consider them.

The Woman upon the Beast.

§ 14. ANTICHRIST delays me long, and yet is not concluded. As this terrible mystery had to be made up of so many different pieces, it is not less difficult to consider them all, than to omit any of the most prominent. The piece which we now proceed to observe, is on the one hand so delicate in itself, and on the other so difficult of access, that the management of it becomes

very embarrassing, and little less than impossible. I would wholly omit it with good will did I not fear to commit high treason against truth; which if any one know to be the gift of God, and dare not declare it, and do not declare it, out of merely human respects, will that excuse avail him before THE HIGHEST TRUTH? This fear constrains me not altogether to omit the point, but to speak a few words upon it. And if these should appear to you evil, it is in your power to blot them or tear them in pieces; and I will conform to your sentence upon this single though indispensable condition, that in that case, it will be yours, and not mine, to give account to God.

The event of which I am to speak seems to be the last circumstance necessary to the perfection and completion of the mystery of iniquity; and is this: That the beast of seven heads and ten horns should at length receive upon his shoulders a certain woman, who appears, by all her signs and countersigns, to be a queen, and a great queen; of whom, in the time of St. John, it is said with truth, that *she ruled over the kings of the earth*. She is represented, in the Apocalypse, as a notorious harlot; and, among other great crimes attributed to her, this one which seems the greatest of all, that she carried on an illicit and public intercourse with the kings of the earth. Read and consider the seventeenth and eighteenth chapters, which are much too long for quotation. As little, however, do I propose to detain myself much in this observation, but shall only give a slight idea of it, yet sufficient for many days of meditation. Two chief things we ought here to ascertain.

First: Who the woman seated upon the beast is. Secondly: What times are spoken of in the prophecy. As to the first; the doctors do all agree, that the woman here spoken of is the city of Rome, in other times the capital of the greatest empire in the world, and now the capital and centre of unity of the true Christian church. On this first point, which is not called in question, there is no occasion to tarry. In respect to the second, we find only two opinions. The first maintains that the prophecy was wholly accomplished, in past ages, in idolatrous and pagan Rome. The second confesses, that till this day it has not been fully accomplished; and affirms that it will be accomplished in the times of Antichrist, in another Rome yet future, and very much changed from the present.

These two opinions, and the obscure and embarrassed way in which their authors explain themselves being attentively considered, it is not very difficult to make out the pious end which they propose, and the true cause of their embarrassment. This point is the most delicate and critical which can be imagined. On the one hand, the prophecy is terrible in all its circumstances: Both the crimes of the woman, which are clearly related, and the chastisement denounced upon them, are undeniable. On the other hand, the respect, the love, the tenderness, the good conceit and estimation, in which this very woman hath been held, ever since she abolished her idolatry, makes it incredible and improbable that of her should be spoken, or in her should ever be verified such crimes and such a chastisement. In so critical a situation, which side then can we take? The truth of the prophecy must be sacred, for no one doubts its authenticity. But it likewise seemeth necessary to save the honour of the great queen, and to calm all her fears. As she is not ignorant of that which is expressed in the scriptures of truth, and which might or should lay her under great apprehensions, it has appeared becoming in her faithful subjects to deliver her entirely from this anxiety. Therefore have they said to her; some, that she had nothing to fear, the prophecy having been accomplished, many ages ago, upon pagan and idolatrous Rome, against which it was spoken; others, who have not been able to enter into an idea so repugnant to the text, have said to her, that she ought not to be afraid, because the prophecy is visibly directed to other times yet to come, and will not be verified upon the present Rome, upon Christian Rome,

upon Rome the head of the church of Christ, but upon another Rome, infinitely different, composed then of idolaters who shall have become masters of it, having driven out the high priest, and with him all his court and all Christians. In this Rome, thus regarded, will be verified the crimes and the punishments announced in this prophecy. Let us shortly examine these two opinions, or those two consolations, comparing them with the text of the prophecy.

First Opinion. This pretends that the prophecy has ancient, idolatrous, and iniquitous Rome for its object, and was accomplished upon it many centuries ago. This Rome they say, was the great Babylon, the Queen of the world, the harlot upon the beast, who exalteth herself and maketh her boast over other cities, which corrupted the earth with her fornications, which shed so much innocent blood, that she became as it were drunk with it. She, in fine, it is, who received the deserved chastisement when the barbarians sacked, burned, and destroyed her almost wholly. We see the prophecy there verified, twelve centuries ago, and consequently there remains nothing farther to fear.

This opinion has without doubt, its plausibility and some little speciousness, when viewed from a certain distance, but if we draw nigh, we perceive at once its disproportions. The explanation of very many particulars is wholly lost sight of in it, and others it hardly touches on the surface. Two difficulties occur to me, one upon the crimes of the woman, the other upon the chastisement denounced against her.

First difficulty. The greatest crime of which the woman is accused is fornication, and to shut the door against all equivocation, the accomplices of this metaphorical fornication are named, to wit, the kings of the earth: *and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her:* and as the kings with the harlot, so she with them lived deliciously. We ask then, how this crime can be true of ancient Rome; which, according to all accounts given in history was so far from this infamy, that on the contrary, she even regarded all the kings of the earth with a sovereign contempt, nor was there any in the known world whom she did not humble and cast down under her feet. Many times were they seen to enter by the triumphal gate loaded with chains, and to pass out at another to be beheaded or imprisoned. With what propriety then, or with what appearance of truth, can ancient Rome be accused of a metaphorical fornication with the kings of the earth?

To this difficulty which stares us in the face, they answer first, that the word fornication in scripture phrase, signifies merely idolatry, and is most frequently so used in Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, &c. and as ancient Rome beholding herself mistress of the world, obliged the kings of the earth to adore her false deities, (which is so false, that instead, she adored all the false divinities of the nations which she conquered) she may therefore be said to commit fornication with the kings. The most which in this case could be said is, that Rome, as well as the kings, committed fornication with the idols which they worshipped: since this adoration of idols is what the prophet calls fornication, and that not always, but only when they speak of the idolatry of Israel and of Jerusalem. But this is not what we read in our prophecy, with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication and lived deliciously. Here the thing manifestly spoken of, is a criminal intercourse, not between Rome and idols, because that fault was not peculiar to Rome, but was incurred by all the Gentile cities; nor yet between the kings of the earth and the idols of Rome, because these kings being idolaters by profession, it was the same crime to adore the idols of Rome as to adore the peculiar idols of their own countries. Now our prophecy speaketh expressly of an illicit commerce, by name fornication, between Rome herself and the kings of the earth: which is a thing infinitely different, that wants to be explained with truth and propriety; and short of this you do but shun the difficulty and wander wide of the question.

Little satisfied with this first reply, they add another as accessory to it. Which is, that in ancient Rome while mistress of the world, many kings were summoned to judgment, and though their crimes were real and very grievous, they went forth free, having bribed their judges by their great gifts. In so much that Jugurtha, tyrant of Numidia, on leaving Rome, spoke these words: *O Rome! there wanteth but a purchaser that thou mightest be sold!* But who perceives not that this accessory reply is the most silly and insufficient which can be given? According to this, with difficulty shall you find at present, or in any time past upon the earth, any court which does not merit, for the same reason, the name of harlot and fornicatress with their criminals; since it is no rare thing for them to compound all crimes for money, and not a peculiarity to be sought for in ancient Rome.

The second difficulty of this opinion grows out of the chastisement announced upon the harlot, which, if attention be given to the prophecy, will certainly appear not yet to have been verified. The expressions which St. John makes use of, are all the most vivid, telling of a full and eternal extermination: consider them. “And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.” Rev. xviii. 21. If this expression seems to you not so clear, read those which follow, to the end of the eighteenth chapter, and part of the following. “And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee. And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee.” verse 22,23.

Either this is all exaggeration, full of impropriety and falsehood, or it is not yet fulfilled, and will be fulfilled in its time to a very little, as it is written. Besides this, the whole context of the prophecy from the sixteenth chapter ought to be considered: where, after having spoken of the last plague in the seven vials, which the seven angels poured out upon the earth, *in which is filled up the wrath of God*, he proceeds immediately to say, *And great Babylon came in remembrance before God to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath*. And then he proceeds to relate at large the crimes and the punishment of this Babylon in the two following chapters, with this notable circumstance, which St. John also adverts to, that one of the seven angels, who had just poured out the vials, was the same who shewed him the mysteries of the said Babylon. “And there came one of the seven angels, which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters.” Rev. xvii. 1. From which it is to be seen, that as the vials are terrible signs which are to happen towards the last times, so also is the chastisement of this harlot.

To all this ought to be added another very important reflection. If, as the authors of this opinion allege, the prophecy be wholly intended against the ancient idolatrous and iniquitous Rome, if upon her be threatened the terrible chastisement whereof so much is spoken; when was that chastisement accomplished? They answer that it was accomplished when Alaric with his terrible army took it, sacked it, burned it, and almost entirely destroyed it. Very well: but in the first place it is a thing certain that the evils which Alaric’s army brought on Rome were not so great as those inflicted by the ancient Gauls, or those which she suffered in the time of the civil wars, or those which she suffered in the time of Nero, as we are assured by contemporaneous authors, as is declared by Fleuri and Milles, &c. And above all, they were not so great as those which are here clearly announced in the prophecy which speaks of total ruin and eternal extermination. “And shall be found no more at all; and the

light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom, and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee," &c.

Secondly, in the time of Alaric, that is, in the fifth century of the Christian era; what Rome did this barbarous prince sack? what Rome did he almost entirely burn and destroy? was it Rome the idolatrous? Rome the iniquitous? Rome the adulteress and harlot for her idolatry? Certainly not, for at that time there was no such Rome. The only Rome which then was, and which continues till this day, was wholly Christian, had already cast all her idols away from her, and consequently no longer deserved the name of adulteress and harlot; already adored the true God and his only Son Jesus Christ; was already full of churches in which holy offices were celebrated: for history informs us that Alaric commanded his soldiers not to touch the public buildings, nor the temples. Finally, it was already Rome the penitent, Christian, and holy. This being so, does it appear to you credible that, upon this woman, now christian, penitent, and holy, should be accomplished the terrible chastisement denounced against the wicked adulteress? Doth it appear to you credible that, the sins of iniquitous and idolatrous Rome should come to be paid by Christian Rome? Consider it well and see if you can comprehend it, for I confess myself unable. Although the opinion had no other difficulty than this, it were enough of itself to subvert it. And yet, if you read the whole of the eighteenth chapter and part of the nineteenth, you shall find others equal or still greater, in the observation of which I do not intend to detain you an instant longer.

Second opinion. Considering the grave difficulties which the former opinion underlies, almost all the doctors have judged that it is not ancient Rome which is spoken of in the prophecy, but another Rome yet future, in which will be verified all the crimes as well as the terrible chastisement which is here denounced against her. And when is all this to happen? It is to happen they say, and with good reason, in the times of Antichrist. But to reconcile this ingenuous confession with the honour and consolation of the sacerdotal and royal city, (to save which is the aim of both opinions) they make certain suppositions and lay them as the basis on which their whole edifice may rest. Which are as follow. First, the Roman empire is to endure until the end of the world. Secondly, that empire which now is, and for many ages has been so dismembered, that hardly a relic of it is to be seen, shall, towards the last times, recover its ancient greatness, magnificence, and splendour. Thirdly, the heads of that empire in those last times shall become not only infidel and iniquitous, but even professed idolaters. Fourthly, they shall without much difficulty make themselves masters of Rome, establish in it anew the court of the Roman empire, and thereupon Rome shall resume that grandeur, wealth, profusion, majesty, and glory, which it displayed in ages past; as for example, in the time of Augustus. Fifthly, that impious race shall root out from Rome the christian priesthood, and likewise all the faithful who will not renounce their faith. Whereby Rome, being free from that great hindrance, will establish anew the worship of idols, and return to be as idolatrous as before.

These positions being all assumed, and as such, requiring no proof, it is truly most easy to conclude whatever you affirm, and to affirm whatever you please; it is easy to conclude that although the prophecy certainly speaks against a future Rome, yet not in any way against a christian Rome; the latter, as she is incapable of those crimes, is likewise not amenable to those threatenings and chastisements. By which ingenuity the truth of the prophecy is saved, the honour of the great queen is saved, and she remains comforted, quiet and secure, without any thing to disturb her peace or interfere with her repose, because the very heavy indignation of the spouse, neither is, nor can be, measured out for her, but for her enemies only. Those enemies, or this new Rome, thus viewed (continues the explanation),

shall doubtless commit new and greater crimes than the ancient Rome; shall return to her fornication, that is idolatry; shall return to be proud, haughty, unjust, and cruel; shall return to shed christian blood, and become drunk with it; and these crimes shall draw down upon this city, now infidel, the whole burden of the anger and indignation of an omnipotent God. It may seem to you, that surely there is no necessity for more suppositions, well believing that those already made ought to be sufficient to sustain the main conclusion intended. Nevertheless there are some loose ends which it is necessary to tie, and to tie them well; some more suppositions are needed, for it is a thing allowed, that supposition is the most easy and secure method of smoothing away every difficulty, how ever great. Behold then the plain and easy method, by which, according to this opinion, that great chastisement will come upon Rome, then idolatress and adulteress of which the prophecy speaks.

Those ten kings, who, as the same authors suppose are to be conquered by Antichrist, (before their misfortune, and while at enmity and formal war with Antichrist) knowing that idolatrous and iniquitous Rome would favour the pretensions of Antichrist, their enemy, shall be terribly enraged against her, and abhor her, as says the text, *these shall hate the whore*. In consequence of which hatred, they shall gather themselves together, and with their united forces, execute the whole will of God announced in the prophecy, *they shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh and burn her with fire*. Shortly after this infliction, these same ten kings shall be conquered by Antichrist, and subjected to his power, except three, who shall have been left not only conquered, but dead. Whereupon these ten kings, with the Roman empire now conquered by Antichrist, (though a moment since supposed friendly and allied to him, on which account its capital was destroyed) shall be joined to the empire of the east, or Jerusalem; all obstacles being thereby removed, and every door opened for the universal monarchy of this vilest Jew. Father Alàpide departs a little from the common opinion, alleging that the destruction of Rome will come to pass by the express order of Antichrist himself, who shall send on that errand the ten kings, after they have been vanquished and subjected to his empire; but this rests upon the same foundation as the other. And this is all we find in the doctors, who hold the second opinion, upon the great mystery of the harlot city and her punishment.

Well now; and pray upon what foundation doth all this pleasant history and all these suppositions rest? Upon what prophecy, upon what reason, upon what congruity, or verisimilitude? Upon what foundation do they assure themselves that the Roman empire shall return to be what it was? That they shall eradicate the christian religion from Rome, and introduce anew the worship of idols? That Rome, now idolatrous, shall unite herself with Antichrist, king of the Jews, and favour his pretensions? That, finally, the ten kings shall, either out of hatred to Antichrist, before being conquered by him, or by his command after, bring upon Rome the terrible infliction? Is not this literally and properly, to build castles in the air? Perhaps you will say that this is all done in prudence, to give no occasion to heretics and libertines to utter more of their wonted incoherences against the Roman church; but this is the very way to give them new weapons, and to provoke them to sport them with the greatest success. The Roman church founded upon *the firm rock*, needs no flatteries, no false and weak props to maintain her dignity, her primacy over all the churches of the earth, and her true rights, which are in no way opposed by the prophecy of which we treat.

You will likewise say, that this mode of treating the subject, followed by the greater part of the doctors, is also the most prudent in this other point of view; that it aims at not grieving our sovereign and common mother before the time: but this is the very reason, for which the pure truth ought with all humility and reverence to be spoken. For this very reason,

ought her true sons and faithful subjects to seek to afflict her, and rejoice to see her afflicted, *not because she is made sorry, but because she sorrowed to repentance*; as St. Paul speaks to the Corinthians, 2 Cor. vii. 9. This sorrow, which is after a godly manner, cannot but produce great and true benefits, for, continues the apostle, *godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation that needeth not to be repented of, but the sorrow of the world worketh death*. Any servant, any subject, any son whatever, doth always manifest a true obedience to his lord, his sovereign, his father, whom he hath made thus to sorrow; and any lord, or sovereign, or father, whatsoever, who hath not lost common sense, ought to value such sorrow more than all vain securities resting on no thing but gratuitous suppositions. Through the foreshowing of the danger, they may easily take refuge and escape perishing therein; but if by sparing their sorrow, you have made them believe there is no such danger, ruin will be inevitable; and so much the greater, according as it has been the less apprehended.

It is very easy to remark the strange and singular conduct which is pursued in their treatment of this subject; I mean the great liberality with which they take for certain and granted, many things which do not appear from revelation; and the very great economy with which they withhold others, upon which the same revelation is so very explicit. No one tells us, for example, what is meant by the woman of whom we speak, sitting on a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And though the mystery be so great, so novel, and so strange, that St. John himself confesses that at the sight of the woman in that state, so unhappy and so alien from her dignity, *he wondered with a great admiration*; Yet do they suppose, this woman seated upon the beast to signify no more than the alliance and friendship between idolatrous Rome and Antichrist. One should think the beloved disciple had no cause for such admiration. What marvel, that an idolatrous and iniquitous city should favour and aid Antichrist?

No one tells us what is properly signified by the drunkenness of the woman, which seemed so remarkable to St. John. "And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus." In full explanation of which, all that they allow us is, that in Rome was anciently shed much christian blood; which they suppose shall also be the case, when she shall return to be idolatrous, and join in friendship with Antichrist. And is this reason enough for calling her drunk? Is that which produces drunkenness, and the drunkenness itself inseparable? That in Rome there is much blood of saints, is indubitable; but that this same Rome, or her inhabitants, should be called drunk with this blood, it is absolutely necessary that they should make use of it, and that it should stupefy them, by filling them with a vain confidence. The prophecy itself explains these effects and this vain security of the woman, who, drunk with the blood of saints, and at the same time drowned in glory and luxury, said within herself, "I sit as a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow," Rev. xviii. 7. And because of this most vain security, continues the prophecy, shall come upon her all that is written, "Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall utterly be burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her." Rev. xviii. 8.

In this sense, which appears the only true one, in other times was Jerusalem (which was then, no less than Rome is now, the holy city, the court, or centre, of the true church) drunken with the blood of her prophets and just men, which she herself had shed, as if that blood could have placed her in safety, and warded off the condign punishment which her crimes deserved. And so the Lord, by his prophets, reproves that inordinate and highly injurious confidence, when he says to them, Woe to you who build and adorn, with much care and devotion, the monuments and sepulchres of the prophets and righteous men; and ye

remember not that your fathers persecuted and slew them; and ye consider not that ye are worthy children of such parents: resembling them greatly in your iniquity. It is clear, the Lord does not condemn the piety of those who built and adorned the monuments of the prophets and righteous men, but, their too great confidence in these things, as if they left them at full liberty to work unrighteousness with impunity; and so the Lord concludes by telling them that, notwithstanding this blood, and these monuments of so many prophets and saints, all the things which were prophesied should come upon that generation: “Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.” Matt. xxiii. 36. In short, no one tells what in reality is signified by the fornication of the woman with the kings of the earth. Oh how delicate a point is this! This crime is the principal and the root of all the other crimes whereof the woman is accused: for this crime, is the name of fornicatress, harlot, and prostitute given to her: and for this crime is so public and violent a chastisement denounced against her. On this very capital point of the prophecy, it is a most manifest sophism by which they have avoided the difficulty. Fornication in scripture phrase, they tell us, is nothing but idolatry, of which, under the name of fornication, the prophets frequently reprov'd Jerusalem, and therefore they call her harlot, fornicatress, and prostitute; so that the charge of fornication against future Rome, is nothing more than to upbraid her for her ancient idolatry, and announce to her, against a future time, the revival of it, with the same punishment upon both. But is it credible, I ask, is it possible, that those who thus speculate should not see the utmost difference between the one accusation and the other? Is it possible that, at least, they should not remark the difference of the accomplices, which are so distinctly named in the prophets, and in the Apocalypse? The fornication of Jerusalem, say the prophets, was with kings of wood and stone. The fornication of Rome, says the Apocalypse, shall be with the kings of the earth. Are gods, or idols, of wood and stone, the same as kings of the earth? The fornication of Jerusalem was certainly nothing but idolatry. And what shall the fornication of Rome be? It will be, if you please to call it so, another species of idolatry; but not terminating in false gods of wood and of stone, but in living and true kings of the earth; for these are the accomplices, which are clearly and expressly named. And what idolatry is there in this? Is there not here a clear and manifest sophism? And is it not as clear and palpable, what very great loss, and most wicked consequences, may accrue from it? So long as the queen shall see no idol in her habitation, she will seem to herself to be standing sure, being so taught by her doctors, and in her heart she will confidently say, *I sit as a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow*. Thus comforted, it appears very possible and very easy that she should, at some time, be thrown off her guard, and, in the decay of her love, give way to those very excesses spoken of in the text; not considering as fornication that which is so in reality. And oh what a fatal consequence this would be!

An author of very great weight, (M. Bossuet, upon the seventeenth and eighteenth chapters of the Apocalypse,) puts forth a defence of Rome after another and a very singular way alleging that the prophecy cannot be spoken of Christian Rome, and proving it by this single consideration, that if the prophecy spoke of Christian Rome, it would not designate her harlot and fornicatress, but adulteress only, which is the name properly deserved by a married woman who should prove faithless. Accordingly (and this is most worthy of remark) when the prophets speak of the idolatry of Jerusalem, who was a married wife no less than Rome, they give it the name of adultery, and to her the name of adulteress. This learned man, on so many accounts worthy of all veneration, appears not to have well considered what he has here advanced. It is certain that to the idolatry of Jerusalem, the spouse of God, the prophets do sometimes give the name of adultery, and to her of adulteress; but it is likewise most certain,

that for once they make use of this name, they do twenty times make use of the name of fornication for the offence, and of fornicatress for the offender. For example, let the whole sixteenth chapter of Ezekiel be read, in which this is expressly spoken of, and it will be found, that there the word fornication occurs seventeen times, and the word adultery but once. If the other prophecies be read, the same will assuredly be found, that they almost always call idolatry fornication, and very rarely adultery; which I regard so very obvious and easy of observation to any one, that it were painful to me to make longer stay upon it. Besides it seems to me exceedingly improbable, that Rome herself will ever be content with this species of defence.

Jerusalem was the capital, the court, the seat of religion, the centre of unity to the church of the true God, and, as such, his spouse, which is the name given to her in scripture; and so Jerusalem was a married woman. Notwithstanding which sacred bond, the love of Jerusalem to her spouse, in time, waxed cold, and she forgot what she was, and began to give way to thoughts and designs very foreign to her dignity. Cooled in her affection, she did not long delay to look with envy upon the vain and apparent glory of other nations, and, desiring to be like them, to say within her heart, what her spouse repeats to her by the mouth of Ezekiel, "We shall be as the nations, and as the tribes of the earth, worshipping stocks and stones," and filled with these purposes, she came to the extremity of bowing the knee to stocks and stones.

Now, my dear Sir, reply to me with sincerity; if there should be another Jerusalem, another spouse of the true God, another beloved one, and still better beloved than the first, and if this new Jerusalem should come, in time, to cool in her love, and to be careless of her true obligations; if she should be notorious for, and formally accused of, an illicit commerce, not, indeed, with gods of wood and stone, like the former spouse, but with the kings of the earth; if the same husband, by some one of his prophets, should give to this commerce the name of fornication, what other thing could we, or should we, in this case understand, but the same in substance, (the accomplices being merely changed) which the prophets declare, when they unfold the fornication of the first Jerusalem? The fornication of the former spouse was with idols, was with the vilest gods of wood and stone: And wherein consisted this fornication? It consisted in regarding them as something which in reality were nothing; it consisted in preferring them, or setting them on a level with the legitimate spouse; it consisted in praying to them; in trusting to them, in fearing them, in...Now apply this similitude: do not shut your eyes voluntarily, or disfigure a truth of such grave consequence.

Far, now, be it from our most pious and prudent mother, to be wroth with any one who telleth her, in the greatest reverence, and with entire affection, the simple truth. This were to be wroth with God himself. Much less ought she to be indignant when she remembereth that it is not present Rome which is at all spoken of here, but future Rome alone to which the prophecy hath its determinate application. We have no reason to apprehend, that the chair of truth should be capable of uttering that folly which Jerusalem spake to her prophets, "Speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits;" Isaiah xxx. and still less that they should give that iniquitous sentence which the priests and prophets passed against Jeremiah, "Then spake the priests and the prophets unto the princes and to the people, saying, This man is worthy to die; for he hath prophesied against this city, as ye have heard with your ears." Jer. xxvi. Oh what evils might have been avoided, and may yet be avoided in the time to come, if those who know a truth did not conceal or disfigure it, out of some consideration, respect, or duty, ill understood! if, at the least, they did not enter the lists so strenuously against it. We are not ignorant that many unrighteous men, out of hatred to the Roman

church, have misused, in a monstrous and most impudent way, this passage of scripture. But what thing is there, so true and so holy, which they cannot abuse? Wicked children, in what they have said concerning Rome, under the head of this prophecy, have uttered injuries, calumnies and invectives, and have mingled some one truth or another with endless fables. But what has all this to do, or what can it have to do, with the present subject? Because some have obscured certain truths, by mingling them with errors and fables, ought we, therefore, not to give our diligence, to set forth these very truths in their clearness and purity? Ought we, therefore, to deny them wholly, and pass entirely to the other extreme? Are we, therefore, prevented from taking a middle path, equally wide of fatal error and mischievous flattery?

What we say of the crimes of this woman, we say, necessarily, of her punishment also. Rome, not idolatrous but Christian, not the head of the Roman empire but the head of Christendom, and centre of unity of the true church of the living God, may very well, without ceasing from this dignity, at some time or other incur the guilt, and before God be held guilty of fornication with the kings of the earth, and amenable to all its consequences. And in this there is not any inconsistency, however much her defenders may shake the head. And this same Rome, in that same state, may receive upon herself the horrible chastisement spoken of in the prophecy; nor is it necessary thereto that she should previously be taken by the infidels, that she should return to become the court of the infidel Roman empire, arisen from the grave with new and greater grandeur; nor that the new emperors should root out of her the christian religion, and reconstitute idolatry. All these extravagant ideas, all these imaginary suppositions, are, indeed, consolations of no worth, and which cannot fail to be of the greatest injury to Rome, if she repose upon them. The great grievance (and it is a grievance worthy of inconsolable lamentation,) is that the prophecy will accomplish itself, as appears by this very thing; I mean, by the too great trust which our mother reposes upon words of consolation, not considering that they spring merely from the respect and love of her faithful subjects, who have regarded, and do regard, it as a point of piety, and even of religion, to bless her at all times and in all ways. Oh that it were possible to speak in her ear, in such a way as should profit her, those words which God spake to his ancient spouse, I mean only with a reference to this particular point! *Oh my people, they which lead thee (say that thou art blessed, Vulgate,) cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths.* Isaiah iii. 12.

Never, oh! our Lady! never, oh! our Mother! shalt thou fall again into the crime of idolatry. That certainly is not the fornication here announced of thee. Thy faith shall not fail; and herein all thy doctors say to thee the truth: but, oh! Lady! take heed, that without this falling away of thy faith, another kind of fornication may one day in thee be accomplished; as metaphorical as was the fornication with idols of the former spouse of God, but not less abominable in his divine eyes, nor less perilous for thee, nor less fatal to thy faithful children, nor less worthy of chastisement, and of a chastisement so much the greater, as thine obligations have been greater, and greater the honour and true grandeur to which thy spouse hath exalted thee, who having *gone into a far country to receive a kingdom to himself, and return*, entrusted, and so much commended to thee the government of his house and the true wellbeing of his great family; of which if thou shouldst one day become careless, attending to thyself, and caring for another grandeur which can certainly never be thine, thou mayest fear, Lady, with great justice, that the utmost weight of the prophecy shall infallibly come upon thee.—“And thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.” Thus writes St. Paul to the Romans; chapter xi. 20,21.

When Messiah appeared in Jerusalem, it is certain that there was not found in her any idol whatever. That abominable crime of ancient Jerusalem had been already corrected, amended, and thoroughly purged away. Moreover, the external worship, or service of religion, went forward; continual sacrifice, prayer at its set times, fasts, solemn festivals, the sabbath, &c. all was scrupulously observed, insomuch that several observances went to the other extreme of too great minuteness; and there were in the city many just men, of whom mention is made in the gospel: in short, the whole city was really, as it was called, the Holy City; which name indeed the Evangelist gives it, even after the crucifixion of Messiah, Matt. xxvii. 33. Nevertheless, Jerusalem was then in so wicked a state in the eyes of God, that Messiah himself *wept over it*; and not only held it worthy of tears, but of that terrible anathema which he thunders against it in the form of a prophecy. “For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation,” Luke xix. 43,44.

This prophecy of the Son of God was fully accomplished a few years afterwards, nor was it required for its perfect accomplishment that the city should return to her ancient idolatry, nor that she should have fallen into the hands of any Gentile power, who might root out of her the true religion, and plant the worship of idols in its stead. Nothing of this kind was necessary. Jerusalem was punished, not for idolatry, but for iniquity; not for her ancient crimes, but for those very crimes which the Lord had reprehended, especially in her priesthood, whereof the character may be gathered without difficulty from the gospel. The similitude then answers freely in all parts without any difficulty, and the application is obvious of itself.

The greatest, or the only difficulty which there is in our system of Antichrist is proposed and resolved.

§ 15. All the travail which we have taken thus far in collecting and uniting into one moral body the diverse pieces whereof Antichrist is composed, or in arming this great machine, will doubtless appear labour lost, unless we answer in a natural way a very weighty difficulty which is found in the second chapter of the second Epistle to the Thessalonians, where the apostle is certainly speaking of Antichrist, although he names him not. This being the case, as no one doubts, there can be as little doubt that he is speaking of a single person, whether you judge from the bearing of all his explanation, and the general strain of his language, or from his always speaking in the singular, and never in the plural number; or, finally, from his mentioning several particulars of Antichrist, especially one which cannot consist with the supposition of many individuals, but of one only. The entire text of the apostle is as follows: —“Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his

coming: even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish.”

In all the Holy Scripture, though you should read it over a hundred times, shall you not find another place besides this, which appears to favour the individual personality of Antichrist; while there are so many others, which withstand and overthrow that idea of his being a single person. So that this single text is all the real foundation on which the common opinion rests and strengthens itself. In order then to reply to this great difficulty in an intelligible way, let us take it up in parts. Two points there are, and only two, on which the whole difficulty rests. —The first, that St. Paul speaks of Antichrist in the singular, and not in the plural, calling him *the man of sin, the son of perdition, who exalteth himself, that wicked one, &c.* The second, that St. Paul says of *this man of sin, that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God*, Wherefore it is of an individual and singular person that he is speaking.

Satisfaction is given as to the first point of the difficulty.

IN the first place it is undeniable and beyond dispute, that the speaking of Antichrist in the singular, and not in the plural number, as doth St. Paul in this passage, can prove nothing either the one way or the other; so ordinary a thing is it to speak of a moral body made up of many individuals as if it were one single person: and both ways of speaking are alike good. In the Holy Scriptures we have examples of this without number, whereof St. Paul himself furnisheth us with not a few. Who will say, for example, that God speaks of the single person Adam, when he says, “I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth?” Gen. vi. Who will say that Jacob speaks of the single person of each of his sons; when before his death he says to them, “Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days?” Gen. xlix. When speaking with each one of them in particular, he announceth to him his future lot: for example, “Issachar is a strong ass. Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf. Napthali is a hind let loose,” &c. Who will say that Moses speaks to the single person of Jacob his father, when he says continually in his books, “Hear, oh Israel! Observe, oh Israel!” —When he says in the singular number, that God delivered the Canaanite into his hands, and that he slew him: *he hath delivered up the Canaanite whom he slew, &c.* Who will say that Isaiah speaketh of some single individual called Egypt, when he says, *The Egyptians are men, and not God, (Vulg. Egyptus homo, et non Dens, Egypt is a man, not God)?* Of these examples one might cite with little trouble two or three thousand; because it is a proper way of speaking in all writings, sacred and profane, when the subject is of many who morally compose one whole.

St. Paul himself (Rom. xi.) certainly speaketh unto all Christian nations, then in being, and afterwards to be; yet, nevertheless, almost always doth he speak in the singular number, as if he were speaking with one single individual; for example: “And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree. Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Well, because of unbelief they were broken off and thou standest by faith.” Now let us suppose for a moment, that Antichrist is to be a moral body, as we have considered it; in this case, would not the expressions of St. Paul be most true and appropriate? Would not the names, *man of sin, son of perdition, that wicked, who exalteth, &c.* answer perfectly well to the moral body? It appears that it would so, and indeed much better than if he spoke in the plural, saying, *the men of sin, the sons of perdition.* Although the stones which form a palace or a temple, be considered in themselves as very

many, and be spoken of in the plural; yet, when they are viewed united together, surely they are no longer spoken of in the plural, but in the singular; surely all that union or aggregation is properly called a palace or a temple. In the same way, although all the individuals who are to compose Antichrist, considered in themselves, be innumerable, yet, considered in union, in a body, in that kind of order necessary to form the whole Antichristian machine; in that aspect, I say, in which all these individuals are a whole, or one body, are an Antichrist; surely we may speak of all as we speak of one person, and give to that whole communion the name which the apostle gives to it, *the man of sin*, *the son of perdition*, &c In all which, far from finding any impropriety worthy of remark, there is, on the contrary, to be seen a very great propriety, and it is the language used when speaking of a religion, of a republic, of a monarchy, and even of the very mystical body of Christ, which is all believers united together, and animated by the same spirit of Christ.

Moreover, if we consider attentively the circumstances and the time of St Paul's speaking concerning Antichrist, I dare take upon me to say, that we may almost with the hand lay hold upon the reason for which he found it expedient not to explain himself fully in this matter, but to speak with some obscurity, and to use words equally applicable to an individual person and to a moral body composed of many. St. Paul was peculiarly the apostle, the doctor, the master of the Gentiles: he was, in those primitive times, like a true mother, most full of love and tenderness, and, at the same time, of discretion and prudence, who gives to her children the necessary and convenient food, and hides from their sight, in some way, that which may not be convenient for them. Still he always speaks to them the truth, and hides from them nothing which it imported them to know; yet certain truths, whereof, the clear and particular knowledge was not so necessary for them at that time, he serves out to them with great economy; the indispensable showing to them openly, while, as it were, he held from them, by some means, the less needful, which might cause them any distress. So happeneth it right often, that he cuts the sentence short, leaving it almost without a meaning, that he might not explain it wholly, or that it might not be wholly understood until the fulness of its time.

Amidst a number of examples, which it were easy for me to point out to you, I draw your attention only to that text of the epistle to the Romans; "For as ye in times, past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief: even so have these also now not believed in your mercy, [Vulg. and Gr.] that they also may obtain mercy," Rom. xi. 30,31. In this second part of the proposition there is manifestly wanting the causal clause which is in the first, and without which the similitude cannot apply throughout; and it appears clear that the Apostle omits it on purpose that he might not then afflict or dishearten the new believers. The causal circumstance, in the first part, is this, through *their unbelief*, that is, *of the Jews*; corresponding to which, in order that the similitude may have free course, there ought to be found another causal circumstance in the second part, to this effect, *on account of your unbelief*. So that if you, obtained mercy through the unbelief of the Jews, they shall obtain the same through your unbelief. These last words, which are wanting in the text, are evidently to be gathered from the whole scope of that which goes before, and still more of that which follows after; "For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all." In the unbelief of the Jews to show great mercies unto the Gentiles; and in the unbelief of these again (when that comes to pass, as it is written) to show equal or greater mercies unto the Jews. Truly a great and inscrutable mystery: and accordingly the Apostle instantly concludeth the subject with that exclamation, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

In this way may we reason, attentively considering all that by the same Apostle is spoken of Antichrist, in the passage quoted. The whole of this chapter, for all that can be said, is most obscure. Some clauses have no sense, or a sense which does not appear, because they are not concluded: others appear true enigmas, much akin to those of the Apocalypse. In others reference is made to what he had spoken by word of mouth, which we have not the means of knowing. Who would understand, for example, that that word, *falling away*, which is so general, *except there come a falling away first*, signifies, in this place, *the apostacy*, if the same Apostle had not explained it in other places, as in his first epistle to Timothy, Tim. iv. 1. and in that to the Hebrews?

Now if the *man of sin*, the son of perdition, of whom he says that he should be revealed or manifested before the coming of the Lord; if *this man of sin* is not in reality any thing else than the *falling away from the faith*, or a consequence of the apostacy; if there is to be no other thing than a body of Christian apostates, animated by that terrible spirit, (*qui solvit Jesum*) which dissolves the body of Jesus; in this case it appears something more than probable that the apostle would explain himself with the utmost discretion and reserve, in order to occasion no injury to those tender plants which were hardly beginning to bud; in order not to afflict or discourage them in their first outset, beyond what was necessary. We do not know what use the Thessalonians made of this passage of St. Paul, nor how they understood it, nor if they understood it at all. It seems most probable that, for the present, they were content with the clear and certain notice given them by the Apostle, touching the leading point of the whole epistle; to wit, that the day of the Lord was not so close at hand as had gone abroad amongst them, (how we know not) since before it there must come to pass a *falling away*, and the revelation of the *man of sin*. Since then, in the course of time, so much has been thought and so much has been advanced upon this passage of St. Paul, that the *man of sin* has at length come to be that phantasm or monster, which no one can look on without admiration, nor read of without fright, I see well enough, and with all honesty confess, that, merely by what hath been said, the great difficulty is not resolved, though it is very certain that thereby, seeing the first words, *man of sin, son of perdition*, are as intelligible of a moral body as of a single person, the first prop of the difficulty is much weakened, and it will vanish entirely with the explanation of the second, to which we now proceed.

Satisfaction is rendered upon the second point of the Difficulty.

AMONG the other particulars given by St. Paul of the man of sin, the son of iniquity, or Antichrist, one is, that he shall not only oppose himself unto, but advance himself “above all which is called God and worshipped, so as that he shall sit in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.” Which sitting in the temple of God, showing himself as if he were God, can only be competent to a single person; therefore the man of sin and son of iniquity, or Antichrist, must be, according to St. Paul, an individual man, or single person. This is the second stay of the common opinion, and they regard it as so clear and decisive, that they deduce from it as a verity of faith, that Antichrist will be an individual and single person.

Well then, if the text of St. Paul, which we now consider, be so clear and decisive, the explanation ought to be likewise clear and perceptible; and upon this supposition it is asked in the first place, what temple of God is it that St. Paul speaketh of? Speaketh he in a figure or metaphor, concerning a spiritual temple? Or is it a material temple built with hands, whereof he speaketh? Between these two temples there appears no middle supposition. If he speaks in the first sense, the text speaks nothing in their favour, but rather against them; because in the same sense in which the word temple is taken, we ought to take the *man of sin* who sitteth

there, and likewise the seat itself, and the action of sitting. If it is a material temple built with hands, we return and pray to be informed what temple it may be? They reply, the very temple of Jerusalem, seeing in St. Paul's time, there was no other material temple of God in the whole earth. But before passing to any other reflection, it is to be believed that St. Paul did not speak here of that individual temple which in his time was standing, otherwise he would have proved a bad prophet, because he could not be ignorant that that very temple of God was shortly to be destroyed, according to the prophecy in the ninth chapter of Daniel, which is very clear, and also the prophecy of Christ himself, who said, speaking of the temple, "there shall not be left one stone upon another which shall not be thrown down," Matt. xxiv. 2. Wherefore if the apostle spake of the temple of Jerusalem, it is indubitable that he spake of another temple still future, and what is that? It is, they say with great formality, that which Antichrist shall build when he establisheth his court in Jerusalem.

And whence is this knowledge derived? We know that there are no other archives from whence information of the future can be drawn, save the revelation contained in the Holy Bible. In what passage then is this notice to be met with? In this very passage, haply of St. Paul, after it hath been understood and accommodated to that view of the subject? It will hardly be believed, yet true it is, that there is not another passage pointed to, or which can be pointed to, because there are not any such in all the Holy Bible: but there are many which assert quite the contrary. Look at this which is worth a thousand, in the ninth chapter of the prophet Daniel, who speaking of Messiah's death and its results, hath this, "And after three-score and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate." If the desolation of Jerusalem and her temple is to continue until the consummation and the end, at which time shall Antichrist build the city and the temple which the Romans have desolated? If before the consummation and the end, he will falsify the prophecy, and this were indeed one of his greatest acts of prowess. If after, then, shall it be still a greater prowess, as he must escape from hell in order to build the temple and the city. See you not, Sir, with your eyes the hypothesis and its inconclusiveness?

Even putting the case, and for a moment granting that this perfidious Jew Antichrist, should be he who in other times shall build the temple of Jerusalem, it is asked, when this temple is built by Antichrist, shall it be really a temple of God? This seemeth a hard thing to be allowed. How shall it be a temple of the living God, how shall we give that name to an edifice erected by the greatest enemy of God, not for God, but for himself? How shall God dwell in that temple so as that it shall with propriety deserve the name of *God's temple*? *If it do not then deserve this name, it follows that the apostle is not speaking of that imaginary temple*, for he says distinctly that the *man of sin, shall sit in the temple of God*.

Then of what temple of God speaketh St. Paul? Those who say that the text is so very clear, and by its clearness decisive of the issue, ought to take charge of all these embarrassments. But, as for the right understanding of the word *falling away*, we found it necessary to consult St. Paul himself in other passages of his epistles, so in like manner, in order to understand the word *temple of God*, we ought to consult the same apostle.

In all the fourteen epistles of St. Paul, this word, *temple of God*, occurs but seven times. In the six first of which it is always taken in a figurative and spiritual sense, and never in a material sense, as we shall see presently. But in the seventh, the sense is not so clear, nor is it with so much certainty to be perceived, whether he speaks of a spiritual or of a material

temple. To which doubt there is to be added, that the material sense hath great difficulties as we have just seen, and the spiritual none as we are about to see. Now in such a case which we have proposed with all truth and faithfulness, we may ask, may we understand this last obscure place in the same clear sense in which we understand the six former? If it be said no, the grounds for the exception should be made to appear: and these grounds do neither appear, nor is there any appearance of their being produced in any other way, than by answering with, or begging the question. But if they answer yes, thereby the difficulty is resolved and the dispute ended.

Lest peradventure there should be a doubt of the actual sense in which the word, *temple of God*, is used by St. Paul, in those other six places, they may be viewed in their several connexions, being three times in the third chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians, where he says, “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy: for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.” In the sixth chapter of the same epistle is found this word another time. *What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you.* In the second epistle to the same Corinthians, chapter sixth, is found this word another time, *And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God.* What now do you think of the sense of these six passages of St. Paul? Can you doubt it? There remaineth then to us no other, than that which is now in question; and we affirm of this also, that there is no reason for understanding it differently; there is no reason for understanding it of a *material temple*; but on the contrary, the whole context of the chapter is confessedly obscure, and all from the beginning to the end full of figurative expression, which leads us to the figurative sense, and dissuades us from the material, both in respect to the *man of sin*, and the *temple of God*.

The temple of God here spoken of, being then figurative and spiritual, the whole mystery is thereby at once unlocked. The temple of God whereof St. Paul speaketh, is nothing else than the church of Christ, is nothing else than the congregation of all the faithful, is nothing else than these believers united in one, who, as St. Peter saith, “as lively stones are built up a spiritual temple.” And this is the temple of God, where the man of sin, the son of iniquity shall formally sit, publicly shewing himself, and freely operating therein, as if he were God: “shewing himself that he is God.” And what may this mean? What it means appears most clear and conformable to all which we have observed above. It all proceeds towards one object without difficulty or embarrassment. The man of sin, and son of perdition, is no other in principle than a great number of true apostates, who having first broken the bonds of Jesus, and disunited themselves from him, and so verified in themselves what the apostle mentions first, *except there should come a falling away first*, shall then unite into a moral body, and give their labour to increase and strengthen it in all possible ways; and after that has succeeded, shall rebel, and declare war against the same Jesus, and against God his Father. Whence indeed to this man of sin the name of Antichrist, or Contrachrist is given.

Then this *man of sin*, this moral body, when he is grown up to perfect maturity, and no impediment restrains him from coming publicly forth; when certain horns which are to grow, shall have grown to their perfection; when, finally, he has gained over and established in his interest a terrible beast with two horns, endowed with all his talent of working miracles, —then shall this man of sin sit in the church of Christ, which is the temple of the true God: *for ye are the temple of God*. And there, in that temple, shall he issue mandates and be obeyed, partly for the terror and power of his horns, and likewise for the horns of the lamb pertaining to the other beast, and for his dragon speech. Then shall he at his will, within this

temple, dispose of every thing most holy, and most venerable, now forbidding the perpetual sacrifice, now altering, now mingling, now changing, now confounding the sacred with the profane, the light with darkness, Christ with Belial. Then shall this monster of iniquity be seen publicly to open his mouth in *blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his temple and they who dwell in heaven*. Then shall he be seen to *make war with the saints and to overcome them*. Then, finally, shall he be seen to be the lord and master of the house and temple of God, *which ye are*. Shewing himself within that temple, by his conduct, by his operations, by his despotism, as if he were God. *Shewing himself that he is God*.

The very physical meaning which they have sought to give to this passage, is that which hath produced these notions so absurd concerning Antichrist, which we have examined. But we need only to reflect that most of the expressions in this chapter are figurative, and therefore very obscure; others far from clear: and it is very easy to believe they were so written with great wisdom, in order that they might not be understood before the proper time. It was neither necessary nor convenient that they should be clearly and definitively understood in the beginning of the church; nor is it credible that St. Paul should write all which in this place is set forth, for the sake of the Christians of Thessalonica merely; but only in as far as it might conduce to the main object of his epistle, which was to draw them out of the error in which they were actually involved, of expecting every moment the coming of the Lord. Of what importance would it have been to the primitive Christians to know clearly what was to fall out in the world, it may be, two thousand years after their time? Yet was it of great importance that all this should be left on record, although with a certain disguise, in order that it might be of service when it became necessary, when time and the events themselves began to open the meaning of it.

This is the true cause of the obscurity of many prophecies. This is the true cause why many future events therein revealed, are yet so concealed and covered under obscure metaphors, in order that they might not be intelligible before the proper time. In which economy the infinite wisdom of God, his providence, his goodness, alike shine forth. On the contrary, the things which pertain to the substance of religion, that is to doctrine and morality, are found written with the greatest simplicity and clearness; and if some should be found not so clear, the same wisdom and providence of God hath disposed and permitted it to be so, in order that doubts might present themselves, and excite disputes; and even in order that errors and heresies might arise, for the church to examine, to clear up, and to teach in their true signification. But in things which pertain not to doctrine, nor to morals, in the prophecies which announce future events, never has the church set herself to declare what is their true signification. She has left this field clear for the doctors to labour in; never has she taken part with any of their opinions, nor approved this as certain, nor reprobated that as erroneous. And thus whatever these doctors have set forth upon the prophecies, may be either received or rejected, according to the reasons on which it resteth. And although they may say and affirm that this or that is a truth, and a truth of faith (as sometimes they will do without advancing any reason but the authority of one another), we do not therefore cease to be at perfect liberty to examine the foundation upon which they say so. If the foundation, after being well examined, shall prove solid and firm, we ought to stand upon their side, as saith St. Augustine; *Not because they have said it, but because they have been able to persuade you of it by means of the canonical authors, or by some excellent reason*. Ep. a Hier, 82.⁴⁴ Extrinsic authority, in these matters we speak of, has no weight, nor can have any, beyond the foundation on which it resteth. But if the foundation, after being well examined, prove not

⁴⁴ See Part I chap. II

sufficient; if time, circumstances, accident, or, in one word, providence, should discover and clearly show some things different, shall we not, in this case, have power, nay, ought we not, in conscience, to depart, in those particular points, from the sense of the doctors? Shall we not have power, at least, to appeal from the doctors who are dead to the doctors who are living? To propose to them our doubts, and ask of them a new, more attentive, and a more mature examination?

Which is the only fruit we desire from all the observations hitherto made, or to be made hereafter. And with that alone methinks I shall remain content. Far from wishing to be believed upon my word, what I most desire is to be examined with all the rigour which the laws of criticism require. The particular things of which I treat are undeniably of the utmost importance, and of the utmost interest. While, on the other hand, the present system of things in the world, the actual estate of the Christian church, in many of its members, very like to that seventh angel of the Apocalypse, neither cold nor hot, Rev. iii. 15. appear to cry loudly upon the ministers of religion, and to intreat them instantly to shake off sleep, to open their eyes, and to look about them and observe more attentively.

I have proposed a new Antichrist. Whether it is true or not I do not decide. This is the province of the judge, not of the party. Neither do I propose it as an assertion, but as a mere proposition, submitted in good faith, both Antichrist as a whole, and all the pieces of which it is composed, not only to the judgment of the church, which is always to be supposed, but likewise to the particular judgment of the learned, who will undertake the labour of examining it, of correcting, of illustrating, of perfecting, and, if it please them, of impugning it also. Only it is besought of them, that the examination or impugning of it should not reduce itself in the end to mere extrinsical authority. I am not ignorant that this authority, for the most part, favours me not. So that if I be thereby judged, judgment will surely go against me: but will it be just? The examining or impugning ought to proceed by the foundation on which that extrinsical authority resteth, or ought to rest; not by the authority itself.

Two Annotations.

1st. In the Fourth Section were quoted these words of the First Epistle of St. John, *Spiritus qui solvit Jesum; the spirit which breaks the cords of Jesus*, as being the proper definition of Antichrist; and it was said that these words bear the proper and natural sense of a real apostacy from the Christian religion before professed. And yet, at Section Seventh, a beast begins to be spoken of, as if it were the true Antichrist, among the seven heads, of which there are only five who can have *broke the cords of Jesus*, or fallen into apostacy: seeing the other two, which are Mahometanism and idolatry, holding no alliance with Jesus, cannot be separated, or separate themselves from him. Either these two heads of the beast are not to be included, or the definition is not just.

Answer. —In various parts of the Phenomenon we have adverted to the double signification, passive and active, of the phrase, *solvere Jesum*, dissolving the body of Jesus; which, in its passive sense, is as it were the foundation of Antichrist, and his first care that he may obtain to himself a form; but after being formed, and having united all his pieces into one, his *dissolving of Christ* will be principally in an active sense, by procuring the disengagement of all in the world who are found in any way attached to him; and for this purpose waging a fierce war against the body of Christianity and Christ himself. On this account St. Paul places *the falling away* first, and afterwards the revelation of the *man of sin*; because the apostacy is necessarily the first step towards the formation of Antichrist, his revelation, and public declaration. Now to wage this warfare against Christ with good

success, in all parts of the world, it will be absolutely necessary, besides the body of apostates, or the five heads, *which went out from us*, to unite to himself two others, that is very many members of Mahometanism and idolatry. These, although they do not verify *the dissolution of Jesus* in a passive, do so in an active sense, since they likewise separate from Jesus, that is procure the separation, of the very many Christians who shall be within their reach. And so the general definition appears just.

2nd. The seven heads of the beast, of chapter xiii. of the Apocalypse, were explained by saying that they represent seven false religions morally united in one body, and actuated by one spirit, *against the Lord and against his Anointed*. Nevertheless, in the seventeenth chapter of the same Apocalypse, the seven heads are found otherwise explained thus: *The seven heads* (which thou sawest on the beast) *are seven mountains....and they are seven kings* [this, not *these are*, is the reading of the Vulgate, and the true reading of the Greek also].

Answer. —In the thirteenth chapter of the Apocalypse, Antichrist and his mystery of iniquity are spoken of generally; whereas, in the seventeenth chapter, a particular event is spoken of pertaining exclusively to the city of Rome. For that general mystery, and for that particular event, the same metaphor is made use of, because of the very great relation or connexion which they shall hold with one another. No wonder therefore that the heads of the beast should symbolize one thing, in the particular mystery of the woman, since even in that particular mystery we see in the very text two different symbols for the same heads, which are seven mountains and likewise seven kings. *And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. And they are seven kings.* In the thirteenth chapter, where there is no mention of the woman, who cometh not, until the end of this general mystery, *into remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of her wrath*, Rev. xvi. 19. In this chapter, I say, would you have the heads of the beast to signify seven mountains and seven kings? Other difficulties which may occur, it is to be hoped will not want some one to resolve them.

PHENOMENON IV.

The end of Antichrist.

BE Antichrist an individual man and single person, or be he rather a moral body composed of many individuals, (as we have just submitted to the examination and judgment of the intelligent,) the matter which hath immediately to do with our main point is the observation of his end. This observation, exactly and faithfully made, is absolutely necessary to understand aright very many prophecies, covered ages ago with a certain sacred veil, which we may now with safety lift up.

We do not waste the time uselessly in sifting out what sort of death, or what end this person, or this moral body is to undergo. The authors themselves are not agreed. The most part assure us (but upon what foundation is not shown) that the archangel St. Michael shall descend from heaven, and, by order of God, slay him and all his followers. Others, believing

that Gog, the prince of whom Ezekiel speaks, (xxxviii. and xxxix.) is Antichrist himself, therefore assign to him the same end, as is mentioned in that prophecy “And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone.” Ezek. xxxviii. 22. Others, quoting from St. Thomas, relate the end of their Antichrist with more minute circumstances. We shall briefly give the whole story, which for its interest and singularity it were not good wholly to omit.

That basest Jew, nothing satisfied with all the grandeur, felicity, and glory, to which he shall see himself exalted; nothing satisfied with his universal monarchy, nor with the divine honours paid to him by all peoples, tribes, and tongues; and perceiving that there remaineth here below nothing further to aspire to, shall conceive the proud thought of ascending to heaven, with the view doubtless of imitating the ascension of Christ, as he had already imitated his resurrection. In this mind, accompanied by his false prophet, and beheld by innumerable people, he shall go up to the loftiest summit of Mount Olivet, and, placing his feet on the same spot where Christ heretofore stood, he shall begin to mount through the air, borne aloft upon Satan the angel of his guard, and upon all the legions of hell. At a short distance from the earth he shall encounter other legions more numerous, descending from heaven to dispute his passage: St. Michael and his angels shall give battle to Satan and his angels, who being conquered and put to flight, our great monarch shall be left in the air, abandoned to his natural weight: and what can happen but that he should instantly begin to fall with greater promptitude than he arose? The earth, who had believed herself free from the domination of the man of sin, seeing him returning to her with such great rapidity, shall open her mouth before he alights, and give him a free passage down to hell.

The story is very singular: I doubt much if the angelical doctor from whom it is taken spoke his own opinion, and not that of others, as he is wont to do in his very brief commentary. The foundation of the whole story is the eleventh chapter of Daniel, where they point out to us these its concluding words: “And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palaces between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.” Dan. xi. 45. If now we ask them to tell us who is spoken of in this passage, the doctors commonly make answer, that although in the *literal sense* King Antiochus seems to be spoken of, in the *allegorical sense*, it is Antichrist. And how is this proved? It does not appear. And though it were allowed, or conceded, that Antichrist is here figuratively spoken of, where in the text, or all the context, is Mount Olivet found, or the devils, or the ascent to heaven, or the fall to hell? —The whole of this must be supplied of grace.

But leaving these things, with respect to which we have no manner of interest, let us turn our attention to the examination of one single point, which does indeed interest us. To inquire, whether or not the end of Antichrist, however it fall out, is to happen upon the coming of Christ in glory and majesty, which every one of us Christians believes in and expects. The Holy Scriptures say that it is; and say it so frequently, and with such clearness, that it is to be wondered how doubt should ever have come over the subject. Nevertheless, the interpreters of Divine Scripture (some boldly, and others timorously) say it is not. From this general opinion must be excepted those many churchmen and martyrs, that very great multitude (Jerome’s expressions) of the four first centuries of the church; who for some time have been undervalued by our peripatetic doctors, as being Millenarians, or favouring in some way that raving and extravagance. It is certain that the foundation of these antients neither was nor could be their own imagination, but scripture itself, as it evidently is. The foundation of the others neither is nor can be the Holy Scripture, from which they do not

produce in their favour one single passage, an evident proof that one is not to be found. As little can there be any apostolical tradition, constant, universal, and declared by the church (which are the necessary conditions to the verity of any tradition) for such neither exists, nor can exist. True, —tradition there is, and may be, of some things not clearly appearing in the Scripture; but of things contrary to what clearly appeareth therein, it is an absolute inconsistency and impossibility that there should be any.

Let us proceed then to observe this truly important phenomenon with all possible exactness and attention; narrowly looking at, and weighing in just scales what makes for the one side and for the other: and since there is nothing to hasten us, let us proceed leisurely.

A Parable.

§ 1. IN a certain principal city, as we are assured by trustworthy witnesses, there arose in past years a famous controversy concerning this point, “Whether Pope Pius VI. had really gone in person to the court of Vienna, and passed through that city.” This which at first seemed mere diversion, was soon seen to pass into a formal and declared contest. Those who stood up for the affirmative (who were at first the great party) assigned no other reason in their behalf, than the testimony of their eyes and their ears: it appearing to them that, in a question *of fact*, there could be no reason more powerful, more convincing, and more decisive.

This reason, far from convincing the opposite party, was received with the utmost contempt, and treated as insufficient, and weak, and gross. They say and insist upon it, that the testimony of the senses is not always sure; and may easily deceive the most considerate, yea, and has often deceived them. That the angel St. Raphael was not a man, yet for such was taken by the holy Tobias: that Christ was not a phantom, yet was taken for a phantom by his disciples, when they saw him walking upon the waters of the sea of Galilee: that the same Christ was not a gardener, yet for a gardener was taken by his holy disciple Mary Magdalene: and they easily cited very many such examples.

It is true, they add, that the journey of Pius VI. to the court of Vienna was an event so public and so noised abroad, that neither the blind nor the deaf were ignorant of it. It is true, that many cities of Germany and of Italy, and Vienna among the rest, received him with public acclamation, bent the knee to him, and received his benediction. Equally true it is, that public notices and private letters spoke almost of nothing else. But what signifies all this? What does all this prove? May it not have been an appearance merely? May it not easily have happened, that this person, whom all saw, and who appeared to all the very person of the pope, was not in reality so? And so, in fact, they concluded. It appeared to all the very person of the pope: but all were misled; all were deceived; for it was only one of the ministers, a prince of his court, clothed with his authority, with his ornaments, and even with his very figure. It was Pope Pius VI. in a certain sense, but in another sense it was not. It was *virtually* the pope, but *personally* it was not he.

These doctors being intreated for the reason and foundation upon which they dared to advance so strange a position, against the testimony and eyes of the world, and even against their own; no other answer could be drawn from them but this: —What necessity was there that the pope himself should remove from Rome, and make so long a journey, when it was so easy a matter to treat and to conclude any business, however grave it might be, by means of some one of his ministers, or an envoy extraordinary, giving to him his orders and instructions, and investing him with his authority and the fulness of his power. Although there be heard from their lips no other answer to all your desires and prayers, it afterwards comes out with perfect certainty, that the true and only reason which moves them is....but we

shall for the present leave it hid, till it disclose itself. To cut short: the fruit of this great dispute was, that upon its becoming known that certain doctors of great fame favoured the negative side of the question, this was enough, by little and little as it were, insensibly to give that opinion the victory, and to bring the affirmative to be regarded as a folly and a dream. To such a degree that at this day there is hardly to be found any one in our city, who does not view this journey of Pope Pius VI. in person to the Court of Vienna in the light of a mere fable.

Application.

§2. An antient writer of great authority among Christians minutely relates all the circumstances of an event whereof he was an eye-witness. This is the same writer “who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.” Rev. i. 2. His relation is as follows. —The forty and two months’ horrible tribulation, “such as hath not been since the beginning of the world, neither indeed shall be,” being concluded, there immediately followed thereon this, which concluded his vision.

I saw heaven opened, (Rev. xix. 11.) and the first thing which I beheld was a white horse, upon which came seated a wonderful personage, who is named or entitled, Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes full of indignation, appeared two flames of fire, and his head was seen adorned not with one, but with many crowns. He had another name written, whereof no one is able to comprehend fully the meaning, but himself alone. His vesture was seen all sprinkled with blood, and his proper name, by which he is named and known of all, is *The Word of God*... This admirable person was followed by all the armies of heaven, likewise seated on white horses, and clothed with linen, white and clean. From his mouth proceeded a terrible two-edged sword, *that with it he might smite the nations*. He it is who is to judge and to rule them with an iron rod; and likewise to tread the winepress of the wrath of Almighty God. In sum, upon the vesture or royal mantle of this wonderful personage is written distinctly, and in several parts, *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords*.

While this great army advanceth on its route, I saw an angel in the sun, who with a loud voice invited every fowl of heaven. Come, he cried unto them, and gather yourselves to the great supper which the Lord prepareth for you. You shall eat the flesh of kings, of captains, of soldiers, of horses and horsemen, of princes and of slaves, of great and small. Whereupon I saw appear upon the other side the beast with seven heads, and along with him, or as a part of him, the kings of the earth with all their armies, who were congregated to make war with the King of Kings. The action was decided at the first onset. The beast was taken in the first place, and with him the false prophet, the same who did the miracles, and seduced the inhabitants of the earth, making them to take the mark of the first beast and declare for him. These two beasts, and all comprehended under them, were cast alive into a great lake of fire, which burnt and was fed with sulphur. The remaining multitude were slain with the sword of the King of Kings which went forth from his mouth; and all the fowls were that day filled with their flesh.

Concerning this relation, which all of us look upon as indubitable, there arose a long time ago such a dispute as that set forth in the parable, and attended with nearly the same result. In the first ages of the church it was thought and honestly believed, that the admirable person here spoken of neither was nor could be any other than Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and the Son of the Virgin, in his proper person and majesty. It was thought and believed, that the whole of this vision, so magnificent, and with such great symbols and admirable figures

represented, was a clear prophecy, was a most vivid picture, was an exact and circumstantial description of the coming of Jesus Christ from heaven to earth, which is expressed in the creed. It was thought and believed, that upon the coming of this great personage from heaven to earth with such state, and directing himself so immediately against the beast and against Antichrist, Antichrist himself, with all comprehended under this name, would that day de cease, and be for ever destroyed and annihilated by the coming of the Lord; and consequently that the coming of the Lord would prove the end and ruin of Antichrist.

The reason and foundation for all this was most clear and evident. The names or titles which are given to this person, the very particular signs and circumstances with which his coming is described, all answer to Messiah. The names or titles are: *The Faithful: The True: He who in righteousness doth judge and make war: The Word of God: The King of kings: The Lord of lords*. The signs and circumstances are the many crowns which he weareth on his head, his garments dipped in blood, in which stile Christ is announced in the sixty third chapter of Isaiah, to which this passage of the Apocalypse evidently alludeth: *Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments as one that treadeth in the winepress?* His eyes like flames of fire, as those of Christ are described in the first chapter of the Apocalypse: *and his eyes were as a flame of fire*: the sword with two edges in his mouth, as he is likewise described in the same first chapter, *and from his mouth went a sharp two edged sword*: his being the same person who is to rule and govern the nations *with a rod of iron*, as is promised to him by his divine Father, in the second Psalm: *Thou shalt rule them with a rod of iron; and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel*: his being that person who is metaphorically to tread the wine-press of the wrath and indignation of Almighty God, as is said of Christ himself. *I have trodden the wine-press alone*; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come. Isaiah lxiii, 3,4.

Notwithstanding all these names, and all these circumstances so clear, so appropriate, and so peculiar to the person of Christ, and to him alone; so foreign, so widely distant from any other mere creature whatever; notwithstanding that all these or the most of them are found in other places of scripture, where, by the express confession of the doctors, Christ is certainly the subject; when they come to this nineteenth chapter of the Apocalypse, there is to be observed a great novelty in their way of proceeding, as if they saw a rock threatening them a-head, they are seen to reef their sails with the utmost expedition. And no doubt their fear is just and well founded. The rock, even at some distance cannot but seem great. It must be shunned by every means, cost what it may, or the system will perish. I need not stay to explain myself further.

Being arrived then at this passage of the Apocalypse, the doctors say and assure us that it is not the coming of Christ his glory and majesty which is here spoken of; consequently that the admirable personage who comes seated upon a white horse with a two edged sword proceeding out of his mouth, and with many crowns on his head, with...although it be a proper symbol of Jesus Christ, yet is not Jesus Christ himself; or if it be, is so only in his virtue and power, but not in his person. They mean to say, so far as I can comprehend them, that in all these symbols and figures, are admirably represented the whole virtue, grandeur, and omnipotence of Christ himself, which he consigns to St. Michael the archangel, with all the armies which are in heaven, in order that he may slay Antichrist and entirely destroy his universal empire.

Now, if I or any other, blinded by this ingenious exposition, should pray them with all courtesy to give us some good reason, and show us some positive foundation for persuading us that the sun which shines at mid-day, is not the very sun, but one of his planets which he hath invested with his light, and clothed with all his splendour, &c. some would remain deaf to our petition, and others would answer us very briefly as persons who speak at random. "For what need is there, (says one of the most advised and judicious of them, in the name of all,) what need is there, that the Lord of heaven and earth should remove from his place in order to make an end of some wretched men, whom with a single nod he could crush and annihilate, and whose innumerable myriads he could, by means of the weakest angel, in one little hour over throw."⁴⁵ You see here, my friend, that very reason, that only foundation upon which the doctors in our parable denied the journey of Pope Pius VI, to the court of Vienna. We do not detain ourselves at present with weighing the invincible force of this reason, which is manifest of itself. Sometimes no other is alleged, because this alone is sufficient and more than sufficient: yes, it is sufficient and more than sufficient for withstanding any truth, be it ever so clear. What need was there that the only begotten Son of God should become man, or that the man-God should die naked upon the cross, when he could have brought the remedy to mankind by some more gentle method? What need that Christ should go in person to raise Lazarus, being at the time so far from Bethany, when he could have done it with a word, or with an act of his volition? Or what necessity that the same Christ should send St. Michael from heaven with all the armies which are in heaven, to make an end of certain wretches whom with a single nod he could crush and annihilate? Whether there be necessity or no, it is clear it belongeth not to man to discuss.

I am very far from believing, that, for this reason only, the doctors deny that Jesus Christ himself, in proper person, is the sacred and holy personage of whom we speak. It appears impossible that they should not have some other secret reason, which for certain causes they may not declare. If at any time it is lawful to judge of the intentions of our neighbour, in this instance we may do it without scruple. Another reason then there is, the true and only one, but it requires great circumspection. What is it? That their general system upon Messiah's second coming falls at once, vanishes, is annihilated by this very passage of the Apocalypse: by simply admitting and confessing, as it seems necessary to do, that it speaks of the person of Jesus Christ and of his coming, which we expect in glory and majesty. Observe how clear this consequence is.

If once it is granted that this admirable personage who descends from heaven to earth, with such glory and majesty, is Jesus Christ himself in his proper person, it is absolutely necessary to concede that his second coming, which we all look for as an essential article of our religion, is here spoken of. We believe only in two comings of the Lord Jesus Christ, whereof all the scriptures bear clear testimony; one already passed, the other infallibly to come to pass. This I speak, not to the wind, or away from the purpose, but because I know there be many doctors (even without counting Aduino and Berruyer,) who admit and set forth many other comings of the Lord in glory and majesty, although secret, (which appears to me a true untangling of the matter,) and by these secret comings which they suppose, they pretend to explain not a few passages of the prophets and even of the gospel; but it is certain that all this is loosely advanced, merely to shun the difficulty and to save the system in any way.

⁴⁵ Quid enim opus est, moveat se loc Dominus cœli et terræ, ut aliquot homunciones conficiat, quos potest solo nutu conterere et annihilare, et quorum innumeras myriadas potest per minimum angelum una horula sternere.

For if it be granted that the sacred and holy personage of whom we speak is Jesus Christ in his proper person, and that his second coming is here spoken of, it appears impossible to separate for a moment the end of Antichrist from the coming of Christ, which we believe and expect in glory and majesty. Why? Because the sacred and holy personage, as well as all the celestial armies which follow him, and the two-edged sword which proceedeth out of his mouth, with all that grand and magnificent array, is seen to proceed directly and immediately against Antichrist, against the kings of the earth, against all their armies *gathered together to make war with him that sat upon the horse*; and because the whole beast, Antichrist with all his kings, whom he leads as their head, with all their armies, shall that day be entirely destroyed, and the immense multitude of their corpses given up a prey to all the fowls of heaven, *gathered to the great supper of the Lord*. Now then, if all this be conceded, and consequently the end of Antichrist, and of his whole mystery of iniquity, be not separated from the coming of Christ in glory and majesty: what followeth? It evidently follows by the rules of sound logic, that all those particular things which stand clearly announced in the scriptures, for a time posterior to Antichrist, (which all the doctors allow will require a time, and not little, to be conveniently accomplished in,) those things, I say, which are to be verified after the destruction and annihilation of Antichrist, must equally have to be verified after the coming of the Lord in glory and majesty. Or more clearly: that not inconsiderable space of time, which all the doctors see themselves obliged to grant after the destruction of Antichrist, they are forced also to concede after the coming of Christ in glory and majesty; and then adieu to their system.

To avoid the terrible gulph of so hard and unfortunate a conclusion, what remedy is there? With difficulty should you find one more seasonable, more ingenious, or more efficacious than that which we are now considering; that is, resolutely to deny that this passage of scripture speaketh of the coming of Christ which we expect in proper person, and freely conceding it of his virtue, or of his power, to substitute instead of the person of Christ, the prince St. Michael: (who, as is said in Daniel, is one of the chief princes:) to substitute, I say, this great prince upon no other grounds than supposing it so, to prepare themselves for doing the same by every passage of scripture without mercy, which speaks with the same clearness, and which would presume to unite the destruction of Antichrist with the coming of Christ in glory and majesty. Of these passages we shall speak purposely in the 4th Section. At present it is indispensable that we should make sure of that great space of time which must be after Antichrist.

That there shall be a space of time after Antichrist, is established by the unanimous consent of all the doctors.

THERE IS NO interpreter I am acquainted with, who does not admit it as certain and undoubted, that after Antichrist there is to be a space of time, great or small, determinate or indeterminate. The Holy Scriptures explain themselves with so much clearness upon this point, that there is no room left for another interpretation. It is true, that many of those things (we had better say all,) which stand announced for that time, the interpreters set themselves to disguise, and several of them even with the greatest pains to conceal, accommodating such as will bear it, now to the present church in an allegorical sense, now to heaven in an anagogical sense, now to every holy soul in a mystical sense, and entirely omitting such as will not suffer themselves to be accommodated, which are neither few nor inconsiderable. It is not my purpose to examine at present, nor even so much as to point out all which in the scripture is evidently reserved till after Antichrist. These things, or many of them, will as we proceed

take their own place. For my actual purpose, those few things are sufficient which are allowed by all, as by their means the foresaid space of time will appear indubitable. Some pretend that this space of time will endure only forty and five days, building upon these very obscure words of Daniel xii. 11,12. "And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days." The difference between the one and the other of those two numbers is forty and five. But this time appears to the most of them exceeding little for the many and great events which they desire to place in it.

The first of all is the conversion of the Jews, which in so many times, and in such diverse manners, is announced in scripture, and which the doctors find not where to place so as not to trouble them, except after Antichrist. This conversion they say, will take place when the Jews shall see Antichrist dead, whom they believed to be immortal; after they see openly exposed, the cheats and diabolical artifices of that wicked one whom they had received and adored as their Messiah. By this exposure being ashamed and confounded, they shall finally open their eyes, renounce their vain hopes, and sincerely embrace Christianity. Let us, with the greatest patience and forbearance we are capable of, take no notice of the manner and circumstances according to which they boldly take upon them to relate the future conversion of the Jews, of all which there is not the least vestige in the Holy Scriptures. Without attending for the present to any thing besides, let us accept that which they give us, and content ourselves with the space of time which is necessary —First, that so many thousands of most ignorant and hardened men may receive true feelings of repentance. Secondly, that they may be sufficiently instructed in the essential principles, and fundamental maxims of the Christian religion. Thirdly, and especially that there may be found in those times and in those circumstances, so many zealous and able ministers as may be sufficient to instruct, baptize, and discipline all that multitude. It appears that all this will take some time, and that not a little.

Much more time will be needed, if, after the conversion of the Jews, the ark of the testament, the tabernacle, and the altar of incense, which Jeremiah hid in a cave of mount Nebo in the land of Moab, should be recovered; as we certainly believe that in that time they will be found, for ends which God only knows, and, which it hath pleased him to reveal to us. Information hereof we find written in the second chapter of the 2nd book of the Maccabees; where a passage is quoted from the Descriptions or Acts of Jeremiah (which have been lost, like some other of the sacred books). "It was also contained in the same writing, that the prophet, being warned of God, commanded the tabernacle and the ark to go with him, as he went forth into the mountain, where Moses climbed up, and saw the heritage of God. And when Jeremy came thither, he found an hollow cave, wherein he laid the tabernacle, and the ark, and the altar of incense." And some who were desirous to mark the place where the precious deposit lay concealed, having gone afterwards, could not find it; which being known to the prophet of God, "he blamed them, saying, As for that place, it shall be unknown until the time that God gather his people again together, and receive them unto mercy. Then shall the Lord show them these things, and the glory of the Lord shall appear, and the cloud also, as it was shewed under Moses, and as when Solomon desired that the place might be honourably sanctified." The whole of which not being yet accomplished, it is necessary that one day it should be accomplished, and this at the very time which the prophecy notices, that is, *when God shall gather his people together again*. Upon this passage, many doctors allege, though in an undertone, that it has all been accomplished already, in the days of Nehemiah, as

appears from the first chapter of the same book of the Maccabees. But upon reading the whole chapter, we find the thing to be widely different. In it there is nothing spoken of but the fire of the temple, which certain of the priests had hid in a well, when they were carried away into Persia; and that Nehemiah, one hundred and fifty years afterwards sent to the descendants of those very priests, to search the well, and bring forth whatever was found therein, *they found no fire, but thick water*: with which water he caused them to sprinkle the sacrifice and the wood which was laid in order; and, without farther care, the wood kindled and consumed the sacrifice: *so that every man marvelled*. Now, what connexion hath this with what is said in the second chapter? Is the fire, which the priests hid in a valley near the temple, the same with the tabernacle, the ark, the altar, which Jeremiah carried away to the land of Moab, on the other side of Jordan, and hid in a cave of mount Nebo?

Still more time will be needed, if, after the death of Antichrist, that new and most exact repartition of the promised land among all the tribes of Israel is to be carried into effect; as it is found announced with the greatest clearness and precision, in the last chapter of Ezekiel. This has not been yet accomplished; nor is it credible that so great an event can be accomplished in the space of forty days. Perhaps it will be said, that this prophecy shall be fulfilled in the time of Antichrist, when he is acknowledged as Messiah, and holdeth in Jerusalem the court of his universal empire. But this is in contradiction to what is said in the scripture; where the remnant of Israel, gathered again from all nations whither they were dispersed, not by the hand of man, but by the omnipotent arm of the living God, are represented in a state of confusion, of lamentation, and of penitence. They are represented as humbled and docile to the voice of God, and obedient to his commands: they are represented as bathed in that pure water (a manifest symbol of the effusion of the Holy Spirit upon them), which is promised to them in the thirty-sixth chapter of the same prophet; from which place, even to the end of the prophecy, through the fourteen last chapters, he speaks in succession of their vocation to Christ, and their dignity as the people of God. "For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you...and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God...Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations." Ezek. xxxvi. 24-26,28,31. Let us leave these things till their proper time; for we shall have much occasion to speak of this vocation and conversion of the Jews, throughout the following Phenomenon, and in the more advanced part of our work.

The second event, which, according to the doctors, shall be accomplished after the death of Antichrist, is that which is found foretold in the thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth chapters of Ezekiel; that is to say, the expedition of Gog, with all his countless multitude, against the children of Israel, now established in the land of their fathers, with all the results of that expedition. This Gog, say some, will be Antichrist himself (and then, say I, he cannot be a single person): others say, that he will be a friendly and allied prince of his: others, that he will be one of his chief captains; who will come into the land of Israel, in order to avenge his sovereign's death. But upon whom shall this vengeance fall? Upon the Jews? They are rather to be pitied than punished; seeing they have lost their Messiah without fault of theirs, and against their will; the blame being wholly St. Michael's. Were it not better, that this prince Gog should call once more all his legions from hell, and with them ascend to heaven,

offer battle to St. Michael, conquer him, humble him, and thereby avenge the death of Antichrist?

But, be this as it may, for it requires a separate observation; that which bears upon our present purpose is a notable circumstance, which we read expressly in this prophecy. To wit; that the death of Gog having taken place, and the total ruin of all his infinite host upon the land and mountains of Israel, the Jews, against whom they had iniquitously come up, shall be left enriched with the spoils of that terrible army, and, among other riches, with wood. For the space of seven years, says the prophecy, they shall have no occasion to fell trees in their forests, nor to take wood from any other quarter, but shall have it in abundance, solely from the abundance of the arms of the army of Gog. "And they that dwell in the cities of Israel shall go forth, and shall set on fire and burn the weapons, both the shields and the bucklers, the bows, and the arrows, and the handstaves, and the spears, and they shall burn them with fire seven years: so that they shall take no wood out of the field, neither cut down any out of the forests; for they shall burn the weapons with fire: and they shall spoil those that spoiled them, and rob those that robbed them, saith the Lord God," Ezek. xxxix. 9,10. According to this, we have after Antichrist, and even after Gog, his friend and captain, and the avenger of his death, a space of seven years at least. I say, at least; because it is not credible, that the wood of the army of Gog being come to an end, the world should thereupon come to an end also. To this matter, it would appear, that not a few grave doctors, with St. Jerome, have given heed; and they are of opinion, that those seven years, of which the prophet speaketh, signify indeterminately many years: which I, far from denying, do indeed very much approve, and receive with good will; drawing the same conclusion, that, after the death of Antichrist, it is indispensable to concede a very considerable space of time, which may not at the least be shorter than seven determinate years, though it may be a long or a very long time, according as it shall appear necessary to place therein, what, according to the scriptures, cannot be placed elsewhere.

This being granted, in which all the doctors, we have seen, do unanimously concur, there resulteth a terrible and most indigestible conclusion; yet legitimate, and necessary, and of easy demonstration. It is, that this same space of time, be it which it may, which is allowed after Antichrist, must likewise be allowed after the coming of Christ in glory and majesty, which we believe and expect. Why? Because there is no reason for separating the end of Antichrist from the coming of Christ, seeing the Divine Scripture, which is the only light we should follow in things of futurity, never separates these two things, but unites them. The nineteenth chapter of the Apocalypse is not the only passage which straitly unites the end of Antichrist with the coming of Christ; there are, besides this, many other passages, which deliver themselves upon this point with the same or with greater clearness, so that the interpreters themselves do not refuse to acknowledge it. Oh of what importance now, that my Christophilus were moderately versed in the reading of this sort of books!

The Examination of two Passages of Scripture entirely consenting with the 19th chapter of the Revelation.

ST. PAUL writing to the Thessalonians, who were troubled by the rumour that was spread abroad concerning the instant coming of the day of the Lord, declares to them, in the first place, that this was a false rumour without any foundation: *Let no man deceive you by any means: because the day of the Lord shall not come till two events, which shall precede it, be accomplished.* The first, the *falling away*, or the apostacy. The second, the revelation, or manifestation, of the man of sin, or of Antichrist. Of whom he says, that when his time is

come the Lord shall slay him with the spirit of his mouth, and destroy him with the brightness of his coming. “And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.” 2 Thess. ii. 8. If Jesus himself is to slay Antichrist with the spirit of his mouth; if he is to destroy him with the brightness of his coming; the death and destruction of Antichrist cannot be separated, neither by much nor by little time, from the coming of Christ: for if it be at all separated, Christ will not destroy him with the brightness of his coming. The consequence is powerful; yet they will not admit it. On what account? Why should we repeat the true reason which stares one in the face? —If Jesus Christ himself destroy Antichrist with the brightness of his coming, whosoever allows a space of time after the destruction of Antichrist, must be forced to allow the same after the coming of Christ. Which cannot be allowed without destroying and annihilating the system. Whereupon one of two things becometh necessary: either that the text give way, or that the system give way. Of the system such a thing must not be thought: consequently the text must yield: and that it may be set aside with some show of decency, observe now how they reason.

The Apostle says, that the Lord Jesus shall destroy Antichrist with the brightness of his coming: but this doth not mean to say, that the Lord himself will come, in his own person, to destroy Antichrist, which were unnecessary; but that, without removing out of heaven, he will destroy him, even with the spirit of his mouth, that is, by his command, even with the brightness of his coming, that is, by the morning, or dawning, of the great day of his coming. If you ask, then, what morning, what dawning, of the day of the Lord it is they mean, they answer you, that it is no other than the glorious coming of the Archangel Michael with all the armies which are in heaven, who shall slay Antichrist and destroy the whole of his universal empire, by express order and command of Jesus Christ himself, who commissions him to the world invested with all his authority, and with all his omnipotence. Oh to what shifts a bad cause forceth even the most learned and considerate men.

The second passage which we have to examine is the fourteenth chapter of the gospel of St Matthew, in which the Lord, speaking expressly of the tribulation of Antichrist, which it shall be necessary to shorten in love to the elect, concludeth thus: “Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” Matt. xxiv. 29,30. So that the tribulation of those days being come to an end, then shall immediately succeed all that follows; the sun and the moon shall be obscured, either by disappearing from view, according to some, or because there shall fall to the earth very many sparks of fire, and inflamed exhalations like the appearance of stars, according to the opinion of St. Augustine, St. Jerome, and the greater number, The powers, or the hinges, or the foundations, of the heavens shall be removed: there shall appear in heaven the sign, or royal standard, of the Son of man; at the sight whereof all the tribes of the earth shall lament. And in fine, which bears most upon the question, all shall behold the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, Jesus Christ, in proper person, with great power and majesty, which words perfectly correspond to those with which the Apocalypse begins: *Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him.* All these things, saith the Lord himself, shall follow, *immediately after the tribulation of those days.* Now before passing on, it will be convenient to ascertain the true and proper signification of the word *immediately (statim)*. I say that this knowledge will be profitable; because there be authors, especially of those who do not

expound the whole scriptures, but the gospels only, who admit *immediately* in its natural sense, without any innovation. They freely allow that every thing contained in the text cited, and the coming of the Lord among the rest, shall come to pass *immediately after the tribulation of those days*. But other doctors, more wary, foreseeing well the inconvenience thereof, are not so liberal. It is true that they allow it to pass; but with all discretion and economy; first smoothing it over, so as not to cause them much injury. Accordingly the word *immediately*, by their explanation, must not be understood with very great rigour, but in a larger and kinder sense, as if one should say, *shortly, soon, not much after; breviter, cito, non multo post*.

I am very far from resisting this small violence, or of raising a dispute about words. The sense which they here give of the word *immediately*, would be natural and obvious enough, were there not a most weighty interest at stake, and did the doctors not declare to us a little more of their mind: if they did not tell us what it is they really intend by this economy; if their expression, *not much after*, were absolute or only relative; if it signified a few days, or a few hours, or signified a little time, compared with another great period; for example, a thousand or two thousand years; but in reality they do not leave us in such uncertainty. If the *not much after* be absolute, we shall have the simple and natural idea that there will not intervene between the end of the tribulation, and the coming of the Lord, time sufficient for extraordinary events. But if this *not much after*, be relative, then that time may be enlarged as much as they please, and there will be no setting limits to how much the *immediately* in the text really implies; which in my view of it is the very thing intended, and, to me, as appears, the whole of the mystery. If not, for what end change the word *immediately*, which is so definite, into the words *shortly, quickly, not much after*, which are not so definite. The space of time which these words must signify, in the mind of the doctors, cannot be so short, as not to be sufficient to contain with ease, the many and the great events which they intend to include in it. Behold some of the principal ones, in addition to those which were pointed out in the preceding section.

There must be time, they say, first, for very many christians who have renounced Christ and adored Antichrist, to acknowledge their faith, to do works meet for repentance, and to be once more admitted into the bosom of the church. There must be time, in the second place, for the bishops of all the earth, who in the time of the great tribulation, had fled to the wilderness (which they would have to be signified by the flight of that remarkable woman, clothed with the sun, into the wilderness, set forth in the twelfth chapter of the Apocalypse, as we shall see in its proper place), to receive sure intelligence of Antichrist's death, and the entire ruin of his empire. There shall be time, in the third place, for these same bishops to return to their churches, and to gather again the relicts of their former flock, to attend to their wounds, to exhort them, to teach them anew, and furnish them all with the food necessary and suitable to such circumstances, There shall be time, in the fourth place, for those events of which I have spoke above, that is, for the conversion of the Jews, and likewise for the gathering together and consuming of all the armies of Gog, which cannot take less time than seven years, according to the prophecy: and if these seven years signify a great and indeterminate number of years, so much the better, for so much the more time will it be necessary to allow. And so, my friend, you have the whole mystery deciphered. You see where this pausing upon *immediately, shortly, soon, not much after*, terminates. This appears to be the only true reason which has obliged them to convert the clear and simple words of the apostle, *the Lord Jesus shall destroy Antichrist with the brightness of his coming*, into the very obscure and equivocal words, *he shall destroy him with the morning or dawn of his*

coming; giving the name of the morning or the dawn of the day of the Lord, to an imaginary coming of St. Michael the archangel, in order by such means to show the difficulty. This, in short, is the only true reason which has obliged them to convert into St. Michael the prince, that great and wonderful personage of the nineteenth chapter of the Apocalypse, who is the King of Kings, and the Word of God.

The harsh and very evil consequences of that space of time, which the doctors will have to be between the end of Antichrist, and the coming of Christ.

§ 3. THE three passages of Holy Scripture which we have just observed, (omitting others to avoid prolixity) make directly against the space of time which the doctors commonly suppose. Those three passages of the Apocalypse, of St. Paul, and of the gospel, admit no other answer, and allow no other escape, save the almost incredible meanings and explanations which we have likewise observed. Besides these, there are many others, which indirectly combat the said space of time, but whose force and efficacy appears still more distinct from the most serious inconvenience, from the harsh and intolerable consequences which legitimately follow, if once this space of time between Antichrist's ending, and the Lord's coming, be permitted.

In order that we may have a more lively apprehension of these inconveniences, let us, my friend Christophilus, discourse by ourselves alone. Let us for a moment drop thinking of what the doctors say; let us imagine that there are not in the world any other men who care to speak of these things, than you and I: by this imagination, we shall be able to speak with more liberty, and to explain ourselves better. I know well, my friend, that upon your principles, you have need of some space of time, (and that not so short as you would have us to understand) between the end of Antichrist, and the coming of Christ, which we expect in glory and majesty. I likewise know, with the same certainty, for what end you have need of that time, and what the true motive of your intention is: because I have studied all this from your own lips, hearing your mode of reasoning with all the attention of which I am capable. Being fully certified of your thoughts, and likewise of your intentions, I ask of you, first, by what right, by what reason, on what ground, you wish to suppose a space of time between the end of Antichrist and the coming of Christ? in Holy Scripture there is none, but on the other hand, grounds by the hundred, for the very contrary. You yourself cannot deny this. Any other foundation whatever, that is not in Holy Scripture, much more that is opposed to it, can have no firmness in respect to a question of the future. Upon what then does your supposition rest? Merely upon your own word.

But I grant, friend, without any limitation, all this time which you wish and have need of, between the end of Antichrist and the coming of Christ. Take it into account then, that you are now master of the time; that it is all placed in your own hands, and left to your free disposal; portion it off therefore as may seem to you most convenient. Place in it whatever events suit you, which you find not how, nor where, to accommodate otherwise after your mind, be they revealed in scripture, or only imagined by yourself. And for so much, I ask but one favour in return, which you cannot deny me, to wit, that I may be allowed to be present at this partition of the time, and see with my own eyes all the events, as you proceed to place them there. So shall I be able to observe more easily, the results or consequences that may follow; which, with your permission, I shall afterwards, in a friendly way, submit to your consideration.

First, you ask, between the end of Antichrist and the coming of Christ, sufficient time, for very many christians (you might rather say the greater number, or almost all, *according to*

the scriptures,) who have been deceived by Antichrist, to discover the fraud, to deplore their errors, and to obtain true repentance. This, you say, ought to be piously expected of the goodness and clemency of God: and I wonder why you asked not space to repent for Antichrist himself, for his prophet, for all that innumerable multitude, who in that day shall be abandoned to the fowls of heaven. Now, as your Antichrist is to be universal monarch of the whole world, as there will be no part of this world to which he shall not occasion the greatest evil, this indulgence of yours ought to extend over all parts. It is easy to conceive then, how much time will be necessary to convey from Palestine to the utmost bounds of the world, the knowledge of the death of this monarch, and thereafter to bring about these good effects.

Secondly, you ask time sufficient, for those pastors who had fled at the sight of the wolves, to obtain sure intelligence of the death and destruction of the man of sin, and of the peace and tranquillity in which all the world has been left, that they may return to their churches, collect the residue of their flock, sustain it, nourish and enlarge it. And as it must be supposed that a goodly number of those pastors, not being able nor willing to fly, shall remain dead in the battle; and as it may likewise be believed, that many of those who fled to the mountains and dens of the rock, have died of hunger, of cold, and of discomfort, &c. there ought to be time enough for the election and consecration of new bishops, and for sending them to all those parts where there is lack, and where they are so much needed (which office Rome can no longer serve, having been destroyed before Antichrist): and after this there must be time sufficient for those new bishops, as well as the old ones, to perform their ministry; for it does not appear just or probable, that those churches only whose pastors, like good shepherds, have given *their lives for their sheep*, should be deprived of this, so necessary succour and consolation.

Thirdly, you ask time for the conversion of the Jews, if not with all, at least some of the very weighty circumstances with which that great event is announced in all the scriptures of the Old and the New Testaments. Fourthly and finally, you ask a time determinate or indeterminate (so that it fall not within the period of seven years), in order that these same Jews, after being converted to Christ, may consume the arms of the innumerable army of Gog, entirely overthrown by the omnipotent arm of God, which army had come against them after they were established in their own land.

Having thus had the time at your own free disposal, having placed in it all the events which have seemed good to you, it now belongs to me to say a word, and to show you a most just consequence which follows from all this, and which you cannot deny, nor yet escape from, so as to be consistent with yourself. The consequence is this: that when the Lord cometh, which according to the gospel, will be *immediately*, and according to your explanation, *not much* after the tribulation of Antichrist, all the world must be in a state of quietness and tranquillity; the church in the greatest peace and observance of the divine law; all men filled with astonishment and contrition by the coming to the earth of the great prince St. Michael; by the punishment and death of Antichrist; by the ruin of his universal empire; and by the shameful fate of so many others, whose flesh is abandoned to the fowls of heaven, gathered *to this great supper of God*. All, in short, shall remain undeceived, enlightened, penetrated with the most lively sentiments of penitence, without excluding from the number, the gentiles, the mahometans, the heretics, atheists and Jews? What think you, friend, of this consequence? Dare you deny it? Can you shun it or escape from it? Have you not sought space of time expressly for all this? Why should you now fear or retract.

This consequence being admitted, we proceed forthwith to confront it with three passages of the Gospel, with which I shall be content, to the omission of many others.

First. Jesus Christ, speaking of his coming, says thus; —*But when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?* Luke xviii. Which words, although in the form of a simple question, no one doubts are in his mouth a true prophecy, a most clear affirmation of the state of perfidy and iniquity in which the whole earth shall be found when he returns from heaven; because, if there be not found faith, which is the foundation of all good, what think you will there be found? It follows from hence, that either the words of the Lord signify nothing, or that the events thou hast placed between Antichrist's end and the Lord's coming are false, and somewhat more than false.

Second. Jesus Christ says, that when he shall return from heaven to earth, he shall find the world as it was in the time of Noah, (Matt. xxiv.) “But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” Observe now the propriety of the similitude: “For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark.” So that, as when the deluge came, the whole world lay in the utmost carelessness and oblivion of God, and consequently in the greatest faithlessness, iniquity, and malice; *for all flesh had corrupted its way*; as the deluge caught them all unprovided, except those few righteous ones whom God purposed to save; in like manner, says the Lord, shall it be at the coming of the Son of man; *so shall also the coming of the Son of man be*: and according to St. Luke, “Even thus shall it be in the day in which the Son of man is revealed,” xxi. 30.

Third. Jesus Christ calls the day of his coming, *that sudden day*; and adds, that this day shall come as a snare to all the inhabitants of the earth: “for as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.” And as the apostle says to the same effect, “When they shall say peace, and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape,” 1 Thess. v. Let us pause here a moment, and make a reflection upon these three passages of the gospel.

And the better to understand each other, let us suppose, my friend, that you and I, among many others, are found alive during all that space of time which you have asked for between Antichrist's end and the Lord's advent. This supposition cannot be regarded as repugnant or impossible. —Not the former, because no one knows when Antichrist and his great tribulation shall come: not the latter, because the space of time after Antichrist cannot be great, according to your notion, but very short; for immediately, or not much after, we shall see the Son of man, *coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory*.

Having thus on our hypothesis survived Antichrist, we have been eye-witnesses both of the very great evils which have befallen our earth, and of the coming of St. Michael with all the armies of heaven; and, thanks to God, we have been delivered from that monster of iniquity. Upon his death the whole earth enjoys a perfect tranquillity. Already we have seen with great joy the fugitive bishops return to their churches; the temples purified, or rebuilt. We have seen, to our great edification, many apostolical men go forth, accompanied with their bishops, to preach repentance amongst the Christians who had been perverted. Other men, warm in the cause, fly to the most remote parts of the world, to preach the gospel where heretofore it had not been preached, or where the preaching of it had not produced such good fruit We have seen the wretched Jews bathed in tears, contrite undeceived, and converted with the whole heart to their true and only Messiah, for whom they had sighed so many ages. We have, in short, seen with our own eyes all the events which you yourself had announced for that time completely verified.

Nevertheless, hear me, my dear sir, this one word. —The space of time which thou hast required for all these great and wonderful events, was not, neither could be so great, as to pass all the limits of discretion, or even of revelation. What are those limits? They are, my friend, the *immediately* of the gospel, and likewise the *shortly, quickly, not much after* of your own explanation. According to yourself, the coming of the Lord *in power and great glory* should now be so near at hand, that we may, and ever ought to be looking for it every day and every hour.

This being supposed, tell me now, my good Christophilus, doth it appear to you credible or possible, that in so short a space of time, not only should things so glorious be brought about over the whole world, but that the world should again have relapsed into the condition of the times of Antichrist? How shall we reconcile it, that the fugitive bishops should have returned to their churches, and the sheep to their pastors, those who were out of the church entered to it again, and received with the greatest love, and the church herself living in great peace, and no enemies to molest her from within or from without; and, notwithstanding all this, that Jesus Christ, who is just coming, and is as it were at the gate, shall find the whole earth as forgetful of God, as corrupt, as wicked, as it was in the days of Noe? Jesus Christ, ready to come, shall hardly find in all the earth any vestige of faith. *Thinkest thou he shall find faith on the earth?* Jesus Christ, ready to come, shall take at unawares all the inhabitants of the earth? The day of his coming, instantly at hand, shall be that *sudden day*, and as a *snare upon all men who are upon the face of the whole earth*? If you, Sir, or any other lofty genius, can conceive these things, and reconcile them to one another, I confess gravely my littleness: I find neither a way nor a reason for escaping from this labyrinth: nor do I know what the doctors themselves would have replied, if any one in their times had proposed to them these doubts, and required of them a categorical answer. You see then the consequences which naturally follow from the space of time you would interpose between the end of Antichrist and the coming of Christ.

You are not ignorant that I could present before you very many such consequences, by the trouble of merely transcribing various passages of scripture; but this would be a fastidious diligence. Nevertheless, so I judge, that it will not be beside our purpose to represent to you briefly another just consequence, which will infallibly result, if the end of Antichrist shall happen in any other way, than by the coming of Christ in glory and majesty.

§ 6. If you will read with some greater attention what was observed in the seventh section of the first phenomenon, you must regard with a certain degree of terror the great havoc and fearful slaughter, to be made in the world by that stone, which, loosing itself without the help of hands from a lofty mountain, shall of itself come right down upon the feet of the great statue, and at the first blow break them in pieces, and reduce them to powder; whereupon the whole colossus of power falleth terribly to the earth, and vanisheth like smoke. Now I ask whether or not, after Antichrist's destruction, this great colossus shall remain in being on the earth, entire and on its feet? According to ordinary principles, according to all the ideas given by the doctors concerning Antichrist, it seems clear that it will not. First; because they suppose it certain that Antichrist shall be a universal monarch of the whole globe, which universal monarchy cannot be conceived while the statue remains on foot. Secondly; because the doctors do not deny that along with Antichrist shall perish all the kings of the earth, all the princes and mighty men; seeing these are all expressly named in the general banquet which is prepared for all the fowls of heaven: "Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them."

Rev. xix. 17,18. Thirdly; because they suppose that the Roman empire must last till the end of the world, (but here they do not guard against consequences,) and, recovering its antient greatness and splendour, shall likewise yield to Antichrist, and unite itself to the empire of the east, or of Jerusalem, which is to be the only one. This will take place, they say, when Rome, now become idolatrous and sanguinary, shall have been destroyed by ten kings, enemies to Antichrist, and these again shortly afterwards conquered by the same Antichrist in their turn.

According to this their scheme, it appears, that they ought here in good faith to confess, that, when Antichrist is dead, and his universal empire overthrown, and therewith all kings and princes, there cannot remain in the world any fragment of the great colossus; which, being wholly incorporated with the universal empire of Antichrist, now destroyed, must consequently in like manner be destroyed and annihilated. Now mark the consequence, and give judgment. Therefore the stone which is to descend from the mountain upon the colossus, and reduce it all *to the chaff of the summer's threshing floors*, which the wind carries away, cannot be Christ himself, but St. Michael: for St. Michael is the person who, according to their supposition, is to destroy Antichrist. Consequently St. Michael will then increase, and become so great a mountain as to cover the whole earth. *And the stone that smote the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth*. But if the stone signifies Christ himself; as no one doubts, when Christ shall come from heaven, which, according to them, will be some short time after St. Michael, he shall find no such colossus upon which to fall; and adieu to the prophecy. If, however, he shall find this colossus, and in effect destroy it, by falling upon it, then St. Michael does not destroy it; and therefore the coming of St. Michael is a pure imagination, a pure avoiding of the difficulty.

Otherwise thus: if the stone of which the prophecy speaks be indubitably Christ himself, then must Christ himself, upon coming from heaven to earth, find all the statue standing, fall upon it, and convert it to powder; consequently there cannot be any space of time between the ruin of the statue and the coming of Christ. And as the whole statue, that is, all the kings, princes, and mighty men, shall, they tell us, be then identified with the universal empire of Antichrist, which is to consist of them all, whoever destroys the statue must necessarily destroy that universal empire; and whoever destroys that universal empire must necessarily destroy the whole statue. Now he who is to destroy all this shall be Christ himself, when he descends from the mountain; therefore there cannot be one instant of time between the destruction of all this and the coming of Christ.

Recapitulation and Conclusion.

§7. I COULD wish, Sir, if it were possible, that we should remain of one mind, or, at least, that we should form a clear and precise idea of all the matters which we have just observed in this Phenomenon. Our dispute, as appears, consists not in the substance of the thing itself, but only in a circumstance which is looked upon as of great weight by both parties; and in fact is so much so, that of itself it is sufficient to decide and determine the whole question at issue. We are entirely; at one upon the substance, that is, upon the space of time which, according to the scripture, must be after Antichrist: this space of time I have yielded to you, and do yield to you anew, without any limitation. I confess, that it is with great reason you ask it, and therefore it is not to be denied. So that we discord only about a circumstance, which is, whether the space of time ought to be after Antichrist, —slain and destroyed by St. Michael before the coming of Christ, or slain and destroyed by Christ himself in the great day of his coming in glory and majesty. You say the former; I say the latter. And with this only

difference in our affirmations, that you affirm the former loosely, without any foundation; seeing divine authority, which alone availeth in a question, of the future, you do not allege, nor can allege. On the contrary I affirm the second, resting upon this divine authority, whereof I have clear and indubitable testimony in the Holy Scriptures, which do not admit of any separation between the end of Antichrist and the coming of the Lord which we are hoping for.

This you have seen clearly, with the most individual circumstances, in the nineteenth chapter of the Apocalypse. You have seen it clearly confirmed by the Apostle of the Gentiles, who saith expressly that the Lord Jesus will destroy Antichrist with the brightness of his coming. You have see it clearly in the gospel, where the Lord himself declareth, that his coming from heaven to earth in power and great majesty shall follow *immediately after the tribulation of those days*; which word *immediately* is found in the four versions without any alteration; that is, in the Syriac, in that of Arias Montanus, and in that of Erasmus. And, in addition to all this, you have seen it still more clearly, by the intolerable consequences which follow, if we separate the end of Antichrist from the coming of Christ, as was observed in Sections 5th and 6th. On the other hand; the events which you have imagined, for filling up the space of time, are evidently incompatible, with those which the Lord himself announced to us with such clearness.

Not being able, therefore, in any way, to make the separation which you desire, it appears that this harsh and terrible consequence must follow inevitably. That if a space of time be allowed, and indeed be demanded, after the end of Antichrist, we must be forced to allow, and even to demand it, after the coming of Christ. That if, after the end of Antichrist, there must be time enough for the convenient accomplishment of many and great events, which the doctors propose, there must necessarily be the same after the coming of Christ.

And by this alone you now see how this ordinary system is entirely subverted from the foundation. You now see, by this alone, how against their will, the doctors themselves are clearly and manifestly constrained to concede that space of time, which with so great fear, and trembling, and reluctance ye proposed at the beginning merely as a hypothesis or supposition (Part i. c. 4.) You see now more into the thousand years of St. John, and all the new and wonderful mysteries of the twentieth chapter of the Apocalypse. You see now the judgment of the quick, separated entirely from the judgment of the dead. In sum, you see now, by this alone, how all the doors are opened, and likewise all the windows, all the curtains drawn aside, and all the blinds raised up, for the beholding and understanding of innumerable prophecies, which, without this, appear not only obscure but obscurity itself.

Appendix to this Phenomenon.

WHOEVER reads the observations which we have brought to a close, and at the same time hath not a sufficient knowledge of this cause, will easily and very naturally think within himself one or other of these two things: either that it is not true that the doctors separate the end of Antichrist from the coming of Christ, making time archangel St. Michael to come in his stead; or that if they really have adopted this side, there will be found in scripture some solid foundation for it, since it is not credible that men of such good sense and learning would embrace a tenet like this, without being perfectly assured of it. This reflection, at least as far as respecteth the second term of the disjunctive, appears to me very good, and I confess that this very thing has made me search with all diligence for that foundation. Let us proceed in the order of the parts.

First, it is undeniable, that the interpreters of scripture according to their system, do endeavour in every possible way to separate the end of Antichrist from the coming of Christ, making the archangel St. Michael to come in his stead, at the head of all the celestial legions. Those who doubt this point, may see with their own eyes what they say upon the nineteenth chapter of the Apocalypse; upon the thirty eighth and thirty ninth of Ezekiel; upon the twelfth chapter of Daniel; upon the twenty fourth chapter of St. Matthew; and

upon the second chapter of the second epistle to the Thessalonians. There are indeed some, who well penetrating the great difficulty, endeavour to cut away, and steer as wide of it as possible, as not being able to find any outlet; but these are the minority. See what is said in the thirteenth section of the third phenomenon.

Upon what foundation do they deny then, that Jesus Christ in his proper person, is he who shall destroy Antichrist, when this is so clearly expressed in the scriptures? And with what foundation do they give this honour to the prince St. Michael? The foundation of the first we have seen already. Speaking freely, it is nothing else than the fear and dread of the nineteenth chapter of the Apocalypse, or of the space of time which it is necessary to grant after the end of Antichrist. If besides this foundation there were any other even passable, it is clear that it ought to be produced, and much more clear that it would not fail to be produced. The foundation for the second is that which I now proceed to set forth; and it rests upon the twelfth chapter of Daniel, which thus begins. "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book," &c.

Let us consider this text with particular attention, for there is no doubt that looking upon it superficially and hastily, it can not fail to occasion surprise. That this text might in any way favour the expedition of St. Michael against Antichrist, it is necessary that those first words *and in that time shall Michael arise*, should allude to the very time of Antichrist, for if they really allude to another time anterior, they will be of no service in the matter. More clearly, if the expedition of St. Michael here spoken of is to take place before Antichrist, before the tempestuous and terrible times of the great tribulation, by this alone the dispute will be settled: now this can easily be proved without going from the text itself; wherein it is clear that two distinct times are pointed out: *in that time shall Michael arise*, this is the first; *and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation to that same time*, this is the second, and a consequence of Michael's arising.

Now the question is, what may be meant by the time so terrible, posterior to and consequent upon the expedition of St. Michael? Perhaps it may be the time, which by the confession of the doctors, should follow after the death of Antichrist? Certainly not because they suppose that space of time to be the most quiet and pacific of all times? May it be the time which St Michael, with all the armies of heaven, will take up in slaying Antichrist, and destroying his universal empire? As little so because for this a minute will be too long, seeing we know that one angel alone destroyed the whole army of Sennacharib, killing in one night, or in one moment of that night, a hundred and eighty five thousand soldiers: and likewise because that time far from being terrible to the elect, would be rather a time of consolation. Therefore this is not the time whereof Daniel speaketh, when he says, *Michael shall rise up and there shall be a time of trouble, such &c.* Therefore this word *there shall be a time*, refers to some other time posterior to the expedition of St Michael. Therefore it is the very time of tribulation which Antichrist shall cause in the world, and which it shall be necessary to

shorten, that even the elect may not perish. Therefore the expedition of St Michael cannot be against Antichrist, because he is not yet come.

For what then cometh St. Michael, and against whom cometh he? This enquiry proceedeth upon a false supposition. It supposes that St. Michael shall come with his angels to this our earth against some one: but whence is this proved? The text saith not so, nor insinuates it, nor giveth any sign to suspect such a thing; saying only, *In that time shall Michael arise*. In that time of which the preceding chapter had been speaking, Michael shall arise along with others, for the word *consurgo*, signifies this; but it is not said for what he shall arise, or against whom, nor whence he shall come, nor what he shall do. This is all left in profound silence. But that which is not declared by this very antient Prophet, is declared clearly and circumstantially by St. John, the last of the Prophets. Read the twelfth chapter of the Apocalypse, and you will there find this mystery with all the information you can desire. There you shall find this same expedition of St. Michael explained and cleared up. There you shall find against whom it is, whence it is, and for what end it is that he cometh. There you shall see that it is not against Antichrist, but against the dragon, or against the devil; that it is not on the earth, but in heaven; that it is not in the times of Antichrist, but before he appeareth in the world. There you shall find that Antichrist with all his mystery of iniquity, and all the great tribulations of those days, will be only a result, and as it were, a consequence of St. Michael's expedition: for the dragon being cast down to the earth after the battle which shall take place in heaven, there are instantly heard there, voices of compassion and lamentation, saying, Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. There you shall find, in short, that the dragon, being conquered and cast out to the earth with all his angels, turns the whole of his indignation against a certain woman who was the sole cause of that great battle: that the woman flees to the wilderness with two wings of an eagle which are given to her; that the dragon follows her, and, not being able to overtake her, returns full of fury to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. And in order to make this war in all form, and with the more security, he goes to the shore of the sea (metaphorical and figurative), and calls to his aid the beast with seven heads and ten horns, which is immediately seen to proceed out of the sea, and to commence the great tribulation and *I stood* [Vulg *stetit*, he stood] *upon the sand of the sea, and I beheld a beast coming out of the sea*.

That the expedition of St Michael, spoken of in this twelfth chapter of the Apocalypse, is the same with that of the twelfth of Daniel, all the doctors seem to grant, giving of both passages one and the same interpretation. We speak not here of the few amongst them who, with the greatest violence, seek to accommodate this twelfth chapter of the Apocalypse to the persecution of Dioclesian. As little do we speak of those who, in a mystical sense, apply to the most holy Virgin some few things in this great prophecy, leaving all the rest as inapplicable to their purpose. I speak only of the literal interpreters, who, although they grant that the mystery is the same in the apostle as in the prophet, do yet explain both so imperfectly, and with so great obscurity, that there is no understanding what they mean. The only thing that can be made out is, that they confound together the dragon with the beast which cometh out of the sea, and the battle of St. Michael and the dragon they make the same as the battle with the beast; not adverting to the circumstance, that the beast is not yet come up out of the sea, neither doth come until the dragon has been conquered in battle, till after he has been cast out unto the earth, till after he has persecuted the woman, till after she has fled to the desert, and he has lost hopes of overtaking her. It is further to be

gathered from them, that they place this battle of St. Michael with the dragon in the times of Antichrist, alleging that it is for the end of defending the church against his persecution.

Still further, to show that this supposition is opposed to the holy text, we desire to know if, in this battle, Antichrist shall be conquered, or the dragon only; if, in this battle, Antichrist and the whole of his universal empire shall die, or if another advent of the same St. Michael shall be necessary to kill this monarch. That in this battle, of which we speak, Antichrist should die, or remain conquered by St. Michael, it appears impossible that they should dare to assert. Why? Because, after that battle, after the dragon and his angels are cast out to the earth, the holy text adds, that the dragon turneth all his indignation against the woman clothed with the sun, whom they wish, or suppose, to be the church: that this woman (be she, for the present, who she may,) escaped from the dragon by flying to the wilderness; where she abode, concealed *from the face of the serpent*, all the time of the continuance of the persecution of Antichrist, that is, for *a thousand, two hundred, and sixty days*; from all which it is to be inferred, that the battle of St. Michael with the dragon must take place before the forty and two months of tribulation, and, consequently, before the revelation of Antichrist. Therefore it cannot be against Antichrist, nor in the time of Antichrist; therefore the coming of St. Michael to destroy Antichrist is purely imaginary; therefore the admirable person described in the nineteenth chapter of the Apocalypse, with all the signs and circumstances whereof we have spoken so largely, cannot be St. Michael the prince, but Jesus Christ himself, the Son of God, and the Son of the Virgin, in his proper person.

This expedition of the great prince St. Michael, whereof Daniel and the Apocalypse speak, with all the new and admirable mysteries, of the woman clothed with the sun, will require a more particular and patient observation; which we shall give to it in its proper place. This I promise you, God willing, in the eighth phenomenon, after that we have made the three following observations, not only in themselves interesting, but necessary to the understanding of it.

PHENOMENON V.

THE JEWS.

ON the ordinary ideas of the coming of Christ in glory and majesty, it will doubtless appear an extravagance to name the Jews, or to take them into consideration; for, according to these ideas, they should hardly have the least particle of our attention. Regarding that unhappy people as absolutely abandoned by the God of their fathers, like a tree wholly withered and incapable of flourishing again, good only for the fire, they suppose that God bears no longer towards them any particular purpose worthy of his greatness; and conclude that these *half-men* have nothing to expect from that coming of Messiah; that, not having believed the first, they have to fear rather than to desire the second.

But those who do not blindly admit the ordinary ideas, and keep themselves apart from all prejudice; wishing with their own eyes to see what there is in scripture concerning

the Jews, can hardly by a possibility fail of entering into views widely different; or, at least into very great and violent suspicions of those presently adopted. Yes, my friend, the Jews, those miserable and vilest of men, shall, according to all the scriptures, make a great figure in the grand mystery of Messiah's coming, which we all expect. In almost all the observations, which we shall come to make as we advance, it is absolutely necessary never to lose them from our sight; because, even if we wished it not, they will place themselves directly before us. Therefore it appears convenient, and even essential, to the subject of which we treat, first to make some observations upon the Jews, and to consider with attention some of the many and great things which are spoken of them in the Holy Scriptures.

The Jews may be considered in three states infinitely different: the first, is that which they were in before Messiah; the second, is that which they have held, and still hold, since the death of Messiah, in consequence of having rejected him, and much more, of having obstinately persisted in their unbelief; the third is yet future, nor is it known when it shall be. In these three states are they frequently regarded and spoken of in scripture; and in each it regards them under four principal aspects.

In the first state, before Messiah, the scriptures regard them; First, as the owners and legitimate masters of all that portion of the earth which God himself gave to their fathers in solemn and perpetual gift: "All the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever," Gen. xv. 18. and xiii. 15. Secondly; it considers them as the only people of God, or which is the same as his church. Thirdly; as a true and lawful spouse of God himself, whose espousals were solemnly celebrated in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, Exod. xix. and Ezek. xxiii. Fourthly; it considers them as endued with another kind of life infinitely more valuable than natural life.

In the second state, after Messiah, it considers them; First, as disinherited of their native land, scattered to every wind, and abandoned to the contempt and derision, and hatred, and barbarity of all nations. Secondly; as deprived of the honour and dignity of the people of God, as if God himself were no longer their God. Thirdly; as a faithless and most ungrateful spouse, ignominiously cast forth from the house of her husband, despoiled of all her attire and precious jewels, which had been heaped upon her with such profusion, and enduring the greatest hardships and miseries in her solitude, in her dishonour, in her total abandonment of heaven and earth. Fourthly; it regards them as deprived of that life which so highly distinguished them from all the living.

In the third state still future, but infallibly believed and expected, Divine Scripture regards them; First, as gathered again, by the omnipotent arm of the living God, from among all the peoples and nations of the world, as restored to their own land, and re-established in it, not to be removed for ever. "And I will plant them and not pluck them up," Jer. xxiv. 6. "And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them," Amos ix. 15. Secondly; it regards them as restored with the highest honour, and with the greatest advantages, to the dignity of the people of God, yea, even under another and an everlasting covenant. "And I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God...And I will make an everlasting covenant with them," Jer. xxxii. 37,38,40. Thirdly; it considers them as a spouse of God, so much beloved in other times, whose desolation, trouble, affliction, and lamentation, do at length move the heart of her husband; who, forgetting his wrongs and reconciled, recalls her to her ancient dignity, receives her with the warmest welcome, forgets all the past, restores her to all her honours, and, opening his treasures, heaps upon her new and greater gifts; clothes her with new attire,

adorns her with new and inestimable jewels, incomparably more precious than those which she had lost; Isa. xl. 49. Hos. ii. 18. Micah vii.

Fourthly and finally; the scriptures consider them as resuscitated and reanimated with that spirit of life, of which, for so many ages, they have been deprived. These three estates of the Jews perfectly correspond to the three states of the life of holy Job, which we may regard as a figure, or as a history written in cypher of the three mighty revolutions of the people of God.

Upon the two first estates we have nothing new to observe. The doctors have observed them with prolixity enough; for, as there is therein no interest openly concerned, there is therefore no difficulty in taking, after their proper and natural sense, all those scriptures which speak of them, either historically or prophetically. Not so with the third estate; which cannot enjoy the same privilege and the same right, though the scriptures which speak of it be equally clear and expressive with those which speak of the first and second estates; yet must they not, neither can, be understood in the same proper and natural sense. Wherefore not? Because they oppose, because they impugn, because they prejudice, because they destroy, because they annihilate the common system. In short; the true reason is not produced, because it is not necessary. These being things to be taken for granted, not to be proved. To the exact and faithful observation, then, of that third state of the Jews, in the four aspects mentioned above, in which the Holy Scripture considers them, we are now to direct all our attention. The point is certainly a very grave one, and may prove of the highest profit, not less to the poor and unfortunate Jews, than to the true and solid well-being of many Christians, who wish, to look into themselves, and give way to serious reflections.

Count it not strange, Sir, if in this point, as in a cause so much my own, I explain myself with somewhat more liberty; nor wonder, if perhaps I should transgress, by some word wanting in civility: look not, at present, so much to the circumstances as to the substance, which ought to be the principal object of regard to a rational man. I am a Christian, it is true, and I acknowledge with the greatest gratitude of which I am capable, that best benefit which I have received from the goodness of God; but I have not therefore ceased to be a Jew, nor am I ashamed of being so. As a Christian, I am a debtor to Christians, of what ever tribe, or people, or kindred, or nation, they may be; but as a Christian Jew, I am likewise a debtor, and that with peculiar obligation to those unfortunate people, who are “my brethren, my kinsmen, according to the flesh: who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came,” Rom. ix. 4,5.

If the things I proceed to speak of after being well examined with all the interest, uprightness, and justice which so serious a subject demands, shall not be found perfectly conformed to the Holy Scriptures, the sentence which may be given against me will be just and well deserved. And in this case, I myself, after being convinced, will ask that just sentence, and I myself will be its executioner.

THE FUTURE ESTATE OF THE JEWS, AS IT IS ORDINARILY FOUND SET FORTH IN THE CHRISTIAN DOCTORS.

Preparatory Discourse.

IN respect to this particular point of which the scriptures speak so largely, the same thing would seem to have befallen various Christian doctors, which heretofore befell our Rabbis, the Hebrew doctors. That is to say, that the former speak of the future vocation of the Jews with the same coldness and indifference with which the latter spoke of the vocation of the Gentiles. The Hebrew doctors, in the perusal of their scriptures, must not unfrequently have encountered what is there spoken and announced against their own Hebrew people, and in favour of the Gentiles. They must have encountered and could not hide the extreme rigour and severity with which the people of God themselves are threatened; his own holy people. They must have encountered and observed with a holy and religious fear, that that same holy people, notwithstanding their living and sustaining themselves upon the faith and hope of Messiah, were to prove when he came to this world, his greatest and cruelest enemies, were to reject him, to persecute him, and put him to death with the ignominy and torture of the cross. They must have encountered and perceived that for this greatest of crimes, the peculiar people of God were to be so no longer; were to be scattered to all the winds, that they might every where become the scorn, the hatred, and the bye-word of all nations: and another people of God to enter into their place, called and chosen from among those very nations which they regarded as reprobate. In short, they must have met with, and not been able to hide it from their view, that the true spouse of God was to be cast out from the house of her husband with the utmost ignominy, and carrying along with her nothing but the enormous load of her iniquities, while in her stead another should receive all the attentions and all the caresses of the husband.

These and other such things our doctors must necessarily and inevitably have encountered in the reading of their scriptures, especially in the Prophets and the Psalms. But all these things which they met with, were to them, and are to them still, *as the words of a book that is sealed*. Isaiah xxix. 11. Written in a book clasped and sealed, which book (continues the Prophet) being put into the hands of one who can read, saying unto him *read this I pray thee, and he saith, I cannot for it is sealed*. And being put into the hands of one who cannot read, saying unto him, *read this I pray thee, and he saith, I am not learned*.

Our Rabbis did not positively deny that the Gentiles were to be likewise called, and to share in part the righteousness, holiness, and felicity of Messiah's kingdom. This in the gross would have been denied: but that vocation of the Gentiles, according to them all, must be without any prejudice to themselves, but rather to their greater honour, glory, and exaltation. This satisfaction with themselves, this immoderate confidence was the very thing which made their scriptures unintelligible to them, which made the very thing they read incredible to them, deeming that even to doubt it was impiety and a kind of sacrilege. Nevertheless the announcements of the Prophets of God, as they were frequent, were most clear; the sad and bitter announcements of rigour, of severity, of wrath, of indignation, of fury, of oblivion, of abandonment, and these altogether general to the whole people of God—to all the holy people. What then could they make of these announcements? To believe, and to confess them, as they found them written in the prophets, was not possible. Why? Because they were not in favour of the holy people, because they were against the people of God, because God could not cast off his own people, his true and only spouse.

In the midst of such false ideas, there remained no other course to take but that which they actually took, very proper in order that the prophecies might be accomplished to the letter, without taking from them one jot. What course was this? It was no other than to confuse some and soften others, interpreting them all in some possible way, and always in their own favour. To allege that some were accomplished in the time of Nebuchadnezzar, others in the time of Antiochus; and such as could not be applied to those times, to limit solely to some of the most notorious offenders of their nation, and not apply to the whole nation in general; —which would have been rashness, impiety, error, and heresy. In one word, there never was a Rabbi, scribe or lawyer, who could see or even so much as suspect that all those prophecies so expressly written against the holy people, could be fulfilled to the letter after they should have crucified and rejected their Messiah. Much less did it enter into their thoughts, that from amongst the Gentiles whom they despised so much, there should be taken another people of God, another spouse, another church incomparably greater, not only in respect of numbers, but of justice and holiness, and much more worthy of God himself. So far were they from these thoughts, that even the first Christians were scandalized at St. Peter and reprehended him for having entered into the house of Cornelius the centurion, and baptized his whole family. “Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised and did eat with them.” Acts xi. 3. Oh what loss did their self-love and national spirit bring upon them! I see you, my friend, full of curiosity to know when this discourse against our Jewish doctors is to stop, and where it is to end. I will here cut it short, with good will, and cast my self entirely upon your judgment and decision. The natural fear of being considered as uncivil and possessed of little reverence to my ancestors, makes me not unfrequently omit some reflections, and even hide some truths of a certain importance; but since you have so oft exhorted me, I go on to explain myself with all plainness and simplicity, devoid of every care but this, faithfully to transfer to my paper what I have in my mind, as thou art intimately persuaded.

It is undeniable that many Christian doctors have followed nearly the same course with the Jewish, have dealt with them after the same kind, and paid them faithfully in their own coin, interpreting the whole of Divine Scripture in favour of their own people. All the prophecies, save those which speak of severity and infliction, they suppose to be accomplished in their own people. Nothing, or almost no thing, will they leave for the Jews, save what is found not so favourable to them, what is found against them, what is found severe, harsh, and bitter. If the prophecy denounce severities, if it denounce tribulations, if it denounce plagues, they understand it at once literally of the Jews; there is not, in this case, any reason why they should dispute with them what is their own: but if favours and mercies be announced, especially when great and extraordinary, then verily they may not be literally understood of the Jews, but allegorically of the Christians. And if, as very frequently happens, one and the same prophecy, speaking by name of the Jews, and to the Jews should announce both evil and good, in that case they divide the prophecy into two equal parts, giving the first to the Jews, and reserving the favourable portion for the Christians: accordingly some of the most celebrated of the Catholic doctors, for the better understanding of the Holy Scripture, lay down upon this point a sure canon or general rule, which the majority of them follow in practice, and which in substance is as follows.

When a prophecy speaks by name of Israel, of Judah, of Jerusalem, of Zion, &c. and it is known that the thing therein announced hath not been accomplished upon ancient Israel, nor upon Judah, nor upon Jerusalem, nor upon Zion, nor, in one word, upon the Jews or Israelites; then ought it to be believed that therein is inclosed some other mystery much greater than the words do signify; and the prophecy ought to be understood in a figurative and

spiritual sense only, not of the ancient Israel, but of the new Israel; not of that Jerusalem or Zion *which killed the prophets*, but of that thereby figured, to wit, the present church; not, in fine, of the *synagogue of the Jews*, but of the *church of the Gentiles*.

This general rule, so much received, followed, and practised, by all the interpreters up to this hour, knows of no foundation to rest upon; but, on the contrary, is exclaimed against by every sacred right which emanates from the veracity of God, from religion, and even from society; forasmuch as every one holds it his right, not to be stripped of that which is his own, that it may be given to another. If the world indeed were ended; if, at least it were known for certain, that no other time shall arrive, wherein the prophecies may be accomplished upon these very persons of whom they expressly speak; then, in that case, would we hold our peace. But if quite the contrary appear; why deny that those persons of whom they speak, may one day awake from their lethargy, open their eyes filled with tears, acknowledge the hope of Israel, and so become worthy of all which the prophecies announce?

True it is, that the Christian doctors do not refuse to the Jews, but without difficulty concede to them, a future estate very different from that which they have possessed up to the present time. They do not deny, that one day they are to be called of God, that they will hear and likewise obey this call, and that God is to manifest to them his great mercies; but this, they assure us, will all happen immediately before the end of the world, or, as one would say in the article of death; will happen without any detriment or prejudice to the Gentiles, who at present constitute the people of God, although Holy Scripture affirms altogether the reverse; and will happen, to the greater glory and honour of those, the actual people of God, with whom the Jews will unite themselves, and be received by them, as it were, out of pure charity and pity, without the sacrifice of one particle of their own authority to themselves. Notwithstanding this complacency, this false and fatal security, we meet with not a few sad and bitter, and, at the same time, clear and undeniable announcements. For example; that a time shall come, when the Christian nations, or the greater part of them, shall become not less faithless to their calling than were the Jews. That by the abounding of iniquity amongst them, and the cooling of their love, they shall likewise renounce their faith, and disallow Christ; who, when he shall return from heaven to earth, shall hardly find amongst them a vestige of faith: that he shall find them as in the days of Noah: that the boughs of the wild olive, grafted with so much mercy into the good olive tree, shall likewise be broken oft as were the natural branches, when they no longer abide in their first goodness, and when the fruits answer not to the labour or to the hopes of the Husbandman.

On the other hand, we find at every step, without being able to avoid the inconvenience, that the day shall come when the Jews, for so many ages humbled, mortified, degraded, and despised, shall come again into favour with their God; who shall collect them with his omnipotent arm from all the lands and countries where they abide in exile and dispersion, when they shall return with great honours, and become once more the people and the spouse of God. Isa. xi. liv. lxv. Jer. xxxi, xxxii. 1. Hosea ii. Micah vii. That their honour, their exaltation, their felicity, shall be so great, as to make them forget all the hardships endured through so many ages of tribulation; that God shall make merry with them like a good father, when he finds a son whom he deemed lost or dead; that the Gentiles shall behold with dismay the glory and exaltation of this son, whom they now treat like the vilest slave, and shall be *confounded with all his valour, when he shall lay his hand upon them*. In short, that *in that time their past iniquity shall be sought for, and shall not be found; their sin shall be sought, and shall not be*.

Now what is to be done with these and other such earnest announcements which abound so much in the Holy Scriptures? To take them as they are found? That is not possible, without injury to favourite ideas. To deny them, or wholly omit them? This were a very difficult and dangerous proceeding. There remains then no other course to take, but that taken by our Rabbis, to wit, to soften some, to allegorize others, and make all of them speak in such a way as not to prejudice or cause any injury to favourite ideas. Perhaps you may think that this is a falsehood, or a great exaggeration; and therefore, as my entire justification, I refer you to the doctors themselves, where you shall perceive and be fully satisfied, that I neither lie nor exaggerate; but, on the other hand, fall far short in my expressions.

These things which I have pointed out, and others of the same kind, are doubtless the things upon which they have their eye, when they set forth and exaggerate the great danger we are in from reading the scriptures without the light and help of their commentaries. It may not be, that as we believe without difficulty every thing we read in the scriptures against the Jews and in favour of the Christianized Gentiles, we should likewise believe with simplicity what we find in the same scriptures to be written against, and in disparagement of the Christian nations, and in favour of the Jews. It may not be, that we should fall into the error of thinking, or suspecting, that the great affliction which befell the people of God, and his first spouse, may likewise befall the new people and the second spouse, like wise so much beloved by God. It may not be, finally, That we should open our eyes and, regard even as possible, that the first spouse of God, or the house of Jacob, may one day return to the favour of her husband; may one day with great honours be recalled to her antient dignity; may one day occupy the place now filled by her who succeeded; — when she also shall have become faithless and ungrateful as the former, and when she shall have surpassed her in malice, and make her appear just, by the abundance of her own iniquity. All these things which I have pointed out as it were merely in the sketch, will, as we proceed, open out by little and little; for it is not possible to explain in a few words such great, and at the same time such delicate mysteries.

Returning now to that from which we began, it appears certain and undeniable, that the future state of the Jews is touched by the Christian doctors (when they see themselves constrained to touch it) with so much indifference, with so much slightness, and with so much haste, that, if we were to judge by the little which they say, and the way in which they speak it, it all amounts very nearly to nothing. According to what they say to us, and the way in which they say it, all which in scripture is announced on this subject by terms and by expressions, so clear, so vivid, so magnificent, may be reduced merely to this; *“that towards the end of the world, and upon the eve of the final end of all things, the Jews who shall then be in existence shall know the truth, shall embrace the Christian faith, and shall be benignantly received by the church.”* This great boon, yielded with so much liberality by the Christian doctors to the house of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, you could not suppose, Sir, that all should yield in like manner and with equal generosity. The greater number are contented with saying in a general and confused way, that at the end of the world all or many of them will be converted: and St. Gregory gives it as his supposition, that even at the end of the world the church will hardly receive the Jews who shall desire to come in:⁴⁶ for the holy church, in her beginnings enriched with the multitude of Gentiles, shall in the end of the world scarcely take up the Jews whom she will find.

⁴⁶ Sancta namque ecetesia in primitils suis multitudine gentium fecundata, vix in mundi fine Judæos quos invenerit, suscipiet.—Lib. 4. Mon. c. 4.

I seem to hear raised against me at least that same complaint which a certain lawyer made against Christ, —“in saying thus, thou reproachest us also,” Luke xi. 45; seeing no Christian doctor hath ever denied the future vocation of the Jews, their true and sincere conversion; but all with one voice admit, that one day, *that is, in the end of the world*, they shall be converted to Christ, and admitted to the bosom of the church; very good: but, by this merely, do you imagine that all the prophecies will be accomplished? that all our hopes will be fully satisfied? May not we Jews with a loud voice and with all reason exclaim, that we have no need of any of their liberal concessions, “for that we have the holy books of scripture in our hands to comfort us,” 1 Mac. xii. 9.

Whence has this future conversion of the Jews, which all the Christian doctors with one voice admit and concede, been drawn? Have they haply taken it from their own reasoning and ingenuity? Poor we, if we had no better foundation than this! They must then necessarily reply, that they have taken it from authentic and public revelation, that is, from the Holy Scriptures; besides which there is no other fountain from whence future things can with security be taken. If they have derived this from the Holy Scriptures, it is asked again how have they not drawn nor made any use of so many admirable things which are written in the same scriptures, so conjoined, connected, and closely united with the future conversion of the Jews? How have they taken the matter of their conversion merely; omitting, and even depreciating all the other weighty circumstances which attend and follow thereupon? Either these circumstances are equally certain and sure, or the conversion of the Jews is not so: for there is no reason, and can be none, for believing the one rather than the other.

Let it be imagined now, that, against all the Christian divines, I should deny the future conversion of the Jews: —in this case, how would they convince me? By showing me very clear texts of scripture to that effect? By those very texts I would defend myself; presenting no other shield than this simple argument. —These very clear texts of the Holy Scripture, which are brought in favour of the future conversion of the Jews, not only affirm that conversion, but therewithal and with equal clearness do affirm many most grave, new, admirable, and magnificent circumstances, which are to accompany and follow the same. Now it is so that the Christian doctors do not generally admit these circumstances: therefore am I as little obliged to admit the future conversion of the Jews. This reasoning, though rude and simple, is not therefore the less just. The only doubt which can remain is, with respect to the major proposition, and this is what it concerneth us to prove and demonstrate which we shall immediately proceed to do.

It was remarked already at the beginning of this phenomenon, that when the Holy Scriptures announce to the Jews the greatest calamities, especially after Messiah’s death it considered them under four principal aspects. —First, as exiled from their own country, scattered to the four winds and captive in the midst of all nations. Second, as degraded from their place, despoiled of their prerogatives, and deprived of the honour of being the people of God. Third, as the faithless and most ungrateful spouse of God, cast out with the utmost ignominy from the house of her husband. Fourth, as a dead body broken up, whose bones, dispersed over the whole field of this world, did excite in the beholders’ view nothing but contempt, aversion, disgusts and horror. Under these four aspects I desire likewise to consider the Jews for, as all the world knows, it is exactly the miserable state in which this entire nation has been found from Messiah’s death till our own times.

ARTICLE I.

The First Aspect

THE JEWS are regarded since Messiah's death, as rooted out of their own land, and dispersed to the four winds of heaven and we ask, Shall this have an end, or not? "And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. For there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Luke xxi. 20, 22-24.

By every thing which we have been able to search out upon this point, the Christian doctors do in reality allow and admit of no other end to the present exile of the Jews, save the end of the world; trying, so far as they can, to accord to the return from Babylon the innumerable passages of scripture which speak thereof: and when this fails them, as for the most part it doth, allegorizing and spiritualizing the whole. —True it is, they declare and affirm, that Antichrist, their King and Messiah, shall re-establish them in the land of their fathers. But this supposed re-establishment does not deserve to be taken into consideration; both because this same King and Messiah, whom they call Antichrist, is so hypothetical and false; and because this very re-establishment which they fancy, they in other parts destroy, as we shall immediately see; and principally because it is not that re-establishment in righteousness and holiness and by the omnipotent hand of God, whereof the Scriptures speak.

Equally true it is, that coming to explain the thirty-eighth chapter of Ezekiel, they show some sort of benignity, or less of rigour; because the things spoken of in that and the following chapter will neither accommodate to the return from Babylon, nor admit of being turned into allegory. There is foretold, with the greatest clearness and simplicity, the expedition of a certain one, Gog; who, coming along with an innumerable multitude of nations, is to go "in the latter days" to the land and mountains of Israel, now re-established in the land of their fathers. There it is told, how God will protect his people, destroying the whole of that infinite multitude by tempests and fire from heaven. There it is told, that the children of Israel, beholding themselves delivered from that great peril, shall go forth to collect the arms of that innumerable army, from which alone they shall have wood enough for seven years. There it is told, that the seven first months shall hardly suffice to bury so many dead, notwithstanding they shall be helped by the fowls and the beasts. To be short, all this famous prophecy is concluded with these words, which call for our greatest attention. "Then shall they know that I am the Lord their God, which caused them to be led into captivity among the heathen: but I have gathered them unto their own land, and have left none of them any more there. Neither will I hide my face any more from them: for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God." Ezek. xxxix. 28,29.

From all which it appears legitimately to follow, that before the expedition of Gog, the sentence of banishment of the children of Israel shall have been already taken off; that they shall have come forth from the midst of all nations, where God himself kept them in exile; that they shall have been already gathered together and re-established in their own land: all this by the grace of God, shown unto them, now full of his Holy Spirit. Is not this prophecy alone, though there were no other, sufficient ground for believing that the present banishment of the Jews is a temporary chastisement? Nevertheless on the system of the Christian doctors it neither is, nor can be, sufficient. Although the embarrassment be terrible,

it is not therefore insuperable. For they allege that, although the prophecy speak of the Jews, or of the children of Israel in general, it speaketh not of them only. Of what others then? It speaks as well and chiefly of the Christians: of all peoples, tribes and languages, who, in the terrible times of Antichrist, shall flee from their respective countries and assemble in Palestine. In Palestine! The Christians, persecuted by Antichrist, take refuge in Palestine, where they suppose the court, or residence, of the universal monarch, who persecutes them, to be planted! Sure that is a very remarkable thing. And pray how shall the Christians be able to apply to themselves those words of the prophecy, “which caused them to be led into captivity among the heathen?” Have they ever been dispersed by God?

And for what purpose should the Lord assemble so many Christians in Palestine? Some reply, to make a brisk war upon the universal monarch in his very court. If this does not satisfy, as not harmonizing well with the flight of the former doctors, others reply to you, that it shall be for the purpose of being eye-witnesses of the grand and fearful punishment which is about to be discharged on the head of Antichrist, and on the multitude of Gog, who have come to avenge his death upon the Christians there assembled. If this can be as little admitted, others, more prudent, reply to you, that it shall be for purposes which God only knows, but hath not chosen to reveal to us. Who would believe, did he not see with his own eyes, that things of this sort, these..., I know not what to call them, could have been written by interpreters of the Holy Scriptures! Men on so many accounts illustrious, estimable and respectable! And wherefore all these violent efforts? Read, my friend, once more, read a thousand times, this entire prophecy; and in the whole of it you shall neither find how nor wherefore to substitute these ideas so extravagant instead of those which are given so clearly, so simply, so naturally, not only in the thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth chapters but in the four preceding and the nine following ones, for it is all clearly and manifestly one and the same subject, to wit, the future state of the Jews.

Now, if a prophecy so clear, so express, so circumstantial, is explained, or eluded, in so strange and so ingenious a manner as we have just seen, what better fate can we expect for the other prophecies? Nevertheless, be they valued what they may, I proceed to show several others, as one who produces in court, unto the judge, some of those authentic documents on which his rights and his hopes are founded.

First Document.

§ 1. SINCE the first of the prophets this great mystery began to indicate itself. Moses, having denounced upon all Israel the various punishments with which God threatened them if they should prove disobedient to his laws, and having prophesied the different states of calamity and extreme misery into which they were to fall for their iniquity, and foretold, with the greatest clearness and individuality that very state in which they are at this day beheld, and in which all the world hath seen them abiding since the death of their Messiah; and being come to the thirtieth chapter of Deuteronomy, he thus speaketh: “And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath driven thee, and shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul; that then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee. If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee: and the Lord thy God will bring thee into the

land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers. And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live. And the Lord thy God will put all these curses upon thine enemies, and on them that hate thee, which persecuted thee. And thou shalt return and obey the voice of the Lord, and do all his commandments which I command thee this day.” Deut. xxx. 1-8.

This promise either hath been fully accomplished, or if not, must needs one day be accomplished; for God cannot fail in his word. That it has not been accomplished till this time will appear evident to any one who, keeping in his mind the holy text, shall cast an eye upon all scripture and upon all history. It may be said, and is in reality insinuated, that the whole of it hath already been accomplished in the time of Cyrus, when some few returned from Babylon with Zerubbabel; for there is no other captivity and return to which to have recourse. But it is evident, from the text and from all the Scriptures, that this promise of God was not then accomplished; as clearly appeareth from the following considerations.

First, this promise certainly doth not speak of a single tribe, or of two, or of three, but of all Israel in general and of all his tribes; even as the threat of dispersion and captivity speaks of all and upon all has been accomplished and is accomplishing. Those who returned from Babylon, as is expressly said in the first book of Esdras, were only of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin and some few of Levi; therefore from that chapter alone, although there were no other authority, we conclude that the promise of God was not accomplished in that time. Secondly and principally, God promised, in formal terms that, when he should collect them by his almighty arm from the nations and peoples whither he himself had dispersed them for their crimes, he would circumcise the heart of them and of all their posterity, in such a way, as that they should love their God, and be able to live before him a supernatural and divine life. And when has this circumcision of heart taken place? Was it, pray, at the return from Babylon? Read the two books of Ezra and Nehemiah, and you shall find the very contrary. Read afterwards, in order to make sure, the seventh chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, and you shall find, at verse 51, that St. Stephen, full of the Holy Ghost, reproves them in public council, and to the face upbraids them with the uncircumcision of their hearts, as well as that of their fathers, saying, “Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, as do ye.” So that up to the death of St. Stephen that circumcision of heart had not come to pass. And when shall we find it thereafter?

It follows from hence, that, the promise of the Lord not having yet had its accomplishment, we ought honestly to confess that the day will come when it shall have it. We ought, I say, to confess that the miserable Jews, dispersed so many ages ago among the nations, shall one day be called, collected, and gathered again, by the almighty arm of the living God, let the powers of the earth take what part they may, and whether they will or not. “If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee,” Deut. xxx. 4. And in like manner shall they be introduced and planted upon a new footing, in that very land which was the inheritance and possession of their fathers. “And the Lord thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it,” verse 5. This appears very clear, and would doubtless be accounted so on any other subject of less interest; but on the present subject it is not so clear, but that it may easily be darkened by some brilliant solution.

There may, however, be alleged on the other hand, what some learned men, in modern times, have set forth as a solution that cannot be questioned, not only of the passage of Deuteronomy which we now consider, but generally of all those prophecies favourable to the

Jews which have not yet been verified. These learned men confess that many, or most part, of the prophecies, which contain promises of God in favour of the house of Jacob, have not been accomplished, nor ever could have been accomplished, by the return out of Babylon. The like confession make all the interpreters of scripture, at least tacitly, seeing that notwithstanding the great efforts which they make to accommodate the prophecies to the return from Babylon, they do almost always find themselves forced to recur to pure allegory as their last resort. They confess, moreover, that the purely allegorical and spiritual sense really doth not satisfy any one who desires truth, and can rest in truth alone. This last confession is certainly worthy of estimation, but on that account is the more strange. For why do they then quit the letter and betake themselves to allegory, and open a way perhaps more difficult, more in convenient, less capable of contenting one who is in quest of truth? What way is that? It is to say generally and with little explanation, that the promises of God made to the Jews, especially those great and extraordinary promises, which till now have not been fulfilled, were not absolute but conditional; and therefore have not been accomplished, because the Jews on their part have failed to fulfil the condition.

Ask them now, even though they should regard you as impertinent, what was the condition, and you will perceive the consequences which follow from this hypothesis. The condition, as they insinuate, was, if they were faithful to God and observed his holy laws; if they received their Messiah with honour; if they heard him; if they obeyed him, &c. O what an important discovery! It cannot be denied, that, in such a case, the Jews would not have been seen, neither would now be seen, in that estate of extreme misery in which they have been and still are beheld. "O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea," Isa. xlvi 18. In this case, it would never have been necessary to graft into the good olive the branches of a wild olive, instead of the natural branches, which were by iniquity become withered, and for their barrenness had to be cut off. Nor in this case, in fine, would that miracle have been so necessary, of raising up from the stones children to Abraham. But how could the condition on which God would accomplish his promises, be, that the Jews should be faithful and observe his precepts, when those promises of which we speak, do evidently presuppose the delinquencies of the Jews to have been not only committed, but visited with the most severe punishment? One of these promises is, that he would draw them forth with an omnipotent arm from all peoples and nations, whither he himself kept them in exile and tribulation for their sins.

Tell me now, my friend, with sincerity, if this promise (and the same I ask of the others which are its consequences) would have been accomplished, or will be accomplished, unless the crimes of the Jews had preceded? Dost thou not see the very manifest perplexity and absurdity of it? The Jews are found at this day, and for ages past have been found rooted out of their country, dispersed among the nations, beat down, despised, and afflicted. And why all this? Because of their virtues or their faults? Thou wilt necessarily say, for their faults: so that had those faults not preceded, God would not have dispersed them, and consequently he would be as little able to gather them. The promise therefore supposes, that they should have committed the enormous crimes which we have seen; and consequently, the condition of the promises of God, whereof we speak, is not the innocence of the Jews, but their penitence. This condition is expressly singled out in the text of Moses, and either expressly or tacitly implied in the other prophecies. "That then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee. If any of thine be driven out unto the

outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee: and the Lord thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it," Deut. xxx. 3-5.

It is indubitable that the great and extraordinary promises of God made to the Jews, which we read in the prophets, shall in no way be accomplished, unless first the condition shall have been accomplished, upon which alone they have been, and upon which alone they could have been made. In like manner is it equally indubitable, that with all fulness they shall be accomplished, when once the condition is accomplished; for the contrary is repugnant to the infinite veracity and sanctity of God. And dost thou doubt, Sir, that this necessary and indispensable condition will one day be fulfilled?

Has any one ever doubted it? Doth it not stand clearly announced, not once, but very many times, in the Prophets, in St. Paul, and even in the Gospels? Do not all the Christian doctors agree on this point? Yes, truly it is altogether so. But when we come to the accomplishment of the promises of God, then it is quite another thing; then at once we behold them draw in their hand, because the accomplishment is entirely for the vile and perfidious Jews; then the various senses of scripture come aptly to their help; then must Moses and the prophets be understood in the allegorical sense specially intended by the Holy Ghost; then, in sum, according to the opinion of our doctors, the promises of God come to reduce themselves entirely to the fulfilment of the condition; and this condition is no more, than that the Jews should one day open their eyes, return with their whole heart to God, acknowledge their true Messiah, deplore with bitter lamentation their past blindness and obduracy, and the church will receive them into her bosom, a little before the end of the world.

If with all courtesy you represent to them that when once the condition imposed by God shall have been accomplished in the Jews, all that God hath promised should necessarily follow; they will reply to you, some with a countenance full of indignation, that the Jews have rendered themselves unworthy of any good; others that the promises of God do not speak of them, but of the Christian nations, who are the true Israel of God; others that the promises of God cannot be understood *according to the letter which killeth*, but in another allegorical and spiritual sense; others that they shall be really accomplished upon the Jews themselves, when they shall be converted to Christ; for then, being entered into the church, they shall likewise have it in their power to enter into heaven, which is the true land of promise. And finally, say others, yes, certainly the Jews or the children of Israel in general, shall one day return again and be established anew in that land of theirs for which they sigh so much; but this in the train of Antichrist who is to be a Jew, to be believed in, and received of them as their true Messiah. Which of these answers is the least absurd?

But let them say what they please, the re-establishment of the Jews, and of all the tribes of Jacob in that same land of theirs, out of which they were cast because of their crimes, is an event as clear and express, and oft repeated in the scriptures of truth, as is their conversion, as is their dispersion and present captivity, whereof all the world is the eye-witness; for the same spirit of truth which announceth the last, announceth likewise the first, With equal appropriation and with equal clearness. There is not perhaps one prophet from Moses to Malachi, who does not in some way touch these three capital points. 1st. The expulsion out of their land, the dispersion and captivity of all Israel among all peoples, and nations, with all the circumstances, whether general or particular, which are related in history or known from experience. 2nd. Their true conversion with *all the heart and with all the soul*. 3rd. Their fixed and stable re-establishment in that very land whence they were cast out, and this upon the real, infallible, indefeasible word of God, *who is faithful in all his words*, that

they shall not again be rooted out of the land for ever: “and I will bring them again to this land: and I will build them, and not pull them down; and I will plant them, and not, pluck them up,” thus he speaketh by Jeremiah xxiv. 6; and thus by Amos, “I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of the land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God.” Amos ix. 15. and speaking of the land and mountain of Israel, he thus speaketh by. Ezekiel, “Yea, I will cause men to walk upon you, even my people Israel; and they shall possess thee, and thou shalt be their inheritance, and thou shalt no more henceforth bereave them of men...Neither will I cause men to hear in thee the shame of the heathen any more; neither shalt thou bear the reproach of the people any more; neither shalt thou cause thy nations to fall any more, saith the Lord.” Ezek. xxxvi. 12.15.

Now then: the first of these capital points the whole world hath seen, and seen it exactly in the way it is foretold in the scriptures. The second is unanimously confessed by all the doctors, even the most allegorical of them. And I say, why then not admit the third also? Perhaps it is not so clear in scripture as the two first? I Why, in that case, so much resistance, so much subterfuge, so much violence in order to deface it? If now you ask, why the like violence is not used towards those passages which denounce wrath, indignation, banishment, inflictions, and plagues upon the Jews, or to those likewise which foretel their future conversion; the answer is simple and short: because neither the first nor the second, shocks favourite ideas; but the third shocks them so much, and with such force, that there is manifest danger lest it should break them to pieces and utterly annihilate them.

I cannot copy here all those passages of scripture which clearly make mention of the third, much less can I make the proper reflections upon them. For which a great volume would be needed, even though we were to take up no other prophet than Isaiah. Some of those passages have been already noted, and many more will yet come out with more precision as we proceed. Nevertheless, we shall remark a few, which directly and immediately prove the end and termination of the present exile of the Jews, which is the particular object of this first aspect. It is of much importance that we should be fully assured upon this point, because upon it dependeth the understanding of the rest.

Second Document.

§ 2. “AND it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall beat off from the channel of the river unto the stream of Egypt, and ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem.” Isaiah xxvii. 12,13. Upon this text of Isaiah we have two observations to make of the utmost importance. And though we should stay a minute longer, or take two or three steps away from our main subject, this irregularity will not be considered as wholly inexcusable.

First Observation.

THE bounds of the land of promise marked off in this prophecy, are doubtless, somewhat more ample than the children of Israel ever occupied; and yet they are precisely the same with those which we find expressed in the authentic writing of the gift which God made to our holy and venerable father Abraham, as clearly appeareth by these words: “In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates:” Gen. xv. 18. So that the children

of Israel never having possessed all that portion of the earth which God promised to them, we may hope from the goodness and sanctity of God himself, that the time will come when they shall possess it. When? “When God shall beat off from the channel of the river unto the stream of Egypt, and ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish.” Isaiah xxvii. 12,13.

Peradventure, you will say, that this was fulfilled in the day of Solomon, seeing that of this famous king it is said in Holy Scripture, “And he reigned over all the kings from the river even unto the land of the Philistines, and to the border of Egypt.” 2 Chron. ix. 26. But what did this power which Solomon exercised amount to? Scripture itself telleth us clearly in the very passage quoted, as well as in the first book of Kings, “And all the kings of the earth (speaking manifestly of the lands circumjacent to Asia) sought the presence of Solomon.” All the kings, or petty princes who then held dominion between the Nile and the Euphrates, desired with their own eyes to see Solomon, who had become most celebrated for his wisdom. And some went in person to Jerusalem, as the queen of Sheba from the southmost part of Arabia; others sent frequent embassies, proposing their enigmas, and consulting him upon their doubts. And they sent at the same time, or carried with them gifts and regalia of gold and silver, with other precious and curious things, which were produced in their territories: “And they brought every man his present, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and raiment, harness, and spices, horses, and mules, a rate year by year:” (vulg. not *a rate* but merely *per singulos annos*, every year) 2 Chron. ix. 24. This is the only thing found in scripture touching the power of Solomon over these kings. It may however be, (although sacred history saith it not,) that some of these petty princes paid a tribute to Solomon, not because he had subdued them, and made them tributary; for we know that Solomon was a pacific king, who never drew the sword against his neighbours; but because they had remained tributary from the time of David his father, as we read in the second book of Samuel. But what proveth all this in the point in question? is this the thing contained in the prophecy of God thus expressed, “To thy seed I will give this land from the river of Egypt, even to the great river Euphrates?” If there be any thing else said in reply to this difficulty, I am absolutely ignorant of it, neither finding in the doctors, nor being able to devise any thing which can be brought against this evidence; and so I hold it as certain, that the promise of God made to Abraham for his posterity, has not been yet fully accomplished, and that the time will come when it will be accomplished; seeing that neither is the world at its end, nor the posterity of Abraham, who still remain unmingled with other nations.

In order to make still more sure of the goodness of this conclusion, let us turn our eyes to the prophecy of Isaiah. In that day, saith he, the Lord shall strike, inflict terrible blows, destroy, and bring to ruin, (for all this is signified by the word *percutio*,) from the river Euphrates to the torrent of Egypt; that is, to the Nile, or even to the Rinocorura, which is more to the east. Which being executed, he adds, the children of Israel shall enter and gather themselves together into that country, *one by one*; “and ye shall be gathered one by one, oh ye children of Israel!” What meaneth this? The expression, although singular, seems very proper and natural. After that vast country is all stricken by the omnipotent hand of God; after it hath been emptied and disencumbered of all the peoples and nations who shall be dwelling therein at that time; it shall not be necessary for the children of Israel to enter thereto as they entered the first time, that is, with arms in their hands, and in battle array; because there being in all the country no inhabitant, as Zechariah declareth, (xiv. 10.) to make resistance, or to dispute their passage, they shall be very well able to enter therein *one by one*; that is to say,

without fear or apprehension, without opposition, as a family entereth into their own home. For at that time, after the country hath been evacuated and the habitation prepared, there shall sound a trumpet (metaphorically speaking) great and loud, at whose voice they shall come and gather themselves, even they who were thought to be lost in the land of Assyria, who can be no other than the relicts of the ten tribes carried away captive by Salmanezer, who did not return in the time of Cyrus, nor is it accurately known where they are: though in general it be known, that the whole of Asia, no less than of Europe, is full of Jews, known only by that general name. Judge then, whether we, the miserable children of Abraham, have reason to believe and expect, that one day God will fully accomplish that promise which he made to his greatest and most faithful friend in these precise words, “Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates.”

You will naturally desire to know why God did not fully accomplish that promise when he led them up out of Egypt. To which I reply briefly, by referring you to the relation of their journey through the desert, which you will find in the books of Moses, and likewise in the two books of Joshua and Judges. The first reason was their sins in the wilderness, so frequent, grievous, and insufferable, that the Lord one day gave demonstration of a purpose to exterminate them wholly: and that he might not do this, which they certainly deserved, the heart of his faithful servant was moved to intercede for them, and to make request with this simple and zealous alternative: —“Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written.” Exod. xxxii. 32. But though for that time he was appeased, the sins of this most ungrateful people did not cease, but became daily more numerous and excessive, until he swore in his wrath, on the day of provocation, that they *should not enter into his rest*, (Psalm xcv.) or that he would not give them what he was purposing to give them. This oath of God, St. Paul recalls to their memories, and by it proves to them, that though Joshua had introduced them into Palestine, the promises of God were not thereby accomplished in their fulness. “For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.” Heb. iv. 8,9.

The second and more immediate reason, for which these were not so fully accomplished to them as the other promises of God, was, that they sought not to exterminate all those nations which God expressly commanded them to do; but fell in with their ways, and were united with them in marriage, contrary to the law. On which account, some years after, being congregated into a certain place, afterward called the place of weeping, the Lord sent them an angel, who gave them his last definitive sentence in these words; —“I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I swear unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break my covenant with you. And ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land; ye shall throw down their altars: but ye have not obeyed my voice: why have ye done this? Wherefore I also said, I will not drive them out from before you; but they shall be as thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare unto you.” Judges ii. 1-3. But, be that as it may upon this point, we come to the second observation, which is the principal one.

Second Observation.

WHAT day or time is this of which the prophecy speaketh? I observe, in the first place, that throughout this twenty-eighth chapter of Isaiah are clearly announced four mysteries or great events, which appear still to be future. Of all four it is said, that they shall take place *in that day*, without determinately informing us in what day they are to succeed. Only it seemeth

certain, that all four ought to happen in one and the same day, both because they are all joined and linked together in one and the same chapter, which begins with the words *in that day*, and likewise because to every one individually are prefixed the same words *in that day*, which appears a manifest and clear sign that the same day serveth for all. This being granted, we reason thus; —Four events or mysteries, which till now have not been accomplished, are clearly announced for one and the same day, without its being certainly known, what that day is. In the midst of this uncertainty, we have the good fortune to find in the scripture the precise day in which one of them is to happen, which is the first. Will not this information be sufficient to determine the point with respect to the other three, which are to fall out in the same day? See, now, this discovery. The first mystery with which the prophecy opens is this; —“In that day the Lord with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea.” Isa. xxvii. 1. This text, considered in itself, is doubtless very obscure; nor is it to be known of what mystery it speaketh, nor of what time. But if we take into our hand that clearest torch, which in another part we left kindled, all is at once enlightened. Call to memory that which was said in our first dissertation upon the Millenarians, Article III. § 5. There it was said, that the divine and admirable book of the Apocalypse is a true light, which shines upon and guides our steps among the most obscure and difficult prophecies, a master-key which opens the most securely barred gates. There it is said, and likewise proved with all the evidence of which the subject is capable, that the imprisonment of the dragon or serpent, *which is called the devil and Satan*, with all the circumstances which St. John makes mention of in the twentieth chapter, is not a past event, but still future; visibly reserved till after the death of the beast and total ruin of Antichrist. And as it hath likewise been proved, and even demonstrated under the fourth phenomenon, that this beast or Antichrist is to be killed and entirely destroyed in the great day of the Lord, when he cometh in glory and majesty; in that same day ought the imprisonment of the crooked serpent to come to pass *by the strong and great and sharp sword of the Lord*.

Compare now the two texts of Isaiah and St. John, and you shall see in both the same mystery announced in different words; and that St. John, according to his custom of continually alluding to all the scriptures, manifestly alludeth in this place to the passage of Isaiah. The prophet says, that in that day, without saying what, the Lord shall visit the serpent with his sore, and great, and strong sword: the apostle naming clearly the day of the Lord’s coming, saith that the same serpent, *which is called the devil and Satan which deceiveth the whole world*, shall then be visited, chained and shut up in the abyss until a certain time, in order that he may not any more deceive the nations, *until the thousand years be fulfilled*. Tell me now sincerely, if it is not clearly and palpably the same mystery in both these prophecies. What visit can be more sensibly felt by the devil, what sorer sword can that proud spirit feel, than to see himself chained, incarcerated in the abyss, and entirely deprived of the exercise of his most violent passion, which is to do men all the mischief in his power?

Isaiah saith, that in that day not only shall the Lord visit the serpent with his cruel sword, but also that he *shall slay the dragon* [Vulg. *cetum*, whale] *which is in the sea*. Read the thirteenth chapter of the Apocalypse, and see this cleared up by the most particular information. St. John says that his beast of seven heads and ten horns, which, in the third Phenomenon, we have considered as a moral body, was in the sea and came up out of the sea; and was consequently of the whale-species for its size: the same saith Daniel of his four beasts, out of which the beast of the Apocalypse is manifestly composed, *and I saw four great beasts come out of the sea*. St. John says moreover, (xvii. 19.) that this terrible beast

which came up out of the sea, *went into perdition*; seeing it is to be killed and destroyed by the sword of the King of kings, in that most solemn day of his coming from heaven to earth. Behold now and judge, if all this doth not perfectly correspond, and even open the meaning of that most obscure expression of Isaiah, *and he shall kill the dragon that is in the sea*: knowing then the day in which the first mystery cometh eth to pass, we may say that we know the day in which the other three shall come to pass. In fact, their very greatness and novelty appear to suggest to us a time still future and infinitely different from the present. And now observe the order of the four mysteries contained in this the twenty-seventh chapter of Isaiah. The first is that upon which we have just made our observations, to wit, the visiting of the serpent, and at the same time the death of the dragon that is in the sea.

The second is, *in that day sing ye unto her a vineyard of red wine* [vulg. *in die illa vinea meri cantabit ei* —in that day, a vineyard of pure wine shall sing to him]. In these four words may well be discerned a mystery wholly new, and unheard of to this day, and worthy only of that blessed time. In that day a vineyard of pure wine shall sing the praises of the Lord. What vineyard is this of pure wine, of generous wine, of richest wine? No one is ignorant that in all times God hath had in this our earth, a vine, or a church, which has rendered to him his due worship, acknowledged him, adored him, and given him praise; and which has always produced the fruits of righteousness, according to the times and the cultivation. We find it from Adam through Seth to Noah. We find it from Noah through Shem to Abraham: these two times are without doubt the least fruitful. We find it from Abraham, through Isaac and Jacob to Moses; by whose ministry the vine was transplanted, and a new cultivation given it, which till then it had not enjoyed, that is, by the law and the appointed ceremonies. “Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt, thou hast cast out the heathen and planted it.” Psalm lxxx. 8. By this culture it is certain that the vine yielded more and better fruit than in the times preceding. But, in fine, infinitely better did it yield after Messiah, in consequence of his sweat, and his blood, and his merits, and his doctrine, and the effusion of his Holy Spirit, and likewise in consequence of having cast out of the vineyard the former husbandmen, and placed others in their stead, agreeably to the sentence which they themselves uttered when the Lord proposed to them the parable of the vineyard. “They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons,” —Matt. xxi. 41. which judgment the Lord confirmed upon the instant, declaring to them with all clearness, what soon came to pass, “Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.” verse 43.

It is not to be denied that this vineyard, which since Messiah, God hath had in the world, has yielded in all times admirable and excellent fruits, in great and even prodigious quantity. But as little is it to be denied, that in all times there have been found in this vineyard of God a prodigious multitude of plants, not only barren and fruitless, but which, instead of being loaded with grapes, have been loaded with strange, unwholesome, and very dangerous fruits. (Gal. v. 19.) So that with the same, or even greater reason, may the Lord still complain as he complained in other times much anterior to Messiah; “What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done to it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?” Isaiah v. 4.

It will be said, nevertheless, that the vineyard of pure, generous, and richest wine, whereof our prophet speaketh, can be no other than the present church, which was renewed and even planted anew by Messiah himself; watered with his blood, and fertilized by his Spirit, whose faith is the most exalted, whose doctrine is certainly divine, her morality most

pure, her sacrifice perfectly holy; in short, whose means of sanctification, as they are abundant; so are they most efficacious. All these things, and many more which might be added, are certainly grand and magnificent, and therefore altogether worthy of our most profound regard and acknowledgment. But we ought to reflect before singing the note of victory, that all these things belong not at all to the fruit of the vineyard, but only to its culture. They declare and preach to us all that God has done for the vineyard; not the goodness of the vineyard, in the sight of God. Who is ignorant that the goodness of a vineyard consists not in its possessing the best possible culture, nor as little in its containing plants by the thousand; but in the correspondence of the fruit both as to abundance and goodness with the multitude of the plants, and the excellency of the culture. This appears without doubt, the greatest of evils, that a vineyard cultivated with so much care, with so much industry, with so much expense, should never have corresponded, nor doth now correspond to the expectation entertained of it. Excepting some plants which for centuries have been few, compared with the multitude remaining; it is undeniable that all the rest have yielded no fruit whatever, except plenty of useless leaves, or yielded it most scantily and of the basest quality. Things being thus, as they really are, doth it appear to you that this present vineyard hath any great reason to boast itself in the excellency and abundance of its fruits? Does it appear to you that its proper husbandmen have any great cause to exalt it, and to bless it every hour; to extol its great fertility, and to give it the most lofty title of the *vineyard of pure wine*? The fruits of this vineyard, compared with those which it yielded before Messiah, there is no doubt will be found much superior both in quantity and in goodness. But if you attend to the culture which hath been bestowed on it since Messiah, and examine faithfully the accounts of outlay and income; it will be seen, that the glorious and illustrious title of *a vineyard of pure wine*, cannot yet be proper to this vineyard in its present condition and providence. How can it be a vineyard of pure wine, or with any propriety deserve that name, if it does not yield that pure wine which is spoken of? How can that wine be pure and generous, when excellent grapes are most rare, good ones not many, the sour and insipid abundant, and the worst kinds innumerable? Therefore it cannot be that vineyard spoken of in the prophecy. Perhaps it may be answered, that the wine of this present vineyard will be pure and of the best quality, if only the good grapes be taken, and pressed apart from the infinite multitude of the rest. But with the same reason might we appropriate the illustrious title of *the vineyard of pure wine* to that vineyard which God hath had in all times anterior to Messiah. And why not? Can any one doubt of the goodness, innocence, rectitude, and righteousness of our patriarchs, our prophets, and righteous men? And were these grapes, these fruits of the ancient vine, which were more in number, and better than is commonly thought, pressed alone, you would have pure and excellent wine, worthy the approbation of God himself. But would this be a sufficient ground for calling that ancient vineyard of God *a vineyard of pure wine*? As little then will it be a sufficient ground for bestowing that glorious title upon the present vineyard, or for believing that it is spoken of, when it is said, *In that day a vineyard of pure wine shall sing to him*. Then of what vineyard and of what time speaketh the Prophet? If proper attention be given to all the context, taking up the thread at least front the fourteenth chapter, it will be perceived that he is speaking of other times which have not yet been seen; that he is speaking of another vineyard; or, to speak more properly; of the same, but in another state, and under another culture widely different. It will be perceived, I say, that he is speaking of that time and of that vineyard, of which the prophet says, farther on, "Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations," Isa. lx. 15; of that of which he says, "Thine

iniquities shall not be heard of any more in thy land;" of that, in fine, of which it is said, "Thy people shall be all righteous;" and much more which may be seen in the sixtieth chapter of Isaiah. And although they say that all this respecteth the present vineyard, and hath all been accomplished or is accomplishing in it, partly *on the earth and partly in heaven*; the truth is, that these are all words given to the winds, which signify nothing, and can in no way content one who sincerely seeketh after truth. Consequently, we may and even ought to say, that nothing of this has ever been seen in *our earth*: and if it hath never yet been seen, it ought then at some time to be seen, seeing it is so clearly announced in the scriptures of truth. And when shall it be? Without doubt when the Lord at length granteth to us that for which we so often pray, taught and encouraged by his own Son; that is, when his kingdom cometh to us, and his will is done on earth as it is in heaven. "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

But if perchance you wish to make a flight towards the highest heaven, in order to seek there this vineyard of pure wine which here hath never been found, I admonish you of two important things. First; that you give good heed to the word which immediately follow the text of Isaiah: "In that day sing ye unto her, a vineyard of red wine: I the Lord, do keep it, I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day." Doth it appear to you, that there in heaven the Lord should have to stand, with great vigilance watching his vineyard day and night. The second thing which I admonish you of is, that whatever is in heaven, or may be brought there, neither is, nor is called, nor can be called without the utmost impropriety, the vineyard of God, but the fruit of the vineyard of God. The vineyard of God is here below upon earth, and always does and will require vigilance, solitude, culture, and labour, in order that it may yield much and good fruit. This fruit which it yields, does not remain on the earth, but is continually conveyed to heaven where it is gathered, and remains laid up in eternal security. We have then, in the prophecy of which we speak, recognized the two first mysteries, and the time at which they ought to be verified; and discovered them to be as the proper fruits of the second coming of Messiah, and not of the first. There remain to us the other two, which speak expressly and by name of the Jews; announcing to them the end of the present expatriation, and the termination of all their sufferings: and of these two we say the same as of the two former that they are mysteries, not yet past, but future; which shall likewise be accomplished in that same moral day whereof the prophecy begins to speak, and continues speaking to the end. "And it shall come to pass (he announceth the first) in that day, that the Lord shall beat off from the channel of the river unto the stream of Egypt, and ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel." Isa. xxvii. 12. "And it shall come to pass (he announceth the second) in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem." Isa. xxvii. 13. To which agree these words of Jeremiah, "For there shall be a day, that the watchmen upon the mount Ephraim shall cry, Arise ye, and, let us go up to Zion unto the Lord our God." Jer. xxxi. 6.

The explanation of these two last mysteries, which is found in the interpreters of scripture, appears to me the greatest confirmation of all that we have just observed. They all seek to accommodate them in any possible way to the return out of Babylon; but as this undertaking is not only arduous and difficult, but impossible, being repugnant to the very text, and to sacred history; they find themselves constrained to have recourse to allegory; saying, that although this was all verified to a certain extent, *in the literal sense*, by the recovery out of Babylon; yet its full verification *in the sense specially intended by the Holy Spirit*, took place after the death of Messiah, and the coming of the Holy Spirit: now observe

with what facility they make this to appear. —First mystery: “And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall beat off from the channel of the river unto the stream of Egypt, and ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel.” Is. xxvii. 12. That is, the Lord in that day shall strike or afflict all the country comprehended between the Euphrates and Egypt. Which he did, now by means of Nebuchadnezzar, now by means of the Romans, who subjected all that vast country to their dominion; now likewise, after the death of Christ, by means of Vespasian, Titus, and Adrian. And you, the children of Israel, shall gather yourselves one by one. What doth this mean? It means (the explanation continues), that after the death of Christ, the Jews shall enter into the church, *one by one*, that is, *very few*.

Second mystery: “And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts, in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem.” Is. xxvii. 13. That is, in that day, which began at time feast of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples; a great trumpet shall sound which is the preaching of the gospel, at whose sound shall enter into the church of Christ, not only very many gentile but likewise many Jews, even of those who had been, as it were lost in the land of the Assyrians, from the time of Salmanezer, and in Egypt, from the time of Nebuchadnezzar; for it is exceedingly probable, that many individuals of all the twelve tribes, believed in the apostles, and became christians. And now, that they may not appear altogether to forsake the literal sense, they add here a saving clause to all this; saying, that the prophet of God, by these expressions, certainly alludeth to the return out of Babylon; but regardeth it merely as a figure or representation of the liberation by Christ from the captivity of Satan, &c. Among many other things which must occur to your reflection, upon this so confused and hasty manner of explaining the prophecy, I call your attention to this only; that in the last verse, many Jews of all the tribes are to come at the sound of the trumpet, and worship the Lord *in the holy mountain of Jerusalem*, that is, *in the Christian Church*; and in the verse preceding, *one by one* that is, *very few*.

Third Document.

§ 3. THE Document which follows is a confirmation, and at the same time, an explanation of the preceding one. For in it is announced the future vocation of all Israel, and their true and sincere conversion, whereby they shall become honourable and glorious in the sight of God, and worthy of his delight. In consequence of which, the Lord promiseth against that time two things, much resembling the two last which we have just observed, or to speak more properly, the very same in more expressive words. “But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life. Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth.” Is. xliii. 1-6.

In order to comprehend well the mystery, and also the time here spoken of, so that there shall remain upon it not even the shadow of a doubt, it will be of great service that we

should read with attention the whole of the preceding chapter, which speaks of the first coming of Messiah, his character, his ministry, his virtues, particularly of his patience and gentleness, as well as of all the wonderful effects which his preaching, his doctrine, his example, his Spirit should produce in the world, &c. And all this in reference to the gentiles, not to Israel, because of their unbelief. Even that voice from heaven which was afterwards heard by Jordan, and on Tabor; *this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased*, we find announced in this forty-second chapter, which begins in that very style: "Behold my servant, whom I uphold, mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my spirit upon him, he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles." After which, from verse 20, it proceeds to speak of the blindness of Israel, who was to be disallowed and rejected; of the indignation of God towards that ungrateful people, of their punishment, of their tribulation, of their dispersion among the nations, and likewise of their hardness and obstinacy in the midst of such great tribulation; the whole concluding with these words, "Therefore he hath poured upon him the fury of his anger, and the strength of battle: and it hath set him on fire round about, yet he knew not; and it burned him, yet he laid it not to heart." And so it is, that till now they have neither desired, nor do desire to acknowledge the true cause of their tribulation.

Having made this important observation, and thereby cut off all recourse to the deliverance out of Babylon, as well as to allegory, it is truly easy to understand the whole of the cited text, which immediately follows in the forty-third chapter; and to perceive that it speaks of Israel, regarded in his present estate of chastisement, tribulation, and darkness, where in he hath abidden since Messiah's day. Consequently, that all the things here announced, are things not past, but evidently future, which in their time shall be accomplished with all fulness. This being supposed, let us now briefly consider those things which are announced, and promised to the residue of Israel: "But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine." Is. xliii. 1. You have here, in the first place, the call of God, a first step absolutely necessary to the conversion of a sinner: "After thou wast made precious in my sight, thou hast been honoured, and I have loved thee."

In what other way can a sinner become honourable and glorious in the sight of God, than by means of a true repentance, and a sincere conversion? Behold then clearly announced in this place, the conversion of Israel, which so often and so variously the scriptures declare. If you do not choose to recognize here the future conversion of Israel, you ought to show another time between Isaiah's day and the present, when Israel, generally speaking, hath appeared honourable and glorious in the sight of God, and worthy of his delight. You shall find the contrary in all the scriptures, and Messiah confirms the same by these words; "How often would I have gathered thy children, as a hen doth her chickens under her wings, but ye would not." Matt. xxiii. The Holy Ghost confirmeth it, when he thus spake by the mouth of St. Stephen: "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye." Acts vii. St. Paul confirmeth it when quoting the sixty-fifth chapter of Isaiah, he saith, "But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people." Romans x. 21. Therefore it follows from hence, that there is yet to be a time in which God himself, speaking of Israel, may say, "Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee." Read the seventy-second Psalm, and you will find throughout it the honour and glory of Israel, after her vocation and conversion, which is announced there: "For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy. He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in his

sight.” Psalm lxxii. 12-14. The same thing you may read, and in terms much more expressive, throughout the fifth chapter of Baruch. Then the conversion of Israel being thus accomplished, the prophet immediately proceeds to say: “Therefore will I give men for thee and people for thy life.” What meaneth this? Turn your eyes to what was said above, upon that other text of the seventeenth chapter: “In that day shall the Lord beat off from the channel of the river unto the stream of Egypt, and ye shall be gathered one by one,” and you will discern the same mystery. And to make yourself still more sure of it, attend to what follows: “Fear not, for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west: I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth.” Is. xliii. 5,6. To make room for so many sons and daughters whom he will bring with his omnipotent arm from all the four winds, there will be much need first, to clear out the lodging, giving up for their sake the men and the people who occupied it.

Other Documents.

§ 4. “AND I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase. And, I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the Lord.” Jer. xxiii. 3,4.

These last words are sufficient to convince us at once, that neither is the return from Babylon here spoken of, nor can it be understood allegorically of the present church. This being adverted to, continue to read the text of Jeremiah: “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness. Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that they shall no more say, The Lord liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but, The Lord liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land.” Verses 5-8. The same prophet further declareth: “The word that came to Jememiah from the Lord, saying, Thus speaketh the Lord God of Israel, saying, Write thee all the words that I have spoken unto thee in a book. For, lo, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the Lord: and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it.” Chapter xxx. 1-3.

The whole of this chapter and of that which follows, wherein the same subject is continued, are doubtless worthy of the most attentive consideration. But as they are so diffuse, and I am in haste with this first aspect, I content myself with making two or three important remarks thereon. First, that here not only is Judah but Israel expressly spoken of, and to both are these words of the Lord directed; *I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah*: at verse 4. *These are the words that the Lord spake concerning Israel and concerning Judah*. By this remark the door closed upon the ordinary refuge of the return from Babylon. Seeing we know for certain that from Babylon Judah, and that only a very small part of it, returned; but Israel did not return, who had not gone to Babylon nor to Chaldea, but Nineveh and Assyria. Our second remark is, that here surely the great and terrible day of the Lord, which has no parallel, is spoken of; the confusion and dismay of the wicked; the fear and terror of all the nations; which can in no way apply to the return out of Babylon. “Ask ye now,” saith the Lord, “and see whether a man doth travail with child? wherefore do I see

every man with his hands on his loins, a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it." Verses 6,7. Our third remark is, that in that day, the Lord immediately adds in verse 8, I will break in pieces the yoke and the chains of Jacob, and not permit that they should ever again be under the dominion of other lords: for they shall only serve their God and David their King (who can be none other than Messiah, the Son of David): "For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him: but they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them." Verses 8,9.

The doctors weary themselves with vain attempts to accommodate this prophecy to the present church in the allegorical sense. The circumstance, that the day of the Lord is mentioned in it, and the conversion of the Jews, which they themselves postpone till after the ruin of Antichrist, demolishes all their interpretation to the foundation. Oh, my friend, read the whole of the prophecy contained in these two chapters, and after having considered it, ask yourself when have the things here announced been accomplished? For if they have not been accomplished to this day, it is necessary that they should be accomplished at some future time, *that thy prophets may be found faithful*. The same prophet says, "Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her that travaileth with child together: a great company shalt return thither. They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble: for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn." Chapter xxxi. 8,9.

And as if the prophet of God had foreseen that the Christian nations might not only doubt, but even undervalue as incredible, so many mercies destined for vile, faithless, and cursed Jews, he turns immediately upon the nations, and tells them not to marvel; that he who spake all this, could likewise perform it; that it is not the word of Jeremiah, but of God himself; who had scattered Israel among the nations; that the same God would one day gather him again *from the extremities of the earth*; would deliver from the hand of him that was stronger than he, and guard him as a good shepherd doth his flock. "Hear the word of the Lord, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock. For the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he." Jer. xxxi. 10,11. And afterwards, "Behold, I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: and I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them: and I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart and with my whole soul." Chapter xxxii. 37-41.

And, finally, "Behold, I will bring it health and cure, and I will cure them, and will reveal unto them the abundance of peace and truth. And I will cause the captivity of Judah and the captivity of Israel to return, and will build them as at the first. And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me. And it

shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and an honour before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them: and they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness, and for, all the prosperity that I procure unto it.” Chapter xxxiii. 6-9. Either all these are immoderate exaggerations, full of impropriety, and even of falsehood, or the Holy Spirit doth not speak here of the return from Babylon; because we know for certain, out of the scripture itself, that nothing of this was fulfilled, or could be fulfilled at that time.

Lastly, Give your quiet and attentive consideration to that prophecy of the Lord, when speaking to his disciples, a few days before his passion, he thus declareth to them; “And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. For there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.” Luke xxi. 20-24. What do these last words mean? Jerusalem shall be trodden under foot of the Gentiles till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. I draw from hence a consequence not only legitimate and just in itself, but agreeable to many other passages of scripture: that the Gentiles have their fixed and determinate times; which being concluded, Jerusalem shall cease to be trodden under foot of the Gentiles. To this doth St. Paul manifestly allude; or, indeed, this same thing doth he utter when speaking to the Christian nations. “For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written.” Rom. xi. 25,26. So that the times of mercy to the Gentiles being accomplished, and their fulness having entered in, (not certainly all, but those who are to enter, according to the foreknowledge of God,) then, saith the Apostle, all Israel shall be saved, according as it is written. Then, saith Christ himself, Jerusalem shall cease to be trodden down of the Gentiles; and that in the same sense in which it is now said with all truth to be trodden under foot of the Gentiles: that is, materially and formally; materially, as respects the place where it was built, —formally, as respects its proper and legitimate inhabitants, or the whole nation of which Jerusalem was the head; for in both senses the prophecy of the Lord has been accomplished, and is accomplishing. I wish not to detain myself longer in the consideration of this first aspect, which has extended itself more diffusely than I had meant: and yet I have said very little, compared with what I had to say. But it would be very hard for me to withhold saying a word or two upon the explanation which is given of those two texts by the best interpreters of scripture. Listen to it for a moment.

Jerusalem, saith Christ, shall be trodden down of the nations until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled; that is, until the end of the world, or some short while before. When? When Antichrist, king and Messiah of the Jews, and universal monarch of the whole world, shall build anew that city, and plant in it the court of his universal empire. The blindness of Israel, saith the apostle, must endure until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. When this fulness hath entered in, or the time of the nations are concluded, then all Israel shall be saved, according as it is written, *that is*, (continue the interpreters) Israel shall be saved, a little while before the end of the world, after the death of their false Messiah. Oh that it were possible entirely to close this door or aperture, and take away for ever this ordinary escape! What good fruits might not thence result to the true and plain understanding of so many and such weighty prophecies. I implore for this point, and for a thousand others of which I treat, the

favour and the protection of the learned of this our age, whose chief characteristic is the search of truth upon any and every subject, and the acknowledgment of it when found.

You will not fail, Sir, to give good heed, though it be but in passing, to that species of salute or preparation which the apostle uses before revealing this secret, requesting, as it were, the particular attention of the Christian nations with whom he speaks; “I would not, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits.” How useless, and how much out of place were such a summons to attention, if the mystery which he was about to reveal amounted to nothing more but that the Jews should be converted in the end of the world; and that the present church should then hardly receive the Jews whom she should find! And this is what the apostle wished the Christian nations not to be ignorant of, lest they should be exalted above measure, lest they should be puffed up with vanity, lest they should trust in themselves entirely, and be wise only for themselves! But of this in another place, for it is not yet the proper time.

ARTICLE II.

Second Aspect.

WE now consider the Jews, as being deprived, since the death of Messiah, of the honour of the people of God, and inquire, whether this their affliction shall have an end or not.

§ 1. It is known to all, that the posterity of the just Abraham, by Isaac and Jacob, were for more than two thousand years the only one of all the nations of the earth, who acknowledged and adored the true God; the only nation chosen of God, consecrated to God, united to God, the only one which had converse with God, which bound itself to God and to which God himself was bound in mutual covenant. —The only one, in short, which merited the appellation of the true people of God, “You only have I known of all the families of the earth;” saith God himself to them by the prophet Amos (iii. 2).

At the same time it is likewise known to all, that this people of God, or the most part of them, were always the most hardened, the most faithless, and the most ungrateful of all peoples. To preserve this people, to instruct them, to make them illustrious and holy, what prodigies did the Lord not work, what providences, what benefits, what promises, what threatenings, what chastisements! But all in vain; and so much in vain that God himself complaineth continually by his prophets, like a good father, who findeth not in his heart to correct his perverse son. “In vain have I smitten your children, they received no correction,” saith he to them by Jeremiah in the second chapter.

The ingratitude and iniquity of this people having come at length to the extreme of disallowing and crucifying the Hope of Israel, the righteous indignation of God did also reach the last degree, of utterly depriving them of, the honour and prerogatives of his people: even to the casting then away from himself, abandoning them, and disowning them, as if he had never been their father or their God. Thus had it been announced by Daniel, “After threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, and the people shall be no longer his.” Dan. ix. 26. (marginal reading.) This terrible threat, which the Jews, *wise in their own conceit*, never fully believed, began to be accomplished, (notwithstanding their vain confidence) after the death of Messiah and hath been accomplished with such plenitude, that for more than eighteen

centuries, the posterity of the just Abraham hath neither been the people of God, nor even a people in any sense; being held since that time in a state so singular, as the world has beheld and still beholdeth.

Accordingly, in this question of which we are treating, we hold these two things certain and indubitable, from the testimony of Holy Writ: the one in history, the other in prophecy; but already fully verified in the sight of the whole world. The first in history is, that the posterity of the righteous Abraham, by Isaac and Jacob, was for the space of many centuries, the only people of God, was the vine of God, the inheritance of God, the church of God, the synagogue of God, for all these different words used in scripture signify the same thing. The second, in prophecy, already most fully accomplished is, that this same people of God, since the death of Messiah, has been entirely stript of its dignity as was written.

Now, if besides these two certain and undeniable things, of which Divine Scripture speaketh so largely, we should find, in the same scripture, a third thing which hath not yet been accomplished, in this case what ought we to do? Shall we be permitted to do with respect to this, what we do not, and may not do, with respect to the first or the second? Shall it be lawful for us to pass to other improper and violent senses, and, at the same time, infinitely wide of the veracity of God? But, my friend, the third is found in the Holy Scriptures, not less than the first and the second; is found announced with the same or with greater clearness; found not only in Daniel, in Hosea, in Malachi, but in almost all the prophets, and in some of them frequently repeated. And what is this third thing? That the same posterity of the righteous Abraham, by Isaac and Jacob, which, from Abraham to Christ, was the only people of God, and, from Christ till this day, has been deprived of that honour, shall one day return, and once more become the people of God, infinitely greater than it was in other times, and that in the same country from which it was cast out; and under another and an everlasting covenant, which cannot grow old nor come to an end, like the former covenant. Do not ask me so soon, in what sense I speak; for I am not capable of explaining many things at one time. The sense in which I speak, will of itself become clear without any care. If this third thing, taken in the simple sense, appear to you harsh and difficult to believe, you give me thereby a very manifest proof, that you believe God in those things only which you have seen already accomplished; but not in those other things which have not been accomplished, and of which it is not known nor understood how the accomplishment shall take place. And in this case, you ought not to think it strange if I apply to you those words of Christ, after his resurrection; "Thomas, because thou hast seen, thou hast believed; blessed are they who having not seen, believe," John xx. 29. This third point is that which we now proceed to show forth.

The Eleventh Chapter of Isaiah is taken into Consideration

§ 2. THE first part of this prophecy to verse 10, although makes wonderfully for the general subject of this work, doth not bear upon the particular point of which we now speak. Let us turn therefore to the study of the second part of the prophecy, which is that of which we have present need.

At verse 11: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah

shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim. But they shall upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west;" &c. ver. 11-14.

It will doubtless appear to you, at first sight, that this prophecy which we have just read, needs no interpretation; it being enough to read it, in order to understand it. And yet it is one of the many prophecies which the doctors do not fail to pause upon with great precautions, lest it should happen to be understood as it reads, and so disconcert all their plans. Which great danger to avoid, they interpret the prophecy by boldly declaring, that although in the literal sense it announceth the going forth out of Babylon, and in that sense was at that time accomplished, if not in whole, at least in part; but in *an allegorical sense* it announceth something more excellent far: and what is that? It is, they say, the conversion of many Jews, of thousands of them, and these probably of all the twelve tribes, which followed upon the preaching of the apostles, both in Jerusalem and in Judea, and in all the other parts of the world, over which the apostles went to and fro. In this, the *loftiest sense, and therefore specially intended of the Holy Ghost*, came about the full accomplishment of this prophecy, which partly began to be fulfilled in the deliverance from Babylon, and this as a type or figure of the liberation of the other greater captivity, which is that of the devil and of sin.

In order now to see whether this interpretation be just or not, though it would be very profitable to confront it with all the words of the text itself, yet, for the sake of briefness, let us regard simply these two important words contained in the first little clause; the one is the *second* time, the other is *to recover* [Vulg. *ad possidendum*, i.e. to possess]. "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time, to recover the remnant of his people which shall be left." So that the Lord doth promise here in clear terms, that, in order to possess the remnant of Israel, he shall do the second time, in that day, that very thing which formerly he did the first time. Now, nothing can take place the second time, without having taken place the first time. The question then is, to what anterior event alludeth this word second? If we revert not to the Exodus, or to the coming up out of Egypt, and passage of the Red Sea, it appears clear that we weary ourselves in vain. The very text of the prophecy sends us back to that first event, concluding with these words; "And there shall be an highway for the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria; like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt," ver. 1-6. Seeing that the first event in which God put forth his omnipotent arm in favour of Israel, was the going forth out of Egypt; the second must be something similar. That is to say, if the first time God made his almighty hand so visible and so wonderful, in such a multitude of prodigies, in order to deliver Israel out of Egypt, and to possess them as his peculiar people; this same God, having promised his almighty hand the second time, that is, in order to possess the remnant of Israel, shall renew these same prodigies, or others similar, or still greater. I say greater, because it appeareth much less difficult to draw a people from the power of one single prince, and from the small territory of Goshen, than to draw them from the power of all princes, and from all the four quarters of the earth where they are dispersed.

If this is not entertained, but despised as incredible or unpleasant, there ought to be produced in past-times that second event, in which God hath manifested his omnipotent hand, as heretofore he did in Egypt. Now what may this event be? Either it was the coming out of Babylon, or the thing has not come to pass until this day: for the spiritual sense to which they have recourse, and with which they attempt to fill up so many and so great blanks, leaves the difficulty exactly in the state in which it found it. That the second event, whereof mention is here made, was not the coming out of Babylon, is clearly proved by three reasons drawn from the text itself, without going beyond it. First, because those few who came from Babylon,

with the license of their king Cyrus, did not come from all the parts of the earth which are expressly named in the prophecy; they came not from Assyria, from Egypt, from Pathros, from Cush, from Elam which were all regions well known to the Jews; much less did they come from the islands of the sea, or from the four quarters of the earth. The only thing which can be said of those who came from Babylon is, that they came from Senaar, or from Chaldea, which also is to be found in this list; and probably it may be for this reason they allege that the prophecy was then accomplished in part, and in that very small part only as a figure of another greater thing which was to be purely spiritual.

The second reason is, because, in the coming out of Babylon, God did not see it good to do any extraordinary miracle: he did not see it good to reveal his omnipotent hand, as he had done in Egypt. He did only secretly move the heart of Cyrus, inspiring him to permit, and even to invite, the Jews to return to Jerusalem, and build the temple of their God anew. Cyrus himself saith so in his decree, or royal edict “Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.” Ezra i. 2. How very different a thing is this from that which happened to Pharaoh!

The third and, in my opinion, the most decisive reason is derived from the cause, motive, and direct end for which the Lord shall, the second time, reveal his almighty hand. It shall be, saith the prophet of God, in order to possess the remnant of his people, which shall then be found in all the nations of the earth; [Vulgate, *ad possidendum residuum populi sui — to possess the remnant of his people;*] “to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left from the Assyrians.” From which it is manifestly to be inferred, that the prophecy cannot be spoken, either in whole or in part, of the coming out of Babylon. Why? Because those who came out of Babylon, were only some individuals of that same race of the righteous Abraham, who had always been the people of God, and his only people; nor, by being banished from their own country, and put on penance by their God, did they cease to be his people, nor did God cease to possess them as such. After these evils, God did not cease to assist his people, to console them, to protect them, by providences not only general, but very special, and many of them truly extraordinary. In which time of their banishment and indignation came to pass that miraculous providence, whereby the innocent Susannah was delivered from the stones already lifted up to stone her, because of the false testimony of the wicked judges. In that time happened that other admirable providence, which delivered all his people from the tyrannical pride of Haman by means of Esther and Mordecai. In that time he drew forth from the furnace, without injury of any sort, those three just men who steadfastly resisted the unjust decree of Nebuchadnezzar. In that time, finally, he raised up to them those two great prophets, Daniel and Ezekiel, who, throughout the whole season of the captivity, did for them services of the highest importance. Signs all these the most sensible that even after being banished and expatriated, God did regard them as his people, and that they ceased not from that honour by being away from their native land.

To be brief, if all the scriptures, from the twelfth chapter of Genesis, that is, from the vocation of Abraham, until the death of Messiah, be read over, Israel will ever be found invested with the honour and dignity of the people of God: in this people will ever be found the vineyard of God; the inheritance of God; the church of God. Otherwise it might be asserted, that the church of God had, at some time, failed from the earth; seeing for God to possess a people is nothing else than for that people to be the church of God. This no small trouble, which God took with that people, ceased entirely forty years after Messiah’s death. During which interval God had already prepared, by the preaching of the Gospel and the

abundant effusion of his Divine Spirit, another and a new people, which he had gathered, in great haste, from among the nations, and in which he had already secured his church: to use the admirable similitude of the apostle, God had already grafted into that same olive-tree, whose proper branches were about to be cut off, other branches of the wild olive-tree, which should partake of the fatness of the root, and plentifully enjoy all its nourishing sap. From thenceforth (and only from thenceforth) all the posterity of the righteous Abraham ceased to be the people of God, and God ceased to possess them in quality of his people, of his inheritance, of his church.

So that, from Abraham until this day, it is impossible to assign another epoch at which God ceased to possess Israel, (in whole, or in part,) and in which Israel ceased to be the people of God, save only the epoch from Messiah's death. Whence it follows, as a legitimate and just consequence, that the promise which God makes of putting forth his almighty hand the second time, as he put it forth the first time in Egypt, in order to possess the remnant of Israel, which in that day, shall be left among all nations, and in all the four quarters of the earth, is a promise which till now has not been fulfilled; and therefore which shall be fulfilled in some future time. When? *When the Lord shall set hand again the second time to recover (possess) the remnant of his people, which shall be left from the Assyrians and from Egypt and from the isles of the sea.*

This second possession or this possession for the second time, is all the hope and the only consolation of the miserable Jews and although the ideas which they hold thereof be assuredly gross, and even absurd, according with the state of darkness and extraordinary ignorance in which they are actually found, yet surely the Christian doctors might correct these their ideas, and give them others, more just and agreeable to their own scriptures; without denying them the very substance of them, with so much harshness, and with so little reason. *The same is confirmed by other passages from the Prophets.*

§ 8 THUS far we have considered only a part of the eleventh chapter of Isaiah Besides this passage there are others innumerable in almost all the prophets, not less clear and express upon the point But because to consider them all, would be a very tedious labour, we must content ourselves with producing and examining some few; making upon them this simple and very short reflection: Tis certain and undeniable, that in the Holy Scriptures there is found a promise of God, repeated and confirmed in various ways, declaring that the remnant of the children of Israel shall be gathered again from all the nations, planted anew in the land of their fathers, bathed with the Spirit of God, washed with pure water from all their sins, enlightened, sanctified, &c. and all this not under the old covenant, but under another covenant, new and everlasting. This promise of which I speak is found not only to this effect, but likewise in these very words, *In that day, in that time, I will be your God and ye shall be my people.*

But if haply, this should be doubted; behold some few instances which we may better consider by viewing them together, and in all their bearings: "For I will set mine eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them again to this land: and I will build them, and not pull them down; and I will plant them, and not pluck them up. And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart," Jeï xxiv 6,7. "In that day, saith the Lord, I will be a God to all the families of Israel, and they shall be to me a people," Jer. xxxi. "And I will make an everlasting covenant with them to be their God, and they shall be my people and I will no more drive my people of Israel out of the land that I have given them," Baruch ii. 35, this text cries aloud for particular attention. "Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord God, I will

even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel...And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh: That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God,” Ezek. xi. 17,19,20. “And they shall know that I am the Lord, when I have broken the bands of their yoke, and delivered them out of the hand of those that served themselves of them. And they shall no more be a prey to the heathen, neither shall the beast of the land devour them; but they shall dwell safely, and none shall make them afraid...Thus shall they know that I the Lord their God am with them, and that they, even the house of Israel, are my people, saith the Lord God,” Ezek. xxxiv. 27,28,30. “For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you...And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God,” Ezek. xxxvi. 24,25,28. “And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whether they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all:...so shall they be my people, and I will be their God,” Ezek. xxxvii. 21,22,23. “Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Behold, I will save my people from the east country, and from the west country; And I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness.” Zech. viii. 7,8. It may be well to observe here in passing, that Zechariah prophesied after the return out of Babylon; as also that those who returned thence came *from the land of the rising*, and not *from the land of the setting sun*.” And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The Lord is my God.” Zech. xiii. 8,9. —It appears that these few passages, although there were no others, would be sufficient, and more than sufficient to assure us of the divine promise of which we speak. Now, hear from me, dear friend, one or two words. What, is said and promised in these and the like passages of Holy Scripture, either was fully accomplished in the times anterior to Messiah, or has not in any way been accomplished till now. Between these two there is no middle course; for neither in the days of Messiah, nor in the ages which have since occurred, can it have been accomplished; but on the contrary, in these times has been accomplished all which is written against Israel: of which, among other things, one which standeth likewise written, and which no one disputes, is the following, “Israel shall cease to be the people of God, and God shall cease to be their God. You shall not be my people and I will not be your God. Messiah shall be cut off and the people shall be no longer his.” (Dan. ix. 26. margin.)

There remains then no other refuge but to assert that it was all accomplished in the times anterior to Messiah. And when? Perhaps in the return from Babylon in the reign of Cyrus and Artaxerxes? Yes: in that time, for there is no other refuge in the sense which they call literal. Now behold the natural and legitimate consequence which to be deduced from this. All these prophecies, you say, speak literally of the return from Babylon; then all these prophets, I say, are Apocryphal, are forged, are false, and those who durst publish them in the holy name of the living God, were in so doing, real seducers. The conclusion is legitimate

and forced upon us. In order to know a false prophet from one who speaks by the Holy Ghost, this general rule is given to us in the eighteenth chapter of Deuteronomy, at the 22nd verse; “When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously.” Wherefore, if the prophecies of which we speak announce and promise in the name of God, with respect to the return from Babylon, things which were not in that event seen to be accomplished, we may upon this ground alone conclude that all these prophecies are forged and false. And if this be really a true blasphemy, we ought honestly to avow that the said prophecies are not in any way directed to the return out of Babylon, but have an eye to other times still future.

If you wish now to assure yourself still more of this truth, and to rest fully satisfied, and entirely convinced of it, turn and read the prophecies which we have just pointed out, and make the following observations.

First: Those who returned out of Babylon, were not all the congregation, families, or tribes of Israel; because the ten tribes pertaining to the kingdom of Samaria, which Salmanezer carried captive into Syria, did not then return, nor have ever returned. And yet the prophecies announce and promise this return, with all its attendant blessings to all the tribes, kindreds, and families of Israel: “In that time saith the Lord, I will be a God to all the kindreds of Israel, and they shall be to me a people.”

Second: Those who returned out of Babylon, did not return free, but subject to the king of Babylon, to his ministers, to his governors, to his exactors; they returned loaded with the same yoke, and dragging after them the same chains which they carried with them into Babylon, and under which they left the still greater part oppressed, who returned not. And yet the prophecies announce and promise to all the kindreds of Israel the very contrary: “When I shall have broken the bands of their yoke, and delivered them out of the hands of those that served themselves of them. And they shall no more be a prey to the heathen,” Ezek. xxxiv. 27.

Third: Those who returned out of Babylon suffered great opposition from all their neighbours, being compelled in building the temple and the city, to work with the one hand, and to fight with the other. And ever after they lived amidst inquietudes, fears, and assaults; they even found terrible enemies who sometimes had the mind entirely to exterminate them, and wanted little of accomplishing it. And yet the prophets announce and promise to all Israel the very contrary, “They shall dwell safely, and none shall make them afraid.” Ezek. xxxiv. 28.

Fourth: Those who returned from Babylon had never properly a king of the family of David; for Zerubbabel, who returned with them, was not their king, nor ever took another title than that of their conductor; and all his children and descendants were thenceforward private men, of whom no mention is made. And yet the prophecies promise and announce to all Israel the very contrary. “And one king shall be unto them all, and my servant David shall be king over them.”

Fifth: Those who returned from Babylon, were once more plucked up from the country, banished anew, and scattered to all the winds; in which state they have continued from the times of Titus and Vespasian till the present day. And yet the prophecies announce and promise to all Israel quite the contrary: “I will build them up, and not pull them down; I will plant them, and not pluck them up. And I will no more remove my people, the children of Israel, from the land which I have given them.”

Lastly: Those who returned from Babylon were some individuals of the people of God, who by being in Babylon had not ceased to be the people of God, nor God ceased to be their God; consequently, they returned as much the people of God as they went. And yet the prophecies announce and promise it to all the children of Israel, as a new and singular thing, that when they return they shall be the people of God: "And they shall be my people, and I will be their God." What real signification can this promise have, if the return from Babylon be the only thing spoken of? The promise evidently supposeth, that when it shall be accomplished, all Israel shall be found in the state of not being the people of God; and this did not happen till after the death of Messiah; it did not happen in the time of the captivity.

In sum, these six observations, which we have just made, being seriously considered, it appears, that we may conclude with full security, that all the prophecies cited, and others of the same kind which we have omitted, cannot have respect to the return from Babylon, nor to any of the times which preceded Messiah. Consequently, the things which are there announced and promised, are wholly reserved for other times, which are not yet arrived, in which they will be fully accomplished, without failing in one tittle. This is all which we contend for at present. The time will come, God willing, when we shall explain ourselves farther.

ARTICLE III.

The Third Aspect of the Jewish People.

THE JEWS, since the death of Messiah, are considered as the spouse of God, cast out of the house of her husband, and entirely despoiled of her dignity: and the question is, whether this chastisement shall have an end or not.

This point hath a close connexion with the preceding, and even appears to be the same, at least in substance; for these names, people of God, church of God, synagogue of God, spouse of God, do all declare and signify almost one and the same thing. If, therefore, it be certain, as we have just proved, that this people, who from Abraham to Messiah was the people of God, and now is not, shall yet return and become his people; we may rest assured, that, in the same manner and in the same sense in which she was the true spouse of God, and now is not, she shall yet return again to be so, though all the world should gainsay it. The point, though highly delicate, is beyond doubt most grave and important in all its aspects.

I am aware of what valour, of what exceeding great valour he hath need, who would announce prosperities to her who was queen Vashti, in the presence of queen Esther, who hath been called in to fill her place, by that terrible sentence of the king uttered against the former; "And let the king give her royal estate unto another that is better than she," Esther i. 19. Which sentence agrees perfectly with that other not less terrible; "Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof," Matt. xxi. 43. Much more valour would be necessary to advance this proposition in a prophetic tone; "The time shall come when king Ahasuerus shall remember Vashti, and what she hath done, and what was decreed against her," Esther ii. 1. The time shall come, in which his heart shall move towards his former spouse, whom he so much loved, and whom he put away from him for righteous reasons; when taking pity on her

hardships, and softened by her tears, and satisfied with her great and most sorrowful repentance, he shall call her once more to himself, notwithstanding the opposition of his seven wise men and his ministers, Esther i. 13; shall reinstate her in all her honours, and clothe her with greater glory than she was possessed of, before her misfortunes.

If to advance this proposition, in the presence of queen Esther, an extraordinary courage would have been required, you may very easily apply the inference to the thing in hand.

THE WHOLE OF THE FORTY-NINTH CHAPTER OF ISAIAH IS CONSIDERED.

Listen, O isles, unto me, and hearken, ye people from afar.

UPON the simple reading of this whole chapter, the first thing which presents itself to the mind as true, is, that the person who speaks in it, from the first to the last word, can, from the whole context, be no other than Messiah himself, or the Spirit of God speaking in his person. He speaketh first of his former coming into the world. He speaketh of the mission which beholdeth from God, of the primary and immediate end thereof, of its effects, both prosperous and adverse. He speaketh of the vocation of the Gentiles; of the mercy which they shall obtain without seeking it; of the conversion to the true God of many kings and princes, and, along with them, of their principalities and kingdoms. After which, as if that great mystery of the vocation and salvation of the Gentiles were already concluded; as if the times of the Gentiles were already fulfilled, or about being fulfilled, Luke xxi; as if he had already obtained among the same Gentiles the fruit of his passion and of his death; that is, "that he might gather into one the children of God who were scattered abroad;" in these circumstances, I say, he turns his eyes, full of compassion and of tenderness, to his own children, to his own blood, to his ancient and miserable people, "whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came."

Represent to yourself here, the whole of this people, all the family of the just Abraham, under the figure of a sad widowed wife, solitary, without consolation, without refuge, without hope, wholly abandoned of heaven and earth; to whom nevertheless, belongeth the name of Zion; that same name by which she was known and honoured in the time of her greatest prosperity. For that Zion, now oppressed with sadness, overwhelmed with a flood of bitterest tears, at the sight of the happiness of the nations who have taken her place, sighs and bewaileth herself, saying, that her God had wholly forsaken her, that he had abandoned her, that he had cast her into a perpetual oblivion, as if he had never known her: "But Zion said, the Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me." This same complaint and lamentation we find in the thirty-seventh chapter and 11th verse of Ezekiel: "They say, our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts." But as there the Lord doth comfort her with promises, with the certain hope that the dry and arid bones, scattered in the field, would return and unite again, and that he would once more bestow on them the spirit of life; so in this place he comforteth her with still ampler promises, and with expressions full of tenderness and love: for the Lord maketh immediate answer to the complaint of Zion, in these words full of his infinite goodness. "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee." Is. xlix. 15.

From which verse until the end of the chapter, it is clearly manifest, without the possibility of a doubt, that Messiah speaketh with no other person but this same mournful and afflicted Zion; and that every word he speaketh is a word of consolation, of hope, of love,

mingled with so many, and such great promises, that their very greatness has made them incredible. To have a worthy conception of these things, and to be able to observe upon them with the more exactness, it is necessary here to copy the whole text, at least from verse 14, and to place it under the eye of the reader. "But Zion said, the Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me." Isa. xlix. 14. This is the complaint and lamentation of Zion, at the sight of the felicity of the nations who occupy her place; to which complaint the Lord maketh immediate answer in these words: "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me. Thy children shall make haste; thy destroyers and they that made thee waste shall go forth of thee. Lift up thine eyes round about, and behold: all these gather themselves together, and come to thee. As I live, saith the Lord, thou shalt surely clothe thee with them all, as with an ornament, and bind them on thee, as a bride doeth. For thy waste and thy desolate places, and the land of thy destruction, shall even now be too narrow by reason of the inhabitants, and they that swallowed thee up shall be far away. The children which thou shalt have, after thou hast lost the other, shall say again in thine ears, The place is too strait for me: give place to me that I may dwell. Then shalt thou say in thine heart, Who hath begotten me these, seeing I have lost my children, and am desolate, a captive, and removing to and fro? and who hath brought up these? Behold, I was left alone; these, where had they been? Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people: and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders. And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord; for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me. Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered? But thus saith the Lord, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered: for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children. And I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh; and they shall be drunken with their own blood, as with sweet wine: and all flesh shall know that I the Lord am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob." Is. xlix. 15-26.

These words cannot be more clear, or more expressive, or more tender, or more consoling. It is not possible for us to make observation upon them all in particular, which any one may do for himself, after having examined and well understood these two capital points. First: Who is this Zion which here makes her lament of having been abandoned and forgotten by her God? Second: What time is here spoken of?

What is found upon these two points in the Doctors.

§ 2. IN respect to the first, we are quite sure that the doctors will not tell us, as they commonly do, when Zion is favourably spoken of, that Zion signifies the present church; for that were to say, that the present church is that which makes lamentation; that Christ, her spouse, had wholly forsaken and forgotten her: here then they confess that Zion, who deplores and laments herself, is no other than the house of Jacob in the character of the people, church, spouse, or synagogue of the true God. They confess, moreover, though in a general and confused manner, that to her likewise the Lord answereth with those words full of affection and all consolation.

Ask them now, if all these consoling words, all these magnificent promises, which you have just read, be spoken to the same Zion who deplores and laments her condition; and

with astonishment you shall find how they contradict themselves. As if by an excess of goodness, and out of the respect so due to the literal sense of scripture, they grant some few things to Zion who weeps and laments her sad condition, the greater part they reserve for the present church, and present spouse, though she had not uttered a word of lamentation, or any word whatever. These things, says a doctor, one of the most classical of them, are beyond all measure too great to be applied *in the literal sense*, to the synagogue, the faithless and reprobate nation of the Jews, but only in a sort of figure or shadow of the present church. And this, the good man speaks with such a satisfaction, as if he were the plenipotentiary of God, the dispenser of his treasures. As if God himself could not promise or give away what is his own, but upon the consent and approbation of man. I know how to this the name of zeal and christian piety is commonly given; but I likewise know, that true zeal and true christian piety, require us in every thing, not only to believe on God, but likewise to have faith towards God; and to hope that he will infallibly accomplish what he says and promises; although I, a poor and limited creature can not compass nor understand how he shall bring it to pass.

As to the second, that is, the times whereof the prophecy speaks, they tell us, consulting in a certain way the literal sense, that the lamentation of Zion, and the consolatory reply of God (not in whole, but in that very insignificant part which they grant her), was verified, partly during the Babylonish captivity, and partly in the deliverance from that captivity: wherefore God saith to Zion these words, “Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me. Thy children shall make haste; thy destroyers and they that made thee waste shall go forth of thee.” Is. xlix. 16,17. Which words, according to the literal sense, mean this: I hold in my hands towards Zion the design of thy rebuilding; they have come, or soon shall come, who are to build thee anew, that is, Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah; and the Chaldeans who have destroyed thee, shall depart from thy borders, and shall be chastised. Who would believe, that not even this small matter, which they allow to the dolorous Zion, was accomplished at the coming up out of Babylon? You shall see it more at large under the VIIth Phenomenon, to which I refer at present.

But this is not the most singular part of it. They tell us, that she who speaks and makes her lamentation in the verse preceding, is spiritually the synagogue, the antient spouse of the true God. And yet the reply which the Lord makes is directed solely to the material Zion, to the city and fortress of David; and the whole consolation amounts to a promise that, materially, it shall be rebuilt again: for that which follows to the end of the chapter, they grant neither to the spiritual, nor to the material Zion, nor to the times of Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah. These things, they say, are grand beyond measure, and so must pertain to other times, and to another Zion; that is, to the present church. It is to no purpose that you ask for what reason, or with what justice they strip a poor widow, full of troubles, of that little which is left to her —to wit, hope; and this in order to give it to another, who is neither in widowhood nor poverty, but full of wealth and overflowing with all things. No reason is alleged, —either because there is none, or, because it is not necessary; these being things which cannot be otherwise understood, without great detriment to the system.

Those Ideas are examined by the Light of Prophecy.

§ 3. To know with all certainty, whether these ideas be just or not, let us consider with some closer attention the context of this whole chapter; that is, the whole of that which precedes the complaint of Zion; by which means alone we shall understand at once, both the time to which it refers, with the occasion and circumstances of that complaint, and consequently the mystery of the prophecy altogether. The first thing, which very clearly presents itself before

our eyes, is, that from the first word the Holy Spirit begins to speak without interruption in the person of Messiah, and continues so to speak to the end, and even in the following chapter. He speaks first to all the peoples of the earth, whose whole attention he asks, as being about to declare unto them things of the utmost importance: "Listen, O Isles, unto me, and hearken, ye people from afar." He begins by giving a general, though grand and magnificent, idea of the excellency of his person, of his dignity, of his ministry, of the great designs which God had in sending him into the world: "The Lord hath called me from the womb, from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name; and he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword."

He then declares the mission which he held from God directly and immediately to the house of Jacob: "And now, saith the Lord that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again unto him:" which harmonizeth perfectly with what the same personage afterwards saith; "that he had not been sent, save to the lost sheep of the house of Jacob." Matt. xv. 24.

It is clearly Messiah who speaks that which we have already examined, and he continues, in what we are now to examine, to say, that although God had sent him directly "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," or, which is the same, "to bring back Jacob unto him;" he should not at that time obtain this primary and immediate end of his mission;—"though Israel shall not be gathered:" and, as if looking upon the resistance which this ungrateful people was to make, and the terrible consequences which should follow to them, he weeps and makes his lamentation over his vain labour, and the fruitless exhaustion of all his strength: "Then I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain." He gives demonstration of affliction and grief for that which respected the perdition of Israel, and likewise of confusion and shame for that which touched his own self, in that he should not find how to answer to his divine Father, nor to excuse himself for not having been received of his people. He consoles himself, nevertheless, in having done for that people whatever was required on his part; wherefore he should not only be excused, but approved and glorified in the sight of God: "Yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God...I shall be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength."

He pauseth thereupon to make mention of the consolation which, his father had given him in the midst of so great afflictions; promising him, instead of Israel, who was lost for their unbelief, another, a greater and a better people, whom he was to draw out from among the nations of the earth. God saith to me, adds the Messiah, a small thing it is, that thou shouldest be my servant only, for awakening and calling the tribes of Jacob, and converting the dregs of Israel: in the loss of them thou shalt now become the light of the Gentiles, and thou shalt carry my salvation to the extremities of the earth. "And he said, it is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth." Isa. xlix. 6. These last words, so very terrible to the Jews, the apostle Paul called to their remembrance when, despairing of their conversion, in which he had so diligently laboured, he dismissed them away from him, saying, "It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth." Acts xiii. 46,47. And in another passage, contained in the last chapter of the Acts, verse 28, "Be it known therefore unto you, that the

salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.” In consequence of this, Messiah goes on in the prophecy to announce the admirable effects of the vocation of the Gentiles, and the copious fruit which he was to gather from amongst them; the kings and the princes which should acknowledge the true God, and adore him; and the multitude of peoples, nations, and languages, which should come from the four quarters of the earth into the unity of one church, of one worship, and of one religion. “Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall arise and worship, because of the Lord that is faithful, and the Holy One of Israel, and he shall choose thee...Behold, these shall come from far: and lo, these from the north and from the west, and these from the land of Sinim, &c.

In this time and in these circumstances, in which the faith is supposed to be already propagated, and the church of God regarded as present and established among the nations, — in this time, in which the whole body of the Israelitish nation is looked upon as not gathered at the voice of the Messiah, and consequently as not his own, nor worthy of being so, — in this time, I say again, it is, that Zion deplores and laments her self, that her Messiah had abandoned and forgotten her altogether, and entirely passed over to the Gentiles: “And Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath for gotten me.”

Things being in this state, to what purpose, at such a time is the lamentation of the captives of Babylon, or the consolation afforded to them by the material rebuilding of Jerusalem and the chastisement of the Chaldeans? And why are all the other things spoken to this same Zion, who maketh her wailing lamentation, not likewise accommodated to these captives of Babylon, and to their return from captivity? Peradventure because it is impossible? Even so, friend; because it is impossible to attempt it. If it had been in any way possible, they would not so soon have quitted that time, that captivity, that Zion; they would not have made so sudden and wonderful a leap from the material to the spiritual, from those times to these of ours, from that Zion to another Zion, which they so name in mere grace, which is not mentioned in the prophecy, nor spoken to at all. A very easy thing it is, to accommodate to a child of two or three years old a small part of the garment which was made for a man of mature age, and of more than middle stature; —but to make it fit exactly, without artifice or violence, that is, without cutting or plaiting it, appeareth somewhat more difficult: and this very difficulty is the most convincing proof that the garment was not really made for the child. —The similitude is of very easy application.

Besides this, it were good to examine until we have certainly ascertained, if it be allowed us, if it have been left in our hands and at our free disposal, to cut, to divide, and break the Holy Scriptures in pieces, after any way which may appear proper to us: If we be absolute masters, into whose power it is given to divide a prophecy into various pieces, and dispose of them as seemeth to us best, giving certain pieces to one time, and others to another; some, as it were in alms to the miserable Jews, and all the rest to the Gentiles, who have the sharing of it in their own hands: I say that it were well to know this for certain, because to me it appeareth an exceedingly harsh, and sometimes an intolerable way of proceeding; and yet I see it followed with the greatest frequency by the doctors.

If the complaint of Zion, (to return to our purpose) if all the cause of her lamentation, according to the whole context of the prophecy, is on the sole account that God had forsaken her, and passed entirely over to the Gentiles, and if this happened not till after Messiah’s death, what consolation is it to say to her that she shall be built materially, and be as she had been in other times, and that the Chaleans should be chastised; when these are events so long passed, so little worthy of consideration, so little to the purpose, and so remote from the times which are spoken of? What consolation is it to declare and promise to her so many other

things, if indeed they be not for her, as the doctors pretend, but for another object of affection, for the sake of whom she has been cast out and forgotten? The truth is, my friend, (and excuse the liberty with which it is some times necessary for me to speak,) the truth is, that the Christians have now before their eyes the perfidious Jews, see their present condition of vileness, of humiliation, and extreme misery; see their hardness, their obstinacy, and their blindness; and it appears to them impossible that in them should be verified prophecies of such a dignity. As if he who promised were not that very God who is “faithful in all his words!” As if he who could “raise up from the very stones children to Abraham,” could not make true sons unto Abraham of those who are his sons according to the flesh! As if he who announceth and promiseth things so great to the remnant of Israel, were not that very Spirit of Truth who did announce and threaten, in terms equally clear and expressive, the miserable state to which all the world be holdeth Israel reduced! The truth is, (and this appears to be the chief cause and the true motive) I was going to say...but I fear to bring to light a truth, and to reveal a secret before the time. I shall explain myself fully in every part of the following Phenomenon, whose title must be, *The Christian Church*.

This prophecy of Isaiah is considered more in detail, and more narrowly looked into.

§ 4. HITHERTO we have attended merely to the circumstances of this prophecy, that is, to whom it is spoken, on what occasion, and with a view to what time: and judging from the evidence we have concluded, first; That it is spoken to Zion, the ancient spouse of God, and that to her alone are addressed all the consolatory words, and all the promises contained in the prophecy. Secondly; that it is spoken to this ancient spouse of God in no other condition than that condition of solitude, widowhood, and desertion, wherein she hath remained since Messiah, and since another spouse was taken into her room. Thirdly; that none of the many things which are declared and prophesied, having yet been verified in the Zion to whom they are spoken, it remains that we should expect some future time in which they shall all be verified; “for God’s arm is not shortened that it cannot save.”

This being granted, let us now see what these things are which are spoken and promised by the Lord to his antient spouse. In the first place, he speaks to her of her approaching re-edification (always following the metaphor of the city of David); that is to say, he speaks to her of her renovation, of her re-assumption into favour, of her perfect remedy, the design or plan of which he held as it were engraved on his own hands: “Behold I have graven thee on the palms of my hand.” And as if this renovation spoken of in all the prophets were already consummated, he doth in spirit invite her to lift up her eyes, and look in all directions around her: “Lift up thine eyes round about and behold.” And what is it she is called to behold? It is that very thing which was the cause of her complaint. Thou weepst, (as if he had said) because I passed by thee to the Gentiles, and lived amongst them for so many ages, compelled to do so by thy incredulity and extreme ingratitude; behold then the most abundant fruit which I have gathered for thee in my solicitude, “all these gather themselves together and come to thee.” —All these Sons of God, have gathered themselves *into one*; (John xi. 52.) all these sheep, *which were not of this sheepfold*, (John x. 16.) have been brought to this sheepfold upon mine own shoulders; and they have all gathered themselves and come not only for me, but likewise for thee. Thou needest not to look upon them as strangers; “for they are not strange children,” (Psalm xviii.) thou shalt be their proper mother, and they are thy sons. I swear unto thee that with all these thou shalt one day be clothed, and they shall all serve thee for attire and most precious jewels. “As I live saith the

Lord, thou shalt surely clothe thee with them all as with an ornament; and bind them on thee as a bride doeth.”

These thy sons (he proceedeth to say), notwithstanding they are the Sons of thy barrenness, are sons which have been born to thee, without thy knowledge, in those times in which thou hast lived *as a widow and desolate*: these thy sons shall be so many, that not being able to be contained in thy confines, *from the river of Egypt unto the great river Euphrates, they shall require of thee a greater space in which to dwell* (expressions confessedly all figurative). “The children which thou shalt have, after thou hast lost the other, [the children of thy barrenness, Vulg.] shall say again in thy ears, The place is too strait for me, give place to me where I may dwell.” Then shalt thou say, O Zion, in thy heart, Who has brought forth to me these children? I barren, I a widow, I an exile, I a captive, abominated of God and man, forgotten, destitute and alone! And these, my sons, from whence have they come? from whence are they? and who has nursed, supported and educated them? And thou shalt say in thy heart, who hath begotten me these, seeing I have lost my children, and am desolate, a captive, and removing to and fro? And who hath brought up these? Behold I was left alone; these, where had they been?

I know not, my friend, whether thou perceivest it. Let, us therefore stop here a moment. Who is it that speaketh these words? Can it possibly be the Christian church, the actual spouse of the true God? Dost thou not see the impropriety and the repugnancy of this supposition? The actual spouse neither can nor ever could say with truth, “I have lost my children [I am barren, Vulg.] and desolate, a captive, and alone.” If this then is not in any way proper to the actual spouse; it is therefore not she who speaketh; it is her predecessor. There is no middle course between these two things. We know for certain that God has only had two spouses. The first, for good reasons, he put away from him, *in his anger and great indignation*; the second, who entered to her place, is she who now reigneth: to her the words in question will not apply; therefore they belong to the first; therefore it is she and none other, who shall one day, upon the sight of the innumerable sons of God, say, that they have been born to her in the time of her barrenness.

From which there follows, first; that this ancient spouse of God, actually sterile, banished, in captivity, destitute and solitary, is one day to come forth from her banishment, her captivity, her solitude, her sterility: is once more to be called to her ancient dignity. If not, when or how shall she be able to say these words: “And thou shalt say in thy heart, Who hath begotten me these children? for I am barren; ...and these, where had they been? “It follows, secondly; that all the children of God, who have been born, and are henceforth to be born, and who shall be gathered from among all nations, are in reality sons of the first spouse; to her they are to be attributed, to her they are to be gathered, and her they shall acknowledge for their mother; and to her they are to serve for an ornament and a glory: “As I live, saith the Lord, thou shalt surely clothe thee with them all as with an ornament, and bind them on thee as a bride doth.”

It may now be feared, not without good foundation, that these things which I have just said, will occasion you no little surprise, and perhaps some sort of scandal; and it may appear to you that I am drawing toward the precipice, and, being a Jew, will end by Judaizing, from which, even now, you judge me not far removed. My friend, fear not for me; there is no reason why you should: I am very far from that folly. I am not ignorant what it is to Judaize, and what alone deserves that name. And, accordingly, I believe it firmly as a truth of faith, determined in the first council of the church, that circumcision, and the other purely legal observances of the law of Moses, do not in any way bind Christians, neither are necessary or

conducive to salvation. To believe any thing contrary to this truth, is that which alone may be called Judaizing. If besides this, there be any other thing which merits that odious name, I am absolutely ignorant thereof; nor doth it appear to me possible to point it out. In consequence of this you will surely have remarked, or ought to have remarked, that when I say that the house of Jacob, which was anciently the people of God and his spouse, shall at some future time return to be so again, I speak not in any way different from that in which the scripture speaketh that is, that they shall become so, in another state infinitely different from the former, and under another covenant, new and everlasting; "I will make an everlasting covenant with them, Baruch ii. 35: "I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David, Isa. lv. 3: "I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah," Jer. xxxi. 31.

If still, notwithstanding these limitations, the things which I speak cause you surprise and wonder, it will be necessary for me to apply to you these very words, which Christ, on a very similar occasion, spoke to Nicodemus, the pious lawyer; "Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things?" John iii. 10. Canst thou be ignorant that all the sons of God, who since Messiah have been gathered, and shall be gathered from all nations, are all *of the seed of that wife*? And if all are *of her seed*, then all are her true children, and all do really belong to her: as, speaking according to nature, all men are the sons of Eve, and all belong to that common mother. Canst thou be ignorant, that no one can be saved, or admitted to the dignity of a son of God, without faith? And can there be true faith but in the true children of Abraham? "Know ye therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham...So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham," Gal. iii. 7.9. Canst thou be ignorant that "salvation is of the Jews," Rom. xi. 17. That there is not salvation, neither can be, in the present providence of the world, but it has come to the Gentiles by means of the Jews? That there is not salvation but for the true sons of the faithful Abraham; who, by means of a true and sincere faith, have been joined to his family? Canst thou be ignorant that all believers among the nations are now in reality those same wild branches, possessing neither their own substance, nor the substance of those savage trees from which they were in great mercy taken; but the fat and precious substance of the good olive-tree, into which they have been grafted? "And thou, being a wild olive-tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive-tree," Rom. xi. 17. Those who think differently, should expect instantly to hear their own apostle whispering in their ear, "Boast not against the branches (those of the good olive cut out *through unbelief*). But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee," Rom. xi. 18. I do not dwell upon the remainder of Isaiah's prophecy, for I would leave something to the reflection of my reader; and it is so clear as to require of him neither much time nor much labour.

Other passages of Scripture.

§ 5. WITHOUT leaving Isaiah we find so much upon the present point that it appears impossible to notice the whole, or even the hundredth part of it, without a prolix and troublesome diffuseness. To avoid which I would only advert, and turn your attention, to one thing, which appears to me most clear in Isaiah, and without which I cannot devise how this prophet can be understood in a consecutive or natural way; and it is that from the forty-fifth chapter to the sixty-sixth which is the last, all is a conversation, a sort of dialogue, in which God, Messiah, and Zion are the speakers, and every thing which they say appeareth to be upon one subject, without changing the conversation to any thing besides.

Messiah, who opens the conversation, and, through the whole of it, bears the chief part, begins by seeking the attention of all countries and all the peoples of the earth. "Listen, oh isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from afar." And having briefly delivered himself of all pertaining to his first coming into the world, so favourable for the Gentiles, and so fatal for Zion, he turneth his eyes full of compassion upon this Zion, who is represented there as covered with filth and with sadness, and in the midst of her weeping uttering no words but these; "The Lord hath forsaken me: the Lord hath forgotten me." From that point forward, through the eighteen chapters which follow, he is not found to speak one single word to any other than to Zion; and to her not in any indeterminate condition, but precisely in that same condition of humiliation, solitude and abandonment. This is so clear, that there is hardly need of more study than the simple reading of it with attention. Accordingly in all these eighteen chapters he is seen to comfort the unhappy Zion, to rebuke her, to exhort her to penitence, to call to her mind her ancient faults, yea, likewise, the bad reception which he had from her when he came to the world. "Wherefore, when I came, was there no man? when I called, was there none to answer?" Isa. 1. 2. And sometimes he shows himself enraged, and incapable of being appeased, doubtless in order to give her the knowledge of the greatness of her evil-doing; yea, he ashameth and confoundeth her, with the example of the nations who have heard his voice, and have acknowledged him: "I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, Unto a nation that was not called by my name. I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people." lxxv. 1, 2. Yea, finally, he comforts, soothes, reassures her with his ancient promises, and adds other new ones of much greater import, he compassionates her trouble, and his tenderness melteth over her.

Zion beareth her witness, and in her words are seen a great and prodigious variety of affections, all good and holy, all tending to salvation. Amongst which are seen affections of confusion, of penitence, of lamentation, of sincere and frank confession of her faults, of admiration, of acknowledgment, of hope, and likewise of love and perfect charity. Like a person awakened out of a deep sleep, or like one deaf and blind who begins to hear and see, every thing strikes her with novelty. Among other things worthy of attention you may observe, and comprehend at once by the context, that all the fifty-third chapter, which seems an abbreviated and complete history of the passion and death of Messiah, is nothing but that which Zion utters in the midst of her complaints, after that she has recognised her Messiah, whom she rejected and hung upon the cross: "Who hath believed our report, [hearing, Vulg.] (she begins by saying,) and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?" Which of us (as if she had said) hath believed his own ears? And to whom is the arm of the Lord, (or, which is the same, the word of the Lord,) or the Messiah, revealed? Who hath acknowledged him? We heard himself speak to us words of life; and we believed not. We afterwards heard his disciples; and, far from believing them, we despised them. We have heard him spoken of in all parts of the world whither, for so many long centuries, we have been dispersed; and we have never believed the hearing of our ears. Time doth not permit me to tarry in these particular observations; which any one may make with a little attention.

Among so many and such various things, which Messiah speaketh to Zion, throughout this large conversation, those ought to be particularly remarked, which make for our general proposition; to wit, such as are for consolation and hope, and contain some extraordinary promise. For example these which I shall now point out as a specimen of very many others, altogether similar, which might be produced.

First: In the fifty-first chapter, verse 16, God, speaking to Messiah, useth these words: "And I have put my words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art my people." In consequence of which, Messiah instantly takes up the word; and turning to Zion, and beholding her so humbled and confounded with the dust of the earth, he thus addresseth her from the 17th verse. "Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand of the Lord the cup of his fury; thou hast drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling, and wrung them out... Thy sons have fainted, they lie at the head of all the streets, as a wild bull in a net: they are full of the fury of the Lord, the rebuke of thy God. Therefore hear now this, thou afflicted, and drunken, but not with wine: Thus saith thy Lord the Lord, and thy God that pleadeth the cause of his people, Behold, I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling, even the dregs of the cup of my fury; thou shalt no more drink it again: But I will put it into the hand of them that afflict thee; which have said to thy soul, Bow down, that we may go over: and thou hast laid thy body as the ground, and as the street, to them that went over," Isa. li. 17. 20-23.

Secondly: "Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean. Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion. For thus saith the Lord, Ye have sold yourselves for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money," Isa. lii. 1,2,3.

Thirdly: "For thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called. For the Lord hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God. For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer. For this is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee... O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires." &c. Isa. liv. 5-9.11,&c.

Fourthly: "The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the Lord, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel. Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations. Thou shalt also suck the milk of the Gentiles, and shalt suck the breast of kings: and thou shalt know that I the Lord am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty one of Jacob... Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise," Isa. lx. 14-16.18.

Fifthly: "Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her: that ye may suck and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolation; that ye may milk out and be delighted with the abundance of her glory. For thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream: then shall ye suck, ye shall be borne upon her sides, and be dandled upon her knees. As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem," Isa. lxvi. 10-13.

Consider, in the last place, the whole of the second chapter of Hosea; in which you will find the whole mystery we speak of shortly treated, from the beginning to the end of that chapter. First: God announceth to his faithless spouse, that the time will come for depriving her wholly of her dignity; when he will look upon her as if she had not been his spouse, or his married wife; that he will make no account of her children, nor admit compassion to his heart. "Plead with your mother, plead; for she is not my wife, neither am I her, husband [Judge your mother, Vulg. Be judged with your mother, LXX]...And I will not have mercy upon her children." Secondly: He announceth to her the terrible troubles and calamities which shall befall her in her solitude and desertion; all from her own hand and of her own causing. "Therefore, behold I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall, that she shall not find her paths...And now I will discover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers, and none shall deliver her out of mine hand. I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feast days, her new moons, and her sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts." &c. Hosea ii. 6.10,11. &c. Thirdly; He doth announce and promise to her, as well in this place as in the third chapter, that, after having been severely chastened, troubled, and humbled to the very uttermost, she shall at length open her eyes, and say, like the prodigal son in the Gospel, "I will arise and return to my father." Fourthly, and finally: He announceth that then she shall call unto her God, naming him, "My husband;" and promiseth that then he shall receive her once more, and espouse her as it were anew, and never put her away from him any more. "And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the Lord," Hos. ii. 19 20.

These passages which I have just pointed out, omitting others innumerable, which are met with in the prophecies, appear to prove irrefragably, that the former spouse of God, who, since Messiah's death, has been ignominiously cast forth from the house of her husband for her unbelief, shall one day be called again with infinite advantages, in another state and under another everlasting covenant, to her former dignity, never to lose it more; which is all that we proposed to prove. Let us now attentively examine what is alleged on the other hand.

Two Impediments are Proposed and Examined.

THE other side, who doubtless have strong motives for opposing with all their might the vocation and re-adoption of Zion, bring against it two difficulties or impediments, which, being looked at from a certain distance, make an appearance truly terrible, capable of dismaying and even of appalling the most brave. The first impediment comes, or pretends to come, from the quarter of the present spouse of God, who entered in the room of Zion. The second comes, or pretends to come, from the quarter of Zion herself; who is supposed to be a fit object capable only of contempt and contumely. And they both present themselves in so decisive a tone, and with such great complacency, that it looks as if there were room neither for doubt nor for suspicion. Nevertheless, if we draw a little more nigh, and examine into them with some degree of particular attention; and if we come so close as with the hand to touch them, we discover, to our wonder and amazement, that the first resteth only upon a pure sophism, and the second upon an egregious falsehood.

First impediment.

THE substance of this first impediment, in a few words, reduceth itself to this argument: God cannot have two different spouses, as he cannot have two churches; for the essence of the church, and of the spouse of God, that is —the active part of the church (which is properly called the spouse and mother,) is unity: therefore Zion cannot be called again, and assumed anew into that dignity of spouse of God, which she held in other times. The antecedent of these two propositions, That the essence of the church is unity, is not only certain, but is a dogma of faith. The consequence is proved thus: for Zion to return, and again become the spouse of God, it is necessary that the actual spouse, who succeeded to her place, should at some time fall into disgrace with her spouse, and into the same misfortune into which Zion fell; just as it was necessary that Zion should fall, and be cast out of the house, in order that the present spouse might enter and reign. To this effect it is said, in Isa. xxviii. 20. “For the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it: and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it.” Now, it is certain and undeniable, according to the infallible promises of the spouse himself, that the actual spouse can never fall out of favour; therefore it is impossible that Zion should ever again return to the dignity of being the spouse of God. If any doubt the promises to the spouse, they are as follows: “And I say unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church: and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it,” Matt. xvi. 18. “But I have prayed for thee” (saith the Lord to St. Peter), “that thy faith fail not,” Luke xxii, 32. “So I am with you alway to the end of the world,” Matt. xxviii. 20.

O, my friend! Dost thou not see with thine eyes, what in a little I shall tell thee? Is it credible, is it possible, thou shouldst pass over so gross a sophism, without adverting to it, without seeing through it? Art thou ignorant that this very sophism was that which deluded my brethren the Jews? That which made the threatenings of God incredible to them? That which made the scriptures unintelligible and even invisible? Give ear to me only for these two words. First: To whom were the promises of the spouse, which the other party allege in their behalf, given? You will doubtless say, To the Christian church, which, after Messiah, was to be established, and as it were founded anew, from henceforth and forever. I pass a little further, and inquire; Was not this Christian church founded by Messiah many years among the Jews? Was not the active and principal part of that church, that part which we call our holy mother, and consequently the spouse of God, many years in Jerusalem and among the Jews only? To them only was not all the spiritual power given directly from the hand of the husband; the whole jurisdiction of *binding and loosing*; the whole government and direction of the church? Did not this church flourish in Jerusalem, and amongst Jews only, with a sanctity and perfection so admirable and so conformed to the institution of Christ, as has never yet been witnessed in any succeeding age? This is all certain and undeniable from sacred history.

Nevertheless, the holy church, founded by Messiah in Jerusalem, and among Jews only, very soon forsook the Jews (or they forsook it, not choosing to enter into it); and it passed to the Gentiles, and this as entirely as if it had been founded for them only. The centre of unity in the Christian church, which the spouse himself had placed in Jerusalem, he removed from Jerusalem and placed in Rome, for the greater good and advantage of the Gentiles. All the active administration of the church was taken from the former husbandmen or labourers, and was given to the other new ones, in consequence of the sentence which had been already pronounced, “I will give your vineyard to other husbandmen,” Matt. xxi. 41. Now, pray did the spouse, by this commutation, fail in his royal word? Did not his promises remain as entire as the church to which they had been made? Would it not have been an

egregious folly in the Jews to bring forward those promises of the spouse, in order to prove that the active church could not pass over to the Gentiles, nor the centre of its unity to Rome? Behold, then, how the first impediment which is alleged against Zion is null and void, being founded on an equivocation, or a play of words.

But this, my friend, is a most grave point, which requires a particular observation. And, for the present, I refer you to the following Phenomenon, where we shall endeavour to treat it more specially. Meanwhile recall to memory what was said concerning the Christian nations in the Third Phenomenon, especially under the beast of two horns, and under the woman seated on the beast.

Second impediment.

The Divorce of Zion.

ZION, they say, cannot return again to become the spouse of God. For what reason? Because she is a divorced spouse and divorced in all due form, as the law prescribeth, according to the fiftieth chapter of Isaiah, and the third of Jeremiah. These are the only documents which they have been able to find in all the archives. Let us examine them with attention, and apart from one another.

The words with which the fiftieth chapter of Isaiah commenceth, are the first document, of which they avail themselves, to prove the divorce of Zion. Now it is to be observed first of all, that not without manifest violence can this chapter be separated from the preceding one, for it is one and the same subject of which they treat. Already we have observed, that from the forty-ninth chapter it is Messiah alone who speaks, directing his words to the people, and instructing them upon the results of his first coming, and thereafter from the 14th verse he turns his eyes upon hapless Zion, and tenderly comforts her to the end of the chapter. It is very certain that this discourse of Messiah to Zion does not terminate here, but continues to the fiftieth chapter, with the merely accidental difference of directing his words to the children of Zion, to whom he putteth these two questions. First: "Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement whom I have put away?" The second: "or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you?" From these two questions, if they be separated from the whole context, or if they should not be taken as questions, it is an easy matter to conclude, that God hath divorced Zion, and sold her children for slaves: but the whole context being attended to, as it ought to be, the very opposite conclusion will be drawn, that he has not so divorced the mother, nor sold the children. What is it that the Lord asks? It is very clearly this: If I have indeed divorced your mother, where is the bill or writing of divorcement which I gave her, upon casting her out of my house? In whose possession is it? Who has seen it? "where is the bill of your mother's divorcement whom I have put away?"

The allusion to the twenty-fourth chapter of Deuteronomy at once naturally presents itself. The law required, that if anyone discontented with his lawful wife desired to divorce her, he should not do it, nor be permitted to do it, without giving to the wife before her dismissal, a bill, or an authentic writing, wherein should be declared that the woman was free; that the matrimonial contract was dissolved, that he gave up all his right in her; consequently that this woman might be married to another when it pleased her. To this law, our Lord manifestly alludes here, when he speaks to all the children of Zion, and asks them for the bill, or writing of divorcement, which he had given to their mother upon dismissing her from his house. As if he had said, it is true that I have cast your mother out of my house, but how appeareth it that I have divorced her. It is not the same to cast her out of the house, and to

divorce her. If then, when I cast her out of the house, I gave her not a writ of divorcement, as it is commanded in your law; thereby alone you are given to understand that she is not cast out for ever, that I have not yielded up my right in her, that I can claim her once more, and that in fact my intention was to reclaim her, when it should seem good to me, when she should have suffered her double affliction according to her deserving, “when she should have received at the Lord’s hand double for all her sins.” Isaiah xl. 2. As little have I sold you, continues the Lord, and if I have, let the buyer appear; let the writing of contract be produced, or let me receive the price which they gave, “or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you?” If I have sold you, it has been gratis, it has been without price, which cannot properly have the name of a sale. Therefore, he saith in the 3rd verse of the fifty-second chapter, “Ye have sold yourselves for nought; and you shall be redeemed without money.” And therefore they themselves say to him in the forty-fourth Psalm at the 11th verse, “Thou hast given us like sheep appointed for meat; and hast scattered us among the heathen. Thou sellest thy people for nought.”

The whole of this mystery as we find it in the text of Isaiah, we read briefly set forth, and painted with the most lively and clear colours, in a most laconic prophecy, and which, for that reason, seems one of the most obscure. God commanded the prophet Hosea to seek for a woman beloved by her friend, and an adulteress; to espouse her, and to “love her according to the love of the Lord toward the children of Israel who look to other gods.” Having without much difficulty found such a woman, made the contract, and espoused her, the prophet received an order from God to separate from her, and to put in her hands a bill of divorcement, but of another kind much more brief, being a formal declaration in these precise words, “Thou shalt abide for me many days; thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be for another man: so will I also be for thee.” ‘The prophet himself instantly explains the enigma in these words: “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: Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days.” Hosea iii.

4, 5.

You see here the true state of solitude and widowhood in which Zion was left since Messiah, and in which the whole world has beheld and still beholdeth her. This state is represented here with the greatest possible vividness and propriety. From the time that the Lord separated her from himself, she has had nothing but hope, which hope hath been her only consolation, in the midst of her great tribulations; (even as he chargeth her in the kind of bill) “thou shalt abide for me many days.” During these many days which now are numbered by thousands, Zion has neither taken up with other gods, nor even fallen into any of those excesses, which so much dishonoured her in other times, (as he likewise chargeth her in her bill,) thou shalt not play the harlot nor be for another man.” Even her greatest enemies find themselves obliged to confess the truth and to bear testimony of her honour in that particular point. All accuse her, blame her, condemn her of hardness, of blindness, of obstinacy, but no one accuseth her, or has ever accused her from Messiah’s time till this present day, of that horrible excess which Holy Scripture calleth fornication, that is, idolatry; much less of irreligion or of atheism. She hath then complied with the two charges which were laid upon her.

There remaineth the third, which relateth not to her, but to God; —“So will I also be for thee,” which we must believe that the same God, on his part, has accomplished or is accomplishing. That is to say, that he has remained waiting, and is waiting till “those times

and seasons which the Father hath put in his own power;” which being arrived, he shall once more claim her unto himself; and she shall hear his voice; and she shall say with her heart, I will arise and return to my former husband. She shall return, I say, to the house of her husband, who moved with mercy will receive her to his arms, and forget all the past; restore her with infinite advantages to her former dignity; give her the possession of all her rights; accomplish to her all the promises, which for so many ages have been suspended, and, in short, make an end of all her troubles. “And afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days.” Hosea iii. 5; and as the same prophet declareth in the preceding chapter at the 15th verse, “And she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt. And it shall be at that day, saith the Lord, that thou shalt call me Ishi; (my husband)...And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness and thou shalt know the Lord.” Hos. ii. 15,16.19,20.

I am not ignorant, friend, nor can you be ignorant, that the whole of this admirable mystery, contained in the very brief chapter of Hosea iii. is, by every possible means, drawn into an accommodation with the captivity of Babylon, and those who returned with Zerubbabel; but you likewise see that this accommodation, with all their forcing, can only go half the way that is wanted.

“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.” Hos. iii. 4.

It is easy to make this first half of the text, separate from the other, to apply to the captivity of Babylon; because, certainly, during all that time the children of Israel were without a king of their own, (and they have been so from then till now,) were without an altar, without a sacrifice, &c. But the other half, which is inseparable, being united, “Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days.” Verse 5. You see now, that the prophecy hath an eye to a different time: if not, unite the two parts, and accommodate the whole which results from their unity to the captivity of Babylon and the return thence, and you will not only perceive, but you may almost touch as with the hand, the repugnancy and impossibility.

In the first place, those who returned, from Babylon, from seeking their God, as the prophecy announceth, thought of nothing else but seeking every one his own, and settling themselves conveniently; insomuch that, several years having passed over their heads, it was necessary that God should send to them two prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, to stimulate them to the principal object of their return, which was, the re-edification of the temple destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. Accordingly the Lord reproves them by Haggai: “This people say, The time is not come, the time that the Lord’s house should be built. Then came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet, saying, Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste?...Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house. Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit.” Haggai i.

In the second place, those who returned from Babylon, far from seeking their God, began immediately to break one of his most holy and most fundamental laws, whereof the neglect had ever been most fatal to the nation. They began to unite themselves with strange and idolatrous wives; as if no longer bound by that law which said, “Thou shalt not take of

their daughters to thy sons.” Exod. xxxiv. 16. How universal this transgression was, in those who returned from Babylon, may be seen in the ninth chapter of the book of Ezra.

And it is to be noted here, that the holy priest Ezra came to Jerusalem commissioned by Artaxerxes, seventy years, more or less, after Cyrus; and consequently after the famous epoch of the return from Babylon. So that during all this large space of time, the children of Israel had indeed admirably sought their God, in breaking his holy laws. I say nothing of the observance of the sabbath, since there was hardly any one who respected that holy day; as Nehemiah lamented and sought to remedy, being sent by the same Artaxerxes, thirteen years after Esdras: “In those days saw I in Judah some treading wine presses on the sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath day.” Neh. xiii. 15.

In the third place, who was this David their king, whom the children of Israel sought when they returned from Babylon? “And they shall seek the Lord their God, and David their king.” Could it perchance be Zerubbabel, the son of David, who returned with them? Surely, it was he. Neither was there another King David to whom recourse in those times could be had. But, for what should they seek him whom they had with them? Perhaps to place him on the throne of his father? to place the sceptre in his hand and the crown on his head? to honour him and obey him as their lawful sovereign? Oh, how far were both the Jews and Zerubbabel at that time from any such thoughts; and how were the words which follow, —“And they shall see the Lord and his goodness in the latter days,” verified in the return out of Babylon? and where place they the word “in the latter days,” which is as it were the key of the whole prophecy or what use can they make of it in respect to those times? Without doubt all these things are beyond measure great, hard, and inflexible, and neither force nor ingenuity are able to wrest them.

Let us now return to Isaiah, whom we quitted for a moment the better to understand Hosea. There being then no such divorce of Zion, or sale of her sons, (continues Messiah, who is speaking,) the reason why I have used towards you and your mother so much rigour, is the multitude and grievousness of your sins. “Behold, for your iniquities have you sold yourselves, and for your transgressions was your mother put away.” Among those faults which were so great and grievous, he names no other in particular, but the bad reception which they had given him in his coming. “Wherefore, when I came, was there no man? when I called, was there none to answer?” —Another clear sign of the times of which he speaks. This declaration being made, that he had not divorced the mother nor sold the children, he immediately pursues the strain of consolation. —“Is my hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem? or have I no power to deliver?” And that they might see what he can do, and what he will infallibly do, according as he had promised, he cheers them in a few words; that, as he had done when he drew them out of Egypt, so is it announced in the scriptures for the times of his second coming. “Behold, at my rebuke I dry [I will dry] up the sea: I make the rivers a wilderness: I clothe the heavens with blackness; and I make sackcloth their covering.

This first document being thus viewed and examined, the conclusion is, that, far from proving any thing against Zion, it proves in her favour. It proves that she is a spouse of God, who is doing penance, but not divorced: because, when the Lord cast her out, he gave her no bill of divorce; and consequently did not give up his right in her nor dissolve the marriage. Seek in all the sacred books for this writ, and you shall find no other than this which we have just spoken of, as written in the third chapter of Hosea. “Thou shalt abide for me many days; thou shalt not play the harlot; thou shalt not be for another man: so will I also be for thee.”

The true meaning of which is, that given by the same prophet in these words: “For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king...afterward they shall return and seek the Lord their God.”

The second Document is briefly examined.

IN order to know the insufficiency and nullity of this instrument, it is sufficient to read the third chapter of Jeremiah, to which they refer us, where we find the very contrary of what is pretended; and find, moreover, that this whole chapter is a confirmation of what we have hitherto said upon the subject of the Jews, and likewise of what still remaineth for us to say.

“They say,” (the Lord beginneth by speaking with the house of Judah, and treating her as his spouse, though faithless and adulterous,) “if a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man’s, shall he return unto her again? shall not that land be greatly polluted? but thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith the Lord.” Jer. iii. 1.

From these first words we begin already to perceive, how far it was from the Lord to divorce Zion; seeing, in the midst of the adulteries with which she was then defiled, he calls upon her, exhorts her, begs her to return unto him, promising to receive her, and to forget all: “yet return unto me, and I will receive thee.” In the whole of the exhortation which follows, made by the Lord to the house of Judah, it is manifest that he desired her penitence and amendment, that he might not feel himself compelled to banish her to Babylon.

Among the things which the Lord saith, complaining of the ingratitude of Judah, one is, that having seen with her eyes the terrible chastisement with which he had just visited her elder sister, (that is, the house of Israel, composed of ten tribes,) whom he had banished to Assyria and Media, giving her a writ of divorce: notwithstanding which she had not been alarmed nor stood in fear; but rather had been provoked thereby to give a looser rein to her excesses, and to multiply her adulteries. And her treacherous sister, Judah, saw it: “And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also.” Jer. iii. 8. Who would think that these words should be taken into their service, and used to prove that Zion is a divorced Spouse? For what reason? Is it for these words, —had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce? But of whom speaketh he this? of what time is it spoken? and in what sense?

Whosoever readeth this text consecutively, will at once perceive that it speaketh not of times posterior to Messiah, but much anterior to the captivity of Babylon: because Jeremiah began to prophesy in the time of Josiah; that is, more than six hundred years before Messiah; and he speaketh here of the idolatry of Judah, which was present at that time. Secondly, that the bill of divorce spoken of is given to the adulterous and likewise schismatical house of Israel, which had separated herself from her sister, the house of Judah, where Zion stood, the court and centre of unity of the true religion. Thirdly and principally, that the house of Israel, as here spoken of, is not considered as the church of God, (for she had already gone forth from the church,) but simply considered as a kingdom, and as a different thing from the house and kingdom of Judah. These two kingdoms, or houses, are called in scripture two sisters —spouses of God; one, the elder, as comprehending the ten tribes; the other, the younger, as comprehending only two: to the first is given the name of Aholah, to the second the name Aholibah, Ezek. xxiii. 4. But this is not said as if God in those days had two spouses, or two different churches; —but because these two sisters, both independent queens, so far as pertaineth to earthly government, must compose one kingdom,

one church, one spouse of the true God. And yet the elder had separated from the younger, and that not only as concerning earthly government, but as concerning religion likewise; separating at the same time from their God, from their laws, from their worship, from their faith, from their, hope, and from their obligations.

Now to this elder sister, schismatical, adulterous, and prostitute by profession, the Lord saith, that at length he cast her forth, and gave her a writing of divorcement: but this he saith not to the younger sister of the house of Judah, in which was constituted and was by appointment to continue his spouse, properly so called; that is, the active ministry of religion, the court and centre of the true church of God. . . Her, likewise, he afterwards banished out of the land to Babylon; but he gave her no writing of divorcement, he did not dissolve the marriage; nor leave her at liberty to wed herself to other gods but, on the contrary, when she desired this bill of divorce, that she might be at greater liberty to give way to the corruption of her heart; the Lord did declare by his prophet Ezekiel, who was his envoy extraordinary to her in her captivity, that he would at no rate grant to her the desire and thought of her heart: "And that which cometh into your mind shall not be at all, that ye say, We will be as the heathen, as the families of the countries, to serve wood and stone. As I live, saith the Lord God, surely with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out, will I rule over you: And I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out." Ezek. xx. 32-34. This appeareth to be the true reason why, when the younger sister returned from her exile, the elder returned not; nor at this day is it to be known with any clearness or certainty where she is to be found: not that she is entirely lost, nor that she is intermingled with other nations, still less that she is never to return; but because her time is not yet come. And thinkest thou, Sir, that it is never to come?

Let me suppose for a moment that you do not assent to any of these passages which have been observed and quoted in this phenomenon concerning the Jews: let me likewise for a moment suppose that all the prophecies were lost, save the third chapter of Jeremiah which remained to us: even then, in that deplorable condition, by this document alone, we could not look upon the ten tribes (much less upon Zion) as wholly abandoned, —without remedy and without hope. Read this chapter onward to the end, and before reaching the middle of it, you shall with admiration begin to discover in what the divorcement of the elder ends at length, and how God's goodness to her appears. Go, (it is said to Jeremiah in the 12th verse,) go and utter words to the north; (whitherward the elder sister had been winnowed a hundred years before,) call upon her, invite her, exhort her to return unto the Lord with all her heart. Say unto her that I am ready to receive her, and that I will actually receive her, notwithstanding the bill of divorcement which I have given her: say unto her in my name, and assure her on my part, that I ask no more of her than that she should acknowledge her iniquity, that she should acknowledge and confess that she hath sinned against her God. "Go, and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord; and I will not cause mine anger to fail upon you: for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger for ever. Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God. . . Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you." Jer. iii. 12, 13. 14.

If this still seems to you not so clear in favour of the elder sister, read on a little further, and you will perceive how the exhortation insensibly passeth into prediction (which is very frequently the case in all the prophecies). "Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I

will bring you to Zion.” Verse 14. These are the precious remnant of Israel, whereof so much is spoken in the prophets. In the same way Jeremiah continueth in the rest of the chapter to announce things wholly new, which till now have certainly not been accomplished. For example; “At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more, after the imagination of their evil heart.” Verse 17. The mystery which here beginneth to appear, we observed in another place. He goes on to say, “In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given for an inheritance unto your fathers.” Verse 18.

When happened this last event? Do you say, In the return out of Babylon? It is false, upon the authority of sacred history. The house of Judah which was exiled to Babylon in the days of Nebuchadnezzar, returned by permission of King Cyrus, without ever a thought having come into her mind of going to seek her elder sister, (with whom she had always lived in the greatest enmity) that she might return along with her to the land of her fathers. The elder sister remained in her exile, in her captivity, in her dispersion, without then having, or since having, had any one to call her. In that exile she continued in that day to be lost; in that exile she shall continue lost, until her time do come. Certain it is, we know not when nor how that will come about; but this our ignorance in respect to the future cannot be any sufficient reason for denying it altogether, or utterly avoiding it by interpretations manifestly violent and purely accommodative. Call to remembrance that great trumpet of which we spoke in another place; which, as saith Isaiah, shall sound in that day for this very end. “And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem.” Isa. xxvii. 13. You may likewise confirm yourself with that other prophecy of Isaiah. “And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.” Chapter xi. 12.

In sum, that we may not waste the time to no profit, the whole of the third chapter of Jeremiah proves nothing against Zion; but confirms and corroborates all the documents which are in her favour. Consequently there is not any reason for saying, that she is a divorced wife, but a wife under penance; that her penance is accomplishing, “until she shall have received of the Lord double for all her sins,” Isa. xl. 2; and as she herself speaketh in spirit by Micah: “Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me. I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me: he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness. Then she that is mine enemy shall see it, and shame shall cover her which said unto me, Where is the Lord thy God.” Micah vii. 8-10. My friend, consider these words of the Holy Spirit; consider them with attention, giving way to serious reflections. If you read them in their proper fountain, with all the context, you certainly shall find much more than I am capable of giving you by my reflections.

ARTICLE IV.

Fourth Aspect of the Jews.

IF we consider the Jews from the time of Messiah, and his death, as deprived of that spiritual and divine life, which had hitherto stood in them alone; and consequently as dead, whose bones are to be seen withered and dry, dispersed over the great field of the world; the question is, whether this punishment shall have an end or no.

In this fourth and last aspect, we have little to observe that is new; both because the principal things are already sufficiently observed under the three preceding aspects, and also, because all the labour is abbreviated to us by a famous prophecy which comprehends, and, with admirable simplicity and clearness, re-unites whatever is found scattered over the others. All our observations shall therefore be turned to this prophecy alone, which we are now about to copy.

The estate of misery in which the whole world has beheld the house of Israel, and along with it that other estate still future into which they are to be brought, God hath shown in an extraordinary vision, and by the most appropriate and natural similitudes to the prophet Ezekiel, as he hath set it forth throughout the whole of the thirty-seventh chapter of his prophecy, in the words which follow:

“The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones, and caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry. And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord God, thou knowest. Again he said unto me, Prophecy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live: And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live and ye shall know that I am the Lord. So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone. And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them. Then said he unto me, Prophecy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord God; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army. Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts. Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then, shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord. The word of the Lord came again unto me saying, moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions: And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand. And when the children of thy people shall speak unto thee, saying Wilt thou not shew us what thou meanest by these? Say

unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand. And the sticks whereon thou writest shall be in thine hand before their eyes. And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwelling-places, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God. And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt, and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children for ever: and my servant David shall be their prince for ever. Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And the heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore."

What is found in the Commentators upon this Passage.

§1. THOU hast my dear Sir, the whole of this celebrated prophecy. And, though I must think that thou hast read it with great attention, I pray thee to return and read it over again, for it is certain that the more thou readeest it, the more shalt thou find in it to understand, and the better shalt thou understand it. It is one of those admirable prophecies in which the Spirit of God explaineth himself in so decisive, so clear, and so circumstantial a manner, that nothing is left for human ingenuity to do: and every effort which she may make against it, doth only serve to discover her littleness and insufficiency. All the authors that I have been able to consult upon the point, give manifest symptoms of embarrassment and of fear, which it is not possible for them wholly to hide, however much they may cloak it. They begin by launching out at first, with great suavity, as in a smooth and quiet sea, but hardly have they passed over a few miles, hardly have they got over some few verses of the prophecy, when they find themselves girdled round with fearful rocks which hinder their passage, and threaten them with inevitable shipwreck.

They begin by accommodating the prophecy to the Jews in the time of the captivity of Babylon. These, they say, are the dry bones scattered over the valley: and those same bones clothed with sinews, with flesh and skin, into which the Spirit of God introduceth anew the spirit of life, are the same Jews who, returned from Babylon. But as it is impossible to follow out this accommodation; and carry forward this idea; behold what they do to deliver themselves from imminent shipwreck. They pretend to have discovered a terrible enemy, to whom it is necessary to offer battle: consequently it is necessary to change the course, for this is a subject incomparably more interesting than the captives of Babylon; and what is this terrible enemy, which obligeth them so entirely to change their course? It is that most ancient error of the sect of the Sadduces, *who say that there is no resurrection*, to whom adhered certain of the most ignorant and gross heretics of the first and second centuries. This error so

prejudicial, it is absolutely necessary to combat here, and even to destroy and to annihilate it. Wherefore quitting the captives of Babylon, and with them the whole prophecy and all its rocks, in a moment the whole interpretation is seen converted into a formal controversy upon the resurrection of the body: and an endeavour to prove and corroborate that essential article of our religion from this passage of scripture, as if there was to be found in it no other direct or immediate mystery which might be worthy of their principal attention. Whence it follows, that like those who have been already fatigued with so grave a dispute, they pass with the utmost slightness, and at no small distance, over the rest of the prophecy, remarking some things but, in a general manner, confusedly supposing others, without thinking of proving them, and wholly omitting the most substantial, as if they were of no importance.

Although that which hath just been said, be the simple truth, (as any one who may dispute it can see by examining for himself,) I do not therefore think of accusing the interpreters of scripture of bad faith. I am not ignorant of the great and notable difference which there is between bad faith, and a bad cause founded on a false principle innocently regarded as a true one. The former suppose malice, artifice, and guile; the latter argues weakness. In their principle, in their untrue supposition, in their unsound system, consisteth all the evil. But what is become of the explanation of the prophecy? Did they not begin by accommodating it to the captives of Babylon? Why then did they not pursue that accommodation until they had entirely concluded it? Was it peradventure, that they encountered the Sadducees, those enemies of the resurrection? Well: but now that these have been left vanquished in the combat, it is a seasonable time quietly to follow out the explanation which was begun. Oh unfortunate request! How is it possible to follow the explanation of a prophecy so diffuse, after the fatigues of so bloody a battle? No, no; you cannot expect but that they should get out by means of some allegory, that last resource.

As to what respects the second part, which is the principal one, and the fullest of rocks, the explanation is equally short and easy, and indeed much more short and easy, by reason of what they omit, which is nearly the whole. The two rods or sceptres which being joined together form one only, and which is placed and for ever established in the hand of one king, and one only, to whom the name of David is given. What meaneth it? It signifies, they say, in the literal sense, that after the return out of Babylon, the two houses or separate kingdoms of Israel and Judah should unite in one under the same prince and descendant of David, who, say they, can be no other than Zerubbabel (notwithstanding that Zerubbabel was neither king nor prince, neither held rod or sceptre, nor any independent authority). Under this prince, they say, came about the union of the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah; it being very probable, they add, that some individuals of all the other ten tribes returned along with the Jews, and joined themselves to the house and kingdom of Judah. And what if nothing of all this squares with as certainly it doth not, but manifestly contradicts sacred history, and the whole context of the prophecy? Why then, if it will not accommodate this way, it signifies in the allegorical sense, specially intended by the Holy Spirit, that Judah and Israel, that is, the Jews and the Gentiles, will unite together into one church, under one king, the son of David, who shall reign over them *by the faith of believers*. This is, in short, the whole mystery of the prophecy, to this all the explanation reduceth itself. See then, Sir, if it satisfies you.

Reflections.

§ 2. To examine at length, and formally to impugn an interpretation of the kind which we have just heard, were little less than a useless work. After reading and considering the

prophecy, what need have we of any other examination, or any other confutation? The prophecy itself not only speaks, but likewise at the same time declareth the sense in which it speaks: proposes enigmas and immediately resolves them; uses metaphors and explains them. By which explanation it openeth an easy, plain, and direct way, and by the same means closeth every other way, every different path which might be taken.

The most manifest proof of this truth, is the utter fruitlessness of that very great labour which hath been taken by so many great minds to open another and a different path; not choosing to enter by that which appeared to them impracticable, and really is so upon their system. Let us make some few short reflections hereon.

1. The resurrection of the flesh is a truth so solidly established by all the scriptures of the Old and New Testament, that it rather appears a real injury, than any good service, to seek to secure it by artificial props which are in themselves most weak. "But if," saith St. Paul, "the dead rise not, then is Christ not risen, and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." 1 Cor. xv. 13. The prophecy which we are now considering, does in no way direct itself to the resurrection of the dead; but is a pure metaphor having for its object another mystery widely different, whereof it speaketh by similitude, not by propriety. This particular mystery is clearly pointed out and explained in the prophecy itself: and accordingly it ought in the first place to be examined, what very great mystery is hidden under so new and so magnificent a metaphor as God himself hath made use of to announce it. It ought to be examined in the second place, what times are here referred to, whether past or yet future. Both these things ought to be examined in the prophecy itself, attention being paid to the context, keeping likewise in view all which precedes in the three foregoing chapters, with all which follows in the eleven subsequent ones: In all which, both the mystery and the time are so clearly seen, that its very clearness would seem to have constrained them either to shut their eyes, or to turn them in some other direction.

2. The metaphor of the bones, *very many in the open valley, and very dry*, which, at the voice of God, united and received the spirit of life, hath no arbitrary signification that it should be submitted to our ingenuity; nor is it any obscure metaphor that it should go a begging for a solution: but the Spirit of truth itself doth explain what is thereby to be understood. *These bones are the whole house of Israel*. All these bones, without excepting one, are the miserable children of Israel. They say, *Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts*.

3. The times of which this prophecy speaks, cannot be those of the captivity of Babylon, and the return to Jerusalem. The very text, and the grandeur of the metaphors, not only oppose this understanding, but contradict it by every word, and especially from verse 15 to the end.

4. The dry and parched bones, wherewith the whole plain was seen to be filled, signify, as the doctors tell us, nothing else, in the literal sense, than the captive Jews in Babylon: and the same bones, re-united and breathed into by the spirit of life, signify nothing else, *in the literal sense*, than the same Jews who went forth from Babylon, and returned to their native land. Whence follows a consequence, somewhat severe, but most just and undeniable. Which is, that even after the accomplishment of this departure from Babylon, and return to their own land, the valley spoken of remained, still, almost as full of dry bones as it was before that event. How? Because we know of a surety, that the captives who went forth from Babylon and returned to their country, were as four to a thousand; very few in comparison with those who did not return; and this not only when compared with the whole house of Jacob, and all the twelve tribes thereof, of which the prophecy manifestly speaketh;

these bones are the whole house of Israel; but even in comparison with the whole house of Judah alone; who are properly called Jews, and were the captives in Babylon. This house of Judah, though only composed of the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin and an adjunct of the tribe of Levi, necessary for the ends of the priesthood, was not so small but that it reckoned some millions of persons. The precise number I do not know, but it may be easily computed by what is said in the second book of the Chronicles, seventeenth chapter; to wit, that in the time of Jehoshaphat, that king had, under one hundred captain generals, one million one hundred and seventy thousand soldiers, besides very many others who guarded the garrisons and other strong places: “these waited on the king, beside those whom the king put in the fenced cities throughout all Judah.” Verse 19. The number of individuals, among men women and children, which would result from a computation proceeding upon this, may be compared with the number of individuals, among men women and children, who came forth from Babylon and returned to Jerusalem, who, as is said in the first book of Esdras, second chapter, only amounted to forty and two thousand. Therefore those who returned to their country, being compared even with the house of Judah only, were a very small portion in respect to those who returned not, And what would it be if we were to take into account the whole house of Jacob? If, therefore, the arid bones, which revived, are the persons who came up from Babylon and returned to their own country, as the doctors pretend, those who did not go out from Babylon, and the other places of their exile, must be understood as remaining in the state and condition of dry and parched bones. And these being little more or less, than a thousand are in respect to four (or, if you please, forty); the plain which Ezekiel saw, necessarily remained almost as full of dry and withered bones as it had been before. Therefore, when the prophet said to all the dry bones in general, “Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord,” he speaks only to an insignificant part, and not to all; for it was only a puny part of them which returned to their country. Now see if you can reconcile this conclusion with the words of Ezekiel. Add, moreover, this other observation: the bones which revived, saith the prophet, *stood upon their feet, an exceeding great army*. Can forty and two thousand persons, men women and children, when speaking of a nation consisting of many millions, with any propriety, deserve, to be called an exceeding great army? Consider it well; for this of itself, though we were to omit a thousand other embarrassments, will bring you, at least, under strong suspicions of their interpretation.

5. It either is to be believed, that the prophecy, in the literal acceptation, looketh directly to the return out of Babylon; or it is not so to be believed. If the former, why not explain the whole consecutively in this sense? why not carry the idea onward until you bring it to the resting place of the end? Is it now because it is an impossible undertaking? Then ought this very impossibility to be regarded as a, real and demonstrative proof that the prophecy contemplates no such object. If the latter, to what serveth so much forcing, in this case altogether useless?

What we say of the literal sense, which is pretended or sought to be supposed, we say, after the same manner, of the allegorical sense; with which they endeavour to fill the infinite vacuities which necessarily occur in that which they call literal. If the allegorical sense be that specially intended by the Holy Spirit, let the prophecy be explained in this sense: but let it all be explained consecutively; attending to every part, and giving reasons for every part of it. And, at least, let them fill well, by this allegorical sense, all the vacuities which are found in the literal sense. If even this be not possible, (as it certainly is not possible; for, had it been possible, wherefore would it not have been done?) it must follow that the intention of the Holy Spirit is the mixed sense. Perhaps you will wonder and, ask me, what I mean by the

mixed sense: and I reply, that I know nothing of it but by their practice. That is to say, that I find a great use to be made of it in certain subjects. True it is that this is not found in the list of the different senses which are appointed for the understanding of the scriptures: but they lay their hand upon it in extremities: and as it is composed of all, it is of service to all, and the most convenient of all. What greater convenience, than to be able to understand one and the same prophecy, which would entirely destroy my system, partly in one sense, partly in another, and partly in five or six at the same time? Notwithstanding this great convenience, which may easily be conceived to reside in the mixt sense, as I have called it; I dare say that, to understand this prophecy, of which we speak, and others like it, not all the senses, (nor all the wits,) joined and united together, would suffice. The more necessary, therefore, doth it appear to have recourse to the last resort, easy and unfailing to all men, which is, to omit and overleap those things which invincibly resist all the senses, and will not accord with our system.

From these few reflections, which we have just made, and from very many others resulting thence, we easily conclude, that if the prophecy of Ezekiel cannot be understood consecutively, in this sense, nor in the other, nor in all joined, we ought to understand it in that only sense, the obvious, natural, and simple one, which the prophecy itself points out, whether it resist, or do not resist, our own miserable ideas. If God hath spoken, he will perform it, however difficult, or impossible, it may seem to us. Why then weary ourselves to no purpose in seeking other difficult and impracticable ways; when we have this plain, easy, and secure one. Is it peradventure that certain ideas cannot pass that way. Then is this an evident proof that they are not good but contraband; seeing they cannot pass securely by the king's high-way. And if they be contraband, then ought they to be abandoned, in faithful obedience to the orders of our supreme king: *bringing our minds to the obedience of faith*. Then only have we nothing to fear: this way is easy, plain, and sure: and the prophecy, which was imagined so obscure, is at once seen to be full of clearness: and is intelligible throughout, from the first to the last word.

THE END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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