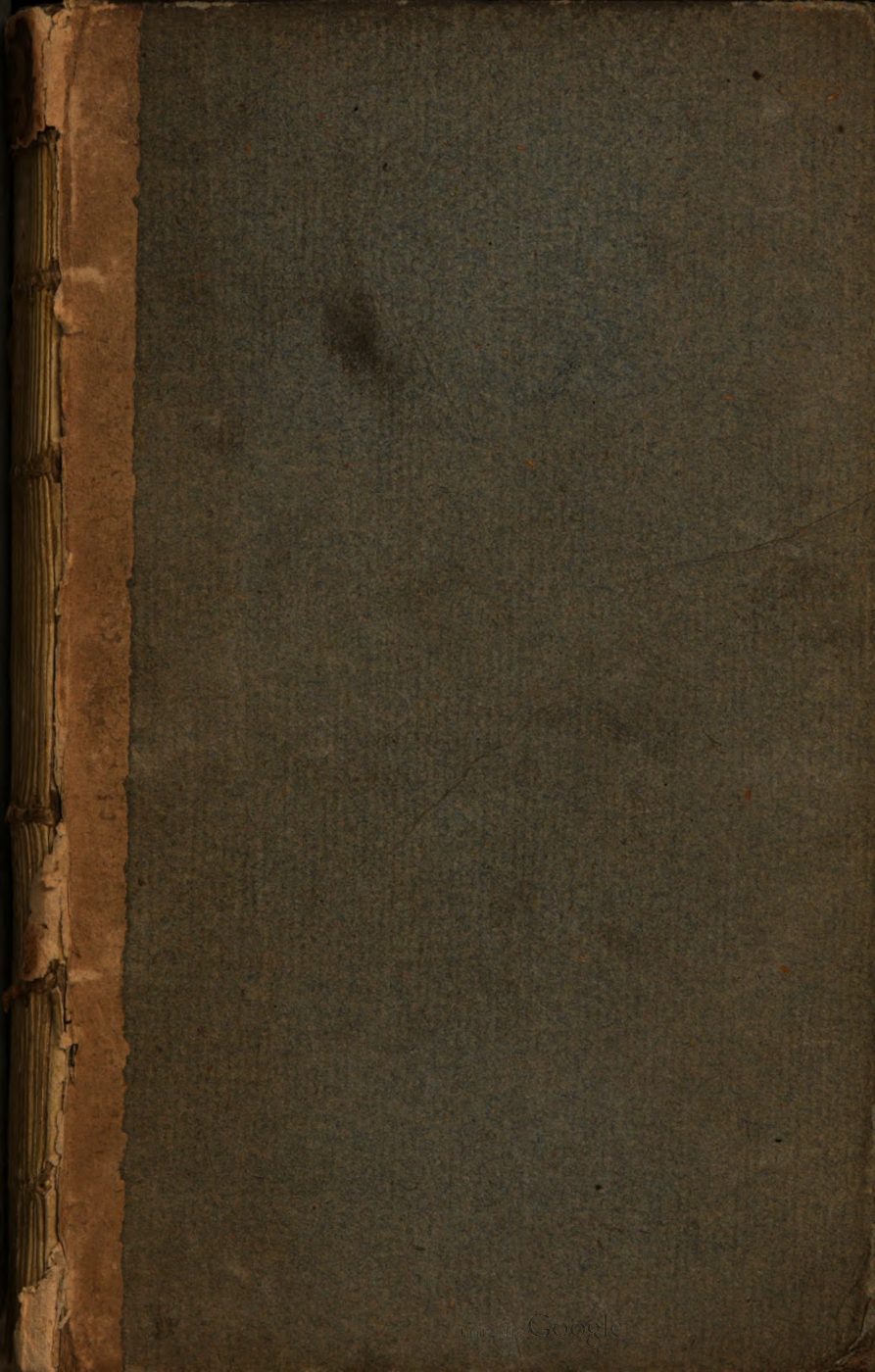

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Paradise Restored:

OR,

A TESTIMONY TO THE DOCTRINE

OF THE

Blessed Millennium:

WITH

Some Considerations on its approaching Advent

FROM

THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

BY THOMAS HARTLEY, A. M.

Rector of Wurwick, in Northamptonshire.

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. *Rev. xx. 6.*

Have not the faith of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, the Lord of Glory, with respect of persons. *James ii. 1.*

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To the Right Honourable

Lady FRANCES SHIRLEY.

MADAM,

AS the doctrine of Christ's temporal reign with his Saints on earth has, in a manner, been long lost in the Church, so his spiritual reign in his Saints has been much opposed, either openly or covertly; by which means many are left without any faith as to our blessed Lord's having, or to have a kingdom in this world, either spiritual or temporal. The design of the following work, here presented to your Ladyship, is to defend our Saviour's royal prerogative in both these branches of his sovereignty from plain Scriptures; and if I have not succeeded, the defect is in the writer, and not in any want of sufficient proof to support the subject.

Both these doctrines are of great, though not of equal importance; nay, the one is fundamental, for he that denies the reign of Christ spiritual in the hearts of his subjects, knoweth nothing yet rightly of Christianity, as he ought to know. Reason, human learning, and the religion of nature, have certainly been exalted far above their proper place, by a sort of advocates for revealed religion, in these last times; and this is one chief cause of that increase of infidelity amongst us, so much to be lamented.— Witnesses to the spirituality of the gospel-dispensation have appeared in every age of the Church, but were never more ridiculed and shamefully treated than in this, under the names of Enthusiasts, Fanatics, and Mystics: And therefore it is high time to rise up in defence of venerable truths and venerable characters, against opposers of whatever denomination; to rescue the holy mysteries of religion from contempt; and to distinguish between doctrines sacred in themselves, and those errors that have been joined with them.

Something of zeal in this cause will appear in the following sheets, and also much of moderation in matters of lesser concernment: But so it happens, that as zeal is sure to procure us enemies, so moderation is not likely to gain us friends; for even the religious

DEDICATION.

go by parties as well as other people; and not to be with one side in all things, is the way to be in favour with no side: Thus impartiality is taxed as well as most other things, but then it carries that evidence of its honesty and truth along with it, without which we should scarcely know it to be a virtue.

The doctrine of the blessed Millennium, by what appears to me, is on its way towards a speedy revival in the Church, not so much by any progress that the belief of it has already made, as by certain strong impressions on the minds of many serious persons at this time, attended with a full persuasion of its near approach. I must own, Madam, that I am in the same belief, and though this affords no argument towards convincing others, yet it will be allowed a sufficient motive with me, for urging the proofs and consideration of it in the best manner I was able. This office of love and duty I owed to my brethren, and my sense of the obligation carried in it the force of a divine command.

The following work is addressed to your Ladyship, in token of the author's great respect and esteem, and also as a testimony of his gratitude for many instances of your favourable regard: But I am sensible, that

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more belongs to public addresses of this kind than the acknowledgment of private obligations; there should also be something praiseworthy in the person addressed, to hold out for imitation: And here I find myself happily justified in this choice, as it presents me both with an example and a theme.

The duty of beneficence on Christian principles (which is the true gospel-charity, both in its root and fruit) is confessedly of divine obligation upon all, according to their means and power; and therefore the great and wealthy are more largely concerned therein than others. Nor will the want of a gospel-faith be any excuse for want of beneficence, seeing though all pretend not to faith, yet all pretend to humanity, and this by the very law of our nature obliges to beneficence; and he whose bowels cannot teach him this, has less of true pretensions to humanity than he is yet aware of.

The rich and honourable owe tenderness, help and protection, to their inferiors; and these stand indebted to them again in all dutiful returns of loving respect and obedience: But the former take too much upon them, when they challenge all from the latter as a debt due merely to their superior worldly advantages and distinctions, which are often accidental, and often without any peculiar excellency in those that possess them: In
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this case they will frequently be disappointed ; and here the relative duties will be at a stand : For it is according to an ordinance of God, both in the kingdom of Nature and of Grace, that the less should first be blessed of the greater, that so all things may begin and go on well. Thus streams descending from the upper springs, enrich the plains below, and cause the valleys to rejoice and sing, whilst these send up again in vapours the drops that water the hills, to yield a fresh supply for their bounty. In like manner, condescending love, with its genuine fruits of kindness, flowing from persons in exalted stations on those that are beneath them, is returned with affectionate prayers and services of grateful duty from them to their benefactors ; and thus a circulation of blessings is continued.

It is this beneficence, Madam, on Christian principles, that gives true dignity to nobility, and it is much to be wished, that they went together oftner than they do : However they meet in your Ladyship ; and may this example of your Christian faith thus evidencing itself by Christian kindness, bring much glory to God by its diffusive influence ! And the good Lord increase you in every virtue and every grace, and crown all with that constant humility which gives him the praise of all the good he worketh in us, and allows no part of it to ourselves !

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Though in all the conversation I have had with your Ladyship on the subject of the *Millennium*, I never could perceive that I gained much ground towards making you a convert to the belief of it, (though what is here put together in better frame may have a better effect) yet I can truly say, that I ever found in my honourable friend a patient hearer of what I had to offer upon it, and one never stiff in conference to maintain or oppose any doctrine which does not affect the essentials of Christianity. It would be well, if there was more of the like moderation in persons of a religious character; conversation would then be not only more easy and pleasant, but also more edifying than it often is, nor would run so much into dispute and a painful kind of discipline. There are few matters of mere opinion that are worth sharply contending for: Besides, earnestness of altercation agitates the spirits too violently; and if it does not take away something from charity, of which there is danger, yet it seldom fails to banish good humour, which is no contemptible vehicle of truth, and does not a little contribute towards procuring it a more favourable acceptance.

As it is my sincere wish that a doctrine so big with important truths, and full of practical motives, as that of Christ's millennial kingdom, may now recover its lost ground in the Church; so if the following view of it prove in any degree

degree useful to this end, I shall think the leisure I am fallen into, so far well employed ; a leisure however not to be envied me, as it is in so great a measure occasioned by the increasing infirmities of a tender constitution in the declining part of life, by which I find myself much unfitted for the discharge of public offices ; so that I may now consider myself as become a kind of out-pensioner to the Church, upon the small accruing profits of a living, which I may be allowed, in present circumstances, to wish exchanged for the more suitable provision of a *Sine Cure* ; but these things, Madam, you well know, go not by wishing, nor always by suitableness : However, I do assure your Ladyship, that it is not my design to be altogether useless, for I abhor idleness ; and therefore, as invalids, who are not fit for a march, or for engaging in the open field, may yet be serviceable in garrison, or keeping watch ; so if upon a sharp look-out I should chance to spy some sly interloper crept into the Church, vending his wares of false doctrine, or otherwise busily employed in undermining any article of our faith ; though I might not be strong enough to seize and bring the offender to justice, I may at least be sufficient to give the alarm, and so contribute to the common safety, as well as more able men. Thus the skilful commander, though he cannot make all his men fit for the same

same employment, can find employment fit for all his men: And so King *David* appointed the two hundred that could not follow him to the battle, to tarry by the stuff or baggage; nor were they to fare the worse for that; for notwithstanding the murmurings of their fellows, he made it an ordinance in *Israel*; that all such should come in for an equal dividend in the spoil; (1 Sam. xxx.) and I am far from thinking that this was written without a mystical meaning.

The resemblance betwixt the present state of religion and the art of war, does but too well justify the foregoing comparison. Divinity has long been considered only as a field of battle for the masters of science to engage in; and where the ablest disputers and critics are supposed to have always gained the victory; and yet the war is not ended; nor does the Church seem to have advanced one step farther in the way of unity or piety; which shews that argument and controversy are not such decisive weapons to procure a good peace, as is generally supposed; and he knows little of polemical divinity who is to be told, that an ingenious reasoner will never be at a loss for something to say on any side of the question. It will therefore be our truest wisdom to change our weapons from carnal to spiritual; for it is not the disputing head, but the devout heart that makes the Christian.

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In the love of God is that peace of God which passeth all understanding; and in this bond of peace is the unity of the Spirit; nay, after all that the wise critic and disputer of this world can have to say; the way to divine knowledge lies only through divine love; and *he that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love*, 1 John iv. 8. Here, Madam, is a short and sure way pointed out to us by the best authority, and a way that is unperplexed with intricacy and debate: It is my sincere prayer to Almighty God, that he will be our strength to keep us in it, till we meet in the glorious kingdom of *JESUS CHRIST*, to whose love I most heartily commend you, and remain, with unfeigned respect,

Your Ladyship's

Obedient humble Servant,

THOMAS HARTLEY.

OF
CHRIST'S

Glorious Reign on Earth with his Saints.

CHAP. I.

The great Importance of this Doctrine considered in several particulars, in connexion with Scripture proofs.

EVERY Doctrine proposed to our consideration on the authority of the sacred Scriptures, whether it be generally received by the Church or not, demands our attentive and serious regard to the evidence offered in its behalf, in proportion to the weight and importance of the subject: Now to the Doctrine before us belongs this claim in a degree of the highest eminence, there being nothing on this side heaven more weighty and important than the nature of that kingdom it holds forth, and man's interest in it; a kingdom of perfect righteousness, peace and love on earth, wherein God shall dwell with men, and be their unspeakable blessedness and glory. How this great and concerning truth, so desireable in itself, and full of comfort; typified by so many of the Levitical institutes*; particularly foretold and described in numberless places by the inspired prophets; made the subject of so many precious promises in the Gospel; delineated, cir-

* For a full and satisfactory explication of these in reference to the Millennial State, see in particular a treatise intitled, *A Spiritual Voice to the Christian Church, and to the Jews*, by the Rev. Mr. Clarke.

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cumstanced, and its exact duration given us in the Revelation of St. John; and received as an apostolical Doctrine by the primitive Christians, according to the testimony of several of the most ancient Fathers: I say, how this great verity of Religion came to die away in the Christian Church, and to lye buried in the grave of oblivion for about twelve centuries*, is more to be lamented than easy to account for, (though something will be offered on this head in the sequel): However we shall be justified in saying, that the grand enemy and deceiver of souls would not be wanting, according to his power, to darken or suppress any prophecies that should foretell his shame, and the downfall of his kingdom upon earth, soon to be translated in renewed glory under the absolute sovereignty of a Prince of that human race whose happiness he ever beheld and opposed with a jealous hatred †. Now as this grand crisis of the Christian Church is more particularly predicted and described in the Apocalypse, or book styled the Revelation of John the Divine, he doubtless would use all his influence and devices, to bring discredit on this part of the sacred Canon; and, whether this happened through diabolical or human malice, certain it is, that the design too well succeeded for a time, and that the Asiatic Churches were so far seduced by the spirit

* From the time of St. Austin to that of the Reformation little or no mention is made of this Doctrine by ecclesiastical writers.

† As it is highly credible that Satan, whilst an angel of light, was a fountain spirit, and hierarch in the place of this world; so we may hence the more naturally account for his particular envy and enmity to mankind, the designed successors to his kingdom; as also for that share of government and dominion he still retains in the evil principle, till the time of his binding shall come as prince of the power of the air working in the disobedient: And however lightly the power of evil spirits may be thought of in this unbelieving age, sure it is, that the Apostle accounts our danger and opposition from this quarter, as a most considerable part of our Christian warfare: "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, (only) but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places," *Eph. vi. 12.*

of

of error as to reject its divine authority: But it was not the will of God, that this inestimable treasure of prophecy and mystic knowledge should be lost to his Church, and therefore his good Providence watched over it for preservation, and has transmitted it down to us in all its venerable obscurity, as that hidden mystery that should be made manifest to his saints in due time.

As few, even among serious and well-disposed Christians, have ever applied themselves to consider the antiquity of this Doctrine, and the authority on which it rests; or have met with any encouragement from that course of reading and instruction to which they have been accustomed, to make the search (the Scriptures relating to this subject having been all explained away to another sense by the several Churches in Christendom, now for many ages) this being so, we have the less cause to wonder at the little success that has attended the labours of some excellent persons, who have endeavoured to revive this precious truth amongst us; and also the more reason to expect, that every fresh offer of it will meet with many prejudices to encounter, before it forces its way to a general reception: In our present state of weakness and dimness, prejudices will cleave to the best men, and in the well-meaning prejudices are to be allowed for with tenderness; these however, in the matter before us, may admit of great abatement, if the serious enquirer will prepare his mind for the admission of evidence, by considering the great importance of this subject under the following particulars.

And first, the belief of Paradise to be restored on earth, by a renovation of the glories of this material creation, gives more extensive honour to the adorable character of the Saviour of the world, by ascribing to his work of redemption the same scope and fullness that belonged to this system of creation, and to the loss it suffered by the fall of man, and

the curse that ensued: And accordingly, (as if on purpose to engage a more than ordinary attention to the promise of such comprehensive power and goodness) we are told in the Apocalyptic Vision, *Rev. xxi.* that He that sat upon the throne said, *Behold, I make all things new: And he said unto me, Write, for these words are true and faithful.* And indeed, though we had had nothing more than some few scattered and obscure hints in Scripture relating to this gracious purpose, it would have been natural to make the most of them, and to strengthen so comfortable a hope by every warrantable supposition: It would have been natural to suppose, that he who is there distinguished by the glorious and benevolent character of *the repairer of the breach, and the restorer of paths to dwell in,* *Isa. lviii.* would repair that breach in nature which sin and the curse have made, according to its fullest dimensions; nor leave one single path, now deformed and desolate, unrestored to paradisaical beauty.

The whole redemption of man, as to the executive part, we well know, is not yet fully accomplished, though in its process towards it: *We groan,* says the Apostle, *within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, (to wit) the redemption of our body:* Now redemption implies restoration, but of what other body than that beauty of holiness which was the covering of the divine image in unfallen Adam, in the room of which sin has cloathed us with this garment of shame, these filthy rags of mortality and corruption: And not only we, but *the whole creation,* says he, *groaneth and travaileth in pain.—It waits in earnest expectation for the manifestation of the sons of God. It shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God, Rom. viii.* The Apostle argues from parity of reason, that if created nature became subject to vanity through the sin of man, and lost the harmony, beauty,

beauty, and perfection of its powers and properties thereby, it must also have its share with him in restoration, and again be blessed together with the author of its curse; nay, he ascribes to it a kind of sensibility of suffering, till that time come, in the laborious struggle, and painful working of its several tendencies, operations and instincts, after the manner of liquors in fermentation, to defecate itself of its present heterogeneous mixtures and contracted impurities, in order to recover its primitive clarity and glory. Let not the minute philosopher with his microscope in his hand, and strutting in the pride of his fancied sufficiency, smile disdainfully at this doctrine as a figment of the imagination, seeing all nature in her present disorder of agonizing throws and convulsions, the distemperature and inclemency of climes and seasons, and all the superinduced malignity of her influences, bear witness to this truth. Let not him, I say, who yet could never pierce half through the outward rind of Nature thus depraved and spoiled, dare to pronounce from fallen reason concerning her primeval excellencies, or her capacities for redemption: if he cannot by a light so feeble discover the latent fire in a flint, till forced from its dark cell by the violence of percussion, how shall he descend into the depth beneath, develope the thick coverings which now conceal the richest treasures of nature from mortal sight, and entering into her recluses center (though in a grain of sand) survey the heavenly powers in their present inactivity and seeming death, though ready to start into obedience at the command of the Almighty, to diffuse their healing influence throughout the distempere'd constitution of our created system, to harmonize all its discordant measures, and to tincture every property of matter, as heretofore in Paradise, with celestial virtue.

But here it must be noted, that how much soever of imperfection, defect and punishment have been

introduced through the Fall into outward nature, to render this world a place of painful penance and pilgrimage, for our disobedience, and to answer many good purposes in the way of our recovery; yet it also must be confessed with grateful praise to the Father of mercies, that He hath not punished us according to the measure of our transgression, nor left himself without abundant witness, in any part of created nature, of his eternal power and Godhead; but constantly displays his wisdom and goodness, in the wonders that he doth for the children of men. Man desired to know good and evil, and he has his choice; of good enough to teach him from how much greater good he is fallen; and of evil a sufficient measure indeed to humble him for his folly and his fault, and to turn him to God to sue for pardon and deliverance: So that they are without excuse, whom neither such goodness nor such severity can lead to repentance: But here lies the greatest evil of all, that man by his false reasonings and vain amusements studies all he can to reconcile himself to his present condition of existence, without looking backward from whence he came, or forward to whither he is going, alike ignorant of the misery of his horrible fall, and of the glories of proffered redemption, and so may be compared to a creeping worm of the earth, that contents itself with knowing or desiring little more than the clod it crawls upon, a stupidity, reprov'd by the Prophet, as exceeding that of the very brute beasts: *The Ox knoweth his owner, and the Ass his master's crib, but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider,* Isa. i.

It is highly natural for man, let him say what he will, to wish for a state of perfect happiness in this world, as his ideas, wants and sensations here, are chiefly conversant with and accommodated to the blessings of God in nature, but in its present constitution such felicity is absolutely unattainable,

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by reason of the manifold disorders within and without him, which occasion disappointment, vexation and suffering at every turn and from every quarter: But if it has pleased the Almighty Father, through the mediation of his Son Christ Jesus the Lord, to promise to his redeemed ones such a state of bliss on earth, to be effected by a renovating change passing on body, soul and spirit, and also on the whole material creation; if he has graciously decreed to conduct us from Paradise lost through Paradise restored, to that inheritance which is eternal in the heavens, thus changing us from glory to glory, it is certainly of high importance to know our interest in so rich a mercy; nay, were the truth of it as doubtful as it is evident, we should be better employed in entertaining it with a pleasing hope, than in studying to form objections to it, especially as it clashes with no article of Christian faith, but invigorates the whole system of it; and is moreover so far from implying any delay or diminution of supreme happiness to the Saints*; that it allows a large increase of their joy before the fixt time appointed of the Father, for the final consummation of all things, and therefore may be considered not as heaven delayed, but as heaven begun on earth.

Secondly, This Doctrine of Paradise to be restored in the Millennial reign of Christ with his Saints on earth, carries in it no small degree of importance, as it points to the accomplishment of God's designs in creating man as his image and representative in the kingdom of temporal nature, fitly constituted and every way furnished for his compleat happiness; and to serve as a theatre of the Divine wonders, in which the heavenly physical powers should work

* It appears from many plain Scriptures, that the souls of them that die in the Lord, are not immediately translated to supreme bliss, but into the invisible state of Paradise, doubtless at times doubly blessed with occasional manifestations of the All-glorious Redeemer. See in particular, *1 Cor. ii. 34.* and *Heb. xi. 40.*

in and through external nature, and bless it in every part of its constitution, according to its original model, when *all was very good*. Here Adam in the time of his innocency stood as a great Prince and Vice-gerent of God, with a Divine intellect, and a body of unspeakable beauty; he ruled in all the powers of glorified nature, and all the creatures were subject to him: But ceasing to co-operate with God in a free surrender of his will, and a resigned dependence upon his Maker, taking the government of himself into his own hands, and forming in himself a separate will and desire to know evil as well as good, contrary to the law of his Creator, he thereby broke off his communication with the fountain of his power and bliss, fell into the evil he had chosen, and into all the impotence and misery of a creature separated from the love and government of its Creator. The grand enemy had now easy access to him, an evil spirit entered into him, and Paradise withdrew: In this withdrawing of the blessing was the curse, and in this fall of Adam from his participation of the Divine nature (for he was a Son of God) lies the necessity of our redemption and restoration by Jesus Christ, God-man.

The common prevailing ignorance of the nature of this fall, or of original sin, is the deplorable root of infidelity in Deists, and the blindness, sin and shame of professing Christendom in general: Whilst men only understand it as an overt act of transgressing a positive law in our first parents, by eating the forbidden fruit, and imputed to all their posterity with such an appendent train of dreadful consequences, no wonder that their notion of our redemption rises no higher than to that of an imputed righteousness; no wonder, that the rational Deist stumbles, as stumble he may, at such a representation of God as appears to him falling short of the goodness and justice of a man: But when on the other hand, it is considered as the loss of, or death to, a holy and heavenly

heavenly nature, which the first man could now no longer communicate to his posterity, but must be derived both to him and them from another blessed fountain, in the way of regeneration, that, *as in Adam all died, even so in Christ should all be made alive*: In this view of the subject, whatever difficulties may arise from the mysterious nature of it, in the way of our comprehension, yet hereby all apparent objection to the Divine goodness is totally removed.

How long Adam kept his first estate of innocence, is not told us: Some believe, that he stood not forty days, supposing that period of time appointed for his trial, before he should be confirmed in bliss, and that therefore the Second Adam, who was to be the repairer of his and our loss, should also pass through a temptation of forty days in our fallen nature, to gain that victory over the tempter, which the former had lost: But however that might be, it appears highly credible, that neither the malice of the grand seducer, nor the sin of our first parents, should by any means be effectual to make finally void the purpose of God in creating so glorious a system for the happy abode of a new race of beings, little inferior to the angels, and ordained to the manifestation and praise of his power and goodness. But how were the gracious designs of this beautiful Creation answered, if evil so soon found its way to mar the works of God, and to make what before was very good no better than good and evil beyond all hope of recovery: If such a last farewell to Paradise so soon took place, even whilst the first human pair had enjoyed the blessings of outward nature for so short a time, and before they had seen any hopes of issue to share and increase their happiness, then might we truly say with respect to temporal good, that the curse is stronger than the blessing, and that judgment hath triumphed over mercy.

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But though Adam, through the abuse of his liberty and disobedience, was the cause of that sad change in nature from which proceed mortality and corruption, and the many evils inseparable from our present miserable condition in this life, yet when we consider this only as a chastisement for sin, till the time for the restitution of all things shall come; a period of probation, wherein many sons and daughters shall be born unto God, and brought unto glory, through the regenerating power and quickening spirit of the Second Adam, who, when he hath accomplished the number of his elect, shall hasten the return of the blessed kingdom, disappeared, but not destroyed, now forfeited, but then restored: In this view of things, which is the scriptural one, God's purpose as to creation stands firm and unfrustrated, nay proceeding to fuller manifestations of the divine philanthropy, as the display of his wisdom, power and goodness in renewed nature will be augmented by the triumphs of his mercy in our redemption: And therefore if the sons of the morning (the heavenly hierarchs) are said to have sung together, and all the sons of God (the whole coelestial host) to have shouted for joy, on the Almighty's laying the foundations of the earth; how far more jubilant will be the joint praises of men and angels, how much louder the shoutings of *Grace, Grace!* when the redeemed from among men, as the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb, shall appear with the King of Glory to take possession of the promised inheritance; and when the holy harpers shall sing their new song before the Lamb that was slain, saying, "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: *And we shall reign on the earth.*"

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That general prevailing notion, that neither the constitution of Adam's body, nor of this world's system suffered any considerable change by the fall, is not a harmless mistake, but a dangerous error, and very hurtful in its consequences, as it leads men to think unworthily of God, whose every work is perfect, and to ascribe those defects to the Creator which took their beginning from the fault of the creature. Adam, as he stood in the image of God, was the great wonder and mystery of created nature, containing all its highest powers and perfections, both intellectual and material, in himself: With a glance he penetrated through all the specific qualities, and differences of the vegetable and animal creation, and when it is said, that he gave names to the latter, we are not to understand thereby that he only appointed certain arbitrary articulate sounds, whereby they should be nominated, but that he distinguished them by such appellatives, as in the language of nature, now lost, expressed the several properties of their natures; for Adam had doubtless an intuitive knowledge of all things within the sphere of his kingdom, and was not left to the painful researches, and slow procedure of the human understanding in its present state, for the discovery of truth, reason (however excellent in its proper use and province) being rather an argument of our fall than of our perfection, in as much as its chief employment consists in seeking after or searching out something that we have lost, or not yet found, especially, if we take in the perplexity of its operations, the uncertainty of its conclusions, and the great disagreement in the judgment of mankind on the most important subjects: Nor will it admit of question, whether his body in its kind was as perfect as his intellect before the fall; but on the contrary, highly credible it is, that it was agile, luminous and beautiful, beyond our conception, and far surpassing the sum total of perfection in all visible nature:

Nor

Nor should this be thought too much to say of it, as it is reasonable to affirm, that to him, for whose sake and happiness all other things were made, must have belonged superior excellence in every part: And indeed the belief of ætherial lucid vehicles, or a kind of heavenly coverings provided for the souls of good and pious men, is no new Doctrine in the Church; nay some of the more enlightened sages of heathen antiquity, especially among the Platonists, seem to have been no strangers to the truth of what the Apostle speaks of under the names of coelestial and spiritual bodies, and of which we have a remarkable proof in the examples of Moses and Elias appearing in glory, (glorified bodies) conversing with our Lord at his transfiguration on the mount, doubtless representing not only what should be the case of man restored, but also what was the case of man unfallen. And this is not without its weight against that vain figment; that the soul is incapable of thinking or acting without such organized bodies as we now carry about us, though in truth, these gross distempered carriages appear much more apt to clog and impede, than to facilitate its operations, according to that affirmation of the wise man: "The corruptible body presseth down the soul, and the earthly tabernacle weigheth down the mind that museth on many things." Dr. Henry More, that wonder of his age, and who saw far beyond all systems of modern Divinity, speaking of the fallen angels, delivers himself as follows: "This their rebellion had an effect upon their vehicles, and changed their pure ætherial bodies into such as were gross and faculent: They have forfeited their more resplendent mansions for this obscure and caliginous air they now wander in, and have in their polluted vehicles less of heaven than the meanest regenerate soul that dwells in these tabernacles of earth, so that what the Prophet says, is most true of them; that *their sun is gone down at mid-day.*"

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The dominion which God is said to have given to Adam over all the works of his hands, elements, and all creatures, denotes the high perfection of his original nature; and the loss of that dominion is one among a thousand other proofs of his deplorable fall, the far greater part of the creatures, nay, all more or less, being inobedient, rebellious or injurious to man at present. To suppose that, during his state of sovereignty and perfection, the fire could burn him, the water drown him, or the earth resist him, is to believe that he was subject to them, and also that they had the same noxious properties before as after the curse: As well may we suppose from a servile adherence to the letter contrary to the tenor of the Scripture, that *Eden* was like a common garden, and that Adam used a spade to dig with. This supremacy of man over the creatures, we are assured, shall be restored to him with all the other privileges and powers of his primæval dignity, and all things be again brought under his dominion, when the creatures now subjected, thro' the sin of man, to the evil of vanity and enmity, (though unwillingly, and groaning for deliverance) shall be freed from this bondage of corruption, and there shall be no more hurting or destroying in God's holy mountain (the New Jerusalem state) but all shall be safety and innocence, as it is represented by the evangelical prophet, (Is. xi. and lxii.) under the images and perhaps realtruth, of the leopard and lamb lying down together, the child leading the young lion and calf, and playing on the hole of the asp, &c. It shall only be added here under this particular, that among other examples in holy writ, we have an earnest of this subjection of the creatures to man, in Elijah's being fed by ravens at the brook *Cherith*, and in the piece of money brought to Peter by the fish, at the command of the Second Adam, ordained head and king of the human race in nature restored and glorified: And as to man's

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power

power over the elements (though suspended in this our present deplorable state of sin and misery) it is particularly exemplified in Elijah's ascent through the air; in *Shadrach, Meshack and Abednego's* escaping unhurt in the fiery furnace, and in our Lord's walking on the waters.

The nature of miracles is greatly mistaken, even by the learned in general, through a slavish attachment to their systems of false philosophy, nor do they seem to be in any disposition to lay aside their prejudices even for a moment, so they may emerge from their error; otherwise, the theosophic writings of *Jacob Behmen*, and other authors of this class, however obscure they may appear at first, would not be so loaded with the reproach of Enthusiasm, nor would they go on to speak evil of things which they at present know not, and resolve not to know. All true miracles are indeed the work of God, but this through the mediation of the heavenly physical powers residing in the Divine Body in his Saints, as truly as the raising of weight is by the instrumentality of the earthly mechanical powers: And therefore our Lord says, on healing of the *Syrophænician* woman, *I perceive that virtue is gone out of me*; and thus handkerchiefs and aprons carried from the body of Paul, nay the shadow of Peter passing by, cured diseases in many. Through the mysterious operations of this heavenly body, (once manifested at the transfiguration) our Saviour, as man, could govern and controul all the powers of nature at his pleasure, as he did on many occasions, for the powers of every created system are subject to those of a superior system, as the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than the greatest in the earthly or planetary kingdom. This divine cloathing or inward and spiritual body was not always in act, as, to the effect of an outward miraculous manifestation, even in the Saints, nay sometimes it depended upon the faith of others for the free

free exertion of its power, and therefore our Lord himself was restrained from doing many mighty works, because of unbelief; and the Disciples were not able on a certain time to cast out a devil, as Jesus told them, because of their own unbelief: But the power of working miracles, being only for the use of others, is not absolutely necessary or essential to it; it may only be an adjunct or occasional manifestation of it, and therefore the want of this power is no argument against the reality or growth of that, without which miracles are not wrought. St. Paul distinguishes this heavenly vehicle from the earthly tabernacle by the names of *God's building*, or his *house from heaven*; and those words, "Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day," are thus expounded by the learned Dr. *H. More*, viz. "Though his earthly body were in a perishing and decaying condition, yet his spiritual and heavenly got strength, and flourished every day more and more." It is no groundless belief, (however exploded by the fashionable infidelity of our days) that to the operations of such a heavenly principle in man, as the body here mentioned, are to be ascribed many extraordinary things above the human powers of nature related by authors of good credit to have been done by persons of eminent piety, both as to healing and otherways. The attestation of Fathers of the Church to the body of *Polycarp* continuing unburnt in the fire, and to St. John's coming out of the vessel of boiling oil unhurt, are well known, though not even the two last facts are allowed credible by our own modern writers of ecclesiastical history: But *Bayle*, *Le Clerc*, *Van Dale*, *Middleton*, and authors of that class, have worked up Incredulity into a system, and the age in general has adopted it, so that to reject the authority and speak contemptibly of the earliest Fathers of the Church, and to jest upon the best at-

tested miracles since the times of the apostles, is no longer deemed unbecoming the character of dignified Divines.

Upon the knowledge of this Doctrine of a heavenly body in the Saints hangs the discovery of great and important mysteries both in grace and nature, however little able we may be at present, through our ignorance of the laws of the spiritual world, to account for the limited exercise of its powers, hidden properties, occasional administrations, &c. or to answer all the objections that an inventive reason may frame against it. The difficulty that attends our conceptions of many things that are the objects of our senses, is not allowed to be any just objection to their reality; and if our ignorance stands confessed as touching the most obvious productions of nature, a like ignorance in things of a higher sphere should not be urged against the truth of them where we have any good degree of authority for its support: The latent fire in a flint, the essence of a fragrant beautiful flower concealed in a dry deformed root, and the powers of magnetism and electricity in bodies are proofs of this kind, and might be adduced to good purpose of illustration on the present subject, if it were to be professedly treated of; but perhaps enough, and more than was designed, has been said upon it in this place, and therefore I shall conclude this head with the following remark.

In the 28th ch. of *Ezekiel*, where the prophet tauntingly reproves the ostentatious wealth and grandeur of the king of *Tyrus*, (type of modern commercial Babel in particular, and of all in general, that pride themselves in the pomp and splendor of this world's riches) we have an allusive description of *Adam's* exalted state in paradise: His consummate wisdom and beauty is declared; the perfections of his body represented by the covering of *cherubic* glory adorned with gems; the harmonious working and play of his inward powers compared to the melody

melody of musical instruments; and the glories of Paradise imaged to us under the beauty and lustre of precious stones: *Thou sealest up the sun, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty: Thou hast been in Eden, the garden of God: every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx and the jasper, and sapphire, the emerald and the carbuncle, and gold: The workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created: Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth, and I have set thee so: Thou wast upon the holy mountain of God: Thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire (radiant lustre.)* His fall and degradation are then declared. *Thou hast sinned; therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God; (degrade thee from thy spiritual dignity and exalted state) and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, (will deprive thee of thy glorious angelical body) &c.* He that does not see a mystical allusion to *Adam* in paradise under the literal expression in this and many other parts of this prophet's writings, loses much of the spirit of them, and is a greater stranger to their genuine mystical character than even the incredulous Jews, who at least owned it, though with derision, saying, *Ah! Lord God, doth he not speak parables?* The scriptures, like the roll given to *Ezekiel*, are a book written within and without, in which the historical fact is often related only for the sake of the mystical meaning, as the spirit of the Lord shall give it, not to the curious and fanciful, but to the humble, resigned and devout mind, for to the latter only the Lord revealeth his secrets. Letter and spirit, like man and wife, should go hand in hand together, but false learning and false criticism have passed a divorce betwixt them; and by a sad perversion of the Scriptures, have figured away the letter; where the literal acceptation should be retained; and on the

other hand, used the letter as a sword, to take away the life of the text, where the true sense is altogether spiritual or mystical.

In the true belief of the primæval glories of man's estate in innocence, to be restored by the blessed Redeemer in renewed nature, that difficult question *Πότεν το κακόν*, which has puzzled the acutest philosophers in every age, receives its solution; since by this doctrine the origin of natural evil is accounted for, the uses of its continuance for many moral purposes explained, and a final period to its existence in this world assigned; and so the ax laid to the root of sceptical reasoning in this matter: And indeed among believers, who acknowledge not this particular, important truth, they find themselves obliged to quit the side of reason for that of a resigned faith, in order to reconcile themselves to this dark ænigma of God's providence. Well then might the great Roman naturalist*, upon considering how all things seem made for the sake of man, and yet how man is subject to greater weakness and misery than most other creatures, make it a doubt, *An natura parens melior homini, an tristior noverca fuerit*: Whether nature should be considered as a kind indulgent parent to the human race, or not rather as a cruel step-mother. Upon the manner of Pliny's handling this subject, the learned Doctor Jackson † raises the following remark: "Here I can rather wish than pray, that this man had lived in this age, to encounter those Semi-christians (Pelagians and Socinians) which contend for the sovereignty of *recta ratio* (right reason as they call it), as if it were the only guide or rule of Christian faith." And indeed would these Semi-christians, as the Dr. calls them, take an impartial view of the human nature, from its first to its last

* See Pliny's Proœmium to the 7th Book of his Nat. Hist.

† Vol. iii. p. 2.

stage,

stage, we cannot see how they can be satisfied with their own reasonings upon the subject, or believe that man in his present condition was the creature which God made upright, and modelled after his own image: Sure it is, that a wretched helpless infant, without covering or defence against the meanest reptile, standing in need of being cleansed, swaddled and fed by another, promises ill for such a representative: The weakness and follies of childhood advance not the similitude, nor do the properties and pursuits of youth help on the matter: And as to all man's courses, works and wisdom in his most perfect state, that have respect only to time, they are accounted by *Solomon** no better than

* *Solomon*, in his Proverbs and elsewhere, speaks of a twofold wisdom of very different sources and characters, which are not sufficiently distinguished by the generality of readers: By the one he means no more than natural knowledge, or the improvements of reason for the discovery of things on earth; which, though valuable in its kind, yet he calleth a sore travail, and saith of it: *In much wisdom is much grief, and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow*, (*Eccles. i.*) denoting hereby the hard labour of attaining to it, as also the disappointments that arise from the shortness and defects of it. To the other (Divine wisdom) he assigns a heavenly original, and speaks of her in the character of a Divine person, and the companion of God; and *Jab* calls true understanding, or the understanding of spiritual truth, *The inspiration of the Almighty*, (*ch. xxxii. 8.*) *Solomon* gives her the preference among all things most desirable, and represents her as uttering these words: *Who so findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord*, (*Prov. viii.*) Which is not the case as to the other wisdom, which oftentimes men of little or no religion possess in great abundance: accordingly he connects true wisdom with the fear of the Lord, and excludes the wicked from all share in her treasures, as being laid up only for the righteous; agreeing to which Doctrine are those words in the book of Wisdom, spoken of Divine Wisdom: "She is the breath of the power of God, and a pure influence flowing from the glory of the Almighty; therefore can no desired thing fall into her. In all ages entering into holy souls, she maketh them friends of God and prophets" (*Wisd. vii.*): This note shall conclude with that apposite remark of the excellent Mr. *John Smith*, in his *Select Discourses*, p. 2. "They are not always best skilled in divinity that are most studied in those pandects which it is sometimes digested into; or that have erected the greatest monopolies of art and science: He that is most practical in Divine things, hath the purest and sincerest knowledge of them, and not he that is most dogmatical. Divinity is a true efflux from the eternal light, which, like the sun beams, does not only enlighten, but heat

than vanity and vexation of spirit; thus far then there can be no similitude or image of God; and we need not add any thing on the decay and infirmities of his nature in old age which finish his period with disgrace: So that as neither mankind, nor this created world, through the evil introduced into both by the fall, have as yet answered their end of bringing glory to God, according to that measure of obedience, happiness and perfection whereunto they were appointed in a state of temporal existence, there must come a time for the accomplishment of this design, (that God's purpose may not be frustrated) when man shall be restored to the primitive excellencies of his nature, exercise dominion over the creatures, and be blessed in body, soul and spirit; and when this once perfect system shall again exhibit a glorious display of the divine wonders for the praise of the great Creator and the happiness of his Saints, prophetically declared (*Rev. xi.*) by the sounding of the seventh Angel, as affording matter of joy to all the heavenly host, who shall then proclaim with triumphant shouts of thanksgiving and praise: "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ."

Thirdly, this doctrine of *Christ's* glorious reign with his Saints on earth, and so bringing the government of it under the administration of a divine theocracy, may in a qualified sense be considered as a temporary reparation of the injuries, and cruel treatment which his afflicted servants have suffered from their wicked oppressors and persecutors, and may help to reconcile them the better to those sharp trials in their Christian warfare which they here

heat and enliven; and therefore our Saviour hath in his Beatitudes connected purity of heart with the beatific vision." As I may have farther occasion to quote this author as one of the most excellent sons of our church, for piety and sound learning, I refer for his character to his funeral sermon preached by *Bishop Patrick*.

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endure through the injustice and malice of men, and encourage them to imitate the faith and patience of the Saints under the like or greater sufferings, knowing that this their short affliction in the cause of God and his Christ; shall be crowned with an eternal weight of glory begun even in time: Not that we are to infer from hence in favour of the doctrine of supposed merits, for man considered as a sinner has nothing to plead before God but guilty; is at best but an unprofitable servant; and in his most afflicted state it is required of him, that he justify God, and confess that his punishment is less than his iniquities have deserved: And yet to man as redeemed, pardoned and restored to the Divine favour, are many precious promises given, both as to things spiritual and temporal, which Almighty God has condescended to bind himself to the performance of as much as if man had a natural claim to them, and to style his own free gift an obligation of justice: Thus he is said, upon our repentance and confession of sin, to be faithful and just, to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, that is, faithful to his promise by a just performance of it. And as to the injuries that are done to his servants, he is so far from approving of them that he expressly forbids them: "Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm," and hath moreover declared, that he will avenge the cause of his elect, and the blood of his Saints, for that he who toucheth them toucheth the apple of his eye. (Zech. ii. 8.) Though God is no man's debtor any further than he calls and condescends to make himself so, yet every man is a debtor to his brother in all the relative duties of justice and kindness, more especially to the righteous, as he is styled more excellent than his neighbour, and therefore entitled to a double portion of love and honour: But has not the contrary of this been the case with them from righteous Abel down to the present time;

time; and as it was heretofore that *he who was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the spirit, so it is now*, (Gal. iv. 29.) inasmuch that the prosperity and great power of the ungodly, and the sufferings of the righteous even for righteousness sake, have been the great stumbling block and rock of offence to the good in all ages, to which purpose are so many expostulations in Scripture on this subject, (Jer. xii. 1. Job xxi. 7.) till the authors of these complaints were silenced (Ps. lxxiii.) by views of the Messiah's glorious kingdom on earth, when oppression should cease, the righteous flourish, and peace should abound so long as the moon endureth; a plain prophecy of which happy day, is given us in the 72d Psalm, which nothing but violence and false criticism can distort to any other meaning.

The external glorious state of the Church described in the 1xth ch. of Isaiah, is mistakenly applied by most of our expositors to the first advent of the Messiah, though it so plainly points to his second coming to reign over his blessed converts, both Jewish and Gentile scattered over the face of the whole earth, when all kings shall fall down before him, and all nations shall do him service; and therefore to apply this description of his happy blessed reign to his suffering, persecuted state, or to any period of the Church since, is to treat the language of Scripture with a kind of mockery, as we know from the unquestionable testimony of all Ecclesiastical History, that truth and the true spiritual worship have hitherto been almost ever on the persecuted side, and that tribulation and the disgrace of the cross, as foretold by our Lord, have been the portion of his closest followers; how then have *the days of their mourning been ended* (ver. 20.) It is said in that chapter (ver. 5.) that *The abundance of the sea should be converted unto Christ, and the forces of the Gentiles should come unto him*, doubtless to denote the universal extent of his Church, and the triumphs

triumphs of his Truth; but which at present has the greater share in the Gentile world, *Christ* or *Mahomet*? and as to professing Christendom, which has had the longest, and which has now the largest sway, Popery or Protestantism? But to what has this small part of the Gentile world been converted? to greater righteousness and truth in all good living? It is to be feared, that some among the unconverted heathen nations will in this respect shame us upon the comparison: How then is that prediction as yet fulfilled amongst us: *Thy people shall be all righteous*, (v. 21.) Or have they been converted to higher degrees of brotherly love and a more pacific disposition; for it is said, (ver 18.) *Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting or destruction within thy borders*: But how will this agree with the hatred, persecutions and bloody wars so notorious amongst us? And how shall an ambitious, worldly-minded and contentious Christendom style itself, *The branch of the Lord's planting, the work of his hands, that he may be glorified?* (ver. 21.) May it not then be asked, If this is that glorious kingdom that should come, or if we may not look for another? Three things are here to be noted; first, that the misapplying and wresting plain abounding prophecies relating to Christ's future kingdom, to a state whereunto they cannot belong, is both a stumbling block to Christians, and also affords matter for derision to the unbelieving Jew against our holy religion. Secondly, that prevailing fondness for visibility and matters of outward observation in the Church, is the cause why most overlook the choicest of her members, such as worship the Father in spirit and in truth, men and women mortified to the world, scattered through all the outward churches, but either little known or much despised, and in their present state signified by the figure of the woman hid in the wilderness: And thirdly, this error is helped on by that dangerous mistake of assigning

assigning the indulgences and donations of the worldly powers for marks of the Church's true glory and welfare, though these have been the accidental cause of her disgrace and degeneracy, according to the following remark of the acute Dr. More*. "I must confess, says he, that the Divine Life as communicable to the Church, has been very much under hatches, since Christianity and political interest went hand in hand; and that when honours and outward advantages were added to the Church, the Gospel net drew up more mud and dirt than good fishes."

In the prophecy of the fore-mentioned chapter, God Almighty is represented as crowning the fidelity of his servants and their patience in tribulation, as with other temporal blessings, so also by reducing their enemies to a state of homage and subjection under them, in reparation for their injuries and insulted honour: Thus speaking of his Church, he says, "The sons 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." But if the Lord thus tenderly resents the injured honour of his saints, how full a reparation must be made to the indignities and sufferings of the man, *Christ Jesus*? Nor is it enough to say, that this is already done in heaven, for that is not the place of justice, but bodily wrongs of a temporal kind must have a reparation suited to their nature, that every measure of justice may be adequate and full, and God display his righteousness in every kingdom of his creation, for he is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works;

* Myft. of Godlinefs, p. 116.

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but how could this hold true of his ways and works in this temporal world, were justice not to take place herein? and therefore even unprejudiced reason must subscribe to this Doctrine of fullness of reparation and satisfaction to be made to the human nature of Christ in this world, and that his tears must needs be wiped away here, his poverty be made rich, his humility exalted; that where he unjustly suffered he must reign; and that where he was crucified, there he must needs be glorified, according to that prediction 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 the name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.* Nor was this Sovereignty to be established over the Jews only, but likewise over the Gentiles: *For is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles?* And therefore, “He should have the Heathen for his inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for his possession.” *Isaiah*, who is so full of Christ’s glorious reign on earth, (though this part of his prophecy is now so generally explained away into metaphor) delivers the will of God concerning the *Messiah* thus: *It is a light thing that thou shouldst be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayst be my salvation unto the end of the earth.* And the prophet tells us in the next verse, that this promise was given to him *whom man despitheth, whom the nation (of the Jews) abhorreth, to a servant of rulers:* But that in recompense for this his abject suffering state at his first appearing, he should receive double of honour at his second glorious Advent; for that then *Kings should see him and rise up, and princes should worship before him:* And that this

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would come to pass when he should be *given for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth.*— Let any one read this chapter with due attention, and say if the prophecy therein relating to the two-fold state of Christ on earth, and to the gathering of the Jews and Gentiles to the end of the earth, under the blessed reign of the Redeemer, has ever yet been fulfilled. Blessed Jesus! How long shall the precious promises of thy glorious reign continue as a book sealed or explained away? Among many reasons which evince, that this royal sovereignty in the person of Christ is not to be understood of his super-eminent dignity in the highest heavens, after the final resurrection, it is plain also from hence; that his mediatorial kingdom will then expire, for *having reigned till he hath put all enemies under his feet, then cometh the end, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father, that God may be all in all.* (1 Cor. xv.) The same prophet in another place, (Is. xi. 10.) speaking of the Messiah's reign, says, *In that day there shall be a Root of Jesse which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek, and his rest shall be glorious.* Which last words plainly point at his triumphant peaceful reign on earth, in the grand Sabbath of rest in the seventh millenary of the world, when hostility and discord should totally cease both in the natural and moral world, and all should harmonize in peace and unity: And yet a celebrated critic, whose name I spare on this occasion, and who was afterwards a convert to the belief of this doctrine, took learned pains in Greek and Hebrew to justify the following interpretation of those words, *his rest shall be glorious, viz.* that he should have a noble dormitory or sepulchre, which should afterwards be erected into a chapel for Divine worship. It is really not a little surprizing to see how some among the learned study to make appear how silly they can be in different languages, rather than

than admit a plain sense of Scripture which suits not with their hypothesis: They that can rest satisfied with such an absurd sense of this passage would, I believe, think it no very animating motive to the enduring of sorrows, disgrace and death, to be told; that in reward of their services and sufferings, they should at last have the honour of a handsome burying place—

Those words of our Lord, that his “kingdom is not of this world,” are urged against this doctrine in great ignorance of their true meaning; for the world of new heavens and new earth, which will then be the seat of his dominion, will be paradisaical, and not according to the condition and spoiled constitution of the present: Besides, it will be of a different, nay contrary nature, in that the administration of his government will have nothing akin to the corrupt maxims and deceitful politicks of the kingdoms that now are, but be a perfect system of goodness, righteousness and truth.—Glory shall be given to God in the highest, peace shall be established in the earth, good-will towards men in every class of inhabitants shall abound, and every thing that hath breath shall praise the Lord. Nor is there any more force in that other objection, that this doctrine supposes our Saviour to descend from a higher to an inferior state of happiness: This is to measure heavenly things by our childish ideas, borrowed from such as are material and local. In the presence of God is fullness of joy, and according to the degree and manifestation of it, is the degree of bliss; so that whether St. Paul was in the body or out of it, when he was spiritually in the third heaven, this made no difference with respect to the revelation, the words *caught up*, being accommodated to speaking after the manner of men. Our Lord was even visible in glory on Mount *Tabor*, and so far in an impassible state, and yet the same Divine nature when it ceased to be in act and operation, but was

unmanifested to his earthly man, left him subject to the common weaknesses of humanity, and to agonizing sufferings in the garden and on the cross, even to the extorting that heavy complaint, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"— But supposing, though not allowing, any diminution of glory and bliss arising from this our Lord's condescension in the case before us; has he not already done more for us in taking upon him the infirmities and miseries of our fallen nature, to suffer for our sakes? and if the condescension here spoken of may have its uses in advancing the glory of God, and our perfection still farther, wherefore should we seek for an objection to such goodness. There can be no manifestations of God to his creatures but in proportion to their capacities; and if the same Saviour who revealed himself to us in a mortal body to save us from our sin, shall again manifest himself in a way suited to the exalted capacities of our regenerate nature, to govern his redeemed sons and daughters, that he may lead them from glory to glory, how amiably do these different dispensations of grace and love, diversify the Divine procedure through the whole œconomy of man's salvation, and minister occasions for still farther gratitude and praise!

A MEDITATION

On the foregoing Subject.

COME now, O my soul, and all ye that have hitherto loitered too long by the way, let us make no longer tarrying in the tents of the ungodly, lest we also be consumed in their plagues, but leave the vain things of this world to its vain admirers, and hasten to join the blessed company before us; those faithful stewards of the grace of God, who having
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their loins girded about, are as men waiting for their Lord, and as those wise virgins who have trimmed their lamps and made themselves ready for the bridegroom's coming. We cannot plead want of calls and warnings for *Israel* to come out of *Ægypt*, and the house of *Jacob* from among the strange children, for the heavens are black with clouds fore-shewing a mighty tempest shortly to be poured out. There has been a shaking in the earth and in the sea, and in the foundations of the kingdoms of this world, and all things seem to be moved as at the presence of the Lord coming to enter into judgment with the children of men, for unemployed talents and despised mercies. Let us then give diligent heed to fill up what is behind of our measure, that being rooted and grounded in the love of God, and in the fellowship with the holy Jesus, we may be meet partakers of an inheritance in that kingdom where the will of God shall be done on earth as it is in heaven; where Christ, now persecuted in his members, shall be glorified in his Saints, and his Saints in him, and the Father shall be worshipped throughout the Church triumphant, in Spirit and in truth.

FOURTHLY, This doctrine has in it the nature of a proper medium to reconcile the more spiritual, and also the literal Christian in an amicable agreement of belief, inasmuch as the former will herein find sufficient scope for the most refined spirituality, since none but the regenerate and spiritual will be fit subjects of this kingdom: The ministration of the Spirit in his several gifts and graces, will constitute the perfection of this New Jerusalem state, and a principle of Divine love issuing from the heart of Christians as its foundation, and circulating through all the members of his mystical body, will unite them to him and one another in a bond of such pure and delectable fellowship, as far surpasses the conception

tion of every one that has not experienced some fore-taste of this blessed communion of saints.— And secondly, as to the literal Christian, who borders upon the Jewish dispensation, and is much external in his apprehensions, he may here innocently entertain his imagination with the material glories and pure delights of an earthly Paradise, till by this gradation he ascends to more sublime contemplations: Nay such among the spiritual as are subject to great distractions through too lively and active an imagination, for these also have their upper and their nether springs, may find no small relief by turning their mental powers from things disorderly and afflictive in the present course of nature, to the future state of the blessed kingdom here spoken of, where their most refined joys will no more suffer interruption either from defects in the natural or moral world, but all things will minister to that sweet peace which renders the soul both receptive and retentive of Divine impressions. The moderate Christian and well-disposed Jew, may here also join hands in some good fellowship of assent, whilst both look forward for a blessing to the same triumphant Saviour, who as the corner stone betwixt two walls of different aspects, gives contact, strength and union to both: Nor is there wanting ground of hope, that when this doctrine shall, by the force of its weight and evidence, recover its lost credit in the Church, it may be a good means among others to remove those scales of ignorance from the eyes of the blinded Jews which now hinder them from owning their and our Messiah as already come, according to the predictions and testimony of Moses and the Prophets, the Apostles and Evangelists, that so they may see and confess, that that same Jesus whom their Fathers crucified, was appointed of God to be King over Israel, and that through sufferings he should enter into his glory: But as the case now stands betwixt Jew and Christian

tian in unbelief on both sides, the former denying the suffering part of his character at his first advent, and the latter that of his visible glorious reign on earth at his second; the difference between them is a great gulph hindering all communication between the opposite parties; nor shall we ever be able to convince them of their lamentable infidelity on the one hand, whilst they see our determined opposition to such plain Scriptures on the other: We can only expect to succeed in their conversion, with the true key of knowledge in our hands, opening and explaining the properties relating to the blessed kingdom here spoken of, in the proper and substantial sense of a real and visible kingdom upon earth: So may we hope to persuade them, that the adorable Messiah should have a militant as well as triumphant Church on earth, and a spiritual kingdom in both, on this side of the world of spirits in the eternal heavens, according to that rule of interpretation laid down by that excellent scholar and good man, Mr. *J. Smith** before-mentioned, viz. That "all prophecy must relate to some state in this world; as it can give no description nor convey any idea of the *Mundus Animarum*, or spiritual world; and that therefore by this rule we must understand what is said in Scripture, of a new heaven and new earth, the *New Jerusalem*, &c. The state of the blessed in heaven being *major mente humanâ*; and much more is it *major phantasiâ*, above the reach of our conceptions, much more of the imagination."

Those Christian writers do injustice to the Jews who charge them all indiscriminately with a disbelief of a future state, and with looking only for a Messiah of this world's grandeur, to fight their battles, and to make them victorious with carnal weapons; for tho' there have always been carnal Jews

* Select Discourses, page 272, 2d Edit.

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and carnal Christians, who looked no farther than to the things of this wretched life, yet we are not to take our measure of the faith of a people from the corrupt part of them, though that be the greater, at least, not without distinguishing between the sound and unsound professors: The true Jew ever did and does believe in a resurrection of the just, to a blessed and holy life, under the government of a spiritual Saviour as well as temporal Prince; though of a second universal resurrection, and a state of bliss to follow in the highest heavens, few, and perhaps none but the inspired amongst them, had any notion, this doctrine being reserved as well as many other mysteries, to be brought to light by the Gospel. As to their belief in a resurrection we have abundant testimony in the Scriptures: Martha, the sister of Lazarus, confesses it; the Sadduces were branded for their infidelity in denying it; and the hymn of *Zechary*, stiled *Benedictus*, in our Common Prayer Book, is prophetic of the accomplishment of God's promise and oath to the Fathers in the person of Christ, at his second coming. Our Saviour in a conference with the Sadduces, refers them to the Scriptures for the truth of a resurrection from the dead, and in particular to that passage, where God saith unto *Moses*; "I am the God of *Abraham*, the God of *Isaac*, and the God of *Jacob*:" Now the force of the proof lies in that inference drawn by our Lord, "He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living." (Mark xii.) It is plain that the argument appeared conclusive at the time, for we read, that *one of the Scribes perceiving, that he had answered them well, &c.* And yet where the strength of it lies, is not so obvious to every reader. The learned Mede has helped us to a just and satisfying explanation of this text, by taking in for a supply what these words had a special reference to, *viz.* God's covenant with the Patriarchs, in respect of which he calls himself *their God*: Now this covenant

venant was to give unto *them* the land wherein they were strangers; not to their *seed* only, but to *themselves**. "I have established my covenant with them (*Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*) to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers." (Exod. vi. 4.) Now, says Mr. *Mede*, "If God makes good to *Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*, this his covenant, whereby he undertook to be their God, then must they needs one day live again, to inherit the promised land, which hitherto they have not done; for the God that thus covenanted with them, covenanted to make his promise good to them, not dead, but living." And doubtless to this promise of the covenant did allude that prohibition given to the Jews, (Lev. xxv.) against totally alienating their possessions in the land of *Canaan*, but reserving to themselves the redemption of them at the following Jubilee: "The land shall not be sold for ever, for the land is mine, for ye are strangers and sojourners with me: And in all the land of your possessions, ye shall grant a redemption for the land." And to this I suppose St. Paul alludes, (Eph. i. 14.) where he tells the Ephesians, that upon their believing in Christ, they *were sealed with the holy spirit of promise, which, says he, is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, i. e. the restoration of all things in the glorious kingdom of Christ, purchased by his sufferings and death.* If the prohibition to the Jews before-mentioned, not totally to alienate their lands, had not respect to that blessed inheritance, of which Canaan was but a type, we should be at a loss to find out any good meaning in the reason assigned for it, *viz. because ye are strangers and sojourners with me*, which would rather be a reason for indifference about their title to lands of so short and un-

* For this promise made to the Patriarchs, both separately and jointly, see the following chapters, Gen. xiii. xv. xvii. xxvi. xxxv. Ex. vi. Deut. i. xi. xxx.

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certain a tenure ; but when we consider, that this law had its typical allusion also, even to their unalienable inheritance in paradisaical Canaan, it served as an anchor of hope to keep them stedfast in their faith and trust in God, under all the changes and chances of their miserable pilgrimage upon this earth, in which the Jews have now been without any inheritance in that land for so many hundred years.

It appears then, according to the promise and covenanting oath of God, that the Jewish fathers and their true spiritual seed shall inherit a *Canaan*, not that earthly country (the figure of the promise) which their descendents possessed without any great advantage of temporal blessings over their neighbours, and which now makes but an inconsiderable part of the Turkish dominions ; for this appears no such great matter for God to give his favourite servants with such distinction and solemnity of covenant ; nor yet the empyreal eternal heavens, which can have no type on earth, and of which state the Jews seem to have no idea ; but that part of paradise or nature restored, which shall correspond to antient *Canaan*, and is in a subordinate sense called the kingdom of heaven*, as the heavenly powers both spiritual and material will manifest themselves, and be the working principles in and through that kingdom for a double blessing to the children of promise. In this new heaven and new earth, after the first heaven and first earth are passed away, (Rev. xxi.) will gloriously appear the New Jerusalem come down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband, wherein God will tabernacle with men, and drink the new wine of the kingdom with his disciples. In this delectable country, which the ancient worthies so much sought after and desired, (Heb. xi.) many

* *Εμπυραϊος* in Scripture meaning as well what is from as what is in heaven.

pious heathens, who in the darkness of their dispensation, felt after God and found him, (Acts xvii.) shall meet from the East and from the West, from the North and from the South, and sit down with *Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*, in the kingdom, (Luke xiii.) and eat of the tree of life which groweth in the midst of the city of God, and on either side of the river: (Rev. xxii.) And here in this regeneration of nature, the holy Twelve who followed their Lord in such eminence of character, shall sit on twelve thrones judging under him the twelve tribes of Israel. (Matt. xix.) These and numberless other glorious things in holy writ spoken of the City of God, cannot with propriety admit of any other interpretation than in reference to a middle state betwixt the present earthly and the final heavenly.

That the wicked, and all that have oppressed and persecuted the godly in this life, shall, in one way or other, be witnesses to their glory in the kingdom here spoken of, was believed by the Jews, and is a doctrine rendered credible by the parable of *Dives and Lazarus*. In the third chapter of the book of *Wisdom*, where mention is made of the righteous that suffered affliction in this life, and whose departure is taken for misery by the unwise, it is said of them, that "at the time of their visitation (resurrection) they shall shine, and run to and fro like sparks among the stubble; they shall judge the nations, and have dominion over the people:" And in chap. v. "The righteous man shall stand in great boldness before the face of such as have afflicted him, and made no account of his labours: When they see it they shall be troubled with terrible fear, and be amazed at the strangeness of his salvation: And they, repenting and groaning for anguish of spirit, shall say within themselves: This was he whom we had sometimes in derision, and a proverb of reproach: We fools, accounted his life madness, and his end to be without honour: How is he numbered with the children
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of God, and his lot is among the Saints." If it be asked here, how the wicked, living or dead, can find a place in Paradise, it might be sufficient to reply with another question: How Satan could find a place in Eden where he tempted Eve; or how two persons may be, the one happy, and the other miserable, in the same external circumstances. An evil spirit, bodied or un-embodied, standing in the forms of its anguishing nature, and shut up in the centre of its own dark fire, would be, to every purpose of suffering, in hell, though placed before the throne of God, nay most miserable there, as the surrounding Divine glories, would be most contrary and hostile to the condition of its existence. All nature, we know, in its gayest scenes has no charms, nay is overspread with gloom, and has a ghastly appearance to the guilty soul under the horrible sense of its condition; nor would even Paradise be manifested in any way of comfort to such a one though placed among the children of the kingdom, and under the shadow of the tree of life; for the gulph that separates them is not distance of place, but difference of principle or nature; the condition of soul in this respect is all in all. Matter is hence supplied for a satisfying answer to that question which naturally at times arises in the mind, viz. Whether departed happy souls shall know one another in a future state; for if it be a part of the punishment of the wicked, to behold the glories of the righteous whom they have despised and persecuted here; what doubt can be made, whether the Saints in their several classes and orders will hold sweet society together, and have a pleasing remembrance of their past joint labours, faith and patience; as such a recollection must be an addition to their fellowship in bliss, and therefore not to be supposed wanting in the glorious company of the Apostles, the godly fellowship of the Prophets, the noble army of Martyrs, nor to the universal Church triumphant. The state of supreme

preme bliss in the third Heaven, after the final resurrection, may indeed be attended with so great a change of our nature, a removal so far distant from the present circumstances of it, as to obliterate all ideas of earthly things, and fully to employ every faculty of the Soul in the fruition of the divine beatitudes: But nothing can be pronounced of that superlatively happy state, where God hath prepared such great and glorious things for them that love him, as pass man's understanding, and are not to be uttered by the tongue of an Angel.

Fifthly, This doctrine of a middle state of bliss under the government of Christ, at his second Advent, to reign with his Saints on earth, removes that stumbling block of final reprobation, by giving all due distinction of favour to the election of grace, and at the same time vindicates the goodness of God from that injurious imputation of unmercifulness with which rigid Predestinarians reproach the most amiable of his attributes, and that under a false notion of doing honour to his sovereignty, as if his sovereignty were not more glorified by the largest displays of his goodness, than by cutting it short with an arbitrary sentence of reprobation passed on the greater part of the human race; a doctrine leading to presumption, despair or atheism; a doctrine which reflects infamy and odium on the Divine theocracy, and deforms the beautiful face of religion with ugliness and monstrosity; nay, a doctrine impossible to be revealed or capable of being rendered credible by ten thousand miracles, for as much as no possible evidence can overthrow the certainty of this indubitable proposition, That God is love; and as he is essentially and perfectly so, the extent of his goodness must be commensurate with his works; nay, his goodness extends farther than creation, for it shall be made manifest also in redemption: The present evil of pain and suffering is no argument against the truth of this, seeing it is not

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to be considered as the punishment, but also as the means leading to the cure of moral evil, and God's justice as the minister of his mercy; and how far the most miserable of created beings may in time become fit objects for the exercise of this, we know not; it becomes us best to believe that nothing but some impossibility in their nature for receiving grace, can place them beyond the possibility of their recovery.

As the word *elect*, or chosen, signifies in Scripture an eminent distinction of grace in favour of some, so also has it a spiritual reference to the called, chosen and faithful, (Rev. xvii. 14.) as glorified in the blessed kingdom before us, and in this latter sense is made use of three several times in the lxxvth chap. of Isaiah, where the Prophet foretells the *New Jerusalem* state, the new heavens, and the new earth, as the portion of the Lord's blessed servants both from among Jews and Gentiles, making one Church, under the name of his holy mountain, signifying thereby both its stability and exaltation; and these he contrasts with the nominal Jew and Christian, *The reprobate silver*, (Jer. vi. 30.) who shall be rejected from having any inheritance with them "Behold, my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry; my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty; my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed: Mine elect shall inherit my mountain. Mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands, &c." Here is an election of the called and faithful to honour and bliss above their brethren; and he that gained ten pounds in his Master's service, is set over ten cities: But what saith the Lord to the ungodly, (ver. 12.) "Because when I called, ye did not answer; when I spake, ye did not hear, but did evil before mine eyes, therefore, &c." And what faithfulness or unfaithfulness to the grace given makes the difference now, (though all the power be from grace) betwixt the goodness and severity of God, *towards thee goodness, if thou continue in his goodness,*

ness, otherwise, thou also shalt be cut off. (Rom. xi. 22.) All absolute personal reprobation is here disallowed, and the cause assigned why some do enter, and others enter not into the joy of their Lord: to man's co-operation with grace, by grace (for though help be given there is no compulsion) are the promises made in general, and all have sufficient power given them, (though all have not faith, through not stirring up the gift of God that is in them) but to the election of grace, (the higher vouchsafements of it) is predestinated the inheritance in the blessed kingdom of Christians on earth, the lot of the first-born from the dead, at the first resurrection, who are typified by the particular privileges of the first-born among the Hebrews before the giving of the law, among which were the priesthood in their respective families, the pre-eminence over their brethren, and a double portion in the inheritance of their fathers goods: Now to these answer the distinguished privileges of the holy first-born from the dead, and heirs of the double portion, even of heavenly and earthly good things in the millennial kingdom: And under Christ, the first, and head of the first-born among many brethren, they have in their several degrees of glory, the pre-eminence over their brethren who obtain not the same goodly heritage, for they are a chosen generation, and elected to higher honour; and they are also dignified with a royal priesthood, for "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." (Rev. xx. 6.)

Though this election of Grace (so called by way of eminence and preference according to the will of God) be predestinated, fore-appointed, to reign with Christ on earth, yet not so absolutely and indefectibly as that man cannot forfeit it, for both grace and glory must stand in consistence with human

liberty; and therefore the Apostle, where he speaks of the promised rest, speaks also of the danger of losing it, (Heb. iv.) with an exhortation to fear; and he puts a double *If* by way of emphatical caution upon the entrance into the sabbath of rest, in order to shew the conditionality of the promise; and refers to the case of the antient Jews, who through unbelief entered not into the typical *Canaan*, that figure of the true rest which remained to, or for, the children of God in the millennial kingdom, which Joshua (translated *Jesus* in our bibles) could not give them; for then, says he, David would not afterwards have spoken of another day (Sabbath of rest.) And as if on purpose to shew us in the type, how the children of the promise might come short of the blessing typified, we read, (Num. xiii.) that when the faint-hearted Israelites were ready to turn back upon the discouraging report of the spies, *Joshua* and *Caleb* encouraged them in the following words, "The land which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land: If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land and give it us: Only rebel not against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land." In which words the condition of the promise to his own elect people (according to the type) is plainly set forth.

Esau's character was doubly typical. In his folly he stood in the image of the earthly sensual man, but as to his primogeniture he represented the first-born from the dead, according to the kingdom of grace, whose birth-right is paradisaical glory in renewed nature: Now profane *Esau* sold his birth-right for a little contemptible gratification of animal nature, so may these, through like profaneness, forfeit their inheritance in the riches of Christ's kingdom, by giving the preference to the vanities of this short life, as *Judas* sold his throne among the twelve in his master's kingdom, for a trifling sum of money; an important caution this to him that thinketh

eth he standeth sure upon his election, to take heed lest he fall. The Apostle introduces this sad case of Esau in Heb. xii. and comforts his Jewish converts with the consideration of their still standing in the lot of their appointment to place and fellowship in the general assembly and Church of the first-born written in heaven; and yet he ushers in this subject (ver. 15.) with a caution to look diligently lest any of them should fail of the grace (here meant favor) of God; and then proposes the case of Esau. The 17th ver. is of awful consideration, "Ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears." This text has been drawn into a dreadful conclusion against themselves, by many godly penitents, as though it declared the irremissibleness of great sins, even upon the most anguishing repentance of a contrite heart: Nor have some such been able to receive comfort in their distress from a hundred plain testimonies of Scripture to the remission of all sin upon true repentance and faith in the blood of Christ. But as they who are fearful and of a tender conscience (as is often the case with the best) are more apt to be cast down by a seeming severity, than to apply to the comfort of their minds the promises that belong to them, it may administer some relief to such, to observe, that these words have no reference to the final condition of Esau, but only to the privileges of birth-right which he had made over to Jacob, and the grant could not be revoked after its confirmation by Isaac; and therefore to have the pre-eminence, or to be lord over his brethren, which by right of nature belonged to Esau, was now become the privilege, and right of Jacob: In other respects, he was capable of a blessing, and had it as well as his younger brother, even of the dew of heaven and the fatness of the earth. This case then, transferred to its anti-type in the kingdom of Grace,

will stand thus: The elect or privileged with higher grace and favour, and as such appointed to be the first-born from the dead, and consequently to have the pre-eminence both in order of time and dignity over their brethren, even a portion in the Kingdom of Christ in glorified nature; if they shall forfeit their title to this promised inheritance, by disgracing their high and holy calling, making no more account of the precious gift of God than of a profane thing, as Esau did by his birth-right, in selling it for a mess of pottage; in this case it shall be taken away from them, and given to their younger [inferior] brethren, who shall be adopted in their room to fill up the number of the elect, whilst they are degraded to an inferior lot, nor shall be able to recover what they have thus alienated, no not with supplications and tears, there being no place left for repentance in this matter; and yet through repentance and conversion, their souls may be saved, yet so as by fire. This is no slight fall, no small loss to many a one, who go on in sorrow and sadness afterwards all their life long, without knowing the cause of it; for though it be not manifested to the reason and understanding, yet the spirit of the sufferer is sadly sensible of it, and this occasions not only great loss of inward comfort, but also much of mourning and woe even to the outward man, oftentimes driving him to despair. The way for the poor soul in this case, is not to seek for its refreshment in the vain pleasures and amusements of this life, according to the advice and example of carnal men; for this would only serve to its undoing, and lead it insensibly on to final perdition; but to endure its chastisement patiently, and to walk humbly with its God in repentance, and faith in that blood of Christ which cleanseth from all sin, going on thus in hope, till the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord, and it shall be comforted with the comforts that be of God. Let not the cavilling
reasoner,

reasoner, nor the mocking Ishmaelite turn this doctrine into ridicule, and make merry with so serious and concerning a subject; for it may have a deeper ground than they know of: It will become them better to stand in awe and sin not; and to consider from whence they may already have fallen, or to what they have not as yet attained in the way of their acceptance.

Whatever is wanting in point of name to give authority to this interpretation of the above passage, it has at least moderation to recommend it; as it steers the middle way betwixt giving encouragement to any presumptuous reliance on the Divine favour on the one hand, and driving the dejected penitent to despair on the other: And as to what relates to the doctrine of election and reprobation in the history of Esau and Jacob, that offence of Calvin's system is here removed: Justice is done to the letter of Scripture, and the Divine attributes are vindicated from the foul aspersion of the horrible decree: And let me add too, that the Divine sovereignty is here acknowledged in an election, which offers no violence to Divine goodness, nor leaves room for cavilling reason to find fault, or question the equity of such a preference.

It is generally understood, as if God finally reprobated Esau, his whole man, both in soul and body; but this arises from ignorance as touching his typical character, not only with respect to the primogeniture or birth-right, but also that part of it wherein he stood as a figure of the first adamical earthly man in fallen flesh and blood, as opposed to Jacob, who was the image of the second adamical man regenerate in Christ, who by his divine power of a spiritual life, should subdue and cast out the fleshly, sinful, reprobate nature, in which is the curse: Now the hatred of God passed not upon the person of Esau, but that which was figured by him; for the old man, the corruptible part in Jacob, was as much hated

hated of God, as that in Esau, and the spiritual heavenly part, by grace, in Esau, as much loved as the same in Jacob: So that in this respect, Esau and Jacob were mutual types, representing each a part in the other, and both jointly figurative of every individual person of the human race, in whom these two twins, good and evil, wrestle together for lordship and pre-eminence, the flesh lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other; Reason in *Babel* may boast all it pleases, but the history of the Old Testament was chiefly given us for the sake of the mystery, and he that reacheth not to the truth of the figure under the truth of the letter, will never see clearly how those two great witnesses of God, the law and the gospel (going along with each other throughout the Scriptures both in letter and spirit) reflect light and consenting testimony on each other as plainly as face answereth to face in a glass; And as the language of the Old Testament, is in its highest use the language of types, so those Scriptures rightly understood, do greatly illustrate the œconomy of man's redemption by Jesus Christ, from the beginning in the mystery, and shew forth the struggle that has ever been betwixt the two births, and will continue to the end of our warfare; and accordingly we find good and evil figured in opposite characters, one against the other all the way, eminently in *Cain and Abel, Isaac and Ishmael, Esau and Jacob, David and Goliath*, betwixt the *Hebrews* and the *Egyptians*, &c. as also in numberless circumstances of the same characters, plainly shewing that these things are an allegory as truly as the typical characters of *Sarah and Hagar*, explained as such by St. Paul, (*Gal. iv.*) Nor is that objection of any weight, that fanciful men have often mistaken their own imaginations for the figurative sense of the Scriptures; seeing this only proves that there are false as well as true Allegorists; and such an ob-
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jector who sets up the letter against the spirit, instead of joining both together, would do well to consider, that his argument, like a sword with two edges, has also one for himself, for who more dangerously fanciful than the false reasoners and false critics on the letter of Scripture, who have rejected its mystical sense, who have filled the world with their disagreeing and contradictory senses of it, and poisoned the Church with their heretical notions. The following quotation from an enlightened author, little understood of many, and therefore despised, is very apposite to this subject. "Know for certain, That this first book of *Moses*, was written wholly from the spirit of prophecy, intimating what each act or sentence of the history holds forth in the figure: And whosoever will read and rightly understand these acts of the Patriarchs, he must modelize or represent in his mind the old and new man, and set *Christ* and *Adam* one against the other, and then he may understand all; and without this he understands nothing hereof but a child-like history; though in truth it is so rich and full of mysteries, that no man from the cradle unto the longest age is able to express them, although he had obtained knowledge and understanding thereunto in his childhood: And albeit we have obtained some apprehensions and meaning of them from the gift of God, yet we cannot express all, nor would the world be able to receive it."*

The divine institution of a sabbatical or seventh year's solemnity among the Jews, has a plain typical reference to the seventh chiliad or millenary of the world, according to a well-known tradition among the Jewish Doctors, adopted by many in every age of the Christian Church; that this world will attain to its limit at the end of six thousand years; though all who have held this doctrine have not

* See *Jacob Behmen's Mysterium Magnum*, page 307.

alike

alike believed in the new heaven and new earth to succeed for a place of glorious rest to the saints.— The mystical sense of this sabbatical year, has been judiciously explained by the Rev. *Richard Clarke*, in his excellent Essay on the number *Seven*, where he well observes, that as both the sabbath of days, and the sabbath of years had a backward aspect to the blessings of nature, receiving their full completion in the sabbath of creation, so also did they look forward to a similar sabbath of redemption, when the children of the kingdom should enter again into their rest. And the same learned author in his treatise on the prophetic numbers of *Daniel* and *Jahn*, observes that the six thousand years preceding the sabbath of rest, will not run out their full course, which he proves from that prophecy of our Lord speaking of the great woes of the last times, “That those days should be shortened for the elects sake,” (Matt. xxiv.) alluding to which, are those words of the Apostle, (Rom. ix. 28.) “He will finish the work (or account) and cut it short in righteousness, because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.” And though what Mr. *Clarke* deduces from that circumstance of our Saviour’s expiring on the cross at the ninth hour, or three o’clock in the afternoon, and so entering into the paradisaal rest before the sixth day of the servile week ended: Though, I say, this observation does not carry with it the force of a particular prophecy, or express testimony of Scripture, yet it holds forth the light of a strong typical prefiguration; when we consider Christ as the first fruits, and head of the first-born that should enter into his rest, and that no circumstance relating to his life or death, was accidental, but full of important signification; so that upon the whole, we have good ground to believe that this present world will reach its end before six thousand years from the Creation shall have had their full accomplishment.

Among

Among the privileges annexed to the sabbatical year, the following are very observable to our purpose: First, that all the Israelites were obliged at this time to release their debtors from all obligations of payment; and to release their bond servants from all farther servitude, provided they had served six years; and so it was called *The Lord's Release*, and that not without a very significant meaning; for it is to be remarked, that none but Hebrew debtors and servants were to enjoy these privileges; all foreigners were excluded, no release being allowed to them in these cases, but only in the great sabbatical year of the Jubilee, at the expiration of seven common sabbatical, or forty-nine years, when they also should have their redemption: Now the former was called *The Lord's Release*, as it respected those whom he dignified with the title of his portion and lot, in preference to all other people, because he had a favour unto them; *For the Lord's portion is his people, and Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.* (Deut. xxxii. 9.) The Israelites therefore being his chosen, there must needs be a distinction of privileges in their favour: This points in the mystery directly to the election of grace under the gospel-covenant, of which the Israelites in their dispensation were a type, allowed of all who acknowledged any spiritual meaning in the Scriptures, and they who do not, are more blind than the literal Jew after the flesh. If then a prior release (redemption) be here typified, where can we suppose it to fall but upon the family of the first-born from the dead, written in heaven, when at the time appointed for the first resurrection, they shall be *delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God*; seeing it cannot allude to their condition in this life; for here in general they have a hard service without release, dwelling under poverty, oppression and contempt, in the tents of ungodliness, among such as are indeed *nominally* their brethren, but *really*

Moabites

*Moabites and Ammonites, Ishmaelites and Hagar-
renes*: However, let them be comforted under the
remembrance of the following words of our Saviour,
and contentedly bear their cross in a patient con-
formity to his suffering states: "Ye shall weep and
lament, but the world shall rejoice; and ye shall be
sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy."
(John xvi. 20.)

In the 14th chapter of Deut. where the respective
duties of the sabbatical year are enjoined, is the fol-
lowing express command of God: "If there be
among you a poor man of one of thy brethren, within
any of thy gates in thy land, which the Lord thy God
giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thy heart, nor
shut thy hand from thy poor brother; but thou shalt
open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely
lend him sufficient for his need: Beware that there
be not a thought in thy wicked heart, saying, The
seventh year of release is at hand, &c. Thou shalt
surely give him, and thine heart shalt not be grieved
when thou givest unto him, &c." And with respect
to the release of the bond servant, man or woman,
is the following command: "When thou sendest
him out from thee, thou shalt not let him go away
empty, thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy
stock." But instead of obedience to these precepts,
which the law of humanity within should have
prompted them to, the Jews in time waxed hard-
hearted and covetous, and neither remitted their
debts, nor released their bond servants at the time
appointed; but contented themselves with the form
of godliness, and such legal observances as cost them
little; and yet they boasted of their religion, crying
out, *The temple of the Lord—The temple of the
Lord*: (Jer. vii.) or in other words, *The Church—
The Church, We are the true Church*. And they
would fast too at times, and let their poor brethren
fast always for them, rather than supply their wants.
This their cruelty and hard-heartedness towards
their

their debtors, bond servants, and poor brethren, in violation of the laws before-mentioned, explains many passages in the prophets, wherein they are reproved for their hypocrisy, and mock-services in religious worship: Thus in Isaiah lviii. "Is not this the fast that I have chosen, to loosen the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens (of your poor brethren) and to let the oppressed (bond-servant) go free, and that ye break every yoke, &c." And most probable it is, that the following petition in our Lord's prayer: *Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors*, does particularly allude to this obligation of the sabbatical year; as the word *Opulentes* properly signifies such as are our debtors by loan: Quere then, if this obligation in certain circumstances, for I don't say all, is not still in force on Christians as much as it was on the Jews; nay more abundantly, as the Gospel is a dispensation of higher mercy, both in its ministration on the part of God, and its obligation on our part, than was the law given by Moses. We are well aware what the sons of selfishness have to offer in objection to this, from difference of times and circumstances, the particular constitution of trading nations, and from various family considerations; and with such like cobweb arguments, the avaritious miser, with thousands in the stocks, endeavours to conceal from the view of his own mind, his passion for filthy lucre, and his greater love for money than for his God: And where this is the case, the griping Jew and greedy Christian may shake hands over their cursed Mammon, and wink at each other's want of faith, nay wish that they had none at all; for what little they have, the one in the God of *Abraham*, the other in the God and Father of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, will only serve to render them the more inexcusable, and to condemn them to greater torment. If we impartially compare the general practice at this day, with the above duties of the Sabbatical year, we cannot

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but see how far we come short of a Jewish righteousness, and that we are Christians only in the letter, and not in the spirit, in name and profession, but not in deed and in truth; for where in a hundred is the person that will give, or even lend to his needy brother, a moderate sum of money without yoking him with security and interest, and exacting the uttermost farthing? Or who sends away a faithful servant liberally supplied from his stock, after having had the sweat and labour of the best of his years? And as to those shameless Traders, who traffick for poor Negroes as for horses, and treat them with greater cruelty, wherefore do they take the name of Christ in their mouths? for what is Christianity in those who are void of humanity? O Christendom how art thou fallen! Thou hast a name that thou livest, but art dead, and unless thou repent and do the first works (of primitive Christians) how applicable to thee is that threatening of him that holds the seven stars in his right hand:—
 “I will come unto thee quickly, and remove thy candlestick out of his place.” (Rev. ii. 5.)

Another memorable particular relating to the Sabbatical year is, that during that period the earth, by an extraordinary benediction from heaven, brought forth its increase spontaneously, for the common benefit of all; for as there was no cultivation of land that year, so neither was there any appropriation of its fruits. (Lev. xxv.) This blessing on nature by a suspension of the curse, which first subjected man to hard labour, has a special typical reference to the Great Sabbath of Rest in the Millennial Kingdom in regenerated Nature, when the heavenly influences shall tincture all the properties of this lower creation, and work in and through them, to the manifestation of the divine wonders in unspeakable beauty and variety of productions, and when the renewed earth shall of its own accord give forth its increase of paradisaical fruits, and God, even
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our God, shall give it his blessing. And as to the common enjoyment of the blessings of nature in this year without distinction of property: This circumstance does evidently set forth the universal blessedness of that state wherein the unconfined, unappropriated riches of Paradise, shall be the common lot and portion of all the Elect or first-born from the dead; of which we have also a farther prefiguration in the infant state of the Church, for a short time, under the Gospel, even at that time when "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart, and of one soul, neither said any of them, that ought of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common, and great grace was upon them all." (Acts iv.) This holy society of Christian people, the model of a perfect visible Church on earth, may be considered as an earnest of the glorious Communion here treated of, when the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, and God shall pour his spirit upon all flesh; when Christian simplicity shall stand in need of no borrowed defence from the wisdom of the serpent, and charity know no bounds; when righteousness and peace shall kiss each other, and the name of the Holy City shall be—*The Lord is there.* (Ezek. xlviii. 35.)

But as the children of the Kingdom are in the Unity, agreeing fellow members in the same mystical body, jointly partaking of and freely circulating the same spiritual and temporal nourishment, so the children of this world stand in the multiplicity whose type is Babel, the essence of which is division, and they are so far from being of one heart and mind, that they have every one a separate will, drawing all to self as its Center, and seek only their own things, whence comes envy, covetousness and enmity: But these are self-excluded from the heavenly City; for it is said, (Rev. xxii. 15.) "Without are dogs, and sorters, and whoremongers, and idolaters, and

every one that loveth and maintaineth a lye;" Now greediness has the dog for its well-known emblem, and covetousness is stiled idolatry in Scripture. How many deceive themselves in this matter with lying pretences of caring for their families, whilst their true motive is an evil covetousness in their own hearts: The practice indeed is strongly supported by the authority of example in every class of life, and is therefore by many accounted wisdom; but then it is no better than the wisdom of the unjust steward, which however commended here, will be found folly at last and punished hereafter; and what greater punishment than to be debarred all inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and of God, (Eph. v. 5.) There is the greater cause for insisting here on the danger of the love of money, as well because it is so general amongst us, as because nothing more indisposes the heart of man than this temper for desiring or believing in any better state than the present, where only he can hope to find the means of gratifying this sordid passion; and therefore such will be against the doctrine of Christ's Millennial Kingdom from principle, ever holding fast to that where they may add house to house and land to land, or find increase from their money by publick or private usury, for where their beloved treasure is, there will their hearts be also: Nay to persons in this disposition, a community of good things even in heaven, cannot appear any desirable circumstance of happiness. *Milton* has a beautiful reflection on the incapacity in persons of so depraved a mind, for relishing celestial joys, tho' they were actually transported to the blessed abodes; and this in the character of *Mammon*, whom he represents in heaven as chiefly taken up with the external glories of the place, and more intent on the riches of the pavements than the beatifick vision.

When the Lord of Hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his Ancients gloriously,

gloriously, (Is. xxiv. 23.) the treasures of nature shall be displayed in all their primæval rich variety, as well to manifest the wonderful skill of the Divine artificer, as to beautify the dwelling-place of his saints, who are the true heirs both of temporal and heavenly good things; and tho' now for a season they lie buried among the pots and brick-kilns of their Egyptian oppressors, yet at the time appointed, now near, they shall be delivered with a mighty hand, and spoil the Egyptians of their usurped riches, their jewels of silver and jewels of gold; for the King's Daughter, the Church of the first-born, the bride of Christ, as she is all-glorious within, so shall she be all-glorious without, when her marriage with the Lamb is come, as faintly imaged by the eternal splendors of *Solomon's* reign, who made silver and gold as plenteous as the stones in Jerusalem: (2 Chron. i.) Now if his typical reign was so glorious, how much more shall that of the divine *Solomon*, the true Prince of Peace, exceed in glory? Let none be offended because silver and gold and precious stones are here mentioned among the productions of paradisaical Nature, since these materials, even in their present imperfect kind, were by divine command made use of to add magnificence to the Tabernacle and the Aaronical garments of old, shadowing forth the higher glories of the New Jerusalem state, according to that pompous description of it given in Rev. xxi. and elsewhere, and of which our highest ideas at present must fall as far short, as the difference is betwixt degenerate and regenerate nature; and yet the good things of the latter can only now be represented to us by the best we know in the former, as our apprehensions reach no higher. The love of these things indeed is now forbidden us, and severe restraints laid on their use, as through the corrupt passions of our fallen nature, and the general abuse, they are not only a snare to virtue and a hindrance to the love of God, but become the

food of vanity, avarice and pride, matter of strife, wrong and robbery, and the occasion of most of the evils that happen in the world: But all danger of this kind will then cease, for selfishness, and a desire to engross the blessings of nature in property, will be no more; all *Zion's* sons and daughters will be disinterested and pure, and all things pure to them: Nay, according to *Zechariah*, the very pots of *Jerusalem* and the bells of the horses, shall be *Holiness to the Lord*, denoting that all, even the most indifferent things, shall be done to the glory of God, and so have their sanctified use; for where divine love is the governing principle, it consecrates every service and thing: Thus shall all God's works praise him under the triumphant reign of his beloved Son, by ministering occasion of gratitude and love to his Saints, who shall join in one universal symphony of praise to his divine Majesty, saying: "Heaven and earth are full of thy glory; Glory be to thee, O Lord most high!"

MEDITATION.

CAN we think of the blessed change that shall take place in the kingdom here spoken of, and not feel our hearts burn within us through an ardent longing for it? Can we any longer set our minds upon the vanities of this wretched world, when we believe that shortly, all the treasures and delights of Paradise will be the common portion of them that love God? Or can we be so pusillanimous as to flinch at some short crosses and trials in following a suffering Saviour to such glory; especially when we consider, that our purification from the corruptions of our nature, and our qualification to reign with him, lye through our conformity to his life and to his death. Say now, ye sons of violence, ye rapacious *Nimrods* of the earth, who cause such desolation

tion all around you, laying waste countries, and sacrificing thousands to your ambition, how will you find a place in that kingdom where all is peace and brotherly love? Ye wily politicians who teach the world by rote how to equivocate and deceive; what portion have you to expect among the children of simplicity and truth? You shameless perverters of justice, who under colour and cloak of law, drive a trade of iniquity by sophistry, subordination and fraud; and break the hearts of your impoverished clients by needless and expensive delays of justice, how in vain will you plead for admission into the blessed society of just men made perfect, who can have no fellowship with the deceitful? You griping and hard-hearted misers, usurers and extortioners, who oppress the poor, wring the sweat from the brow of the half-famished labourer, and shut up the bowels of your compassion from your needy brethren; how can you look for that mercy which is only promised to the merciful; nor indeed is it possible for any other to enter into the joy of their Lord. Be wise now, O my soul, to take warning by the folly, sin and danger of thy deluded brethren, who are thus content to barter unspeakable, lasting bliss for unsatisfying pleasures which wiser heathens have despised; for a name, a breath of popular applause from the unthinking giddy multitude, which has nothing in it desirable but what vain imagination gives it, nothing durable; for uncertain riches, which they either do not, or cannot long enjoy; and which will not profit them in the day of wrath: For such trifles light as air, do many sell their souls, their Saviour, their very hope of glory. But whilst thou condemnest the folly of others, beware, O my soul, that thou comest not under the same condemnation though in another form; nor lull thyself into a false and fatal security by deceitful comparisons, fancying that all is well with thee, because thou dost not such and such things; but enter into thy inner chamber,

chamber, try and examine thy thoughts, and search out thy spirit, to see if there be not any way of wickedness in thee, no beloved *Delilah* unforsaken, no darling sin yet unsacrificed to him who has the supreme right to thy undivided affections; for who can say that he is out of all danger from the constitutional sin that most easily besets him? Nay, how few can say to their own heart, yet lackest thou but one thing! Behold, thy All is at stake for life or for death, and a full surrender of all that thou art and hast, without reserves, into the hands of thy sovereign Lord, is now required of thee; if therefore there be any false love within, that separates betwixt thee and thy God, any lurking idol in the temple of thy heart, however artfully concealed, however speciously disguised, thou must not spare it, but bring it forth to be hewed in pieces before the Lord in *Gilgal*. Make then no longer tarrying, but put thyself in readiness to meet thy Saviour, for the day is at hand, and the morning-redness in the East proclaims the approaching advent of the Great *Messiah* coming to be glorified in his Saints, and to be admired in all them that believe in that day. (2 Thes. i. 10.)

CHAP. II.

That a glorious state of the Church under the triumphant reign of Christ on earth is plainly foretold and promised in many places of the canonical Scriptures; and that this doctrine was generally received by the primitive Christians in the earliest ages of the Church.

IF the Jews were without excuse, in not receiving the plain testimony of their Prophets concerning Christ's suffering state, their hardness and infidelity are still more reprehensible in rejecting their *Messiah*,

siah, when he came credentialed with every evidence of his divine mission and character, to fulfil all righteousness, to put an end to the typical sacrifices of the law, by the sacrifice of himself, and to give a completion to those prophecies which relate to his state of humiliation. The true cause of their rejecting him proceeded not from want of clearness, either in the prophecies or their application, but from their carnal hearts, and false conceptions of dignity and honour; they were averse to suffering, disgrace and contempt themselves, so could not acknowledge those in the character of the Prince and Saviour of Israel; not considering, that a world blinded and corrupted by sin makes false estimates of all things, counting the wisdom of God no better than foolishness, and casting reproach upon those whom the Lord delighteth to honour; whence our Saviour on a time explained to the Jews one chief ground of their infidelity.—“How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh of God only?” And at another time having taken occasion to prepare Peter for his approaching ignominious death; and the disciple, like a man of honour (in the sense of the world) shewing himself offended thereat, saying, “Be it far from thee, Lord, this shall not be unto thee,” he gave him the following sharp reproof, “Get thee behind me, Satan, for thou art an offence unto me; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.” How many praying Christians with Jewish hearts, were they to speak the truth, would confess the like offence at the shame of the cross! But when we speak of the Jews in a generality, we allow for some exceptions, for many among them believed in him, and some confessed him; though few, not even his disciples, till enlightened by the holy spirit, conceived rightly of the nature of our redemption by him; or of the glory of his kingdom, as appears from Luke xxi.

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The belief of the Jews then as concerning the reign of the Messiah, was that of a regal and triumphant Messiah; and here they certainly went upon right ground; for to him was promised the heathen for his inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for his possession. (Psalm ii.)—His dominion should be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth, (Zech. ix.) and his enemies should be his footstool; Psalm cx.) but here, through the blindness and carnality of their hearts, they erred again, in not seeing and believing that his reign should be spiritual as well as temporal, and that he should rule in them as well as over them, for they were called to holiness in many places. (Exod. xix. xxii. Lev. xi. Numb. xvi.) The Prophet Jeremiah (Jer. xxxi.) explains the nature of the new and better covenant which God would make with Israel, as an inward and spiritual dispensation, the law of the spirit of life, (which is the true gospel law) by putting his law into their inward parts, and writing it in their hearts, so that thus taught of God, they would not any more stand in need of written rules or human instructors; and Joel (Joel xi.) foretells that God would pour out his spirit upon all flesh under this glorious dispensation of the Spirit; and this inward cleansing and renovation of a gospel-spirit, the true, inward Jew foresaw, desired and in a measure enjoyed in his day, according to that prayer of David; "Make me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me;" for all true Israelites drank of that rock which followed them, and that rock was Christ; but with the Jews in general, and considered as a nation, it was far otherwise: They, like Jewish Christians, placed all in external forms, in temple-services, and in cleansing the outside of the cup; they thought it enough to give God good words and good ceremonies whilst their hearts were far from him; and of this their blindness as to the true spiritual worship, St. Paul takes

takes notice, (2 Cor. iii.) where speaking of the different ministrations of the letter and of the spirit, and the far greater excellence of the latter, he saith, "Even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their hearts; Nevertheless, when it (Israel) shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away:" implying that there will come a time for their conversion. But neither did the blindness of the Jews end here, for they also grossly erred in their belief concerning the nature of the Messiah's temporal kingdom, supposing it should be according to the model of earthly kingdoms, and that under his reign they should be exalted above other nations in this world's grandeur; whereas it appears from that remarkable prophecy of *Jacob*, that when *Shiloh* (the Messiah) should come, or make his first appearance in the flesh, the government and legislative power should depart from Judah, (Gen. xlix.) as they actually did, and were translated to the Roman jurisdiction; and yet *Christ* was to be a king, as all the Prophets have spoken, and to this end did he come into the world, not in majesty but seeming weakness, to lay the foundation of a kingdom which should not be shaken, to suffer many things before he entered upon the glories of his reign, and to make ready a people prepared for the Lord, that he might rule over willing and obedient subjects in the day of his power.

The outward kingdom of the Messiah was to be founded in grace; and in order to raise up this glorious superstructure, a great and gradual preparation-work was first to take place in the hearts of many, to make them meet to partake in this rich inheritance; an astonishing scene of divine wonders was to be opened in the birth, person, ministry, life and death of the mysterious Immanuel, who was to preach the glad tidings of the gospel, work miracles, put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, force a passage for us through death and the grave by his resurrection, and by his ascension into heaven lead
 captivity

captivity captive, and receive gifts for men:—
 And as all who should be glorified with him in his
 kingdom, must be sanctified, for this is the will of
 God even our sanctification; so it behoved the same
Jesus, who gave himself for us, to become also in
 us a principle of divine life by the regenerating
 power of the Holy Ghost. By taking the humanity
 upon him at his incarnation, he condescended to
 become our brother; but by making us partakers of
 his divine nature, he stands in the character of the
 Second Adam, the father of a spiritual race, beget-
 ting us again to a lively hope, and so bringing many
 sons and daughters unto glory. This was first mani-
 fested in the way of a publick dispensation on the
 day of Pentecost; a dispensation to continue through-
 out all ages of the Church, for Christ in us, the hope
 of glory, is the very earnest of that glory. This is
 that great mystery of godliness which distinguishes
 Christianity from all other religions in the world;
 and though it be the stumbling block of the proud
 disputer and conceited reasoner, yet to the true be-
 liever it is the wisdom of God and the power of
 God; nay, to such a one this precious faith is a key
 to all other mysteries of religion, neither doth he
 stagger through unbelief, at reading that the flesh of
Christ is meat indeed, and the blood of *Christ* is
 drink indeed, knowing that where there is a spiri-
 tual body, there is also a spiritual blood, the prin-
 ciple of spiritual life; and that this is as really and
 substantially derived to the child of the new birth
 from the *Second Adam*, as the gross flesh and blood
 whereof we now partake, is derived to us from our
 first fallen progenitor through our respective parents:
 and herein consists the difference which the Apostle
 (Gal. iv.) makes betwixt those that are born after
 the flesh, and those that are born after the spirit,
 the latter being said to receive power from Christ to
 become the sons of God, and taking their denomi-
 nation from their better nature, are styled born, not
 bred; and our new nature is renewed and yet has not
 yet been

of (human) bloods, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. (John i.) It is not then to the natural children of *Abraham*, nor to the circumcision that is outward in the flesh, as the carnal Jew supposes, that the promise of the Messiah's kingdom is made, but to the children of his faith, to Christ's spiritual seed, Jews or Gentiles, who are appointed for the chosen generation to this inheritance; nor indeed is it easy to conceive how a kingdom constituted and modelled according to the gross apprehensions of such a one, after the spirit of this world, could exalt the glory of God or the true dignity and happiness of the human race; for what are carnal men with their unsubdued passions and unrenewed nature, in their fullest enjoyment of this world's goods? what better than the brute beasts that have no understanding? Nay, how often worse, as being more proud, more earthly, more sensual, more devilish. Hence it appears, that the faith of the Jews in general (for the inward and spiritual Jew is always excepted) in relation to their Messiah and his kingdom, was not only grossly defective, but sadly debased and corrupted; and therefore his first humble appearance in the character of a suffering Saviour, was an offence to them. He came unto his own, but his own received him not: So it is, that at this day they expect him for the first time to appear in worldly pomp and majesty, to restore the kingdom to *Israel*, according to their own carnal sense of the matter, but not as the prophets have spoken; and as many of the Jews who were proselyted to the Christian faith in the earliest ages of the Church, retained some of their first errors concerning Christ's reign on earth, so the Anti-chiliasmists took advantage of their fond opinions, to charge all the Millennarians with them, in order to discredit the doctrine itself as a Jewish figment, of which class was no less man than the learned *Jerom*, though candour and equity require that we judge of a doctrine according

to the purest sense of it, and as it is held by the sound and not the unsound part of its professors; but it has ever been an artifice practised by the great adversaries of truth, to sow tares among the wheat, that the good seed may not be owned, but the whole crop pass for tares; and thus the generality are deluded, as few know how to separate the precious from the vile.

As the credibility and truth of this doctrine is not to be tried by what some mistaken or ignorant men have held concerning it, but by what the prophets have spoken, so recourse must be had to their testimony which is full and clear to the point, where the mind of the reader is not tinctured with invincible prejudice against it. Now the Prophets and Apostles have in many places foretold that the Lord Jesus Christ will have a visible glorious kingdom upon earth in the great sabbatical age or Sabbath of rest, and that not only transiently or figuratively, but expressly, with repetition and circumstance; and here the first circumstance to be remarked on, is the seat or locality of this kingdom, it is to be in nature restored to its primitive state of perfection, and after that glorification which followed upon his ascension, according to that declaration of St. Peter, Acts iii. "And he shall send *Jesus Christ* which before was preached unto you, whom the heavens must receive, till the times of the restitution of all things;" the word in the original (*ανακαταστασεως*) signifying a change of one constitution of things to another; and this the Apostle before ver. 19. calls the times of refreshing (*αναψυξεως*) (revivification or renewing even of the animal life) and speaks of this comfortable change as the subject of prediction in the mouths of all the ancient Prophets. St. Paul to the Hebrews chap. i. 6. speaks of this second mission of our Lord into the world to receive worship, even from the holy angels, giving us hereby to understand, that during this blessed reign a communication will be opened

opened betwixt the angelical kingdom, and the communion of Saints, and the vision of *Jacob's ladder* be realized in their favour. There is indeed a mis-rendering of the Greek text in the English translation of our Bibles, which makes it run thus; *And again, when he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, &c.* But the learned *Meade* hath restored it according to the true grammatical sense of the original, thus; *And when he bringeth in again the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.* The same Apostle in this and the following chapter distinguishes betwixt the divinity and humanity of Christ, and observes that though with respect to the latter, in order to qualify him for his suffering state, he was made a little lower than the angels, yet by virtue of the union of his human with his divine nature, and the glorious exaltation of the former in his regal state, he should therein also be of superior dignity to the angels, for that according to what was prophesied of him, he should be crowned with glory and honour, and all things put in subjection under his feet, but then this he refers to a future time, for, says he, we see not yet all things put under him; but what other future time was that than this world of nature restored, in which he should erect his throne, the government of which is reserved for him and not for the angels, as he saith, chap. xi. ver. 5. *For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak:* in which words it is to be observed, that the term *οικουμενη* is never used in Scripture to signify any other world than this habitable region wherein men live, and therefore cannot be applied to the heavenly state.

St. Peter, 2. Eph. chap. iii. speaking of the first judgment by fire that should pass upon the wicked, to their destruction from off the face of the earth, mentions this *world to come*, rising as it were from the ashes of the present into a new and more perfect

constitution through the purifying operation of fire, in which, says he, *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 burnt up; seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, &c.* Now that this is not spoken of the consummation or final destruction of this elementary system appears from the next verse but one: *Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness,* or wherein righteous men shall dwell. Besides, the word *λυθησονται* (shall be dissolved) does not signify a total abolition of their formal essence, but their being freed or set at liberty from some adventitious impediment or imperfection, the same word being used by St. Luke speaking of the woman that was loosed by our Saviour from the bond of infirmity, by which she had been bound by Satan for eighteen years; now if this interpretation, which I think will appear a just one, be allowed me, then the being dissolved here spoken of, will mean no more than that the elements through the separating and purifying virtue of the fire, will be released from that disorder and mixture of evil, which sin through the curse hath introduced into the creation; which exactly corresponds with St. Paul's doctrine on this subject, Rom. viii. 20. where he says, that the creation (*καταβολή*) which was made subject to vanity, shall be delivered (set free) from the bondage of corruption. It is also further to be remarked in this passage of St. Peter, where he says, *the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved,* that we are hereby to understand the aerial heavens, or atmosphere as meant, not the starry heavens, much less the empyreal, for so far the curse extended not; and that the word Heaven is often used in Scripture under this threefold distinction, is well known.— Thus the empyreal is called the heaven of heavens—the highest heaven—the third heaven—the throne of

of God—the habitation of his holiness—the place where his honour dwelleth, and the host thereof are the holy angels. 2dly, The starry heavens are that expanse in which the planets and astral bodies are placed, and is called in Scripture the firmament of heaven.—Thus in the Psalms, the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy work; of these heavens the stars are called the host. 3dly, The sublunary heaven, or heaven joined with earth, is used for the air: Thus the birds of the heaven and the fowls of the air mean the same in Scripture language, and the dew and clouds of heaven refer to the same element: the visible host of this sublunary heaven are clouds and meteors, and the invisible host of spirits of different orders and kinds; and among these, evil spirits have their residence, we are told, in the same region, and that in the form of a government of polity, of which *Satan* is their head, being called in Scripture the Prince of the power of the air; and in these lowest heavenly places, they exercise the spirits of men with various temptations, nay even rule in the hearts of the children of disobedience. Thus Eph. vi. 12. We wrestle against spiritual wickedness in high (it should be rendered *heavenly*) places. The heavens then, which according to the prediction of the Apostle, are to be dissolved, set free, purified by fire, are no other than the aerial heavens of our atmosphere, which is at present so greatly infected by the malignity of the curse, as through its multifarious impure mixtures, to contain in it the seeds of all corruption; if it stagnates, it becomes putrid; if in too violent a motion, it produces destructive storms and tempests; and it is moreover the vehicle of all poisons, so that if on the one hand, it is the support of life, it is on the other, the parent of death in various shapes; but when defecated from its heterogeneous and evil commixtures, and reduced by fire to its primitive temperature, it will not

F. 3. only

only become a principle of chearful health, and perfective of the animal life, but also serve as a purer medium for the transit of light, by which many unimagined glories in the rich furniture of the firmamental heavens may be laid open to our view, exhibiting an astonishing display of the wisdom and power of God in the various aspects, motions, configurations, and harmonious œconomy both of the planetary and astral systems. The same fire, tempered by the plastic hand of its Creator, shall produce a like meliorating change in the earth, and its several productions of vegetables, minerals, and fossils; not destroying or impairing, but refining and exalting their natures, separating by a supernatural chymistry all adventitious fœculencies from matter, and causing every impurity to evaporate like the smoke of a caldron; and here the stars and planets shall join their friendly aid to tincture the several classes of bodies with their rich influences, adding fragrancy and sanative virtues to plants, gums and spices, the choicest flavours to fruits, lustre to the precious stones, delicacy of sounds to metals, and unspeakable beauty of colours to the variegated face of nature; and to complete all, the divine *Magia*, the operation of the Most High in the heavenly physical powers, shall so dispose, proportion and harmonize the whole, that at the going forth of the Almighty *fiat*, old things shall pass away, and all things shall become new.

The agency of fire in producing very wonderful changes in natural bodies is well known, whilst its own nature remains amongst the most inscrutable mysteries; it is perhaps the most simple and distinct of all God's creatures, and yet manifests itself in the greatest variety of forms and diversity, yea, contrariety of effects; it hardens and it liquefies, it dwells in the most compacted ice, as well as burns in the body of the sun; it is quiescent in the dark flint, and yet diffuses a world of light through the planetary system

system with incredible rapidity; it enters into all bodies, and yet is concentrated in its own incorporeal essence throughout the void of boundless space. Its operations are reducible to no standard, for it acts according to the kingdom in which it moves, and the subject it possesses; in heaven it is a heavenly fire, and the principle of a joyous life; in hell it is a hellish fire, and the source of torment; and in this mixt world of good and evil, it assumes more forms than *Proteus*—it flashes in the lightning, and faintly illumines the glow-worm's feeble lamp—it does the several offices of the laboratory and kitchen, and warms us by the consumption of our fuel—it destroys and preserves life, nay, it is the root of every life from the archangel to the pismire; and without it there neither would be vegetation nor animality, no appetite, conjunction, fœcundity nor growth—in a word, it may be called in its ministry under the Omnipotent Artificer, the soul of the world, and the life of the creation, and coæval with his first works. No wonder then, we read that the instrumentality of this potent officer shall be employed to effect the divine purpose in the formation of a new world.

Inquisitive reason will be ready to start many questions and difficulties on this subject, as how the bodies of the saints shall remain unhurt in the conflagration here spoken of; and whether there will be a new creation of brute animals to stock their kingdom; or the present generation of them be continued on for their use and entertainment, or for the display of the divine wonders, seeing such are spoken of in Scripture as existing, though all of an inoffensive nature in this new state: (Isaiah xi.) To this it might suffice for answer, that the Lord well knoweth how to preserve both man and beast, as heretofore the bush and the three children of the captivity, from the power of the fire; nor need we be solicitous how this shall be done, seeing every promise of God has omnipotence for its security; besides,

besides, the paradisaal fire by its superior energy, being only inferior to the divine fire, and manifestative of it in its kingdom, will so penetrate, tincture, and cover what is earthly in the bodies of the saints, as to counteract all influence of the elementary fire, it being impassible with respect to its inferior, as also by a gradual process of its transmuting power, so alter or rectify what is corrupt and impure in the animal part, with little or no sense of pain, as to change their vile bodies that they may be fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body; (for even the children of the kingdom in order to their renovation must pass through a fiery trial, that all their wood, hay, and stubble may be consumed) and so in both these senses will that promise (Isa. xliii.) of God to his people be fulfilled; "When thou walkest thro' the fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." But the children of the kingdom have also the trial of another fire to pass through, and that of a more searching nature, for it is divine and spiritual, that so the iniquity even of their holy things, may be purged; for where is the perfect man that is so without stain or spot as to have nothing in him that offendeth, that hath built only pure gold, silver and precious stones upon the right foundation, and hath neither wood, hay, nor stubble, in all his building to be consumed; now the fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is. (1 Cor. iii.) To this double purification then by fires, we are bid to take heed, that so we may *glorify the Lord in the fires*, (Isaiah xxiv.) or make manifest by higher degrees of purity, that we have been faithful stewards of the grace of God, in *that day which shall declare it, because it shall be revealed*. (made known) *by fire*.

The false philosopher, and the bigot to a system, will both mock at the doctrine of a purification of the soul by fire, as the Athenians did at that of the resurrection, (John iv. and vii.) the latter drawing matter:

matter of ridicule from the figments of a Romish purgatory, unable through the darkness of his prejudice, to separate betwixt truth and error; and the former from his false definitions and distinctions of matter and spirit, whereby, under the negative term immateriality, he has learned to exclude all substantial forms and realities from spiritual nature, and so banish every idea of heavenly things; though all principles and properties in this external world, are only an efflux or an outbirth from the internal, having their archetypal forms, root and ground therein, according to the nature of the kingdoms whence they derive their originals, according to that famous axiom of the ancient adepts "*Omnia cœlestia sunt in terris, sed modo terrestri; omnia terrestria sunt in cœlis, sed modo cœlesti;*" i. e. all heavenly things are found on earth, but after an earthly manner; and all things on earth are found in heaven, but after a heavenly manner: and therefore to assert a heavenly materiality, as well as an earthly, is no new doctrine. Where our Lord says—"Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God;" it would be a gross misinterpretation of the words to understand by them, a birth from our common elementary water, which has nothing in it adapted to the nature of the soul: but if hereby be meant a holy, pure and spiritual water, which is so suited to its essence as to become therein a principle of divine life, through the operation of the Spirit of God, here the sense of the words, whatever difficulty may attend our conception of the thing, offers no violence to the understanding: now such a living, satisfying water our Saviour speaks of as the gift of God. (John iv. & vii.) This does by no means tend to supercede the outward ordinance of baptism, but gives to it its proper rank of a sacrament or outward visible sign, the elementary water being the symbol and nearest emblem in nature of the heavenly water; as the out-ward

ward bread and wine in the other sacrament represent the spiritual body and blood of Christ, which are the soul's true nourishment. Nothing should be lightly esteemed in religion because it is external, for we must glorify God in our body as well as in our spirit: besides, as far as it is an exercise of faith, humility or obedience, so far it has respect to the internal, and is accepted of God, not for the matter of the service, but the disposition of the doer: and therefore the true spiritualist will walk hand in hand with his weakest brother, through the lowest forms and rudiments of religion, and take comfort in this exercise of his charity for the edification of his fellow member, that he may grow thereby, and both be built up in love: but the great and common danger lies in placing religion in the mere external service, without respect to the inward disposition, or to God, the great object of our worship; for so all our services, however specious, however pompous, however multiplied, are no better than sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal, yea, than abomination; and therefore to all such worshippers God saith: *I will spread the dung of your solemnities upon your faces.* (Mal. ii.)

And as there is a cleansing by water, so also is there a purification by fire, and by this double baptism operating in repentance and sanctification, are the sons and daughters of God made meet for glory, for every christian sacrifice, the heart of every devout worshipper, must be salted with fire. (Mark ix.) It was this inward heavenly fire that our Saviour came to send on earth, (Luke xi.) and to baptize his own with, and the publick manifestation of it under the emblem of elementary fire, declared the opening of the spiritual kingdom, or true gospel dispensation, on the feast of Pentecost. The sacrifices under the law, and the descent of fire from heaven on certain occasions to consume them, in token of the divine acceptance, do point to this inward purification by
fire

fire on the altar of the heart, to kindle therein the holy fire of divine life and love, by the consumption of all false loves and every idol which usurps the place of God in his temple, which temple we are. (2 Cor. vi.) The painful experience of this fire of the refiner in the inward spiritual senses, when he comes to consume the filthiness of our corruptions, and to cast our reprobate silver and tin into the midst of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it, (Ezek. xxii.) is well understood of those whom the Lord hath dealt with in this way of severe, but loving correction. It was this fiery trial that pinched Job to the quick, brought him down from his altitude of self-complacency in his own righteousness (though allowed of by God for his justification outwardly before men) and made him to see and to confess his vileness before that God who trieth the hearts and reins, and in whose sight the very heavens are not clean. David, that chosen servant of God and man of afflictions, became *Holy David* only through the sanctifying operation of this divine fire, which indeed he thoroughly experienced, and gives a lively description of: his other trials and troubles, which were many, he compares to deep waters, floods and storms; but this sharp inward discipline, to the pains of hell burning up his bowels like a firebrand, and causing his heart in the midst of his body, to be even as melted wax. O how did he groan and roar through the disquietness of his heart, when God set before him in full view the account of his sins, with his numbering the people, his adultery and murder, at the head of them; and how great was the anguish of his sufferings, when to this pile of much wood, the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, was applied to kindle it, though in effect (by these rods and scourges, this salting with fire) to put away his offences, to make him a clean heart and to renew a right spirit within him. The soul has its spots and real defilements as well as the body, and must have

have a suitable cleansing also ; nor is the evil of sin conceived and formed in the mind, so unsubstantial a thing as many suppose : there is a higher philosophy than what is generally received that teacheth this, however it may be derided by that which is mechanical, and excludes all reality of substance from every thing that carries not in it the known properties of gross matter ; and yet the power of the mind to produce substantial forms may be illustrated by the effects of desire and imagination in pregnant women, manifesting themselves visibly and palpably on the bodies of their offspring, by various marks and formations commonly known.

God, in Scripture, is represented to us under the name and property of love, and also as a consuming fire ; now, though these seem opposite characters, yet in him they are one and the same, for the divine nature is *simplex duntaxat et unum*. When God manifests himself from the unsearchable deep of his hidden essence, as a fire of divine love, he communicates of this perfection to all his creatures in their different kingdoms, according to their several natures and degrees of receptivity, making his angels loving spirits, and his celestial ministers (the glorious *Seraphim*) a flame of fire ; and he sheds abroad the same heavenly principle of love, by the Holy Ghost, in the hearts of his children here on earth. But then as this holy element is of an active and penetrating property, striving to assimilate and convert its subject into its own nature, it must act with violence, as a powerful separator, where it meets with contrariety or obstruction : now all malignity of sin is in the greatest hostility with it, and therefore must be consumed by its superior energy, which cannot be effected without very painful sensations in the subject of its operations, and may be compared to the pain of cauterizing an ulcer, tearing off pitch-plasters from the flesh, or separating a limb by amputation. The hellish fire, which is the tormenting
life

life of evil spirits, being wholly void of the love-property; is by natural antipathy most contrary to the divine fire, nor able to endure its operations, inasmuch that the presence of our Saviour was more intolerable to the devils mentioned in Matt. viii. than their own hell, which caused them to say; "Art thou come to torment us before the time?" nay, man in his unconverted state is little able to bear any great degree of it, as appears by what Peter suffered when he said; "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord;" and the same is felt in a degree every day by conscious sinners when in company with holy persons: hence it is, that our Lord is graciously pleased so to graduate and temper the process of our purification, as we are able to bear it. This assimilating and converting power in the work of regeneration, has its outward emblem in the operation of our material culinary fire on the wood that serves it for fuel; it seizes, penetrates and kindles it; it separates the humid parts by smoke or despumation, and breaks open its firmest cohesions, to set at liberty the imprisoned congealed element; it then with augmented force, overcomes all resistance, it rages, blazes and burns, till it has transmuted all that is convertible into its own essence, rejecting the extraneous matter; and then withdraws into its hidden source. Were the wood endued with sense, it would have correspondent sensations to every act of the fire, and its pain would be in proportion to the resistance it makes to its operations, till becoming one with it by the consumption of itself, it would be at rest, and incapable of suffering any farther from it. Just so the divine fire; it wounds only to heal; it blackens in order to purify, and kills to make alive: thus God is love in the very act of his being a consuming fire: were there nothing in us to be destroyed, he would no longer be a consumer, but a blessed fire of divine life, light, love and glory. The Rev. Mr. *Richard*

Clark in his *Feast of Trumpets*, p. 12. speaks of this regenerating work of the spirit in the following masterly manner: "Every one born of the woman under the law of death, must have his divine birth of God opened in him, through the compressing, drawing and anguishing operation of God, which is the way through tribulation into the kingdom of heaven: and it does not so much regard outward troubles, wants and persecutions (which make no part of the cross of Christ in those whose condition removes them from these trials) as it signifies the inner and strait paths, where the soul suffers the purifying vengeance of the fiery judgment of God, which is more or less tormenting, longer and shorter in its terrors and painful strokes, as the mind and heart gives up faster or slower its false will and its sins, to be slain, crucified and burned away by the fire of his jealousy. And these inward purifications in *Abraham's* smoking furnace, (Gen. xv.) are very different as the hearts of men are so, and may be often repeated according to the backslidings of the children: let both the spiritual and the babes in Christ beware of presuming, or thinking themselves safe, when they have passed through the flaming sword once only."

Here let the profane scoffer be warned of his danger, who speaks evil of things that he knows not, turning into ridicule the office and ministrations of the Holy Spirit in a work of conversion or regeneration in the hearts of men fearing God, and believing in the power of our Lord and Saviour *Jesus Christ*, whether this office be in the way of comfort or distress, of building up or casting down; whether they are exercised with uncommon terrors, and under the buffetings of Satan for a season; or have that peace of God which passeth all understanding, and are refreshed with unspeakable joy in the Holy Ghost. These things are of most serious and important

portant consideration in their height and in their depth, as also every thing else that relates to that fundamental change and meetness for glory, which is called in Scripture by the name of the *New Birth*: a doctrine containing the substance and marrow of the Scriptures from beginning to end, and without which they have no satisfying meaning. To effect this mighty change in the soul of man by his spirit, was the great end of Christ's mission, ministry, sufferings and death; for though the Holy *Jesus* had suffered a thousand times upon the cross for sin, yet if the Holy Ghost had not been given, and is not now given in as saving a manner as on the day of Pentecost, for our sanctification and being born again, there is, there can be no salvation for us, but the gates of heaven are shut with everlasting bars against us. To mock even at the natural infirmities and defects of our brethren, is so highly offensive to God, that it was punished with death in forty and two children by a judgment; (2 Kings ii.) and should the Lord enter into judgment with our land for this sin, so common amongst us, what have we not to fear? But to mock at the spiritual sufferings of our brethren, when the hand of the Lord presseth them sore, and when he melts and tries them, to bring them by his sharp discipline, through the death of sin to a life of righteousness; this denotes an evil spirit with a witness, and savours so strongly of diabolism and the unpardonable sin, as must cause the ears of every Christian man to tingle, and spread horror upon his soul: but know, profane mocker, whatever be thy character or dignity in this world, (for spiritual thou canst have none that is good) that for thee also (who now jestest upon these painful though salutary operations of the Holy Spirit) there is a cup in the hand of the Lord, which is a cup of fury and trembling to all them that mock at his righteous judgments; and it contains the red wine of his fiery indignation, full mixt with every ingredient of his

his vengeance, and the ungodly scoffer shall be made to drink it up, nay, and to suck out the very dregs thereof. What though the sting be sharp that now pierces the tender conscience of the contrite penitent? what tho' the fire be hot which the returning sinner is now passing through, in the course of his sore travail, that it may the sooner purge away his dross, and consume every thing that offendeth? yet the Lord well knoweth how to support and when to deliver him, even when the *refiner* hath sufficiently *purified his Levites, and purged them as gold and silver; that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.* (Mal. iii.) But there is also a furnace-work prepared for the men of this evil world, who now sport themselves with the afflictive experiences of the children of the kingdom, in their passage through the strait gate, whom the Psalmist calls the sword of the Almighty; and a sharp sword they are in the sides of his poor suffering servants: but though now they go so merrily and jestingly on their way, and by their own desire, have their portion in this life, yet their bellies (their inward parts) are filled with that hid treasure of fire from the Lord, which, (though for a time concealed and smothered by the cares, pursuits and enjoyments of this world) must sooner or later burst forth into operation for life or for death.—May the good Lord in mercy visit all such with his loving corrections, and drive them by these terrors, which they now despise or ridicule in others, to seek and know and *feel* the things which belong unto their peace, before they are for ever hidden from their eyes!

Did the doctrine of a new heavens and a new earth, rest solely on the testimony of St. Peter, that might well suffice for its credibility; but he appeals to God's promise by the mouths of his Prophets for the antiquity and truth of it; and therefore, if he had received no revelation on this point himself, his sense of the prophecies on this subject must be our rule.

rule whereby to interpret them: and here, among many prophecies, parables, figures and allusions throughout the Scriptures, *Isaiah*, as the mouth of God, expressly reveals it; thus, chap. lxxv. *Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.* And chap. lxxvi. *For as the new heavens and new earth which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed, and your name remain:* And St. John says, Rev. xxi. *I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away:* In ver 2. he speaks of the *New Jerusalem* coming down from heaven: ver. 3. of the tabernacle of God with men, and his dwelling with them: ver. 4. of his putting away death, pain and sorrow: and ver. 5. seals all with this solemn confirmation much to be noted: *And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold I make all things new: and he said unto me; Write, for these words are true and faithful.* So that the end of God's renewing the face of the earth, evidently appears to be, for a glorious habitation of the Saints under Christ the king of Saints, that *the Lord God may dwell among them*, according to that prophecy of Daniel, chap. vii. *The greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the Saints of the Most High.* And happy indeed are all they who (at the sounding of the seventh, angel, when *the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ*, Rev. xi.) shall have their lot with the four and twenty elders, and the rest of the redeemed, to be *made kings and priests, and to reign with him on earth.* (Rev. v.) A great variety of particulars relating to the nature, constitution, polity and glories of this kingdom, and the blessed condition of its inhabitants, are scattered through the writings of the prophets; nay, make a very considerable part of their message; as that they shall be all righteous and holy, and live in perfect

peace, beating their spears into pruning hooks, and learning war no more: that all fierceness and noxious qualities shall be removed from the brute creatures, and the absolute dominion over them restored to man, insomuch that a little child shall lead the lion, and play on the hole of the asp; nay, the most opposite amongst them, as the wolf and lamb, the leopard and kid, shall feed and lie down together in fearless peace: that there shall be no more malignity or distemperature in the earth, elements or seasons; that the fruits of the earth shall be excellent, or not liable to corruption; the ground not fail to give her increase, nor the heavens their dew: that the Lord's people should possess all these things, and be blessed, and that their fasts should be turned into joy and gladness, and chearful feasts: that the heavenly bodies should shine with augmented glory, the moon as the sun, and the light of the sun be seven-fold; and yet that their increased lustre would be as nothing compared to the brightness of the blessed King's personal glory, at his coming to reign in Zion, and to be the light of the holy city of God: In a word, that all shall be harmony and friendly agreement, love, joy and peace between God and men and all creatures: for these and many other particulars of this glorious reign, see more especially the following chapters in Isaiah and Zachariah. (Is. ii, iv, xi, xxiv, xxxii, xxxv, lx, lxii, lxv. Zech. viii, xiv.) Ezekiel and St. John in the Revelations, are particular in the description of the *New Jerusalem*, that city of the great King, where the Lord will reveal himself with more conspicuous manifestations of his royal presence; and the latter specifies the glories of the place, its foundations, walls and gates, as made of the richest materials in nature, as precious stones and transparent gold; and both speak of the river of God issuing from the throne, and the tree of life bearing fruits on each side of the river of pure and healing waters, &c. It is commonly objected

jected, that this description must be figurative in whole or in part, as where it is said, that every several gate of the city shall be of one pearl, &c. Be it answered, that figures imply realities, otherwise they would be but figures of figures, which is contrary to the rules of all language: besides, the superior excellency of things in nature exalted and glorified, can only be represented to us by such images, or the compounding of such images as nature in her present state of degradation doth furnish us with: and though it be allowed, that there are some mystical allusions belonging to this description of the *New Jerusalem*, both in *Ezekiel* and *John*, which for want of types in nature more nearly corresponding cannot at present be more intelligibly explained; yet we must desire to be excused from giving up the substance of the prophecy, because of some unavoidable difficulties through the weakness of our apprehensions, till the objector shall supply us with something more satisfying in the room of it. But wherefore all this stupid opposition to a doctrine, which holds forth to us the joy of the whole earth, as if it were less worthy of our Saviour, or less credible and desirable by us, that he should reign with his Saints in the *New Jerusalem*, than that he should be crucified betwixt two thieves in the *Old Jerusalem*, especially since the prophecies of the former are even more abounding and more express than those which relate to the latter.

The learned *Mede* charges *Jerom* with unfair dealing in the translation he has given us of the prophecy of *Tobit*, from the Chaldee, and has restored the text in a latin version from a pure edition of the Hebrew, wherein *Tobit* foretells, that after the return of the Jews from their captivity, they should build their temple, (but not according to its first magnificence) and remain at *Jerusalem* for certain ages; and that *after this, they should suffer by far the greatest captivity of all*: which part of the prediction

diction is left out in Jerom's version, (which we copy after) as favouring the doctrine of the millenary reign; for if after their last captivity, or dispersion, continuing to this day, they shall again be gathered to *Jerusalem*, and the holy city be built gloriously, &c. according to the following part of his prophecy; then this gracious promise remains yet to be fulfilled. The same author * inveighs sharply against that nefarious practice which so many have been guilty of, both in ancient and later days, of expunging and sophisticating such passages in authors as make against their own particular tenets; and shews in particular, how this doctrine of Christ's blessed reign on earth has suffered by this wicked art, in the works of *Justin Martyr*, *Irenæus*, *Victorinus Pictaviensis*, and *Sulpicius Verus*: and no wonder, that these authors should suffer in this manner, when, by a sacrilegious combination of the *Asiatic Churches*, during a great part of the second and third centuries, such wicked pains were taken to exclude the *Apocalypse* from its place in the canonical Scriptures, on account of the plain undeniable testimony therein given to this doctrine, it being notorious that the book of the Revelations scarcely treats of any thing else but this subject, and things leading or referring thereto.

But if the locality and material glories of this blessed kingdom, are thus graphically described; so also the different privileges, offices and dignities of the Saints respectively that shall inherit it, are taken notice of: thus to some it shall be appointed to sit on the right hand, to others on the left hand of Christ in his kingdom: some shall be crowned and sit on thrones; some be rulers over many things, some over fewer; some be set over ten cities, some over five; some sit at table with him, others serve; some follow him whereso-

* MEDE'S Works, page 533.

ever he goes; others come from one sabbath to another, and from one new moon to another, and from year to year, to worship before him; for which in particular, see the places referred to beneath.* Now such distinction and subordination in the subjects plainly infer a polity and outward administration of government in our Lord's kingdom. It is well known that our Saviour taught much by parables or similitudes, in order to conceal the matter of his instructions from the mockery of profane scoffers; and that they only might understand them who were fit to receive them, and disposed to be the better for them: now the greater part of his parables have their true interpretation both according to the letter and spirit, and point as well to his kingdom of glory in this world, as to the inward kingdom of his grace in the heart, the latter being the true preparation and qualifying work for the former. The feast made by the king for the marriage of his son, does by this significant emblem figure the joyful solemnity of that alliance which Christ will enter into with his Church at his second coming: he was betrothed to the human nature at his nativity: he came and hath sent to invite all to the marriage, and is even now intimately present with his beloved ones in the fellowship of his Spirit; but the full accomplishment of this union in all the blessed fruits and effects of it, is reserved for that happy period, when he who was heretofore a man of sorrows, shall be anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows in the sight of his saints; and when the king's daughter, the church, with her numerous goodly train, all glorious within and all glorious without, shall be brought unto him, and with joy and gladness enter into the king's palace: and accordingly the same image of a marriage is used by St. John, (Rev. ii.)

* Matt. xx. 23. Luke xix. 17. and xxii. 30. Rev. xiv. 4. Isaiah. lxvi. 23. Zech. xiv. 16.

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where speaking of the *New Jerusalem* coming down from heaven, or the holy city of holy souls born again by a heavenly birth from God, he describes her prepared as a bride adorned for her husband: Behold, says he, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell among them; not as heretofore in disgrace and affliction, but in dignity and honour, his humanity glorified by his divinity. The same advent is likewise represented to us in the Gospel, by the parable of the nobleman who went into a far country, committing different talents to his servants, and charging them to occupy or improve them till his return: (Luke xix.) as also by that of the other master who made a great supper and bade many. (Luke xiv.) Those other parables of the grain of mustard, and of the hid treasure, and of the net cast into the sea, have likewise their reference to the glory as well as grace of the Saints, pointing to the kingdom of regenerate nature, a treasure concealed at present and little known of men, though really existing in its paradisaical root and principle, and now growing up towards its manifestation at the time appointed of the Father; and then the good fishes caught in the gospel-net, and now preserved in vessels, shall drink of the water of life, according to that figure of Ezekiel, in the vision of the holy waters: (Ezek. xlvii. "There shall be a very great
 "multitude of fish, because these waters shall come
 "thither; for they shall be healed, and every thing
 "shall live whither the river cometh." To this second glorious appearing of *Jesus Christ* on earth, the enlightened and zealous, and therefore persecuted *Antonia Bourignon*, applies the song of the Blessed Virgin as follows: "What ground would
 "the Blessed Virgin Mother have had for singing
 "the magnificence of her Son and Saviour, who
 "should be born poor and despised in the stable of
 "*Bethlehem*, and persecuted in his tender infancy?
 "what ground for rejoicing to see him imprisoned;
 "accused

“ accused and condemned as a malefactor, and at
 “ last hanged upon a cross in her presence : his con-
 “ tinual sufferings were a sword of sorrow which
 “ always pierced her heart : it must needs be then,
 “ that her joy proceeded from a prophetick spirit,
 “ in seeing that future time when he would appear
 “ on earth in glory, when all generations would call
 “ her Blessed ; which is not yet come to pass ; for
 “ among the few that praise her amidst so many
 “ nations, how many offend her by their idolatrous
 “ worship ; nor would Christ himself allow her to
 “ be called Blessed merely on account of her rela-
 “ tion to him after the flesh : and therefore it was
 “ in a prophetic view of his glorious kingdom,
 “ wherein she saw that her joy would be accom-
 “ plished, and that her *Spirit should rejoice in God*
 “ *her Saviour*. It will be then that he shall cast
 “ *down the mighty from their seats and exalt the*
 “ *humble*, which has never yet been effected ; for
 “ since the coming of *Jesus Christ*, the mighty have
 “ exalted themselves as much as ever, and the hum-
 “ ble have hitherto been rejected and despised.*

The book of Psalms has always been allowed both
 by the Jewish and Christian Churches, to be a code
 of divine prophecy, for not only *David*, but *Asaph*,
Haman and *Jeduthan*, who were the authors of
 several of them, were of the order of Prophets ; and
 we may justly conclude the same of such others of
 them as are *incerti authoris* : now one main subject
 of the Psalms, and that which chiefly bears the
 stamp and characteristic of prophecy, consists in
 predictive declarations and descriptions of a glorious,
 happy state of God's Church and people upon earth,
 when the Lord shall reign and make his glory to ap-
 pear in *Sion*, which will then be the joy of the whole
 earth ; when he shall build up *Jerusalem*, and ga-

* See her treatise called *The Light of the World*, Conf. xxviii.

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ther together the outcasts of Israel; nay, shall have the heathen for his inheritance and reign over them, for that the Princes of the (heathen) people shall be joined to the people of the God of *Abraham*, so as to form one Church, (see in particular Psalm *xlvi.* and *lxxii.*) That God will establish the seed of his David (his beloved, his Christ) for ever, and his throne from generation to generation, even as long as the sun and moon endureth, (Psalm *lxxxix.*) according to his oath and covenant: That in this reign of God, the Saviour, mercy and truth shall meet together, and righteousness and peace shall kiss each other; and that this seat of his kingdom hath been prepared for him ever since the world began, (*lxxxv.*) That in it the righteous shall flourish and prosper in the earth, the true of heart be glad, and nothing be withheld from the godly, for that the ungodly shall perish, and the horn of their power be broken, and the meek-spirited possess the earth, and the men of the earth be no more exalted against them, (*xxxvii.*) These were the times, the dwellings, the tabernacle, the temple of God with men, that the Psalmist longed for, panted after, and wished to be a door-keeper in, and not an outward building of brick or stone, that he might go to church, (as we term it) for surely King David could not want convenience or opportunity for that. These, and a hundred other particulars relating to the future blessed reign of Christ on earth, throughout the Psalms, were written, as he tells us, for them that should come after, and for a people that should be born, to praise the Lord (*cii.*) And to this joyful state it was, that his prayer in Psalm *cvi.* had respect: "Remember me, O Lord, according to the favour
 " that thou bearest unto thy people; that I may see
 " the felicity of thy elect, and rejoice in the glad-
 " ness of thy people, and give thanks with thine
 " inheritance." That this could not be meant of the times when David lived, is plain from the unpromising

promising state of things in his days, and from his many and grievous complaints of the overflowings and triumphs of ungodliness, the blasphemies and atheism of the multitude, and the oppressions of the poor and needy; and when the righteous were so far from inheriting the land, and the generation of the faithful from being blessed with riches and plentifulness, that the adversaries of the Lord everywhere lifted up their banners, in token of their superiority in number and power, eating up his people as it were bread, insomuch that he often calls out upon the Lord, to rise up and defend their cause, and maintain his own honour in the earth: nay, the prosperity of the ungodly and the tyranny of the wicked were at such a height, that the sight of it staggered his faith, his footsteps had well nigh slipped into a distrust of God's providence, and he had utterly fainted, as he tells us, but for his belief and hope in a better state of things, when he should be one day raised up again to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. And if God's righteous servants had so hard a time of it in the days of David, true godliness was not likely to fare better in Solomon's reign, under the example of a King who so foully lapsed into idolatry and sinful indulgences, and to whose mal-administration is ascribed in Scripture, the rending of the kingdom so soon after his death, by the revolt of ten tribes from the house of David. We read indeed of riches abounding in his reign, and of the great magnificence of the king; but it does not follow that things went any better with godly men on this account; for as such cannot set their hearts upon gold and silver, nor even in their necessity seek to acquire them in the ways of the world, so neither is it their lot, under any reign, to come in for any great share of such riches. How it went with the Jews afterwards, we may learn from their history and Prophets, in the sad accounts they give us, of their evil Kings, of their backslidings,

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hypocrisy and rebellions, and their punishment by wars, captivity and other calamities, from which they had little rest; and when they had, they did evil again, (Neh. ix.) so that if we consider their ingratitude under distinguished favour, their disobedience and their punishments, from their origin down to this very day, they will perhaps appear to have been as stubborn and suffering a people as any upon the face of the earth: nor shall we be able to find any one period of their history, wherein the blessings of the covenant which God made with *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, have as yet been fulfilled to them as a nation in any satisfying sense of the promises; nor do they themselves pretend so much, but look forward for their accomplishment, whilst they remain ignorant of that Saviour who is already come, and shall come again to be the glory of his true Israel (the Jew and Gentile of the inward circumcision) in his blessed kingdom, after saving them from their sins by a sound conversion through that repentance and faith which are in Christ Jesus.

As the Psalms foretel a future happy state of the Church on earth, so do they describe the present evil state of the world; and if we compare times with times, we shall find the cause of complaint much the same now as then, as the tyranny of men in power, the prosperity of the wicked, the troubles and persecutions of the righteous, the profaneness of the ungodly, the scornfulness of the wealthy, and the despitefulness of the proud: Thus as in a glass they shew us things past, present and to come: But if we reject their testimony to that triumphant state of the Church, when its warfare shall be ended, when the Lord shall turn away the captivity of his people, and godliness shall have the upper hand; in this case it may be said, that they promise blessings to God's servants which never yet had their accomplishment, nay, which they are not to look for; they set forth real evils, and only an imaginary redress

redress of grievances; they speak of a righteous administration in Christ's kingdom on earth which is never to take place on earth; and in a word, are so far from inditing any such good matter as they seem to hold forth, that they only comfort us with deceitful promises and vain hopes. For want of believing in the reality of such temporal blessings to be dispensed in due time, it is, that the generality read and sing the Psalms in the daily service of the Church all their life long to so little improvement, and without being more affected with the precious promises therein recorded: hence, that the most respected of our commentators on this portion of Sacred Writ have given us such jejune and inept interpretations of many of the Psalms, accommodating important prophecies to trifling, historical events in David's family, or to transactions of no general concernment to the Church of God: and hence, that political churchmen have so often complimented Kings, by applying to revolutions or circumstances of their government such of the Psalms as expressly refer to the personal reign and kingdom of Christ, as if the glories of the Saints, the peace of *Sion*, and the prosperity of *Jerusalem* were events reserved by Providence to distinguish and dignify their administration; and the same compliment is ready for any other that shall step into their place: But the thanksgiving is appointed; the psalms and lessons are pressed into the service, and the people read them, and so all passes; and well would it be sometimes, if it might pass for nothing, and not for a solemn mockery. Such profane tampering with the Scriptures is no light matter, but of weighty offence; and better perhaps were it, if human compositions only were appointed for what respects particular occasions, to guard against the like misapplications.

One reason why those prophetic parts of the Psalms which point out the happy times of the Messiah's kingdom on earth, are so little noticed

and acknowledged, is because of their being mixed with other matter of a different nature, and not professedly treated of in the way of methodical coherence, but *raptim* and in a desultory manner, like the flying touches of a masterly hand upon a rousical instrument; it being the usual way of the Holy Spirit, by these sudden lapses of divine influence, to seize the subject of its operations, and transport it to the matter of prophecy all of a sudden: an instance of which we have in *Michaiah*, (1 Kings xxii.) who, from mocking *Ahab* and his false Prophets, is immediately transported to the prophetic vision, and breaks out: "I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills as sheep that have not a shepherd," &c. So likewise here: the beginning and end of the same Psalms oftentimes look different ways, and carry in them a seeming contradiction, whilst the inspired writer in one part complains of judgments, and in the other signs of mercies: to instance only in two out of very many, viz. the tenth and eighty-ninth: in the former, the author complains of the oppressed condition of God's poor servants, and the triumphant state of the wicked, down to the 18th ver. when the Spirit of Comfort represents to him in vision the state of things reversed under the administration of the Messiah's future government, upon which he changes his note all on a sudden: "The Lord is King for ever, and the heathen (the ungodly) are perished out of the land: Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the poor," &c. In the latter Psalm we are presented with a song of praise, describing the glorious exaltation of the Messiah in his kingdom upon earth, down to the 37th verse, when the transporting view of that joyous dispensation vanishes all at once, and leaves the Psalmist under mournful complaints on account of the sorrowful, suffering state of God's children and servants, continuing on till the commencement of the fore-mentioned

mentioned period. We sadly mistake the meaning, and lose much of the benefit of these inspired writings, when we apply them, as is usually done, so much to the reign and personal circumstances of the typical *David*, in which we are so little concerned, and not to Christ the true *David* (beloved) and to the things of his kingdom, of which they were only a figure, and wherein we are so nearly concerned; as also when we judge of the inspired writings by the common rules laid down by man's art of grammar and criticism, which are no laws to God, whose ways and thoughts are not as ours, neither doth he teach as man teacheth. The pious and learned Mr. *Smith*, mentioned before in this work, has observed solidly on this subject,* whose wise remark I shall here give at full length, as it cannot fail of giving pleasure to the intelligent reader: "For the better
 " understanding all prophetical writ, we must ob-
 " serve that there is sometimes a seeming inconsis-
 " tence in the things spoken of, if we examine them
 " by the strict logical rules of method: we must not
 " therefore in the matter of any prophetical vision,
 " look for a constant methodical contexture of
 " things carried on in a perpetual coherence. The
 " prophetic spirit doth not tie itself to these rules
 " of art, or thus knit up its dictates systematically,
 " fitly framing one piece or member into a combi-
 " nation with the rest, as it were with the joints and
 " sinews of method; for this would rather argue
 " human and artificial contrivance than any inspi-
 " ration, which as it must beget a transportation in
 " the mind, so it must spend itself in such abrupt
 " kind of revelations as may argue the Prophet to
 " have been inspired: and therefore *Tully de*
 " *Divinat.* judiciously excepts against the authen-
 " ticity of those verses of the *Sybilis*, which he met

* Select Discourses, page 270.

" with in his time, because of those *acrostics* and
 " some other things which argued elaborate artifice
 " and an affected diligence of the writer, and so in-
 " deed *non furentis erant sed adibentis diligentiam*,
 " as he speaks. *Lumen propheticum est lumen*
 " *abruptum*, as was well noted anciently by the
 " Jews; and therefore the masters of Jewish tradition
 " have laid down this maxim: *non est prius et pos-*
 " *terius in lege*; we must not seek for regular con-
 " catenations of things in the law, or indeed in any
 " other part of prophetic writ. There must be some
 " kind of *Manna* in all prophecy, as *Philo* tells us;
 " for when divine light ariseth upon the horizon of
 " the soul of man, his own human light sets, at least
 " it must hide itself under the beams of the greater,
 " and be wholly subject to the irradiations and in-
 " fluences of it." What enthusiasm will this be called
 by our modern stiff opposers of every thing in reli-
 gion that is not according to the standard of their
 supposed infallible reason!

To this temporal reign of Christ on earth here
 asserted, it may be objected, that both the Psalm
 and the Prophets, from which we draw our proofs
 in support of this doctrine, do in many places speak
 of this kingdom as lasting for ever: thus, in Psalm
 xlv. where the exaltation of Christ in his kingdom
 by the Father is spoken of, and the words quoted
 to the same purpose by St. Paul, Heb. i. it is said:
Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: and where
 Daniel, chap. vii. speaks of the greatness of the king-
 dom under the whole heaven to be given to the
 people of the Saints, he adds; *whose kingdom is an*
everlasting kingdom, &c. And consequently, the
 kingdom here spoken of cannot properly be meant
 of a temporal reign. But however this objection
 may have its apparent weight with common readers,
 it vanishes at first sight before those that are but a
 little versed in the original languages of the Scrip-
 tures; as it is well known that neither the Hebrew
 word

word *Gnolam*, nor the Greek word *αἰών* translated *for ever*, do mean an unlimited eternity, according to the scholastic definition of the word, but only an uninterrupted continuance of any thing during the existence of the person, dispensation or period referred to: thus, the Hebrew servant that refused to use his privilege in taking the benefit of release on the sabbatical year, but chose rather to live on with his master; in that case, his master should bore his ear, in token of his consent to perpetual service, and he should be *his servant for ever*, (Deut. xv.) or to the end of his life: as touching the passover it is said, (Exod. xii.) *You shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations: you shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever*; where the meaning of *for ever* is explained by the foregoing words, *throughout your generations*, i. e. from age to age, so long as the Mosaic oeconomy shall last: so likewise Moses to the Israelites, (Deut. iv.) *Thou shalt keep his statutes, &c. that thou mayest prolong thy days upon the earth; which the Lord thy God giveth thee, for ever*; which can only mean during the time of their continuing a people here on earth, and not the eternity of the earth. We read that upon the sounding of the seventh angel, (Rev. xi.) *there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever*. The literal translation of which last words would be, *to ages of ages, us uss aionas ton aionon*, nor does the adjective *αἰών* signify more: besides the Apostle elsewhere in several places, assigns the period of a thousand years to this reign, which though lengthened to sabbatical or jubilé years, yet give a limited sense to the words *for ever and ever*: nor if these words were to be taken in the sense of infinite, would St. Paul be consistent with himself, who speaking of Christ's reign, in Heb. 1. says, *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever*; and yet in

1 Cor.

1 Cor. xv. affirms, that when the end cometh, *he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father*, whose gift it was, that *God may be all in all*; and so the imperial, mediatorial reign of Christ shall perfect its period. Thus much may be sufficient for the difficulty before us; though indeed it is obvious enough, that words must take their precise meaning, from the nature of the subject to which they are applied; and that nothing would be more absurd than to interpret any expressions in a sense of infinite duration, when applied to things existing only in a finite state. *everlasting* therefore, and words of like import, when used conjunctively with Christ's kingdom here on earth, or things relating to it, denote no more than its stability and continuance through all ages of the world till time shall be no more, and then not to be destroyed, but swallowed up in higher glory; for it will be raised and exalted into the kingdom of the Almighty Father, whose reign, in the proper metaphysical sense of the word, is from eternity to eternity; so that the kingdom of Christ will not so properly be dissolved as consummated, under another denomination, in the supreme Majesty and glory of the Father's kingdom, on this side of which nothing can be called everlasting, but in an inferior and limited sense, according to which the Gospel is called in Scripture, *the everlasting Gospel*, (Rev. xiv.) meaning its being the last revelation from God publicly dispensed to mankind for salvation to the end of time; for when it has attained its end, all farther ministration of it must cease of course.

It is for want of distinguishing the different senses in which the same word is more or less used in Scripture, that many fall into dangerous mistakes concerning doctrine, and hence that grievous errors are sometimes imbibed, and important truths rejected; to instance only in these words, *kingdom of heaven*:
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in their primary and highest signification, they mean the empyreal heavens, where the Godhead manifests its supreme glories to the angelic hosts; thus, *heaven is my throne and earth is my footstool.* (Acts. vii.) Secondly, the kingdom of God, or the kingdom of heaven, is used in many places of the New Testament to signify the kingdom of Grace, wherein Christ reigns spiritually in the hearts of his servants: thus, *the kingdom of God is within you;* (Luke xvii.) and this is the kingdom which is said, not to come with observation: and thirdly, it means that supreme power and dominion which Christ at his second coming will exercise on earth, *when he shall put down all authority* (of men and evil spirits) *and subdue all enemies under his feet:* (1 Cor. xv.) in this kingdom the twelve Apostles shall *sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel*, even in the regeneration, or kingdom of regenerate nature, wherein *the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of his glory.* (Matt. xix.) In the second sense of these words (kingdom of heaven) Christ reigns in his Saints in the Church now militant: in the third sense, Christ will reign with his Saints in the Church then triumphant. They that reject the former sense deny every thing that is truly divine, spiritual and saving in religion: they that reject the latter, deny all real manifestation and literal fulfilment of the material and visible glories of Christ's Church and the inheritance of his Saints on earth, as testified of throughout the Scriptures both of the Old and New Testament. Let it be added here, that Christ's glorious kingdom on earth may, in a proper sense of the words, be called the kingdom of heaven, as the administration of it will be under the blessed influences of the heavenly-spiritual, and the heavenly-physical powers, externally in glorified nature, and internally in the souls of glorified Saints.

What

What has been said before in this chapter touching the difference of place, privilege and dignity among the heirs of the kingdom, may serve to obviate some objections, and to reconcile some seemingly contrariant passages in Scripture relating to the constitution of this kingdom and its inhabitants. Thus our Lord, in answer to that question of the *Saducees* concerning marriage, (Matt. xxii.) answers thus : *In the resurrection* (the first resurrection of the Saints) *they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven* ; and yet the Prophets speak of multiplying an offspring in the kingdom of the Messiah, (Isa. lxx. Jer. xxx.) denoting hereby a continuation of the ordinance of marriage. St. John says, (Rev. xxi.) that in the time of this happy reign, there shall be no more death ; and yet Isaiah, (chap. lxx.) speaking of the same, says, *The child shall die an hundred years old*, signifying hereby that the longevity of men in those days will be such, that an age of an hundred years will be deemed but as the life of a child. The same Apostle speaking of the *New Jerusalem*, says, *that the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it, for the Lamb is the light thereof* ; (Rev. 21.) and yet Isaiah says, (ch. xxx.) *The light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun seven-fold, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound*. Now, these seeming repugnances will disappear when it is considered, that the things here spoken of have respect to persons in different conditions and relations, though subjects of the same kingdom. Thus the Saints raised from the dead in their glorified bodies, as the Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles and Martyrs, as well as others of inferior class, will be in a far different state of existence and glory from those who shall be found alive at the coming of our Lord, and shall also enter into his kingdom : the former having already passed the gates.

gates of death, shall die no more, but rise to a blessed immortality; nor will the present ordinance of marriage be in any wise suitable to their pure, celestial vehicles; but their gratifications and communications will be more refined and exalted; and yet neither is the man without the woman, nor the woman without the man in the Lord; but the male and female tinctures or properties are united, or made perfect in one, as in Adam before the division; and as in the holy angels, who are neither male nor female in distinction, but both in one. And as in the resurrection the Saints will exist in an order of nature superior to this elementary one in which we are placed, in comparison whereof our air and light are density and grossness; so their light and vision will be of much higher purity, through illumination from the splendors of the blessed Redeemer's glorious body, as the planets in their several orbits are respectively enlightened by the sun; so they shall have their different degrees of clarity and brightness, as one star differeth from another star in glory. But as to those who shall be found worthy to partake in the joys of this kingdom, before their mortal part is swallowed up of immortality, and perhaps none but the incorrigibly wicked and impenitent shall be excluded, it will not be altogether so with them, for their place is within inferior nature, but of inferior nature exalted and highly glorified to what it is now, for to them the light of the sun shall be seven-fold. These will go on to increase and multiply, according to the order of nature in which they stand, (and with the first blessing on a happier kind of marriage) to build houses and inhabit them, to plant vineyards and eat the fruit thereof, being blessed in all they do, for as the Prophet tells us in the same chap. (Isiah lxxv.) *They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth with trouble, for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them.* But then as death is the lot appointed for all living, so
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when they have fulfilled their time, they must pass through this translation, though without pain or suffering, to their higher glory; for at the sounding of the last trump to the second resurrection, all shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye; and then death, the last enemy, shall be destroyed by the all-victorious Saviour; and what shall be the law of death to some before that consummation, we know not.

Bishop *Hall*, in a short tract called *Revelation Unrevealed*, sets himself to refute the doctrine of Christ's personal reign on earth, but in so weak a manner, and by such frivolous queries and paradoxes of his own raising, that one cannot without concern, behold so good a man, the author of so many pious discourses and meditations, say any thing so unworthy of himself; but his talent did no lie this way, and when great men go out of their province, they must fall short of themselves: besides, he was so tied and bound with Calvin's chain, that he could not admit any thing that his master taught him to disbelieve; so dangerous a thing is it *jurare in verba Magistri*, and to fetter ourselves with a system upon any human authority whatsoever; and yet this is the pitiable case of many excellent men, and one great bane of truth and charity in every church; they hastily seize upon the articles which they are to believe and defend as *pro aris et focis*, and then treat as heresy every thing which they find not within their own circle. The above writer ridicules the belief of marriage in the circumstances before mentioned, as savouring strongly of a *Jewish* or *Mahometan* paradise. To give any thing an ill name suited to vulgar prejudice, is a popular art of gaining the undiscerning multitude on our side; who generally take their measures of truth, not from any right standard of its soundness and purity, but according to the judgment they have formed of persons or parties; so that if you mean cunningly to discredit

discredit any doctrine or truth with such as are children in understanding, call it Popish, Jewish, Turkish, or by any other name they dislike as much, and your business is half done; for not being capable or used to distinguish, they immediately rank it in the number of confessed errors among the people of such a name: thus some who bear no good will to our church, have endeavoured to cast an odium upon it, by calling her service popish; because some of her collects and usages are the same with those in the church of *Rome*; as if the people of that communion, because they hold some things that are wrong, could neither pray nor do any thing that is right. It is allowed that *Mahomet* borrowed some of his doctrines from the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and what if he disguised this of the *Messiah's* kingdom with carnal fancies, in order to recommend it the more to the liking of a sensual people, shall we give up a glorious truth with all its precious promises, because he has defiled it with a mixture of errors?—God forbid, that we should thus put it in the power of our enemies to rob us of any part of the rich treasures contained in the Scriptures! Let us learn to exceed Turks in just and righteous dealing, before we reproach them for their erroneous notions about paradise. The God and Father of all nations has divided portions of his truth, in different ministrations of light and clearness, according to his good pleasure, to every people upon the face of the earth; and though some noxious weeds do, in every climate under heaven, mix and grow up with the good grain, yet wherever we meet with any of this heavenly seed, let us praise God for it and cherish it, having pity for the ignorance and errors of our brethren, remembering who it is that maketh us to differ. But why so much objection to an ordinance of God (instituted in the time of man's innocence) being continued on in the time of man's restoration?

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No 2.

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There is confessedly, for the most part, too much of shame and impurity going along with it, through our disorderly passions, and the corruption of man's fallen nature, and yet it is pronounced honourable in itself, and a blessing promised to the due observance of its laws: and what though it so often proves the source of discord and misery; yet this is not the natural consequence, but owing to the abuse of the ordinance, or the perverseness of the parties, seeing that the true end and tendency of the institution is to promote godly fellowship and mutual comfort, and to prevent much evil in society; and therefore we ought to speak of it with reverence, whether we consider it as a divine appointment, or as the only lawful way which the God of nature hath ordained for the multiplication of his subjects in our present state: to the pure all things are pure, and were every thing that is otherwise, separated from our ideas on this subject, it will be hard to say what there is in the supposal of marriage (as far as human nature may then require and admit of it) more unworthy of Christ's kingdom than the innocent loves of little children; especially when we reflect that all things will then be sanctified by perfect purity and the love of God, for nothing that defileth shall enter there: So that there is little room for that misplaced banter of our author on the "Saints comforting themselves with the pleasures of bed and board in this new kingdom;" and yet sure I think, that the good Bishop believed that Adam and Eve were in a state of Saintship before the fall, and were comforted in like sort; why then should that be thought a disgrace in paradise restored, which was none in paradise forfeited? and how is that ordinance a proper subject of ridicule, which even in its present imperfection was honoured with our Saviour's presence, and is dignified with the signature of an emblem of his mystical union with his body, the Church? But here lay the root of the matter: The author's system

tem reached no farther than Mr. *Calvin's* Institutes, and as he found nothing there beyond an imputed righteousness, so he could not conceive how human nature on this side heaven could be cleansed from original, derivative corruption; as though the locality of heaven had any peculiar virtue in it to effect this change: In a word, he thought it not possible to be fruitful and multiply without being fruitful in multiplying sinful creatures by a sinful act, supposing that all human creatures in every condition of humanity must of necessity be conceived and born in sin, nay and live in it too—Take his own words: “What! mortal and yet sinless? What man or angel can reconcile these two? What! all Saints and no hypocrites? O happy kingdom, where there is no taint of hypocrisy! But shall men have hearts then? And are not the hearts of men deceitful above all things? I had thought, says he, that the fruit of God’s gracious election, had been the remission, not freedom from the commission of sin:” And towards the end of the same tract, he observes thus: “Certainly we must cease to be men when we begin to be sinless; for sin, though it be not the essence of our nature, yet it is a proper and inseparable adjunct thereof, which we cannot hope to be quit of by the most perfect regeneration.” Surely, nothing less than the credit which this author is deservedly in for his piety, could be a passport for such gross absurdities in divinity, with the intelligent part of his readers; but where the votary has once subscribed to *Calvin's* Creed,* even the necessity of the Saints sinning in the kingdom of the regeneration, may join hands with that of decretal reprobation, and both pass for two

* Reverend *Calvin*, says he, whose judgment I so much honour, that I reckon him among the best interpreters of Scripture since the Apostles left the earth, &c. See the same Tract.

articles of faith. I shall reply briefly to the foregoing queries and assertions.

Where does it appear in Scripture, that mortal and sinless are terms that imply a contradiction, or how does immortal mend the matter? for if Adam became mortal only through sin, then he sinned being immortal, as did also the fallen angels. But if he introduced sin into our nature, is it not the office and promise of the *Second Adam* to abolish it, and to become the parent of a holy race, that as in *Adam* all died, died to God and the divine life, so in *Christ* should all be made alive, alive unto God through vital holiness and a participation of the divine nature; or is Christ's power less to heal and save than Adam's was to wound and destroy? how then shall he be the restorer of all things, or what truth is there in those words—*Thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help.* Is not Christ to subdue all enemies under his feet, and is not sin his greatest enemy? but *the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death*, and therefore sin, the parent of death, shall be destroyed first. *The sting of death*, says the Apostle, *is sin, but thanks be to God who giveth us the victory*, over what, but sin? *Behold the Lamb of God*, saith John the Baptist, *who taketh away the sin of the world!* Now what is this sin of the world but its apostacy from God, sin in its very root, essence and principle, which unless eradicated, the malady is not removed, but the bitter fountain will ever send forth bitter water, the evil tree will continually bring forth corrupt fruit, and so after ten thousand remissions of sin, there will be ten thousand commissions of it again, and so on, sinning and sorrowing, and repenting and sinning again. But if the fountain must one time or other be purified, what is the time of doing this and where? In Heaven? All things there are already perfect, besides then Christ will have finished his kingdom and office: It remains then

then that the work be done here on earth, or in some future purgatory, or in paradise: Let the objector chuse which he pleases, it will suffice for the silencing his objection, though we here make choice of the last, as that blessed state described by the Prophet, (Isa. iv.) *when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughter of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the Spirit of Judgment, and by the Spirit of burning;* (the purifying divine fire issuing from the body of Christ) *when he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and shall purify the sons of Levi.* (Mal. iii.) Here at least the regeneration of Saints shall be perfected, and they be made free from sin, that they may have their fruit unto holiness; shall be all taught of God; filled with the Holy Ghost; and joined unto the Lord in one Spirit: And sure this must be a sinless state: and why not even in their mortal bodies, purified as they will then be, so that they shall not be tempted to evil from this quarter; nor from evil men, for they shall have no fellowship with them; nor from Satan, for he and his shall be bound for a thousand years. (Rev. xxii. 2.) Nor do the Prophets leave us under any doubt concerning this their state of purity; for thus saith Isaiah (chap. iv.) *In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel: And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem.* And elsewhere: (Isa. lx.) *Thy people shall be all righteous; they shall inherit the land for ever; the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified.* Zephaniah likewise, speaking of this restoration of Israel, (chap. iii.) says:— *The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies, neither shall a deceitful tongue be found*

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in their mouth. And again, Isaiah lxij. 12. *They shall call them the holy people, the redeemed of the Lord: And thou shalt be called, Sought out—a city not forsaken.* How ill do these declarations stand with the supposal of hypocrisy and deceitfulness in the hearts of the Saints? and in what a poor low sense of the word must the author have held the doctrine of regeneration, to say, that the most perfect kind of it, gives us no hopes of being made free from sin? and yet if it be not a restoration of a righteous, innocent nature, how is it a regeneration? But he says, we must cease to be men when we begin to be sinless—what then was Adam when he was sinless; what was Christ in his inferior nature but a sinless man? Is not this to make sin essential to our nature not only fallen, but regenerated, nay in its most perfect state of regeneration? Beware, my dear readers, how you expect to find any true satisfying explanation of our spiritual redemption in *Calvin's Institutes*, or in any other author who holds that no communication of Christ's righteous nature to man, is ever to be expected from his most perfect regeneration; and that he can only put off his sinful with his human nature: And yet God forbid, that I should seek occasion to discredit good Bishop *Hall* in the main of his character, whose piety and writings (for the greater part of them) I truly reverence and recommend: But great errors are often found in great and good men, and therefore are the more to be marked out, as their authority is apt to affix a kind of a sanction to them in the eyes of the undiscerning.

Though all the inhabitants of the blessed kingdom will be happy as well as holy, yet in great variety of differences and degrees, according to their respective measures and qualifications, as one star differeth from another star in glory; and therefore our Lord saith, *In my Father's house are many mansions*; yet so, as that the lot of inheritance which
falleth

falleth to the lowest, shall far exceed the highest good things in this world: Some shall rule and some shall obey; some shall minister and others be ministered unto; and from this subordination, conducted through the whole œconomy of the kingdom, with perfect fitness, alacrity, and exchange of the kindest offices, will result unspeakable harmony, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and good will towards all men." This world, even in its present state of depravation under the curse, is as a glass through which we may read many things that shall be in that which is to succeed it; and we might read much more, were it not for the dimness occasioned through sin; for it is a figure of things to come, in which the invisible things of God are knowable by them that do appear. In its diversity of climes and regions differenced in temperature, beauty and fruitfulness, it exhibits faintly an image of the various scenes of paradise, where the face of regenerate nature will have great distinction in its glories. Man, for the most part, is for having all things one way; but God, both in the kingdoms of nature and grace, manifests his wisdom and power in the unspeakable variety of his works; and for this may praises be given to his adorable goodness, who hath opened so many different doors of mercy for his poor creatures to enter into the joy of their Lord. Were it so, that only one certain measure of happiness and glory had been provided for the heirs of his kingdom, how many must have fallen short of it through their incapacity and unfitness? But now hath he taken care of the lowest in his kingdom of Grace, and, as it were, let down a ladder with many steps of bliss, that so his little and feeble ones (Zech. xii.) may find a portion in the Sabbath of rest: And in this I do and will rejoice for the hope that remaineth to the unworthy hand that now writes this; that even I also, though but the least in the kingdom of heaven, shall see the fair beauty of the
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the Lord, and visit his Temple: Praise him sun and moon; praise him all ye stars of light!

If there be any plain meaning in the Psalms and Prophets to be come at by us, I think it must appear by the many passages thence adduced, in proof of the doctrine before us, that they do foretel a glorious state of the church, a happy time to come, when *Messiah*, the prince, the *David* of God, the Lord our Righteousness, shall have a kingdom upon earth, the administration whereof shall be in righteousness, peace and truth; when he will maintain the cause of his poor suffering servants and exalt them to honour, and put down the rule and authority of the proud usurpers who now engross the blessings of nature to themselves, and tread down the humble and meek as the mire of the streets; and when there shall no longer be any violence or war, no more iniquity and deceit in the earth, but peace and truth, love and joy shall flourish and abound so long as the moon endureth. But though the blessedness, stability and extent of this kingdom are spoken of in many of the Scriptures here quoted, yet the discovery of the time of its duration seems to have been reserved for the beloved disciple, to be communicated by him to the church of Christ; and here, both the revelation of the kingdom and time of its continuance is made with uncommon solemnity, the former in Rev. v. the latter in Rev. xx. In the former the Almighty Father is represented on his throne, holding a sealed book in his hand, whilst a strong angel proclaims a challenge to the universal world, asking, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? But none was found worthy: Upon which John weeps. One of the four and twenty elders comforts him, by declaring, that the Lion of the tribe of *Judah*, the root of *David*, had prevailed to atchieve the work: And thereupon, the Lamb that was slain came and took the book out of the right hand of him

him that sat upon the throne: This act figures more strongly than words can express, the authority and power inherent in our Saviour's divine nature, to open the dispensation of his kingdom, according to that declaration in the days of his flesh: *Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, &c.* (John xvii.) And that this act was declarative of such a power appears from this, that the four and twenty elders (representative of the redeemed among the twelve tribes of Israel, doubled by as many from the Gentile churches, under their respective heads, patriarchs and apostles) immediately sung a new song, saying: *Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth.* And upon this, all creatures in heaven and earth, and in the sea, proclaimed blessing and honour, and glory and power unto the Lamb, &c. So that upon the whole of the matter, this chapter in the Revelations seems plainly to exhibit a solemn scenical prefiguration of our Saviour's commission for the exercise of his regal power, signifying, by the register of a book, God's counsel and decree to set his King upon his holy hill of Sion, and to give him the heathen for his inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for his possession, (Psal. ii.) as the seals thereof denote the signatures of its approach, stamped on the awful judgments that shall be the harbingers of the great King at his accession to his throne.

Secondly, In the xxth chap. of the same book, a thousand years is the period assigned for the duration of the kingdom; and this literally expressed, no less than six times, relative to different circumstances of it. The prophetic vision here also

also opens with a striking solemnity: An Angel descends from heaven having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand: he lays hold on the dragon, the old serpent, which is the Devil and *Satan*, shuts him up and sets a seal upon him, that he may no longer deceive the nations till the expiration of the thousand years. The thrones are set for them that had suffered martyrdom, and had not received the mark of the beast; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years; but the rest of the dead lived not till the end of the thousand years: This is the first resurrection, which plainly declares a second to succeed it. Criticism must here be at a loss, with all its subtlety and sophistry, to evade the force of a prediction so positive and circumstanced, and where no reason nor rule of interpretation will justify a departure from the literal sense of it, in respect to the reign of the martyrs with Christ, the duration of their reign, and the time for the rising of the other dead being deferred till the end of it; especially as it clashes with no one article of the Christian faith, but greatly strengthens it, by giving clearness of interpretation to the many Scriptures which give evidence to the real future existence of such a kingdom, both in the declarative way, and also by prophetic vision; of which latter kind we have one similar and correspondent to the last mentioned, in Daniel vii. wherein "The Ancient of Days, the Eternal Father, is represented as sitting on his throne, and one like the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven is brought near before him; and there was given him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages should serve him, and his kingdom should not be destroyed." And this part of the vision bears so near a resemblance to that of St. John in which is mentioned the sealed book, that I think no doubt can pass on the foregoing interpretation of it.

After

After Daniel had received the interpretation of the four beasts, as signifying four kings or kingdoms which should arise out of the earth, it is added for the comfort of the church, in the next verse: "But the Saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever and ever." But before the time of this victory, the horn in the head of the fourth beast, having eyes, and a mouth speaking great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows, should make war with the saints and prevail against them: But after this, the judgment should sit, and the saints should take away his dominion, and utterly destroy it; and "The dominion and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, should be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom," or, according to the foregoing explanation of this term here used, not to be destroyed or taken away, but to last to the end of ages, till time should be no more. This prophecy of *Daniel* concerning the judgment, and kingdom to be given to the saints, harmonizes in full agreement with that of St. John upon the same subject, except that the latter only assigns to its continuance the period of a thousand years: But whether this term of years is to be understood of common solar years, or of sabbatical years making 7000, or of years of Jubilees, amounting to 50,000; or whether *Thousand*, being the most perfect number, may signify any indefinite progression of centuries, is here made no part of enquiry, but left to the judgment of those who are better skilled in the prophetic numbers; or till he who alone is worthy to open the seals of his mysterious book, shall give the interpretation thereof to such as he shall chuse to make the discovery by: Nor shall I attempt the explication of the four emblematical beasts, typical of the four kingdoms mentioned by *Daniel*, or of the agreement of the fourth beast in *Daniel* with those

those mentioned in the 13th and 17th chapters of the Revelations, which do certainly agree in their enmity and prevailing power for a season against the saints, as also in the sameness of their destruction by the Lamb, and their translation of their kingdom to his followers. These, as well as the character of the *Whore of Babylon*, have been applied almost unanimously by Protestant writers to *Rome Papal*: And her cruel persecutions, as well as her affectation and use of worldly power, do indeed denote her to have a large share in the application; and yet, to confine it to her only, argues great partiality in the other Churches in their own favour, that so they may the better shift off all charge of apostacy from themselves; whereas *Babylon*, considered as the outward manifestation of Anti-Christ mystical, though it may have a fuller visibility and display in one church or kingdom than another, yet in its principle it possesses the hearts of all that are enemies to the power of godliness in the saints, however they may be restrained from persecuting them openly: And therefore, as touching *Babylon*, it is said, "That all nations drink of the wine of the "wrath of her fornication." (Rev. xviii.) Besides, it must be allowed, that as in the most corrupt visible Church, Christ hath faithful and holy servants; so also, that there are many rotten members in the purest, who make no part of his body; Dr. *Henry More*, in his chapter called *The Lamentation over Babylon*, (in which he more particularly exposes the corruptions in the Church of Rome) among other marks with which he stigmatizes *Babylon*, he mentions the two following; first, her Anti-Christian oppositions to the divine or spiritual life: "The "palpable and visible difference, says he, that "Providence is to make betwixt the evil and the "good, will be so wisely contrived, that it shall not "only be an undoubted revelation of God's sovereignty in the world; but in a special manner,

for

“ for the high honour and triumph of the divine
 “ over the animal life, which through so many sor-
 “ rows, afflictions, temptations, scornful reproaches
 “ of the ungodly, and their cruel and barbarous usa-
 “ ges, shall at last, with all that embrace her, be
 “ enthroned in everlasting peace and glory: But
 “ says he, there is one thing behind, which is the
 “ turning of the Church into a mart or fair by col-
 “ lations of ecclesiastical preferments, for mere
 “ worldly and secular interest; the turning the ex-
 “ ercise of Christian offices into a mere trade of gain
 “ for the priests of what dignity soever: But the
 “ merchandise of such dignities in their Church shall
 “ fail them, with the rest of their pomp, in the ruin
 “ and desolation of Babylon, even their great and
 “ opine preferments, which their ambitious and
 “ worldly minds so hanker after; for these are the
 “ fat and fair objects that so make their mouths to
 “ run a water in this full Babylonish market, where
 “ every thing is to be had for money, and nothing
 “ without it.” Now, if these are some of the cha-
 racteristics of Babylon at *Rome*, then may we con-
 clude, that wherever men bearing the name of
 Christians (whilst void of that unction from the Holy
 One which is the true nature signified by that name)
 think, and live, and love, and do as they do at
Rome, there also is Babylon and the cup of her for-
 nications.

Many difficulties are often raised, and truth much
 perplexed, by restraining the sense of a subject to
 what is said of it in one verse or portion of Scrip-
 ture, without attending to what is predicted of the
 same in other places; for it is not the way with
 sacred writers, as was observed before, to treat their
 matter systematically, and according to the artificial
 methods of human composition, but as it were *raptim*
et saltim, as the Spirit prompted them; and there-
 fore Scripture should be explicated by Scripture, and
 things

things widely separated and distant in place, be brought together in one view, in order to give them clearness and consistency. For want of this, some have restrained the saints of the first resurrection, mentioned Rev. xx. to the noble army of martyrs, who are there indeed distinguished as to precedence and priority in this resurrection, but not exclusive of many saints of other orders and classes; for if so, then *Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*, and the Blessed *Virgin* also, would be excluded from reigning with Christ. Besides, as the Rev. Mr. *Clarke** justly observes: "There is an internal martyrdom of the heart, which will doubtless be accepted to a place in the first resurrection; and exemplary piety in a corrupt world and a very corrupt age of it, is oftentimes a trial slower, and perhaps harder than any other martyrdom." But that the number of the first resurrection-saints will be of far greater extent than so, is plain from Rev. xi. where it is said, upon the sounding of the seventh angel, "There were great voices in heaven, proclaiming the kingdoms of this world as become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, who should give reward unto his servants the Prophets, and to the Saints, and to them that feared his name, small and great." And that the same kingdom of our Lord is the subject here spoken of in this chapter, and also in Rev. xix. carried on through part of the xxth, is evident to any attentive reader: The voices in heaven proclaiming his advent and victory; the worship of the four and twenty elders, and the small and great that shall praise him in his kingdom, with other particulars relating to the solemnity of his accession, answer to one another as Cherub to Cherub on the mercy seat.

* Essay on the Number Seven.

Another

Another circumstance here to be noted with respect to this kingdom is, that it will be a time of judgment as well as of government and great joy; and the Saints who shall judge the world (1 Cor. vi.) shall be also judged themselves: The best will have something to be ashamed of and sorry for, and cause enough to confess, that not any merits of their own, but God's mercies and Christ's merits have advanced them to this honour; and that the blessed lot of their inheritance is by no means of debt, but all of gift and free Grace: Nor is it to be doubted, that even the Apostles themselves, who shall sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel, shall first take their turn in the judgment, that they may receive praise of God before men and angels, and be welcomed to their high dignity by the mouth of the heavenly King, pronouncing, "Well done good and faithful servants, enter into the joy of your Lord." The dead in Christ, says the Apostle, shall rise first, (1 Thes. iv.) or at the first resurrection; and to what end this priority of their resurrection serves, we learn from Rev. xi. 18. where our Lord's accession to his kingdom had just before been spoken of, and is here represented as a time of wrath and a time of love, of wrath for the unbelieving and disobedient nations, and of love for the Saints: "The time of the dead (in Christ) is come, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants, &c. and shouldst destroy them which destroy the earth." How in vain would any go about to explain this of the Grace of Christ reigning in the hearts of his servants under an outward establishment of the Christian religion? for how should the Grace of Christ and spirituality of his religion be established or defended by the laws and weapons of carnal men? Nay, is it not well known how the sword of the ungodly, who destroy all true peace and comfort in the earth, has ever been turned against those who are true of heart in

defence of vital religion; and that from the very first establishment of the visible constitution of it under Constantine, the kingdoms of this world, both as to the civil and ecclesiastical jurisdiction thereof, have for the most part been in the hands of men, either void of religion, or having only the form of godliness, but denying the power thereof?—

If the reader will be at the pains of comparing the seventh chapter of Daniel with the twentieth of the Revelation; he will find a wonderful agreement betwixt the prophetic visions of those two beloved and inspired writers, both as to the exercise of the regal and judicial power of Christ and his Saints in his kingdom: In both, the thrones are pitched, and the judgment sits; in both, judgment is given to the Saints; in both, the Saints possess the kingdom, or reign with Christ; in both, dominion and power is taken away from the Evil one, signified by dethroning the kingly horn, who had for a time prevailed against the Saints in the former, and by the binding of Satan for a thousand years in the latter; and in both, the grand jubilé of the Holy Empire succeeds the destruction of the Anti-christian powers.

The learned *Mede* hath * shewn, that the more intelligent part of the ancient Jews did believe that the kingdom of the Messiah in the Seventh Chiliad or Millennium, would be a time of exercising his judicial authority; and that the Saints would judge the nations as well as have dominion over the people, as it is declared in *Wisd. iii.* and doubtless the plain prophecy of Daniel before mentioned, was to them as a strong shield in that their faith: And therefore it was, that they usually called his reign *Magnum diem Judicii*, the great day of judgment, or the judgment of the great day; † not hereby meaning the

* See his chapter called *Placita Doctorum Heb.*

† The Jews (if we except some of the more inspired among them) seem to have had no notion of a second resurrection, or of a state of supreme

the short space of a natural day, but a season of administration, a dispensation, or period of time:— Thus the day of their temptation in the wilderness, of their captivity, of their affliction, signifies a duration or continuance of many years: And so *Abraham* with the eye of faith saw *Christ's* day, and was glad; but what day shall we suppose meant here, the day when *Abraham's* Lord suffered as a malefactor, or the day when he shall be exalted on his throne in his kingdom, to fulfil the covenant made with *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*? I shall not here enter into that dispute concerning the application of these words of *St. Peter*, who, in the same chapter where he speaks of the new heavens and the new earth, says, that “one day is with the Lord as one thousand years, and one thousand years as one day;” for whether they be understood as referring to the time of judgment in the millennial reign of *Christ*, or to the time preceding it, the affirmation holds equally true; observing only by the way, that the general mistake of confining the work of judgment to the compass of a natural day, arises from not distinguishing between the vulgar acceptation of the word, and the different uses of it in Scripture, according to the nature of the subject to which it is applied. *Bishop Hall* sets himself to expose the scheme of interpretation for protracting the judgment beyond the time

Supreme felicity in the eternal heavens with the everlasting Father; but to have looked no further than the glories of the *Messiah's* kingdom; and perhaps the light of their dispensation did not reach beyond this, these things being reserved for a more perfect revelation of divine truth: However, this opinion is submitted to better judges, only with this observation, that the Jews are without excuse in falling so short of their own dispensation, in rejecting the person of the *Messiah* in his suffering state so clearly testified by their Prophets, and for thinking so unworthily of the nature of his kingdom, both as to its spiritual and material excellencies and glories.

which popular opinion has assigned to it, and has erected it into one of the paradoxes, which he has imputed to the belief of Christ's millennial kingdom. "As if the Almighty, says he, should be limited to do his acts by leisure; as if he that made the world in six days, and could have made it in an instant, cannot in that space of time judge it? Alas! what is time, but a poor circumstance of finite mortality, not reaching up to the acts of the Eternal; that Ancient of Days may not have his workings confined to hours, days, months and years; and justly do we say, that he, who is of himself one most pure and simple act, works in an instant; he can therefore gloriously reveal his justice, truth and power, to men and devils, without such leisurely respirations." But the question here, with the Bishop's leave, is not about God's power, but his good pleasure; not concerning what he is able to do, but what he sees fit to do, and has declared to be the rule of his proceedings. As God was pleased to manifest himself in a created nature of temporary existence, so has he made time the measure of all temporal things, and his manifestations are in order and succession suited to the capacity of his creatures. Man is for precipitating all things, and hastening them to a conclusion, but God proceedeth leisurely, and dealeth with man according to the measure of a man; for though time is a poor circumstance of finite mortality to God, yet is it the element and line of our life, and the sphere which comprehends all our knowledge and actions. Certain it is, that God did limit his acts by leisure in his works of creation; and all his creatures, by the general laws of their nature, advance leisurely both towards their maturity, and their end: Nor is it otherwise in the ways of his providence: He could have delivered his people from their Ægyptian bondage in less than 400 years, and have led them thro' the Wilderness in less than 40; and instead of length-

lengthening the plan of man's redemption, thro' a series of events for 4000 years, have appointed the atoning sacrifice to take place immediately after the first transgression.—But this suited not with the scope he had decreed for the manifestation of his wonders, and that display of wisdom, power and goodness which may serve for a theme of adoration and praise to all worlds, when time shall be no more: And sure it is, that we have all great cause to praise his Name (however hardened and impenitent men may abuse such patience) that he doth not execute his sentence speedily, but leisurely against every evil work, because he is slow to anger, and slow to inflict punishment: And who knows how slowly and leisurely he may proceed in the administration of the great judgment, not only to explain and justify all his ways and doings to all his creatures, but also to subserve many gracious purposes of mercy, which at present lye beyond the reach of our conception.

MEDITATION.

AND hath the Lord prepared his seat for judgment? and shall even his Saints stand before his throne to give an account of what they have done in the body? O how awful is the thought of that day when all our misdeeds shall be set before him, and every secret sin unrepented of, in the light of his countenance! Humble then thyself in the dust, O my soul, at the review of thy manifold transgressions, and confess that it is of the Lord's mercy thou wast not consumed, when thou walkedst in times past according to the course of a careless and vain world; and that he has thus far lengthened the acceptable time, this day of thy salvation. Praise him for thyself, and praise him in behalf of others, who
thus

thus granteth space for repentance, that sinners may be converted to him; and praise him likewise for having provided so many different degrees of bliss and glory for his redeemed ones in his kingdom, that men of grace in different classes may find an entrance there, where many that love much, and have had much forgiven, will be highly exalted above many of their fellows, though now lightly esteemed by the judging, self-righteous Pharisee, who shall not be able to stand in the judgment before him who resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble. By the help of this animating hope may we press on toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus: And in the strength thereof mayest thou, O my soul, be enabled to bear up under thy outward meanness and afflictions, and all the discomforts of this mortal condition, taking up thy cross willingly, bearing it patiently, and persevering faithfully unto death, that thou mayest receive a crown of life. Amen.

All the deceitfulness of false criticism has been employed to extinguish that light of evidence which the Scriptures hold out to the truth of this doctrine, concerning the glorious reign of the Saints in Christ's Kingdom here on earth: And accordingly, many have attempted to explain away the literal sense of these prophecies, by endeavouring to accommodate them to Christ's spiritual reign in the heart by the power of his grace; thus confounding things temporal with things spiritual, and the external felicity of God's chosen with their inward meetness for it; though the many circumstances enumerated do as plainly refer to the visibility and locality of this glorious kingdom as words can express; the several offices and organs of the body are spoken of in correspondence to their suitable material objects, for
exercise

exercise and gratification ; and the outward constitution of nature in the new earth, together with its productions and glories, and the condition of its inhabitants in very many circumstances and relations, are particularized and graphically described : Inasmuch that we must altogether despair of finding any certain rule for the interpretation of the Scriptures, if what is herein mentioned of the external reality of such sensible objects is not to be understood according to the sense of the letter. Besides, if the resurrection of the Saints to reign with Christ on earth, meant no more than his grace acting as the ruling principle in their hearts, why is it spoken of prophetically as a future state of the Church, seeing this has and always must have been the case with the Saints from the beginning, for without such an indwelling principle they could not be Saints ? And what has this to do with the binding of Satan for a thousand years, as it does not appear how the Saints before and after this particular period, should be any way profited by such a ligation ? And how does it appear that he has been yet so bound as to leave the world free from his deceptions ? Or rather is it not manifest, from the experience of all Saints, that they have never yet been free from his temptations and buffetings, from the time of St. Paul's complaint of this, down to the present day ? It is moreover declared, that in this happy kingdom there shall be no more sorrow or pain, for that *the former things are passed away and all things become new* : (Rev. xxi.) But when has this yet been the case with the Saints ? When have the wicked ceased from troubling them ? When have they not been men of sorrow and acquainted with grief, in the conformity of their state to that of their suffering head, according to their several measures ? But it is needless to dwell longer on confuting so absurd an interpretation, the weakness of which is such, that some men of learning, though no better friends to the truth of this doctrine than

than those before-mentioned, have seemed ashamed of it; and therefore, as a literal sense belonging to this prophetic part of Scripture, looked them too full in the face to deny it, they have set their invention to work, how to explain away the substance of it by allowing a sort of literal completion to it, which, they say, commenced with the establishment of the Christian Religion in the empire of *Constantine*, who endowed the Church with many immunities and liberal donations. At the head of these is *Grotius*, who here fixes the epocha of the Millennial kingdom and interprets *The New Jerusalem, the Lamb's Bride adorned for her husband*, of the external splendor and decorations of the Church through the munificence of Christian Princes; as if the outward adorning of gold and sumptuous apparel, which the Apostle cautions married women against the use of, (1 Pet. iii. 3.) as unbecoming godly matrons, were ornaments better suited to the present militant condition of that Church which is called to be the spouse of Christ; and as though any part of her excellency consisted in those corruptible riches, the love and desire of which are forbidden us, rather than in that meek and quiet, that humble and loving spirit which is declared to be so precious in the sight of God. But how unsuitable a date this is, wherefrom to reckon the happy and triumphant reign of Christ with his Saints, appears from hence, that within the period of a thousand years, according to this calculation, we may reckon the greatest calamities, disgrace and corruptions, that ever befel the Church. If in this æra throughout, we are to look for the halcyon days of truth and purity of worship, then did they flourish when the heresy of *Arius*, denying the true divinity of Christ, prevailed over and persecuted the orthodox believers; when Christians suffered a cruel persecution in *Persia* for thirty years together,* and

*See *Theodoret*. Book v. on the persecution by *Sapor*.

when:

when *Scythians, Goths, Vandals*, and other barbarous nations over-ran the greatest part of Christendom, committing horrible profanations of Churches, murders and rapes, as set forth in the following lamentation of *Jerom. Epist. 3. Quot matronæ, quot virgines dei, et ingenua nobiliaque corpora his belluis fuere ludibrio? Capti Episcopi, interfecti presbyteri, et diversorum officia Clericorum: Sabversæ ecclesiæ, ad altaria Christi stabulati equi, martyrum effossæ reliquie, Romanus orbis ruit, &c.* See also *Epist. xi.* And as to the state of religion in the Church about this time (not half a century from its establishment by *Constantine*) the account we have of it, is still more deplorable, every one framing to himself such doctrines as he liked best, and forming his creed according to his fancy, whilst a fondness for novelty generally prevailed; as may be seen by the following complaint of *Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers*, extracted from his treatise *On the Evil of Divisions: Usus molevit, qui postquam nova potius capit condere quam accepta retinere, nec vetera defendit nec innovata firmavit, et facta fides temporum potius quam evangeliorum. Periculosum nobis admodum atque etiam miserabile est, tot nunc fides existere quot voluntates, tot doctrinas quot mores: Excedimus eâ fide quæ sola est, et dum plures fiunt, ad id cæperunt esse, ne ulla sit.* Here is a sad report by a father of the Church of the little amity in faith, or rather of the multiplicity of creeds, and of the distracted condition of things in the Church so soon after its establishment; and if we come lower down, we shall not find matters at all mended, but growing worse and worse, through introduced superstitions and fraudulent practices to support them; through animosities between the Eastern and Western Churches, the pride and ambition of Popes, and the nonsensical jargon of the schools, set up in the place of sound divinity. Nor did things go better without than within doors, for soon after the Northern ravagers

vagers had scourged backsliding Christendom, the *Saracens* succeeded as the instruments of its farther correction, spreading horror and desolation through all the Southern parts of Europe, as these were afterwards followed by the *Turks*, to lengthen out the punishment of apostate Christians, and to confine them within narrower bounds; teaching them hereby, that they were not the Saints of the Most High, to whom the promise was made of the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heavens, (Dan. vii.) for a possession: Nor did the combined forces of Christian Princes assembled in mad *Crusades* at all avail to expel the warlike descendants of *Ishmael* from their conquered settlements in *Palastine*, or stop their progress to the Western shores of Europe; but served only to augment their loss and shame, and to evince at the same time, that not the figure of a cross, nor the name of *Holy*, could give sanctity or success to bloody wars, or avert God's wrath for sin; and that the truth of his religion is to be defended and propagated, not by carnal weapons, but by demonstration of the Spirit joined to purity of life and manners.

But the disgrace and sin of degenerate Christendom, within the period here mentioned, appears in nothing more flagrant than in that evil spirit of persecution which instigated the Ecclesiastical Powers to make Princes the executioners of their Antichristian wrath and hatred on their poor Christian brethren the *Albigenses* and *Waldenses*, in the valleys of *Piedmont*, and to butcher them by tens of thousands at a time, with more than pagan cruelty; and this for no other crime than peaceably separating themselves from communion with a Church which they could no longer in good conscience join with in worship and doctrines. These people may properly be called the first reformers of religion from its impure mixtures; and from their Institutes it was that our *Wickliffe* sketched out the plan of that reformation

mation which afterwards took place amongst us under the new editions of *Luther* and *Calvin*. From this hasty glance of the state of the Church soon after *Constantine's* edict in its favour downwards, it will sufficiently appear, that *Grotius* has made a very bad choice of an epoch for the commencement of Christ's happy millennial reign, and that *Satan*, instead of being bound and shut up in the bottomless pit for a thousand years from that time forward, was never more at large, either to deceive under the subtlety of the serpent, or to devour as a roaring lion; nor will it admit of any doubt, whether by slipping into the form of godliness he did not more succeed in his enmity against the power of it in the Church established, than by the ten bloody persecutions of it, under Rome, whilst pagan, before its establishment.

If then the glorious *Millennium* began in the time of *Constantine*, then was *Jerusalem* in prosperity and *Sion* in peace, when ravaged by barbarians and infidels, and when feuds and divisions raged in the very bowels of Christendom; then did mercy and truth meet together when cruelty and heresy, pelagianism, ignorance and superstition overspread the Church, and the stronger party in it murdered the best of their brethren for conscience sake, under pretence of doing God good service: If these were the happy times of the Church, according to *Grotius*, when the glorious promises of God to his elect were fulfilled, and when all should be love, joy and peace, and the Father be worshipped in spirit and in truth; then must we be at a loss to know what is meant by precious promises of good things, or how to understand the Scriptures, and the accomplishment of them, nay how to distinguish the reign of Christ from that of *Anti-christ* on earth: In a word, then we know not whereabouts we are, nor on what foundations we stand, nor what we have to trust to, for our fore-fathers in this case have run away with the blessing.

blessing, and yet we see not wherein they were blessed above others: In this case, our *Jerusalem* is no longer a praise in the earth, but a reproach to her adversaries, and her true name is *I-chabod*, for her glory is departed; (Sam. iv. 21.) paradise is lost a second time, and no farther restoration of it is to be expected, for the election of Grace is already accomplished in its full number, and we have no lot or portion in that matter, but our time is that of *Gog* and *Magog*, and nothing is now to be looked for but mourning, lamentation and woe.

The absurdity of this error in *Grotius* is too palpable to need farther refutation, and therefore we cannot but express surprize that good Dr. *Hammond*, among others, should be so led away by it, as to hold that the resurrection of the saints to reign with Christ on earth is past already: Nor is he the only Divine of eminence in our Church that has given up a better judgment to the fanciful glosses of this author, through a faulty obsequiousness to the reputation he possessed for his learning, though perhaps the whole class of commentators on the Sacred Writings cannot supply us with a performance wherein learning and invention are more trifled with than in *Grotius's* Exposition of the Apocalypse, which so deservedly exposed him to the censure of the learned Dr. *Henry Moore*. To instance only in a few of his many offensive interpretations: He expounds the *outward court* and *holy city*, (Rev. xi.) of the city *Ælia*, built by *Adrian*, on the spot of ground where *Jerusalem* stood; and its being *trod-den down of the Gentiles*, of a heathen temple built therein; and he makes the *Two witnesses* to signify two Churches of Christians in the same city, the one speaking *Hebrew*, the other *Greek*. By the *Temple of God* or the inward court of the temple as appointed to be measured, (though it has evidently a mystical or spiritual sense) *Grotius* understands that particular-spot of ground which should not be built upon

upon by *Adrian*. By Anti-Christ he supposes the Jewish impostor *Barchochab* to be signified; and the fight of *Michael* with the dragon he refers to that doubtful report of *Simon Magus* tumbling head-long out of the air at the prayer of St. Peter: the reign of the martyrs with Christ he expounds to the meaning of the honour done them at their sepulchres; and the letting loose of *Satan* to the invasion of Christendom by the *Turks*, though it must be observed by the way, that this happened about the middle of his supposed *millennium*, and above four hundred years before the time mentioned in Scripture for his enlargement: And as to *The Bride of the Lamb*, (Rev. xix) by which every one that has learned his Christian alphabet, knows to be meant Christ's Mystical Body, the Church, or his spiritual members, *Grotius* explains (away) this very significant figure into a complimentary allusion to *Constantine's* family and retinue: Now what can exceed the profaneness of this last interpretation but his expounding the stone cut out of the mountain without hands, (Dan. ii.) and the *Son of Man* coming in the clouds of heaven, to signify the grandeur and power of the Roman people? Doctor *Henry Moore*, who patiently bears with many other fond conceits of *Grotius*, can no longer contain himself at this, but cries out: "Here is a device which is scarcely to be uttered without horror and astonishment! I am infinitely amazed, says he, that so learned a man should fall into so bad an error."*

This method of expounding prophecy to frivolous senses, and in reference to characters and events of little concernment to the Christian Church, is highly reproveable, as it tends to lessen our reverence for the Sacred Writings, and to expose them to the derision of Jews and Infidels, whilst it degrades the

* *Moore's Works*, page 668.

sublime mysteries of the Gospel and the important transactions relative to the divine oeconomy of our redemption to a level with petty occurrences in the administration of human affairs, oftentimes accidental, or attended with no remarkable consequences, or at least with such as bear not any connection with the salvation of mankind, which, I am bold to say, every thing foretold in Scripture does, in one sense or another. I shall only trouble the reader with one more instance of puerility in this author's interpretation of prophecy. The last trumpet-vision recorded in Rev. xi. exhibits an awful solemnity of divine worship and praise in heaven, on the kingdoms of this world becoming the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, in which the four and twenty elders before his throne are represented as joining in the following hymn: "We give thee thanks, O Lord
" God Almighty, who art and wast and art to come,
" because thou hast taken to thee thy great power,
" and hast reigned." Can any man of sober judgment suppose, that the Holy Spirit intended less by all this sacred pomp of prophecy and praise, than some most glorious and happy revolution in the kingdoms of this world, which should afford matter of joy to the angelic host, and of adoration and thanksgiving to the eternal King? And yet *Grotius*, with his favourite figure *Meiosis*, makes no more of it than the privilege granted to the early Christians, by some of the Roman Emperors of professing their religion at *Jerusalem*, when the Jews were expelled that city. Such trifling as this with divine revelation, offers an insult to the understanding of Christian men, that calls for indignation and rebuke: And when expositors of Scripture think themselves privileged by what they call learning, to vent such crude notions for the mind of the Holy Spirit, it is high time to call out to their well meaning followers, to caution them of their danger, and that they beware
how

Now they suffer their reverence of any man to cause them to fall (Eccles. iv.) into his delusions.

Learning has its use when duly employed; and when it knows its proper bounds: Thus, it is serviceable in rightly dividing the word of truth into its literal and allegorical sense, and giving to each its due; in settling the meaning of doubtful or equivocal terms; in explaining the idioms of languages; in rectifying the mistranslations; in clearing up points in history, chronology, topography, &c. In these and such like matters, it lends a friendly aid to the knowledge of the Scriptures, and is not likely to be spoken of: But in the mysteries of the kingdom, and those deep things of God, which can only be spiritually discerned by the light of that wisdom which is from above; here human learning is at the end of its line; all within is the *Sanctum Sanctorum*, into which none gain admittance but men of humble minds and devout hearts; the learned and unlearned here are both alike, where the *Inspiration of the Almighty alone, giveth understanding*, (Job. xxxii.) and God revealeth his secrets to whom and in what measure he will reveal them. Within the sphere of learning much good or hurt is occasioned by it, according to the principles and dispositions of the parties that respectively possess it, as the same fire differently circumstanced and modified, ripens the fruits of the earth or blasts them. Thus, learning in an *Austin*, recommended and enforced every motive and obligation to Christian faith, whilst the same in a *Pelagius*, undermined the foundations of it: In *Erasmus* and Archbishop *Usher*, the acquirements of human literature are an ornament and defence to religion; whilst in a *Bayle* and a *Bolingbroke*, they are a disgrace to the name of it: So that learning, merely as such, lends no authority to truth, but only in its right use and application, for it can adopt and defend error as strenuously as it can oppose it, as the

Apostle

Apostle Paul was the same great scholar when a bitter enemy to the faith of Christ, as when he defended it against the Philosophers at *Athens*. Hence it is, that science or human learning, in respect to divine things, is spoken of in Scripture under very disparaging terms when set in comparison with the teachings of God's Spirit, (1 Cor. ii.) being called fleshly wisdom, the wisdom of this world, that wisdom by which men know not God, or when they did know him, glorified him not as God, but became vain in their imaginations, (were infatuated in their reasonings) and professing themselves to be wise they became fools. (Rom. i.) Such are frequently represented as the greatest adversaries to the doctrine of the cross, (and generally are) counting the wisdom of God in the simplicity of the Gospel, no better than foolishness: No wonder then we read, that not many of these wise men were converted to the faith, (1 Cor. i.) for being full of that knowledge which puffeth up, their prejudices on the side of error were the more confirmed by it, whilst their pride and self-sufficiency render them invincible by the force of truth: And in like minds the same causes still work the same effects, in opposition to the spirituality of religion; for where the heart is not seasoned with humility and grace, human learning can and does, even under the profession of religion, fight as strongly against the life and power of it now, as it did against the first admission of its doctrines formerly. This evinces that the work of reformation and conversion must begin in the heart, and that proper dispositions therein for the reception of the truth, must first lead the way to it; and hence it is, that so many applications are made in Scripture to the heart rather than to the head, as, *My Son, give me thy heart*: (Prov. xxiii.) *Speak ye to the heart of Jerusalem*; (Isa. xl.) and that the understanding and wisdom of the heart is therein so much insisted

insisted on, seeing *out of it*, as Solomon says, *are the issues of life*. (Prov. iv.) St. Paul thanks God, that his conversation had been *in simplicity and godly sincerity* with his *Corinthians*, and *not with fleshly wisdom*: (2 Cor. i.) And to *the pure in heart* is promised that great blessing of *seeing God*. (Matt. v.) All which do confessedly give the preference to right dispositions in the heart over the richest furniture of ideas in the head, and denotes that the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour *Jesus Christ*, which maketh wise unto salvation, must have its root in the former, without which the scientific part of religion can only qualify us for subtile reasons and admired disputers, seeing its farthest process is only to specious opinions and barren speculations; it may put forth the leaves of a blind zeal and a pompous profession, but cannot bring forth fruit to perfection. An apposite little story occurs on this subject, which, to the best of my remembrance, I met with in Dr. *Woodward's Call to a careless world*. As two learned men were engaged in a warm dispute on some topic in religion, in their evening's walk, they chanced to spy a poor shepherd on his knees at his devotions; upon which one of them turning to the other said as follows: *Indocti rapiunt cælum, dum nos docti doctè descendimus in Gehennam*. The unlearned take the kingdom of heaven by violence, whilst we with all our learning go learnedly to hell.

What has been here said of *Grotius*, is by no means designed to reproach that learned author with any ill intention, for his character induces us to believe that he meant well even when he erred most; and both candour and justice require that we put into the other scale the obligations we are under to him for that useful and valuable treatise which he has given us on the moral evidence *of the truth of the Christian religion*: Nor are his judicious performances on the laws of nations among his other works, to be mentioned without due honour to his name;

name, as he shewed therein a vast extent of genius, a penetrating judgment, and an honest heart: But not being spiritual as he was learned, like some other great scholars, he mistook his province when he set up for an expounder of Scripture-prophecy, and so his learning proved a snare to him: He thought to make all things, even in divinity, bow to the force of his genius, but here he undertook a task that was too hard for it: He followed not the right guide to the kingdom of mysteries, but taking the by-path of criticism, which leads to the land of fancy, he there lost himself in the wilderness of imagination: But yet this great man recovered from his wanderings at last, and then became truly great when he became little in his own eyes, and made no account of those accomplishments natural and acquired, which we are so apt to esteem most highly in him; for it is related of him, that, at the close of his life, when he saw all things in a better light, he wished himself in the condition of *John Uric*, who was a poor and illiterate, but a pious and devout peasant in his neighbourhood.

The testimony of the primitive Fathers to a future triumphant state of the Church, under a visible reign of Christ on earth.

THOUGH it be sufficient for our belief in any doctrine, that it be supported by the authority of plain Scriptures; yet as plain Scriptures may be explained away, or the sense of them contested, the agreeing judgment of good men properly qualified to interpret Scripture, will give additional strength to our faith, as joining their evidence to that of our own judgment concerning the true meaning of the Scriptures. Now the primitive fathers nearest to the times of the Apostles, are justly to be deemed competent.

petent judges in this matter, not only on account of their skill and integrity, but also as they are the best evidence for what was received for apostolical doctrine in those early days of the Church : And if the matter here before us shall appear to be such, the credibility of it will not rest upon the sole authority of the first Fathers, but is to be admitted as a doctrine received in the Church prior to their testimony, and of apostolical authority, and handed down to us by them for such. Now that a belief in Christ's second advent to reign with his Saints on earth, did prevail in those early days of Christianity, appears from the plain testimony of *Justin Martyr*, who from a Philosopher was converted to the faith of Christ about thirty years after the death of the Apostle St. *John*, and who sealed his faith with martyrdom about the middle of the second century.— This testimony is to be found in his Dialogue with *Trypho*, the Jew, as follows :

Trypho. “ Tell me truly ; do you own it as an article of your belief, that there shall be a *New-Jerusalem*, and that your people shall be raised up, and assembled thither to live with Christ in joy,” &c.

Justin. “ I am not such a miscreant, O *Trypho*, as to say one thing and mean another : I have confessed to you before, as you well know, that this is not only my belief, but that of many others ; and though I owned to you, that many Christians of piety and good faith are not of the same mind, &c. yet both I myself and every other Christian that is of a right judgment (orthodox) in all things, are well assured that there shall be a resurrection of the flesh, to a life of a thousand years in *Jerusalem*, which shall be new built, richly adorned and enlarged, as the Prophets *Ezekiel*, *Isaiah* and others have foretold ; for thus saith *Isaiah*, chap. lxxv. *Behold I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former shall not be*
“ remem-

"remembered nor come into mind: But be ye glad
 "and rejoice for ever in that which I create; for
 "behold I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her
 "people a joy, &c. And a certain man of our own
 "whose name was *John*, one of the twelve apostles
 "of *Christ*, hath prophesied in that revelation
 "which was given him, that after the thousand
 "years are ended, there shall be a universal resur-
 "rection to the final judgment." I have abridged
 this passage in translating it for brevity sake, and
 refer the learned reader for some curious latin notes
 thereon to the learned *Mede**, who upon that affir-
 mation of *Justin*, that all orthodox Christians in his
 time did believe a millennium, observes as follows:
 "If we except the primary and fundamental articles
 "of our faith, perhaps all antiquity does not furnish
 "us with a stronger testimony than this to the truth
 "of any Christian doctrine: What a presumptive
 "argument have we here in favour of its being
 "apostolical, in that it was received by all orthodox
 "men at a time so near the apostles, when highly
 "credible it is, that many were then living who
 "heard the truth from their mouths." Nor is it a
 small recommendation of his testimony that the cha-
 racter of this good father is without blemish, a man of
 great humility though abounding in all the riches of
 learning, had passed through the several schools of
 the philosophers, and found no rest for the sole of
 his foot but upon the *Terra firma* of Christian truth,
 in which he profited above most others, studying
 only to know and make known the way of salvation
 through *Christ*, the Saviour. "He was, says
 "*Epiphanius*, (*Hæres*, 46.) a holy man and a friend
 "of God, leading a life much exercised in virtue,
 "an eminent lover and worshipper of *Christ*, and
 "bold in his defence of the Christians in those
 "learned apologies which he presented to the
 "Emperors and Senate of *Rome*."

Irenæus,

* MEDE'S Works, Pag. 533, 534.

Irenæus, Bishop of *Lyons*, was another father of chief note in the early days of the church, having been a disciple of *Polycarp*, as *Polycarp* was of *St. John*. Very honourable mention is made of him by the fathers of the following ages, and even by those who rejected the doctrine of the *millennium*, as *Eusebius*, *Theodoret*, and *St. Austin*, styling him an apostolical man, admirable, and the light of the Western churches. *Jerom* in his commentaries on *Isaiah* and *Ezekiel*, and *Eusebius* in the third book of his Ecclesiastical history, affirm, that he believed in the thousand years reign of Christ on earth, according to the letter of the *Revelations*; which, by the way, is one very probable reason why all his writings in which he professedly treats that subject, have been suppressed, and that only one of his many volumes (that on heresy) is come down to us, recovered and published by *Erasmus*, in which, though the matter of the work leads not to this point of doctrine, yet there is enough to confirm what *Eusebius* and *Jerom* have affirmed of him as to this matter. In particular, he delivers it as an article in the symbol or creed of the churches in his time, that Christ should come to restore all things: And in book v. chap. 28 and 30. that at the end of six thousand years would be the sabbath of rest, when the Lord will destroy the reign of Anti-Christ, put the just in possession of the kingdom, and restore the promised inheritance to *Abraham*. *Eusebius*, who was no friend to this doctrine (nor yet to one of still greater importance) makes *Papias* to be the first author of it, and endeavours to discredit his authority, by calling him a plain, illiterate man; and yet asserts that he led *Irenæus* into this error: But if *Irenæus* was a man of such ability and learning as he is represented, and does appear by what we have left of his works, how came he to suffer himself to be imposed upon in a matter of such consequence by
a weak

a weak man, when he had no less advantage than that of conversing with those who had conversed with the apostles, and was himself a disciple of *Polycarp* who was instructed by *St. John* the Divine. Besides, it appears from the confession of *Jerom* himself, (who had taken up as strong prejudices against this doctrine as *Eusebius*) that *Papias* was also a disciple of *St. John*; and *Eusebius* owns that *Irenæus* called him so, and the companion of *Polycarp*; and surely these connections well qualified him for a witness to their doctrine. If *Papias* was a plain man, he was the less likely to impose upon others; nor could it require much learning to know whether his master *St. John* explained his prophecy of the *millennium* in a literal sense or not. Whether *Papias* was a man of learning or not, is nothing to the purpose of this question; he was an honest man, charged by no author of credit with holding heretical notions, and so great a veneration had he for the apostles, that he was a diligent collector of all remarkable particulars concerning them, and even of their sayings: What his credit in the church was, appears from his being made Bishop of *Hierapolis* by the immediate successors of the apostles; and the dignity of his office in those days of the church may be allowed a good presumptive argument of the sufficiency of his qualifications for the discharge of it; or else we must say, that all things went wrong apace in the church, even in the first century; and then there is an end of all Ecclesiastical authority. But the truth of the matter lies here; the tide of prejudice and opposition ran so strong against the millennial doctrine after the second century downwards, that no arts of calumny and misrepresentation were spared in order to sink it, insomuch that even good men were by education and the authority of the learned prepossessed against it; and this has been so much the case in general for now more than fourteen centuries, joined to the

the wicked practice of corrupting, curtailing, and suppressing the works of the first fathers on this subject, that it is next to a wonder that we have any of their testimonies to it left. It is likewise to be observed, that together with the opposition to the doctrine of the millennium sprang up in the church a fondness for that critical and contentious kind of theology which teaches men to doubt of every thing, and to dispute against every thing; insomuch that there are few of the canonical books of Scripture which did not meet with some oppugners to their divine authority about that time: But the God of truth hath set his seal upon the Sacred Writings, and his providence hath preserved them to us; and so long as we are possessed of this blessing, so long will this doctrine be supported by an authority against which the gates of hell shall not prevail: and fully assured we may be, that the time when the knowledge of the Scriptures, both as to the mysteries of our holy faith and interpretation of prophecy, will be given in greater clearness and a fuller measure than has been hitherto, and that not in the way of human learning and criticism, but by larger communications of the Spirit of wisdom from the Father of lights in the hearts of the simple and unlearned, both men and women; and that as well to humble the pride of men on account of their natural and acquired endowments, as to make manifest that the excellency of wisdom is not of man, but of God. That the full understanding of the Scriptures has not yet been given, will readily be granted; and that they shall be understood in perfection cannot be denied, since to that end they were given: Now, we know that it is according to the purpose of God, to conceal his secrets from the great and wise of the earth, and to reveal them unto babes, (Matth. xi. 25) persons of an humble mind, and of a resigned and simplified understanding; and

and that thus it shall be in the last days, when he will pour out his Spirit upon the servants and upon the hand-maids, (Joel ii. 29.) and all his children shall be taught of the Lord, (Isa. liv. 13.)

Tertullian was the first of the *Latin* fathers, and flourished in the very beginning of the third century: His learning and great abilities are confessed by all, nor have we a more unanswerable apologist for Christianity than him against Jews, hereticks and heathens: His writings, we are told, were so highly esteemed by good *Cyprian*, the martyr, that he never passed a day without reading some portion of them. He practised a very rigorous discipline himself, and was a severe reprover of that relaxation of morals that prevailed among the orthodox, (for so they affected to call themselves in his time, who placed more in right opinions than in good life and the spirituality of religion) which raised him many enemies in the church, so that every thing is aggravated against him in the matter of the *Montanists*. As to that blasphemous charge laid against *Montanus*, of pretending that he was the Holy Ghost, that is an invented calumny of late date, which no one acquainted with Ecclesiastical antiquity believes, being void of all support from authority*; and what in truth were the errors of the *Montanists*, is hard to determine, as none of their defences have been suffered to come down to us. However, that dispute affects not the testimony of *Tertullian* as to the doctrine of the *millennium*, which he received from his forefathers in the church, and has transmitted to us with the addition of his own hand and seal. It will be sufficient to our purpose to quote the following passage from his book against *Marcion* the heretick, which I find translated to my hand by *Hanmer* in his "*View of Antiquity*," called *Ἀρχαιοσύνη*. "We confess, says he, that a kingdom

* See *Lee's History of Montanism*, chap. 7. published by Dr. *Hicks*.

“ is promised unto us on earth, before the heavenly
 “ one, but in another state (of the world) viz. after
 “ the resurrection for a thousand years, in a city of
 “ divine workmanship, the *New Jerusalem* coming
 “ down from heaven; &c. This, we say, is provid-
 “ ed of God for the saints, to be there refreshed
 “ with all spiritual good things, in recompence of
 “ those things which in this world we have either
 “ despised or lost: For it is a righteous thing and
 “ worthy of God, that his servants should exult and
 “ rejoice where they have been afflicted for his
 “ name’s sake.” There are other clear testimonies
 to this purpose in his book *De Resurrectione Carnis*,
 and in that *adversus Hermogenem*: But I forbear
 to burden this work with more than needful
 quotations.

Origen is quoted by Mr. *Mede* as a witness to
 the same doctrine, and though perhaps he may
 be rather said to allude to it than professedly
 to maintain it in the passage quoted from his 13th
 Homily on *Jeremiah*, yet it sufficiently proves his
 belief therein: “ Whoever, says he, shall continue
 “ in the regeneration (*servaverit lavacrum Spiritus*
 “ *Sancti*) shall have a part in the first resurrection;
 “ but as to those who are reserved to the second
 “ resurrection, they are such sinners as stand in
 “ need of the baptism of fire: Wherefore seeing
 “ these things are so, let us lay the Scriptures to
 “ heart, and make them the rule of our lives, that
 “ so being cleansed from the defilement of sin before
 “ we depart, we may be raised up with the Saints,
 “ and have our lot with *Christ Jesus*.” And well
 might poor *Origen* look for good things in the king-
 dom of the first resurrection, who had so large a
 portion of sorrow and sufferings on this side of it.
 He is said to have written above a thousand volumes,
 and to have been constant in teaching and the
 business of the church, as also in the practice of
 piety and many rare virtues; and yet this great man

was suffered by his admirers to want even needful accommodations. *Hammer** in the conclusion of his account of him, observes as follows: "Notwithstanding all his labours and worth, yet his age and end, as well as the former part of his life, were accompanied with poverty; so small a recompence had he from men, who were contented freely to afford him their praises, whilst they kept fast their purses: *Sic virtus laudatur et alget*: And for this rich *Ambrose* † above all others, is deserving of blame, that at his death he was not more mindful of his old and indigent friend *Origen*: Hence it came to pass, that he ended his days in a mean and miserable condition. *Miserabiliter, inquit Nicephorus, infelix obiit, dying in the city of Tyre, An. Dom. 256.*" We cannot here enough lament the great decay of brotherly love shewing itself thus soon in the church, and proving to a demonstration, how much of the Spirit of Christianity was already evaporated; for what stronger argument can there be of man's apostacy from the true faith of Christ, than that of hard-heartedness towards their indigent brethren? But where this appears in any towards the ministers of Christ, and persons of unaffected piety, such do, to all intents and purposes of the apostle's meaning, *deny the faith, and are worse than infidels*, (1 Tim. v. 8.) For it must be said, upon the whole of the matter, that in every age of the church (and how dreadful is the application to our own!) selfishness, or want of charity, is the heart and soul of Anti-Christ; and in this evil principle, all pretended zeal for religion in its doctrines or modes of worship, all talking about it and about it, and all studied appearances of it, is no better than mockery and

* *View of Antiquity*, p. 247. N. B. This book, octavo, was printed anonymous in 1677.

† This could not be *Ambrose*, Bishop of Milan, who did not live till a hundred years after.

mummery,

nummery, hypocrisy and lies : And may it not be asked here ; or rather, shall it not be affirmed without scruple, that the free-hearted cavalier, without making any pretensions to piety, is far preferable to such a hollow, painted image of a pharisaical godliness.

Lactantius, that learned apologist for Christianity in the reign of *Constantine*, and, for the elegance of his style, called the *Ciceronian* father, was a professed millenary, as more particularly appears from the seventh book of his *Institutes*, wherein he asserts two resurrections, according to the *Apocalypse* and discourses at large on the reign of the Saints upon earth : Which he calls *mille anni celestis imperii, in quo justitia in orbe regnabit*. The thousand years of the heavenly empire, when righteousness shall reign on earth. He speaks there of many things that will then come to pass, among which some indeed are to be placed to the account of opinion and private judgment ; which liberty, in a modest use of it, is allowable, where it encroaches not on the dignity of the subject, and offers no violence to any article of Christian faith, especially if it be countenanced by probable inference from Scripture. He does there speak of propagation in this new kingdom, not among the Saints that shall be raised from the dead, but among those that shall be found living at the coming of Christ, who, he says, “ Shall abundantly multiply, and beget a “ holy generation, dear to God, (as Adam would “ have done, had he not sinned.) But as to the “ resurrection saints, these shall lead a more hea- “ venly life, preside over the others, and neither “ marry nor be given in marriage, but be as the “ holy angels.” *Lactantius* has been censured for holding such corporeal gratifications as eating, drinking and marriage in the new kingdom, but undeservedly and rashly, as neither his distinction betwixt the living and raised inhabitants in that

state, nor the innocent and sanctified use of these things therein, has been rightly attended to. It argues great weakness of judgment to take our measures of things in the exalted condition of that kingdom, from this of infirmity, sin and misery, in which we now live; and if none were to dispute the matter, but those who are too refined and spiritual for such appetites, the number of objectors, I think, would be but small: But sufficient has been said before on this subject, where it was considered as resting on no less authority than that of the Scriptures.

I must here beg the candid reader's excuse for a trespass in order of time, by leading him back to the testimonies of St. *Barnabas* and *Hermas*, the former in his *Catholic epistle*, the latter in his book styled *Pastor* or *Shepherd*; works so venerable for their antiquity and authority, as entitle them to priority of rank, as well as time, in the catalogue of witnesses to this doctrine, if we except that some have raised doubts, whether the apostle St. *Barnabas*, and the *Hermas* mentioned by St. *Paul*, (Rom. xvi. 14.) were the real authors of these works: This however is certain, that in the early ages of the primitive church, they were held in reverence next to the canonical Scriptures, and publicly read in the assemblies of the Christians: For the authenticity of them, I refer to Archbishop *Wake's* treatise, called *The Genuine Epistles of the Apostolical Fathers*. Though all the copies, translations and editions of these pieces have been handed down to us, through so many centuries by men, that were either declared enemies or no friends to the millennial doctrine, and therefore may be supposed to have suffered in their passage from foul dealings, as well as other of the primitive vouchers to the same truth, yet enough has escaped to preserve their testimony. Thus, St. *Barnabas*, in the fore-mentioned epistle, speaking of

of God Almighty's finishing his works in six days, and resting on the seventh day, and sanctifying it, "Consider, my children, says he, what this signifieth: The meaning of it is this: In six thousand years the Lord God will bring all things to an end, for with him one day is as a thousand years, as himself testifieth: *Behold, this day shall be as a thousand years*: Therefore, children, in six days, (i. e.) in six thousand years, shall all things be accomplished: And whereas it is said; *He rested the seventh day*; it meaneth this: When his son shall come and abolish the time of the wicked one, and judge the ungodly, and shall change the sun and moon and the stars, then he shall gloriously rest in that seventh day (seventh thousand of years). He adds lastly; *Thou shalt sanctify it with clean hands and a pure heart*: Wherefore we are greatly deceived, if we imagine that any one can now sanctify that day which God hath made holy, without having a pure heart in all things: Behold therefore, he will then truly sanctify it with blessed rest, when we (having received that righteous promise, when iniquity shall be no more, and all things be renewed by the Lord) shall be able to sanctify it, being ourselves first made holy*." Here is a full testimony of an apostolical man to the grand sabbath of rest, to be celebrated in a renewed state of nature by a people, that shall be made holy, when the hand of God shall come to perform the promise made unto the Fathers, to put away iniquity, and to produce a great change in the natural world.

If it be objected to the testimony of this venerable author, that he pretends to assign the exact time, when this revolution shall take place, whereas it appears from our Lord's words, that no man knew the precise time of it; (Matth. xxiv. 36.) be it

* Quoted from Archbishop Wake's translation.

answered,

answered, that the assignment of the seventh chiliad for this period does not infer our knowledge of the day and hour, nor yet of the year when this shall happen, as the just computation of time from the creation of the world is not known, nay, the difference in calculations is so great (in particular between the Samaritan and Jewish accounts, being no less than 311 years, according to Archbishop *Usher*) that there remains no hope of adjusting so disagreeing a chronology; and perhaps this is not without a particular design of Providence. But though we were free from all doubt as to the mensuration of time, yet forasmuch as the sixth chiliad will not run out its full length, but there will be a *cutting short*; because of the last woes for the *elects sake*, as was observed before, so we should still remain in uncertainty, as to the exact time of this grand event; forasmuch as the measure of this abridgment or cutting short, is not declared in Scripture. However; this hinders not, but as the time draws nigh, such evident signs of its approach may be given, such a knowledge of the *prophetic numbers* and *Iconisms* may be opened, and such clear presentiments of the great Messiah's second advent may be imparted to the minds of some, as may abundantly serve both for warning to the wicked, and for encouragement and comfort to the godly groaning under the burden of their present sufferings.

St. *Hermas*, author of the work called *The Shepherd*, is the last among the ancients, whose testimony I shall here make use of; and *Eusebius* tells us, (*Eccles. hist.* book iii.) that according to the received opinion in his time*, the author was the *Hermas* mentioned by St. *Paul*. He describes the present state of the world; and the future blessed state of the church in divers visions and similitudes, which may be styled divine parables: Among others

* *Eusebius* died *An. Dom.* 340.

is that of a monstrous beast, which had on its head four colours, black, a blood-red, golden and white, the interpretation of which was given to him as follows: "The black which thou sawest denotes
 "the world, in which you dwell: The fiery and
 "bloody colour signifies, that this period of it shall
 "be destroyed by fire and blood: The golden part
 "are ye who have escaped out of it; for as gold
 "is tried by the fire and made profitable, so are ye
 "also in like manner tried, who dwell among the
 "men of this world: They therefore that shall
 "endure unto the end, and be proved by them,
 "shall be purged: And as gold by this trial is clean-
 "sed and loses its dross, so shall ye also cast away
 "all sorrow and trouble, and be made pure for the
 "building of the tower†. But the white colour
 "denotes the time of the world which is to come,
 "in which the elect of God shall dwell, because
 "the elect of God shall be pure and without spot
 "unto life eternal." In the third book or chapter,
 alluding to the building of the same tower, he gives
 the interpreter's words as follows: "As therefore
 "thou hast seen, that after the rejected stones
 "were cast out of the tower, they were delivered
 "to evil and cruel spirits, and thou beheldest
 "the tower so cleansed, as if it had all been
 "made of one stone: So the church of God, when
 "it shall be purified (and the evil and hypocrites,
 "the profligate and doubtful, and all that have
 "lived wickedly, shall be cast out) it shall become
 "one body, and there shall be one understanding,
 "one opinion, one faith and the same charity:
 "And then shall the Son of God rejoice among
 "them, and shall receive his people with a true
 "good-will" This evidently means a state of the
 church on this side Heaven; for in Heaven opinion

† He alludes here to another of his visions, wherein the tower signifies the glorified church, or *New Jerusalem*.

and

and faith have no longer place, the former being there swallowed up in certainty, and the latter in fruition.

This testimony of the most early fathers to the doctrine of a triumphant state of the church on earth, is not here so much to be considered as an evidence distinct from that of the Scriptures, as making one and the same with it, their testimony being chiefly made use of here in support of the true interpretation of the Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament, and to shew that they were understood according to this meaning in the very first ages of the church, not only by the immediate successors of the apostles, but also by such as were cotemporary and conversed with them; in which respect the authority of their testimony must be allowed far to outweigh that of such among the later Fathers, who set themselves to oppose this doctrine. First, because the latter had not the same advantages of knowing the mind of the Holy Spirit from the first revealers of gospel truth; and secondly, because they lived in more degenerate times of the church, when ecclesiastical men began to think more lightly of the gifts of the Spirit of God, nay, to speak against them, and set up human learning for their idol, which greatly extinguished their divine light, and ran them into dispute and vain jangling, whilst they magnified themselves and others only in proportion to the credit they were in for scholarship and critical learning, so turning holy faith into a science and subject of debate. And from this departure from Christian simplicity and humility of heart, which are the only proper soil for evangelical fruits to thrive in, we may account for the great decrease of spiritual gifts in the church from the second century downwards, for the rise and progress of Arianism in the fourth, of Pelagianism in the fifth; though in every age of the church, even the darkest, there have been a chosen few, who cherished.

rished and preserved the light, and grace and love of God in pure vessels, and may properly be styled the *inner* court, whilst the *outward* court was trodden down by the Gentiles, professing indeed Christianity in a shew of outward worship, but holding the truth in unrighteousness; Gentiles and aliens from the commonwealth in heart and spirit; and whilst they wrapped themselves up in the form of godliness, denying, if not persecuting, the power thereof.

The ancient fathers of the church, though highly venerable for their piety and abundant labours in the work of the ministry, and many of them for their constancy in suffering, even unto death for the truth's sake, yet are they not all upon the same level in point of authority, not only on account of their nearer or more remote distance from the times of the apostles, but also as they had their different measures of grace and gifts, and were men of like passions and infirmities with good men now-a-days. They had too their prejudices of education, and constitutional weaknesses, their peculiarities in discipline and opinions, as well as their respective excellencies, to let us know that they were but men, and that we must not trust too much in man, and so run into an idolatrous kind of reverence: But this ought not to deprive them of that just tribute of respect and praise, which we owe to those early champions in the Christian cause, who have transmitted down to us the invaluable treasure of the Scriptures, and borne so much of the heat and burden of the day, in times of fiery trials for our benefit. They were not only men fearing God, and as such respectable, but most of them eminent for great talents and rare virtues, not given to the love of filthy lucre, but dead to the world, and to the honours and praise of it; burning and shining lights in their generations, and not counting even their lives dear unto themselves, so that they
might

might finish their ministry with all good conscience, and testify the gospel of the grace of God: Nor will many among the later fathers be found undeserving of this character, *Cyprian* and *St. Austin* in particular; and therefore to take pains to discredit their testimony, by exposing to public view their faults or failings, and that with aggravated censure, argues want of generosity and candour, especially when we consider what hands their writings have passed through, and what circumstances in their favour may now be lost to us at this distance of time. But, to sit down professedly to find fault with them, and to take or make an offence in their writings or characters, in order to expose them to raillery and contempt; this denotes a bad heart, and justly incurs the charge of impiety, whilst it is not only a confessed violation of charity, nay, even of common justice, but serves also to wound religion through their sides, and causes the adversaries of it to rejoice.

The art of criticism has been long applied to bad purposes in divinity, and in stead of rectifying mistakes and errors has served greatly to multiply them, insomuch that he who takes for his guides, even some of the most reputed dealers in this way, will soon be at a loss to know whereabouts he is, and what he is to believe: A new world of doubts, difficulties and objections, which he never before dreamt of, immediately presents itself to his view; and every article of his creed must be given up, to be examined with the most scrupulous caution, for he is allowed to believe nothing; but by the rules of the art critical, that is, till he has heard every thing that can be said against it; nor will the authority of the earliest Fathers of the church be allowed to stand him in stead, or to free him from his embarrassments, seeing we are taught by the more judicious Fathers of criticism to suspect their credit in every thing, and to lay as little stress as possible

possible on their testimony, even with regard to matters of fact: And accordingly, Dr. *Jortin* lays down as a rule for us to go by, "That it is safer to defer too little than too much to their decisions and authority*;" and that he means here some of the most ancient of the Fathers is plain, in that he includes the learned and pious martyr *Justin* in the number, who, says he, "are often poor and insufficient guides in things of judgment and criticism." It is *Irenæus's* character, that he was admirably well skilled in all sorts of learning both sacred and secular, eminent for his defence of the Christian faith against heretics, and answerably to his name (which signifies peaceable) a studious promoter of the peace of the church†; and the healer of that sharp dispute in the time of *Victor*; between the Eastern and Western churches in relation to the time of keeping Easter. *Epiphanius* says of him as follows †: "Old *Irenæus*, every way adorned by the Holy Ghost, brought into the field by the Lord as a valiant and expert soldier and champion, and anointed with heavenly gifts and graces according to the true faith and knowledge, contended against all the arguments of sottish heretics, and most accurately confuted them." From the foregoing character of this father, and also from considering that he was brought up at the feet of *Polycarp* the disciple of *St. John*, it appears highly reasonable to allow his testimony, at least with regard to such matters of fact, as he delivers upon his own knowledge; but modern criticism says No; and the reason why, is not hard to guess, viz. because modern criticism is no friend to the belief of miracles; now *Irenæus* does assert the continuance of extraordinary gifts of the Holy

* See his *Remarks on Ecclesiastical History*, vol. ii. p. 164.

† See *Erasmi* Epist. ante *Irenæum*. † *Heres.* 31.

Ghost in his time, as prophecying, casting out devils, and healing by laying on of hands; and does also affirm that persons raised from the dead were then living. This made so strongly against Dr. *Middleton's* system of incredulity, that he had no other way of getting over this father's testimony, than by representing him as a weak and credulous man, which he scruples not to call him: Dr. *Jortin* adopts the charge, only with the following lenitive: "I fear it will be no easy task to clear him entirely from the imputation of credulity and inaccuracy*;" and to authorize his fear, if he was under any fear about it, he gives the following quotation from *Le Clerc*: "The credulity and inaccuracy of the Christians of those times permits us not to trust to their relations, especially when they contain any thing preternatural." Thus the Doctor leaning on the shoulders of *Middleton* and *Le Clerc* (*par nobile fratrum*) gently gives a third kick to the authority of this excellent Father: But he deals more roundly with some others of that class, for he calls *Papias* a simpleton; and as to the good martyr *Cyprian*, he tells us that "What he thought upon in the day, he dreamt of at night, and the next morning took his dreams for divine admonitions." Here the Doctor dispatches his business like a workman, and strikes off the authority of two more of the Fathers at a jerk. But he is much offended with some others of them for their plain-dealing in their remonstrances to the Emperors in favour of the Christians; for taking occasion to extol the genteel civility, decency and politeness observable in the apologies of *Athenagoras* and *Melito*, he tells us that "*Tertullian* compared to them in point of address and courtesy is a very clown, and so is *Justin Martyr*." I did not know before, that gentility and politeness were qualifications requisite

* Remarks, &c. Vol. ii. p. 207.

in the Ancient Fathers of the church; however, I have no objection to these in proper time and place, nay, think them commendable; and therefore the rather wonder that the Doctor should treat *Justin Martyr* and *Tertullian* so unlike a gentleman. It is natural to observe here, how well the Doctor's preference in favour of politeness over that clownish virtue; plain-dealing, supplies us with an apology for Pope *Gregory* the Great, in a part of his character hitherto much censured, I mean his congratulatory address to the Emperor *Phocas*, who murdered his master *Mauritius*, and seized on his Empire: The following words are to be found in that epistle *Benignitatem pietatis vestræ ad imperiale fastigium pervenisse gaudemus; lætentur cæli, et exultet terra, &c.* "We rejoice that the benignity
 "of your godliness has ascended the imperial
 "throne: Let the heavens rejoice, and the earth
 "be glad, &c." How differently would *Justin Martyr* and *Tertullian* have expressed themselves in writing to such a murderous usurper? but they were clowns, and *Gregory* a man of courtesy and politeness; and what man of breeding in this polite age can be guilty of such coarse language, as to stile a genteel compliment by a Bishop of Rome, the base flattery and servile prostitution of a time-serving church-man? But if the Doctor's genteel civility is so proper a part in the character of a man of God, even in the discharge of his ministerial office, what must we suppose that he thinks of that rough-hewn man *John* the Baptist, who with his unfashionable coat, and no less unfashionable behaviour, had the assurance to handle *Herod* so boldly in the matter of *Herodias*? What less, than that he deserved to be put into the stocks for using such clownish freedoms with a person of his quality; for as to beheading, I am persuaded that the Doctor deems that punishment more than adequate to his offence.

False criticism is of ancient standing in the church, as appears from Scripture, wherein we are cautioned against such as turn aside from faith unfeigned (the simplicity of faith) to vain jangling, and such as doat about foolish questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh railing, evil surmizings, and perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, destitute of the truth. But though this science, falsely so called, and censured by the Apostle in his epistle to *Timothy*, has long had its favourers and practitioners, yet perhaps it never flourished more than within a century past, and this to the staggering of man's faith in every article of religion, and to the introducing a general scepticism amongst us; insomuch that nothing is more common at this day, than to hear the first principles of religion, as the doctrine of original sin, and the renovation of our hearts by the Spirit of Grace, not only called in question but derided: And as to going to God in prayer for the light of his Spirit, confessing our blindness, and submitting our understandings to his teaching, as David directs and did, what rank enthusiasm must this appear to such as hold, that the Spirit of Criticism is sufficient for us? Or if they grant that the former way be taken by the illiterate, common sort of people who have no other, yet they expect it should be allowed that they themselves can do better without it: In truth, their meaning and desire is to be thought the only oracles of wisdom, and to lead captive the minds of the people by instilling into them a slavish veneration for their supposed learning; whilst they themselves, though ever learning, never come to the knowledge of the truth, because they seek it not in simplicity of heart, and therefore stand in need of being taught, which are the first principles of the oracles of God. I distinguish here betwixt true criticism and the false, in respect to divine things, meaning by the former a sound judgment and clear discernment joined to an honest

honest and humble heart and pious affections, as these last are necessary qualifications here, not only to beat down all self-conceit and fondness of praise from men, to regulate the imagination, and to give sobriety to the judgment; but also to fit us for that wisdom from above, which *maketh men of* quick understanding in the fear of the Lord, (Isa. xi. 3.) Thus instructed, the divine critic will be thoroughly furnished for his work, be able rightly to divide betwixt truth and error, to lay open the deceitful covers of specious sophistry, to separate the precious from the vile, and to give all their due, credit to whom credit, praise to whom praise, and censure to whom censure is due. Here human learning is in safe hands, and will be applied to its proper use; in particular, it may be helpful on occasion, to *answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit.* (Prov. xxvi. 5.)

Every thing in true religion has its counterfeit in the false; thus, as there is a false worship, a false faith, a false zeal, &c. so also is there a false criticism in divinity, and her sons are many according to their respective natural turns or talents. Thus, there are your minute critics, whom Mr. *Pope* somewhere calls, "Word-catchers that feed on syllables."—These will go nine times round the plain meaning of a word to find a flaw in it, or by an artificial twist make it speak contrary to its most obvious sense: They deal much in ancient manuscripts, especially if little known or hard to come at; and they are fond of monosyllables and particles, as by a dextrous management of these, by changing, transposing, leaving them out, or putting them in at pleasure, they can do wonders with any sentence you shall give them: They will even venture with their art to take the tree of life out of the midst of the garden, and place it where they please. Though this sort of critics appear not very formidable at first sight,

sight, yet by their indefatigable diligence they may do a world of harm, as the smallest worms bore holes in ships that sink them at last.

Secondly, There is the ostentatious critic, with all his pomposity of quotations in the ancient languages, from any authors, if profane no matter, so that he may make a show of his learning; not that he has a better understanding than others because of this, but rather a smaller share of it, for spending his vigour so much on the bark of the tree of knowledge, he is the less able to make his way to the heart of it: Besides, he is often more obliged to good indexes than we know of, for the many signals he displays of his much reading; but he is desirous to appear wise in the Scriptures, and so sets about to explain St. *Paul's* epistles by the use of the same words and phrases as they stand in the Greek comedies of *Aristophanes*; he will be as little obliged to revelation as he can, and so only takes his words from thence, whilst he borrows the sense of them from the heathen poets, and so turns the sacred canon into a pipe to play his profane tunes upon.

Thirdly, There are your bold adventurers in criticism, who despising all borrowed helps, and to tread in beaten tracks, will undertake to shew you a new road to faith, more to be depended on than any known before; nay, pretending to have found out, by a rare invention of their own, the only true evidence that can support the authority of the Pentateuch, and of the renowned legislator of the *Hebrews*: But some that were beguiled by the fair promises of one of these deluders, do affirm, that after following him through many dark and thorny ways, he left them in a wilderness poorer in faith than he found them; herein resembling those sharpers who decoy credulous people into by-places, under pretence of shewing them hid treasure, and then

then rob them of their money. Some of these who boast so much of their curious discoveries, do not scruple to affirm, that they have seen the original marriage-contract between church and state, and that they can tell you to a penny, how much the former got by the match; though some more worthy of credit, are ready to prove to a demonstration, that what she gained thereby in the article of wealth, comes far short of what she lost in true estimation and honour, and that she has since given up more than became her.

Fourthly, "There is the race of Gigantic Critics, so called as they may be compared to the fabulous giants of old who attempted to storm heaven.— These are men of brass with a witness, who fear neither God nor man, but despise all authorities, and in a full confidence of their own sufficiency place themselves without ceremony in the Chair of Infallibility. The most Ancient Fathers of the church, they account no better than pigmies in divinity, and seldom speak of them but with contempt; nay, they scruple not to reject their testimony, even as to matters of fact within their knowledge, and so allow them not the same credit which we give a common mechanic. They pretend to have by them the exact dimensions of their understandings, and, by the help of their critical scales, to tell you the weight of their honesty to a grain. In a word, they do roundly affirm, that though they have passed so long in the church for Fathers, yet they were in truth but children, and that a tolerable modern critic, assisted by some late improvements in this art, knows better what they heard, and saw, and said, than they did themselves. Nor are they much more modest with regard to the Scriptures, rather giving their own sense to them than receiving that which they hold forth; nay, questioning the divine authority of such books or passages as suit not with their particular systems—
and

and fancies, for nothing is allowed to stand before them that is in the way of building up themselves and the reputation of their art critical. The inspired Writings must bend to the rules of their own grammar; and as they are all for comprehensibles in religion, they never willingly admit any thing into their creed, which does not come within the sphere of their own intellect. They are very unwilling to own miracles, but when they cannot help it, limiting as much as possible their faith by the laws of nature, whereas miracles put things out of their course, and they often see no manner of occasion for them, or can explain them better in the way of natural operations, usually stiling such supernatural acts the expence of miracles, as though they put God Almighty to some needless charge, or occasioned him trouble: On these and other accounts, they seldom admit of any miracles wrought since the times of the Apostles, however credibly attested; and how far farther back they would carry their incredulity, if they durst, we know not, but by their nibbling we may guess their meaning. Nay, some of these Gigantic Critics of the first rate, have stood upon little reserves in this matter, and have levelled their clubs against the miracles recorded both in the Old and New Testament. It may be needless to observe, that these bold disputers bear no good will to the doctrine of particular providences, for all such divine interpositions border so nearly on the dispensation of miracles, that they are an offence to their system. Nor are we to wonder, from this character of them, that they are such professed enemies to the spiritual sense of the Scriptures, stiling it *mystical jargon*, and so robbing religion of its true life and power, leaving nothing in the room of these but a sapless, sterile, unaffecting system of ideas, notions and opinions, which neither warm nor comfort the heart, nor have any relation to the spiritual part of man. They deny the *typical* references

references of the Jewish oeconomy to that ministration of the Spirit, which exceedeth in glory, (2 Cor. iii. 8.) and so rob the Levitical dispensation of its testimony (in the way of figurative prophecy) to the spiritual dispensation of the gospel; hereby taking away the seal from both Testaments, and nullifying the evidence both of the promises of good things and of the accomplishment of them, and setting up the shadow, without its meaning, in the place of the substance; whereas St. Paul speaking of the Jewish priesthood and the service of the tabernacle, calls them the shadow of heavenly things, (Heb. viii. 5.) and elsewhere (1 Cor. x.) he expounds the cloud, the passage of the Israelites through the sea, the manna, the rock yielding water, &c. all in a mystical sense: Now, says he, *All these things happened unto them as types**, (1 Cor. x. 11.) or figurative exhibitions of things to come: And his other allegorical or mystical interpretations of Sarah and Hagar, Isaac and Ishmael; as relative to the two covenants, shew a figurative sense wrapped up in these characters. Nor are the preceptive parts of the law without their figure: Thus, for instance, that of *not muzzling the ox that treadeth out the corn* is expounded by the Apostle in an allegorical sense, and saith, that *for our sakes it is written*. Now these are only samples among many other things under the law, that have their perfect interpretation and accomplishment in the gospel-ministration or the spiritual life; and therefore to oppose mysticism here, is to oppose the right interpretation and most edifying truths of the Scriptures, which that kind of criticism does which rejects their spiritual reference and meaning under pretence of doing justice to their grammatical and verbal sense. But I shall keep back what I have farther to offer on this head, till I have done with the following critic.

* This is the closest interpretation of the words in the original.

Though

Though it is with the utmost unwillingness that I enter upon personal animadversions, yet where the honour and truth of religion are concerned, we are called upon not only to declare against dangerous errors, but against the authors of them also, especially where they stand in some degree of reputation for their learning, and so are the more likely to diffuse the poison of their errors, by the seeming authority of their names. I shall here content myself with instancing in the noted *Le Clerc*, of *Amsterdam*, for an example of the last mentioned species of false criticism, not only as he was in himself a most flagrant proof of it, but may in a sort be called the Father of our modern heterodox critics, uniting in himself the single talents of many others, and forming one compound of *Arian*, *Socinian* and *Pelagian*, as appears from the whole tenor of his writings, in which he all along opposes the doctrine of original sin, or the derivative corruption of man's nature through the fall; and denies, that by Grace is any where meant in Scripture the inward operation of God, or the work of his Spirit in our hearts; affirming that it signifies no more than his affording us outward means and help, for man to make the best he can of by the strength of his own natural powers. He sets himself to weaken or explain away every proof of the union of the divine and human natures in the person of *Jesus-Christ*, as also of the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity; and rejects the spiritual sense of the Scriptures throughout, ever setting up the letter that killeth, against the Spirit that giveth life; and dealing as unmercifully by the letter, where it should stand in its full force, if it makes against his *Socinian* tenets: And forasmuch as the Fathers of the church in general are so many vouchers to a spiritual meaning in the Scriptures, no wonder that he takes such pains to invalidate their testimony, and to treat them with contempt.

That

That learned *Leyden* divine, *Witsius*, so well known for his moderation and candour, expresses himself thus in relation to *Le Clerc*: "I protest, says he, that I have all due esteem for his learning; but many of his opinions dispersed through his works savour so strongly of *Arianism*, *Pelagianism*, and *Libertinism*, that I utterly abhor and detest them as they deserve*." And in his animadversions on the same author, for calling in question the inspiration of the 69th and 109th Psalms, though quoted in the New Testament, and for pronouncing them to be the dictates of a mind inflamed with passionate anger, he remarks as follows: "He most impiously doubts whether *David* was the author of those Psalms. What name shall I give to his doubt? Shall I call it ignorance? Or an inexcusable itch of disputing? Or the profane dictates of a presumptuous mind? The Apostles witness that they are *David's* Psalms; they quote them as part of the Scripture; *Peter* also, in a set discourse, (Acts i.) pronounces, that the Holy Ghost spake so by the mouth of *David*; and here a critical divine openly maintains, that these Psalms are not from the Holy Spirit, but from a mind agitated with the passions of anger and revenge! I cannot but be astonished at so great impiety †."

It is to be observed here, that divine love and our spiritual union with *Christ* is often represented in Scripture under the image of human love; and in particular, that of espousals and marriage, though in its present state of imperfection and degradation: But love can only represent love, for all other types and images fall short of it. Now the *Canticles* or song of *Solomon* is a figurative or mystical representation of the spiritual marriage, union or love, betwixt *Christ* and his mystical body the church,

* Miscell. Sacr. Tom. i. p. 345.

† Ibid. p. 218.

and

and every member of the same, imaged to us under the most endearing passion that belongs to human nature in its present state, and will be best received and understood by persons that are in the highest degrees of purity and innocent love; but by people of gross conceptions, and such as are most impure in their passions, that divine book will be grossly misunderstood, and misrepresented. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. Now Mr. *Le Clerc* not having spiritual senses exercised to savour spiritual and heavenly things, could conceive no higher of it in his impure imagination, than as a mere carnal production of a wanton fancy, and therefore is for excluding it from the sacred Canon, comparing it to the song of the Giant *Polyphemus* to the nymph *Galatea* in *Ovid's Metamorphosis*. This impious effrontery of *Le Clerc* so far roused the godly zeal of honest *Witsius*, as to extort from his otherwise patient temper the following rebuke: "*The Song of Songs*, says he, "according to this author, has nothing mystical in it, but is compared to the rustic, gigantic song of *Polyphemus*. Should we go on thus, how little of what is divine will be left us at last! O miserable church that has so long endured such writings! Or rather, O bold and impious criticism, that assumes such a right to itself over divine matters, and endeavours so wickedly to destroy the foundations of our faith †."

Le Clerc is much offended with the miracle of *Lot's* wife being turned into a pillar of salt, and strains every nerve of his art critical to explain it to another meaning; but not being quite satisfied with his success, and conscious to himself that there appear marks of his having laid violent hands on the text, he does not scruple to say, with impudence

† *Ibid.* p. 230.

unparalleled, that a wrested interpretation in that place would be more tolerable than the supposal of a miraculous event, for the sake of two little words. *Witsius* upon this exclaims, as he well might: “What perverseness is here! the ancient prophets magnified the name of God for his wonderful works, but now it passes for wisdom to disparage miracles, and to practise critical devices to expunge them out of our creed. By this instance, we may see what it is to make that proud reason the interpreter of Scripture, which chuses rather to force it to speak any other sense, than to allow in it what is above its comprehension. Who can read such bold interpreters without indignation? Is reason afraid lest God should work miracles? What part of the world do we now live in, that we hear such things in the midst of Christendom as even the heathens would be ashamed of! Nothing should appear so incredible to us in Scripture as to tempt us to offer violence to the plain words of it by forced interpretations; and yet this is what Mr. *Le Clerc* does without scruple. What wickedness is it to set up our notions of probability in opposition to the clear and plain narratives of the sacred history *?”

I have here contented myself with abridging these remarks of *Witsius* on this audacious critic, who spends fifty pages of his work in animadverting upon him, wherein he gives him due correction without scurrility, and is zealous without abuse.—Among other things highly reprehensible, he charges him with denying the inspiration of the historical parts of Scripture; and also with saying, that a good critic, without any inspiration, might have said better things than many in the Proverbs of *Solomon*. Now can one forbear crying out, O the gigantic profaneness of *Le Clerc*! What amazing

* Tom. ii. Exerc. vii.

self-confidence is here ! Sure a man that had one grain of modesty left, would rather suppose ignorance in himself than want of wisdom in the Scriptures, would place much to the imperfection of human knowledge ; to the account of phrases, customs, allusions, &c. now not clearly understood ; or to secret reasons in the divine Mind for suffering many things therein to remain hid for a time, to exercise the submission of our understanding, or to keep down the pride of knowledge : Or where any truths there delivered, appear to be of common observation and within the reach of an ordinary capacity, he will however reverence them the more for the weight and sanction they derive from such unquestionable authority : But *Le Clerc* set himself above the Scriptures, as a learned critic to rule over them, and therefore lost all reverence for them : That knowledge which puffeth up, besotted and entangled him in vain disputations and reasonings, which led him to doubting, which gave him up to unbelief, and so he became captive to the spirit of delusion : And yet this is the man who hath bewitched so many of the learned in Christendom with a reverence for his authority, even he who has worked up Infidelity into a system, to the disgrace of the Protestant religion, and hath taught those very men who eat the best bread of the church, to stab that religion to the heart, the sons and servants of which they falsely call themselves. And would to God that the poison of this man's false doctrine had not introduced itself into the church of England ! but it has spread itself wide upon her, nay, it has sunk deep into her. I forbear to say what mischief it hath already done, though I know in part ; and I dread to think how much more it is likely to do, whilst the stream of her fairest and best preferences runs so strongly in this channel. But this hope and confidence have we, that the same Lord who hath built his church upon a rock, with this promise,

promise, that the gates of hell shall not prevail against her, will protect and defend it against all the assaults of its enemies; and will continue, as heretofore, to raise up faithful witnesses in every church, to bear testimony to the word of his Grace, men not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, nor seeking the favour or honour that cometh of men, but that which cometh of God only; whom he will endow with the Spirit of wisdom and of a sound mind, and make them powerful in word and in deed, to convince gainsayers, to suffer reproach and endure the cross patiently, and to rescue the honour and truth of the Scriptures, both in the letter and in the Spirit of them, from all the depredations and violences, all the corrupt interpretations and profane handlings of infidelity and a false criticism.

The candid Reader will not construe any thing that has been here said in favour of the early Fathers of the church, as meant to lift them up into infallible expounders of Scripture, but only to assert the credit due to their testimony, and defend their honour against the calumnies of bold detractors, who take a fancied merit to themselves in depreciating these ancient worthies; that they may adorn themselves with the spoils of their reputation; and yet if we take an exact survey of these critical robbers, they will be found not to reach up to their knees: How far will they be found, upon comparison, to fall short of them in humility, self-denial, voluntary poverty, patient suffering for the truth, and other rare virtues, for which they were so eminent? and as to their writings, they warm the heart of the reader as they came from the heart of the writer, they are spirited; full of unction; full of authority; whilst those of their modern adversaries are as cold as they are critical, unaffecting, pedagogical. But as all human characters have their blemishes, and must have in this state of imperfection, so the primitive Fathers were not without theirs:

They brought with them some prejudices of education and speculative errors from the schools of the Philosophers, especially the *Platonic*, (which came the nearest to the truth) from which their conversion to Christianity did not altogether set them free, at least for a time, which mixing with their religious opinions, grew up as tares with the wheat, and sometimes it requires a careful hand to separate them; but in the fundamentals of faith they were sound, nay, are of authority to us, as appears from the ancient creeds, particularly those of *Irenæus* and *Tertullian* which are come down to us. They are charged indeed, some of them, with running their allegorical interpretations of the historical parts of Scripture to excess; but the moderns are much more blameable in rejecting all allegorical meaning as not belonging thereto, seeing historical facts may be as instructive and profitable for life and doctrine as fables, types, emblems or parables, which are the most ancient methods of teaching, especially in the East, even to this day; and fully persuaded I am, that wonders in this way remain to be opened by the Spirit of God in the history of the Old Testament, which is not only to be considered as a register of real facts and transactions, but also as replete with prophetic and mystical meaning; *propheticis gravidata sensibus, et velata tegminibus*, as *St. Austin* speaks, who is a strenuous assertor of the double sense of the Scriptures, figurative and literal, and accordingly lays down the following rule for us to go by: *Nec illis consentiendum qui solam historiam recipiunt sine allegoricâ significatione, nec illis qui solas figuras defendunt repudiata historicâ veritate* †. “We must neither
 “hold with them who keep only to the history
 “without allowing the allegorical sense, nor yet

† See much of this Father on this subject, in his celebrated treatise *De Civitate Dei*, lib. 15, 16.

“ with

“ with those who are so taken up with the mystical
 “ as to reject the historical meaning.”

It is well known, that every proper name of a person and place in the Hebrew language has a meaning belonging to it, and denotes some quality, office, act or character, &c. which may serve as a key to the figure: Thus *Melchisedec* signifies King of righteousness: But he was also King of *Salem*, which signifies *peace*. Here we have both the letter and the Spirit of the letter, opening to us this Scripture-doctrine, *that the work of righteousness is peace, and the effect of righteousness is quietness and assurance for ever*, (Isaiah xxxii. 17.) And it has also a typical as well as a doctrinal meaning, as *Melchisedec* points in his character to *Messiah, the Lord our righteousness*, (Jer. xxiii. 6.) and *Prince of peace*, (Isa. ix. 6.) *the scepter of whose kingdom is a righteous scepter*, (Heb. i. 8.) and who giveth true peace to his people, (Isa. xxxvi. 12.)

Doctor *Everard* in his *Gospel Treasury opened*, (p. 355.) gives us the following interpretation of *Joshua* xv. ver. 16, 17. from the etymology of the Hebrew names: “ And *Caleb* said, He that smiteth
 “ *Kirjath-sepher*, and taketh it, to him will I give
 “ *Achsah* my daughter to wife: And *Othniel* the
 “ son of *Kenaz*, the brother of *Caleb*, took it;
 “ and he gave him *Achsah* his daughter to wife.”
 As *Kirjath-sepher*, says the Doctor, signifies in Hebrew *the city of the book or letter*; *Achsah*, the rending of the vail; and *Othniel*, God's good time, or the Lord's opportunity; so it will signify, that he who masters or opens the letter, shall have for his portion *the rending of the vail*, or that which the taking away the cover of the letter presents to him, *viz.* the mystery of the kingdom; or, according to the vulgar phrase, he that breaketh the shell shall have the kernel: Now *Othniel* (which signifies God's good time or season) smote and took the
 city

city of the letter, denoting that this can only be done when the Lord sees fit. This interpretation of the Doctor ought not to be derided as fanciful, seeing the sense of the words leads to it, and opens therein an important truth, *viz.* That there is a mystery concealed in the history, and that we are to make our way to the former through the latter. The Doctor allows the truth of the history to a tittle, as the taking of such a city by *Othniel*, and his marrying the daughter of *Caleb*; and therefore he cannot be charged with robbing the letter of its due; but if by the authority of the same words that he believes the literal transaction, he also admits an useful truth figured by it, we ought certainly not to object, but rather to allow an advantage on the side of his method of interpretation. Besides, it is confessedly a more important part of knowledge, to be informed that even the historical parts of the Old Testament often represent to us heavenly things and spiritual mysteries, than it is to know who married *Caleb's* daughter. I do not say that every particular circumstance or character in the history has its figurative sense, seeing many are connected with, and only mentioned for the sake of those that have; to which purpose are those words of *St. Austin*: *Non sanè omnia quæ gesta narrantur, aliquid etiam significare putanda sunt, sed propter ea quæ aliquid significant, etiam ea quæ nihil significant attexuntur* †. I shall leave it here to the consideration of the reader, if those words of the Apostle, (2 Cor. iii. 15.) *Even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart*, does not evidently imply, that the blindness of the Jews hindered them from seeing the mystery of the gospel figured in the letter of the Scriptures throughout the the whole œconomy of that people.

† *De Civitate Dei*, lib. 15.

The rich treasure of instruction that is to be found in the Hebrew Scripture-names of persons and places, (in both which are couched deep mysteries) affords matter of wonder, that the adepts in that language have not made more use of their skill in explicating the types and figures with which they are pregnant; as this would give light to a species of historical prophecy and divine instruction, contained in the characters of the Old Testament, which are now read only as so many uncouth, hard names, without any meaning, and consequently benefit to the Reader. The pious and excellent *Bromley* in his *Sabbath of Rest*, has given us a very edifying specimen in this way, in *the journeys of the children of Israel* through the wilderness, which, as well as every other dispensation of that people, is a picture of the Christian's progress through the wilderness of this world, and beset them as types for our instruction. As to that objection of danger lying in the way of this kind of interpretation from an over-indulgence of fancy, it concludes too much; for at this rate we must forbear exercising our faculties both on the literal and the spiritual sense of the Scriptures, seeing imagination may mislead the best in some things both ways, and nothing but a total inspiration can absolutely secure us from mistakes, through the play of imagination and the fallibility of our judgment; but where the heart is rightly disposed, I am bold to affirm, that such mistakes will not be of very bad consequence. There is confessedly some danger both on the right hand and on the left in most things, and we must steer the middle way as well as we can; but where guide-posts are set up, if men chuse rather to cover them with dirt, than pursue the directions they give, because they tell not every little turning in the road, such, it must be owned, have little claim to our compassion. Much stir has been made about the method of allegorizing used by

by some of the Fathers, but wherefore I see not : Their instructions in this way are all to the purpose of godly edification ; and he that leads us safe to heaven, either by the path of allegory or that of plain precept, most certainly deserves our thanks, and it would ill become us to quarrel with him for not showing us another way. We ought not to disparage any means that lead to a good end, but I must own that the former has generally had the better effect upon my mind, as well as upon many others ; and as far as I can judge from something of experience, I am inclined to think, that *Bunyan's* beautiful and instructive allegory or parable of the *Pilgrim's Progress* has brought more persons to a godly seriousness than all the reasoning of Archbishop *Tillotson*. I shall conclude this section with recommending to the learned reader a treatise, intitled *Letter and Spirit*; by the Rev. Mr. *Holloway*, Rector of Middleton Stony, Oxfordshire. The introduction to it is of more general use, and deserves to be published by itself.

In answer to the last foregoing objection, it may be observed, that teaching by the grammatical sense of the Hebrew Scriptures is not without its difficulties and uncertainties any more than allegorical instruction, and that because of the uncertain sounding of the Hebrew words through the loss of the vowels, which subjects the same word to various, doubtful and even contrary senses : Thus the same word (*Barack*) in that language signifies both to bless and to curse : And though the context will often direct to the right choice, yet where it happens that the same word so fits different or contrary senses, that the meaning of the proposition is complete in either, we must in that case be at a loss which to take ; as for example, whether we are to understand *Job's* wife as bidding her husband to curse, or to bless God and die : And if we are to go by that rule, that where we are in doubt betwixt

two

two opposite meanings, the better is to be preferred, then it should be translated *bleſs*, and not *curſe*; for the reproof of *Job* to his wife, on this occaſion, may not have reſpect to her adviſing him to curſe, but to die, or make away with himſelf. This perplexity ariſing from different ſenſes in the ſame word answers to the meaning of *Babel*, which ſignifies confuſion or mixture, and makes evident that the Hebrew tongue, though the moſt perfect that we have, did ſuffer loſs in its purity through the confuſion of the properties in human nature firſt introduced by ſin, and afterwards repreſented externally by *Babel*, as its viſible type; for highly credible it is, that this confuſion happened in part immediately after the fall, or when *Adam* fell from harmony into diſcord, and from unity, or ſimplicity, into multiplicity; whence proceeded diſiſion among his poſterity, who otherwiſe would all have been of one mind and heart, as well as of one ſpeech; though it is not to be doubted, that this confuſion and diſiſion in language did moſt remarkably take place, and had its full effect at the time of the building of the tower *Babel*; perhaps by a miraculous inſatuation, attended with a paralytic affection of the organs of ſpeech diverſified, cauſing men to ſound the vowels differently, which muſt neceſſarily introduce confuſion and miſunderſtanding both in ſpeaking and writing any language, as every one will readily find upon making the experiment. In thinking on this ſubject, I was led to conſult the meaning of the Scripture-names mentioned in the eleventh chapter of *Genesis*, which treats of *Babel*, to ſee what light they might afford on this ſubject: Now it is there ſaid, that *Heber*, (from whom the *Hebrews*, his deſcendents, took their name) begat *Peleg*, which ſignifies *diſiſion*, thus bearing in his name the ſign of what happened to the Hebrew language, for in his time it was that the earth was divided, (*Gen. x. 25.*) or that men ſeparated themſelves,

selves, according to their dialect or divided tongue, and so became the founders of different nations; And hence going back to the preceding chapter, I found that the same *Heber* is there recorded to have had two sons *Peleg* and *Joktan*, the latter of whose name signifies *strife* or contention; denoting that strife or angry debate is of kin to division in the collateral line. Surely, said I to myself, there is undoubtedly a mystery in these genealogies; and if *Heber* had begotten a third son, I suppose his name would have signified *False Criticism*.

We are hence furnished with a sad proof among a thousand others, of the deplorable fall of man, in that he hath lost the original language, in which all things are expressed and understood according to the truth of their properties and natures, without uncertainty or mistake, wherein he comes short of the birds of the air and the beasts of the field, which all, by instinctive sounds, understand one another in their several tribes, without danger of being deceived; for though they lost a happy state of existence through man, yet they fell not after the manner, nor according to the woeful consequences of his transgression. But if the confusion of languages is a sore evil in human nature; so the uncertainty, ambiguity and false use of language in every tongue, proceeding from the same cause, have abundantly increased the miseries of mankind; and in vain do men go about by art to remedy these evils, for human art and device, guided by selfishness and subtlety, have their ground in *Babel*, and serve only to give an external birth to the hidden mystery of iniquity, in the several apparent forms of the deceivableness of unrighteousness; examples of which we have in every class of men from the political negociator down to the lowest trader, more particularly in the false pleader, the false critic, and the false orator, who professedly deal in sophistry, and in darkening of counsel by words. Nay, the spirit:

spirit of contradiction and dispute in almost every family and conversation, betrays the twistings and contortions of the crooked serpent, whose delight is in strife, confusion and vain *Babblings*.

Nor is religion without its *Babel*, nay, it is imaged here in its fullest dimensions, and rises to its greatest altitude, as is conspicuous in the various disagreeing parties throughout the world; in the *Lo here!* and the *Lo there!* in the endless controversies, and the blind zeal for matters of mere opinion and unconcerning modes of worship; and as the many different religions answer to the confusion of languages, so do the different sects in every religion, to the different dialects in each language. Governors have endeavoured to heal or suppress these divisions, but have always failed, as the means used have not been adequate to the end proposed: They have applied methods of restraint, constraint, or persecution, as best suited their tempers or politics, but these remedies, the last more especially, are ever worse than the disease, as the practice of oppression and cruelty is abominable, whereas difference in opinion is only inconvenient or troublesome. Besides, this is to bring a cure from hell for a natural evil, and to do the Devil's work, under pretence of promoting the honour of God. The malady lies too deep for human power and skill to prevent or cure, for *Babel* is not only in every society, but more or less in every unrenewed heart, and will continually break out in one appearance or another: Nor would a forced uniformity in worship at all mend the matter; it might serve to make many hypocrites, but not to promote the least degree of Christian fellowship, for this stands only in that unity of the spirit, in which is the true bond of peace and love: And therefore, so long as all due submission is paid to the magistrate, and the peace of society is not violated, differences in religion, and different assemblies for divine worship,

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for conscience sake, ought to be tolerated. The Lord bears with such differences, much more ought we: Besides, we know not what wise ends of Providence they may answer in the present state of things, and some perhaps are easy to assign; and therefore we should wait in patience and charity for that dispensation of the Holy Spirit, which in due time will perfect all things, bring us back from the multiplicity of *Babel* into the simplicity and unity of concord in the fellowship of the Spirit of peace, and so make us all of one heart and one mind; and then the one universal language will again prevail, and we shall not only think but speak the same things, and all to the praise and glory of God.

Of this glorious dispensation a gracious earnest was vouchsafed to the church at *Pentecost*, when the Apostles were not only all in one place, but of one accord: The Holy Spirit prepared their hearts with grace before he imparted his gifts, for they were at unity with themselves and each other before they were enabled to speak with tongues: And here we may well suppose, that all the effects of mystical *Babel*, during this time, wholly ceased in the Apostles; and that the original, universal language was restored to them; and that speaking in this, they were understood in the several divided languages of those that heard them, as what comes from the root is received in all the branches; and where lesser musical pipes are inserted into a capital one, the same breath which sounds principally in the larger, does also pipe forth differently in the lesser tubes. This explanation equally answers all the purposes of the hearers, and also to the meaning expressed by their (the Apostles) *speaking with other tongues*; for so it was in effect, though the root were but one; and this seems to be signified by the emblematical fiery tongues that rested on the Apostles, which were not cloven throughout, but united at the root.

I forbear

I forbear to apologize for the foregoing digression, as well because it may have its use, as because I have been led thereto by offering something in vindication of the authority of the primitive Fathers, as far forth as the weight of their testimony to the *millennium* might be concerned: And as it was a chief part of their vocation to bear witness to the truth of the Scriptures, and to the double advent of Christ, first to suffer, and secondly to reign on earth, so in this their province they acquitted themselves as men of God well furnished for their work, faithfully executing the same, even with the seal of martyrdom: They were also in possession of the traditions handed down to them from the apostles by such as were cotemporary with them, which was a collateral evidence to the truth of this doctrine, and a strong support of their sense of the Scriptures relating thereto; and both *Justin Martyr* and *Irenæus* who firmly maintained it, at the distance only of one remove from the apostle *St. John*, wrote commentaries on his book of *Revelations*, which the enemies of this truth have taken care to suppress, as they did every thing else in their power, to hinder its being transmitted down to us; but the providence of God so far watched over this sacred deposit in the hands of his church, as not to suffer it to be totally lost, and will at this time, I doubt not, revive it to the unspeakable joy of his people; and I must own, that every fresh testimony to it gladdens my heart and strengthens that hope and expectation I am fully possessed of, that this glorious truth will shortly triumph over all opposition. The Rev. Mr. *Johnson*, vicar of Great Torrington, in Devonshire, published two volumes of sermons, in which are some very good ones, with a preface, on this subject: The Rev. and learned Mr. *Richard Clarke* before mentioned has, according to his uncommon talents in the deep and mystical science

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of the heavenly physical powers, expounded many of the typical and figurative rites of the Levitical law, in reference to this doctrine†: The Rev. Mr. Piers, vicar of Bexley, in Kent, has in a late sermon bore his testimony to the same: And Dr. Gregory Sharpe † replies as follows, to an objection brought against the Fathers on account of their testimony to the *millennium*: “If we do not believe that they received this doctrine from their masters (the Apostles) it will be hard to determine what they received from them, nor can there be any dependence upon these primitive men: And how they will answer this who are unwilling to admit of any *millennium*, I can no more conceive than I can account for their admitting the Revelation of St. John to be divine, whilst they deny what that Revelation so manifestly contains; for the Scriptures expressly declare, that men are to rise again at two periods, the first is the resurrection of the just,” &c. As it is my desire and usual guard, not to lay more stress upon any argument than it can well bear, so perhaps an over-caution herein has kept me from doing full justice to the authority of the ancient Fathers in their testimony to this doctrine, by considering it only in the light of moral evidence; whereas it comes sanctioned to us by that of divine gifts, as appears by their public appeals both to Jews and heathens; in particular *Justin Martyr* assures us, that both men and women were endowed with extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost in his time, and instances more especially in that of prophecy, or expounding the Scriptures by the light of inspiration—*Apud nos hucusque etiam prophetica extant dona* *. But it is easy to guess how questionable this species of prophecy will appear to

† See his *Spiritual Voice*, in particular.

‡ Argument in Defence of Christianity, p. 140.

* Dial. cum Tryphone.

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the reasoning critic, who allows nothing for divine but what carries with it some evident appeal to the senses; and therefore it is only offered to such as are in a disposition to receive it.

As in this doubting and disputing age we must expect to meet with objections at every step we take, so it may be alledged here, that the testimony of even the most ancient Fathers to this doctrine, however high their characters may be on some accounts, yet is only that of single men, and therefore to be placed to the account of private judgment only; whereas matters of doctrine stand in need of being supported by the authority of the church, which claims to itself the right of interpreting Scripture in such matters: To which let it be answered; first, That though this doctrine be of very great importance, yet it is not urged as an essential article of faith: It is offered as highly-worthy to be believed, and that on the best authority, for weighty reasons, but not as necessary to salvation; and therefore, though any church should pass over this doctrine in silence, as this will not argue such church to be defective in the fundamental articles of faith, so neither will it argue against the credibility or importance of this doctrine; seeing, secondly, it was believed and maintained by the early Fathers, who may, in a very allowable sense, be called the church in their day, as they were the visible builders and supports of it; and the authority of this doctrine is so much the stronger, as they professed to have received it: Now, what is received by any persons as an article of faith, is more ancient than what is first advanced by them for such; and this will carry back its antiquity to the Apostles themselves: But thirdly, neither is this doctrine without the seal of ecclesiastical authority in the fullest sense of it; for it has no less sanction in its favour than that of the first famous council of Nice, called by *Constantine* the

Great, and composed of Bishops from all parts of the Christian world, which not only then settled the articles of Christian faith, and canons ecclesiastical, but also set forth certain forms or models of doctrine for the use of the clergy, containing such topics as were judged needful for them to insist on chiefly in their discourses to the people; much in the way and design of our Homilies published by authority in the reign of *Edward VI.* Mr. *Mede**, to whose learned pains we are obliged for many instructive particulars on the subject of the *millennium*, has given us an extract of one of these forms on the doctrine of the resurrection, as it is recorded by *Gelasius Cyzicenus* in his history of the acts of the council of Nice, of which I shall here give the following translation, for the sake of the English reader: "This world (earth) was made
 " the smaller as God foresaw that man would sin †;
 " wherefore we look for *new heavens and a new*
 " *earth*, according to the sacred Scriptures, wherein
 " shall be gloriously manifested the kingdom of
 " the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; and
 " then as *Daniel* prophesies, (*Dan. vii. 18.*) *the*
 " *Saints of the Most High shall possess the kingdom* :
 " And the earth shall be a pure and holy habita-
 " tion; the land of the living and not of the dead,
 " (*Matth. xxii. 32.*) on the foresight of which,
 " with the eye of faith, *David* cries out exulting :
 " *I believe verily to see thee goodness of the Lord in*

* *MEDD'S Works*, p. 813.

† The strength of the conclusion seems to lye here: Almighty God foreseeing man's fall through sin, and that he would thereby entail death on his posterity, made this earth of no greater extent, by reason that death, taking off the several generations of the human race successively, would leave its present dimensions sufficient for the number of its inhabitants: Besides, the curse should pass upon this earth, as not being the proper abode of the Saints, for whom is reserved by God a better inheritance in Paradise restored; wherefore, according to his promise, we look for new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, 2 *Pet. iii. 13.*

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“the land of the living; (Psal. xxvii.) the land of
 “the meek and humble; for *blessed are the meek,*
 “for they shall inherit the earth; (Matth. v. 5.)
 “and as the Prophet saith: (Isai. xxvi. 6.) The
 “feet of the meek and humble shall tread upon it.”

The above form of doctrine sanctioned by the council of *Nice*, or the authority of the sacred Scriptures, appears as strong a testimony as any ecclesiastical authority can give to the sense of the Scriptures, in favour of the *millennium*, or at least of a happy triumphant state of the church on earth, wherein the Saints shall have a blessed inheritance under the reign of *Christ* our Saviour; which is all that is here contended for. It is here very observable, that this doctrine, thus transmitted to us, stands upon the same authority as does that of the NICENE CREED; and that this Council interprets that promise of our Saviour, that *the meek shall inherit*, or possess *the earth*, into a confirmation of, and identity of sense with the same prophetic declarations to be found in many places of the Psalms and Prophets.—See in particular, Psal. xxxvii. 11. lxxix. 36, 37. cxlvii. 6. cxlix. 4. Isai. xi. 4. xxvi. 6. xxix. 19.

These, among numberless other predictions of a happy time, when the Saints, and all such as are of a meek, humble, and loving spirit, shall possess the earth, have been a great stumbling-block in the way of those expositors who own no such future period; but falsely suppose, that all these declarations and promises must have their accomplishment in the present times; and so have strained their invention to find out a sense to these Scriptures, that may some how or other pass with the reader, to make appear that the Saints have the best of it in this life, in a worldly sense of the expression; tho' this be so contrary to the sense of the Scriptures, and the sense of experience. And here all such false interpreters, are called upon, to shew when, and where

and how, this ever was the case, from the time of meek *Abel* down to meek *Moses*, and so on to the meek and lowly *Jesus* inclusive: In what sense, during these periods, did the meek possess the earth? I will tell them: They possessed it under contempt, reproach and sufferings of all kinds: They possessed it as the harmless dove possesses the talons of the cruel vulture in her agonizing heart; or, as the innocent lamb possesses the knife of the butcher in his bleeding throat: And how have things gone since the time that the good Shepherd came upon earth, to gather unto himself a flock out of every age and nation upon earth, and to lay down his life for his sheep? Why, it has gone with his followers, more or less, as it went with himself, and as he foretold them it would: Their way has been through much tribulation; they have been as sheep in the midst of wolves; or, as Pilgrims passing through an enemy's country, either persecuted and tormented, or, at least, flouted at, and afflicted by the inhabitants of the land: And the same lot is to be expected by all that will live godly in *Christ Jesus*, (2 Tim. iii. 12.) till that blessed time comes, when the Lord will make up his jewels, and establish a better difference between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God (in spirit and in truth) and him that serveth him not (Mal. iii. 17, 18.) Let us then no more hear of the Saints now possessing the earth, according to the sense of such fallacious expositors, who, in their hearts, desire not to possess it as they now do; nay, with one consent would desire to be excused from entering upon such an inheritance, as do all that in this life desire to receive their good things; whereas, the length of days, the ways of pleasantness and paths of peace, together with the riches and honours that are mentioned in Scripture, (Prov. iii. 16, 17.) as the portion of true godliness, are not according to their estimate of these things, but are of another kingdom, which the men of this world

world seek not, nor can have any acquaintance with. The children of *Abraham's* faith, who are the true heirs of the promises, stand in this life, as it were, with one foot in the land of promise, (the now invisible Paradise, the unmanifested Kingdom of Christ) and with the other on this wretched earth, in which is the curse; and as, in the former, (in the better part of their nature) they are comforted with the comforts that be of God, at least supported; so, in the latter, they are afflicted, for it is not their home and proper element, but their pilgrimage to a better country: But being the church of the First-born, they will have their double portion, even their earthly as well as heavenly blessings in the new earth that shall be, and they shall possess the earth: Now, in that good land, is that long life so often promised in Scripture, and is the blessing annexed to the observance of the Fifth Commandment, stiled by the Apostle, *The First Commandment with promise*: (Ephes. vi. 2.) Now, as God is faithful to a tittle in all that he promises, and for as much as the promise here given is not fulfilled in this life, according to any sense of a stated rule, it must refer to that good land of promise, wherein the Saints shall possess the kingdom, and the meek and the obedient to parents shall rejoice together †.

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† It is matter of common observation, that the most promising, pious, and dutiful children are, for the most part, taken away first, and so thus early delivered from the evil to come; or, where this is not the case, that they are generally the least favoured by their parents; and I must own, that my observation through life, made with more than ordinary attention, agreeth thereto: Good children fall under the same predicament with adults in this matter, and suffer in proportion; and the reason is, because all things at present are out of course, the foundations are cast down for a time, and the power of evil will prevail against the good, till the administration of the kingdom of this world shall be assumed by the Lord our righteousness, when all things shall proceed according to invariable rules of equity and goodness in his millennial government. Thro' not attending to this, the saints of old were staggered at beholding the prosperity, power, and longevity of the wicked, (as we read in particular in *Job xxi. Psa. lxxiii. Jer. xii.*) till they became enlightened with the knowledge of Christ's second advent to reign on earth. David thought to understand this

This testimony of the council of *Nice*, to the doctrine of the resurrection of the Saints to reign with Christ on earth, is of great moment in several respects; 1st, As it is a standing monument, in the church, of its antiquity, its greater antiquity, for it did not then first enact it as an article to be believed, but adopted it as an article already believed. 2dly, It witnesses to the importance of its being publicly taught, by directing the clergy to instruct the people in it, amongst the other *credenda* of religion. 3dly, As it frees this doctrine from the charge of particularism, as tho' it had been received only by a party, or some few in the church. 4thly, It infers a particular providence in favour of this doctrine thus preserved against a powerful party in the church, which endeavoured to stifle it by a continued opposition for more than fifty years; notwithstanding which it kept its ground till it was acknowledged by the church in her first oecumenical council under *Constantine*, *anno Domini* 325, when the Christian religion became the established religion of the Roman empire. 5thly, It carries with it a reproof for all those, who, in any Christian church, set themselves to oppose or speak lightly of a doctrine so venerable for its antiquity and authority; and the

this dark mystery of providence by the light of his reason, but it was too hard for him, till he went into the sanctuary of God, the inward sanctuary of divine illumination, in which the ways of God towards men are made manifest and justified. Through not seeing into this second part of the great drama of the world, that kingdom to come where all shall be rectified, and wisdom, justice, and goodness have their full display, almost all our reasoners and writers upon the scheme, find themselves pinched with insuperable difficulties, and unable to explicate the present administration of the government of the world into a consistency with the divine attributes: They have recourse indeed to a future state in heaven, as they must have in order to help them out; but then, this is going beyond their subject, and the sphere of God's providence in this created system, which now, through the fall, consists of two parts, though they know it not, Paradise lost and Paradise restored, which, in treating this subject properly, must be taken into one view, in order to explain the whole divine economy towards man: But something has been already offered on this subject, in the first part of this work.

danger

danger of doing this is so much the greater, as there is reason to fear, that all wilful opposition to it may have a great share in disqualifying such persons for an inheritance in the millennial kingdom, as it is endeavouring to *take away from the words of the book of this prophecy*, (Rev. xxii. 19.) and so far incurring the dreadful sentence denounced therein. *Lastly*, From this testimony of the *Nicene* council, the unlearned, and such as are scrupulous (thro' the incompetency or distrust of their own judgment) of admitting any thing into their creed, but what has received the sanction of the church, may hereby be encouraged to venture on so safe a shore, and are enabled to give an answer to every man that asketh them a reason of this hope; (1 Pet. iii. 15.) for the climax or ladder of evidence in this matter, is of easy and direct ascent, and supported by the testimony of Scripture, at the side of it all the way. And therefore, they have their answer ready at hand: We have received this doctrine of Christ's millennial reign, on the authority of the church, from the ancient and celebrated council of *Nice*, which received it from the earliest of the *Fathers*, who received it from the *Apostles*, who received it from *Christ*, and the inspiration of the *Holy Spirit*.

It was my intention to have concluded this chapter with the foregoing remarks on the *Nicene* testimony, but finding that Mr *Mede*, in the page following this extract from *Gelasius*, has likewise preserved an extract to the same purpose from King *Edward* the *Vith's* Catechism, I am unwilling to pass over any testimony to this doctrine that may be found in our own church so soon after the *Reformation*. This Catechism was published in Latin by Royal Authority in the last year of King *Edward's* reign, after he had put it into the hands of some of the *Bishops* and other learned men, for their perusal and examination, as appears by the King's letters prefatory to it, which begin thus: "*Cum brevis et*
"*explicata*

“ *explicata Catechismi Ratio, à pio quodam et erudito*
 “ *viro conscripta, nobis ad cognoscendum offerretur,*
 “ *ejus pertactationem et diligentem inquisitionem*
 “ *quibusdam Episcopis et aliis eruditis commissimus;*
 “ *&c.*” The passage is taken from the exposition
 of the second petition in the Lord's Prayer; and is as
 follows: “ Here we pray, That his *Kingdom* may
 “ come; for as yet, we see not all things brought
 “ under subjection to *Christ*: We see not how the
 “ stone cut out of the mountain without hands,
 “ hath broken in pieces the Image described by
 “ *Daniel*, that so the stone become a mountain, (by
 “ which *Christ* is signified) may take and possess
 “ the kingdom of the whole world by the grant of
 “ the Father: Nor is *Anti-christ* destroyed as yet:
 “ And therefore in this petition we pray, that these
 “ things may be fulfilled, that so *Christ* alone may
 “ have the dominion, and reign with the Saints,
 “ according to the divine promises, and that the
 “ government of the world may be administered in
 “ equity, according to the pure and perfect dispensa-
 “ tion of the holy gospel, and not according to the
 “ customs and laws of men, and the arbitrary plea-
 “ sure of the tyrants of the earth.” The same
 Catechism treats of the end of this world, according
 to its present form and constitution, to which will
 succeed the new heavens and the new earth, when
 (saith the book) will be, “ as it is called in Scrip-
 “ ture, the consummation or perfecting of the king-
 “ dom and mystery of *Christ*, and the renovation of
 “ all things; for it seems agreeable to reason, that
 “ there should be a time when this world shall be
 “ released from that state of corruption and change-
 “ ableness, to which it is now subjected through
 “ sin.” It then goes on upon the authority of that
 prophecy of St. Peter, (2 Pet. iii. 15.) concerning
 the dissolution of the present world, as follows:
 “ The apostle here intimates to us, that as gold is
 “ purified by the fire, so this world shall be defecated,
 “ and

“and reduced to its primitive perfection by the
“same means: And in like manner, will man (who
“is called the Microcosm or little world) be also
“freed from his present state of mutability and
“corruption: Thus will this world wear a far more
“delectable and beautiful form, in its renovation
“for the sake of man, for whose use it was first
“created.”

I have been the rather induced to translate the above passages at their full length, because it may be reasonably supposed, that this little book is now very difficult to come at, as Mr. *Mede*, who was in possession of one copy, speaks of it as scarce in his time. Had good King *Edward*, wise above his years, (whose name this Catechism bears) been spared for a longer blessing to this land, this doctrine of the *Millennium* would probably have made its way in the church; but he was early taken off by death, and as all things soon went into confusion, his pious pains to revive it, were not followed by any answerable success. It may be said rather to have been preserved, since his time, in the church from oblivion, than to have made any advances towards a general reception, and that chiefly by the rising up of particular witnesses to this scriptural doctrine, now and then, here and there, in the several churches of Christendom, it having nothing to do with any particular systems of belief; and therefore, in all communions of Christians, some have embraced it, whilst the generality in all have been either so taken up with their several church-divisions and controversies in religion relating thereto, or else with the cares, vanities, or pleasures of this world, that they have not allowed themselves leisure to attend to this important subject; but this doctrine is now on the way of recovering its lost credit, and after bearing down all opposition with the force of its evidence, will go on to shine more and more in the light of truth, till the perfect day
of

of its full manifestation at the glorious appearance of our Lord and Saviour *Jesus Christ, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe.* (2 Thess. i. 10.) And there is the more cause to wish and pray, that this comfortable truth may gain ground, and meet with all-good acceptance in the Christian world, not only as faith in the blessed kingdom may be a means to qualify many for it; but also, as it is the only true key of knowledge to many of the types, promises, and prophecies contained in the Scriptures both of the Old and New Testament, many of which do refer to it alone, and most have a share therein; and to the taking away of this key it is owing, that so great a part of the Psalms and the Prophets are to this day so little understood, and read to no better edification and meaning; and, in particular, that the book of *Revelations* is as a book without any revelation in it. If my little talent may prove of any use towards this good end, may the Lord have the praise, for so far prospering the work of his most unworthy servant; nor am I without hope, that this well-meaning testimony, though delivered in much weakness, may stir up persons better qualified to do justice to this subject.

MEDITATION.

And is the time hastening on, when Christ the Second Adam, Son of God and Son of man shall erect his throne on earth in Paradise restored, and visibly express the hidden glories of the Father in his own sacred Person? And was it for this end, that he once veiled his divinity with the weakness and mortality of our fallen nature, and came amongst us, that he might tread the wine-press alone in garments stained with blood, and redeem a chosen generation

generation to himself, that so he might bring many sons and daughters unto his glory? Think of this, O my soul, with rapturous gratitude, praise and love, and when thou thinkest thereon, strain every power within thee, to shake off thy sloth, and all fondness for the things of a perishing world, that unto thee may be ministred an entrance into the joy of thy Lord. Thou hast too long been holden down by the fear of men like thyself, and too often hast thou made snares for thy feet by seeking the favour of the rich and great; and to what has all this served, but to cover thee with shame and remorse, and to leave thee poor at last? Be not then any longer the servant of men, to bow down to them for that which cannot profit, and may greatly hurt thee; but hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ without respect of persons, seeking the favour and honour that cometh of God only. Thou hast a Master in heaven, who hath a claim upon thee by right of purchase, whose service is perfect freedom, and who hath promised, that if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him: Tarry not then in *Egypt*; make not thy dwelling with *Mesech*; pitch not thy tent in *Kedar*; but turning thy back on worldly men and worldly things, take up thy cross and follow thy Master through sufferings to glory: Fear not lest thou shouldst walk alone; for though thou leavest by far the greater company behind thee, yet thou wilt overtake, or be overtaken by some Christians of every denomination travelling the same way, most of them indeed despised of the world, and mean enough as to their outward appearance; but be not ashamed of them on that account, for thou wilt find them men and women fearing God, rich in faith and good works, and having their hearts warm with the love of *Jesus*: To these thou mayst safely join thyself, for they are all true-hearted, and free
from

from every taint of dissimulation and selfishness : They will be thy pleasant companions and friendly helpers on the road, and you will take much sweet counsel together. But though got thus far, be not high minded but fear, for thy warfare is not yet ended : The people of the world will not let thee escape thus easily, but follow thee with reproach, derision and persecution ; will represent thee as deluded by a set of Enthusiasts, and hastening to thy undoing : Nor will the great Adversary of Souls be wanting to practise all his subtle devices, that he may shake thy faith and constancy, by injecting fears and doubts into thy mind, and laying many temptations in thy way, to discourage thee from going up to take possession of the good land. Nay, to prove what is in thine heart, and for the fuller exercise of thy faith, the heavens shall be black with clouds, and the ways of God's providence seemingly against thee : But fear not, neither be dismayed, but look unto *Jesus*, the Author and Finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, and will enable thee to endure it also : Take a view of the promised land with the eye of faith, as did *Moses* from the top of *Pisgah* ; so shalt thou be comforted on thy journey at beholding the lot of thine inheritance, that rest which remaineth for the people of God, and where the heavenly harpers on the Holy Hill now wait in readiness to welcome thy arrival with one of the songs of *Sion*.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Some further objections to this doctrine answered; and the serious consideration of it recommended, and enforced from the signs of the present times.

AS the doctrine of the *Millennium* appears so strongly founded on the authority of the canonical Scriptures; and the belief of it in the first ages of the church is so well supported by the testimony of the primitive Fathers, and the sanction of the council of *Nice*, no private interpretation of Scripture can stand against it; all opposition from men of whatever name must fall before it; neither will any errors that have been mixt with it, nor any difficulties that may be started against it, be allowed sufficient to set aside the substance of the doctrine, whilst the evidence on which it rests, remains unshaken. Among the many arts practised in order to bring any truth into discredit, none is more popular than that of exhibiting it to public view, joined with the absurd tenets of some that have espoused it, and which is not improperly called dressing up truth in a fool's coat, on purpose to make it appear ridiculous; and this often succeeds with the undiscerning vulgar, who judge only by the outward appearance of things. Something has before been offered on this head, in relation to that disparaging comparison made by some betwixt the *Millennium* and a *Mahometan Paradise*. I shall only here observe, that this method was taken by *Jerom*, that great champion of the Anti-chilist party, in order to load this doctrine with contempt; who accordingly charges it with the sensual errors of *Cerinthus*, and the fond conceits of those carnal Jews or judaizing Christians, who supposed that circumcision, and the legal bloody sacrifices were to be revived in this new kingdom, thus mixing

heretical notions with a gospel-truth, that he might bring it into disgrace; whereas the primitive Fathers (against whom he sets himself in this matter) and likewise all pious Christians, did believe in this kingdom of Christ as a kingdom of *Saints*, not of *Epicures*, and as a heaven upon earth, wherein righteousness and holiness should dwell. And as to those Jewish fancies concerning the revival of their typical ceremonies, *Justin Martyr* expressly declares against it as follows: "Don't think that *Isaiah*, or any other of the Prophets teach, that at Christ's second advent, the blood of victims and libations will be offered upon an altar, but only the spiritual sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving." This disingenuous dealing of *Jerom*, Mr. *Mede* censures with exclamation: *Os Hieronymi!* &c. "O the assurance of *Jerom*, to charge these things upon the Millenaries, &c." And yet *Jerom*, who so indulged himself at times in ridicule on this serious subject, was not without his more moderate fits of reflexion thereupon, as appears from his following words quoted by Mr. *Mede* in the same page, which are introduced with his speaking of the supposed errors of the Chiliasts: *Quæ licet non sequamur, damnare non possumus, quia multi virorum Ecclesiasticorum et Martyrum ista dixerunt: Unusquisque in suo sensu abundet, et Domini cuncta judicio reserventur.* "Which opinions (though we do not follow them) we cannot condemn, forasmuch as many, both among ecclesiastical men and martyrs, have maintained the same: Let every one freely enjoy his own sentiment; and let all things be referred to the judgment of the Lord." When *Jerom* said this, surely he did not join the doctrine of the *Millemium* with the errors of *Cerinthus*, for then he must have condemned it here, as well as in other parts of his works. *Jerom* was a great scholar, and possessed of uncommon talents, but they seem rather to have been human than

than divine: Simplicity does not appear to have been any distinguishing part of his character; for he is charged with being an unfair relator of the opinions of other men*, when he disliked them: He paid little deference to the authority of the primitive Fathers, being perhaps influenced herein by an over-weening conceit of his learning and great abilities; and he is severe in censuring their allegorical interpretations of the Scriptures, whilst he himself denied the literal sense of the book of Revelations: But the defects, and even errors of great men, are entitled to allowances of candour: Take him for all and all, and he deserved well of the church, and his praise is in it, for many learned and useful labours.

Though what has been offered on this subject in the present work, is abundantly sufficient to free the doctrine before us from the imputation of Novelism; nay, to fix the charge on the unbelieving side; yet it has been said, and probably will be said again, that the church has done very well without it for many centuries, and that to go about to revive it, only tends to disturb its peace, and to introduce disputes: That it is only a matter of speculation, and so long as we are to be happy hereafter, it is of little consequence, whether this shall be in the way of a gradual process, or all at once; whether in a new state of this world, or by an immediate translation into the blessed abodes of the eternal heavens; and therefore there is little need to be very solicitous about it. This objection consists of two parts, each of which calls for its answer: And here, in the first place, it will be difficult to say how well the church has done, without this doctrine, for so many centuries; and though the times of past ignorance God winked at, yet to this end hath he revealed his truth and his

* See MBD's Works, p. 602.

counsels, with respect to the salvation of men, that they may be known; and if *all Scripture is given by inspiration, and is profitable for doctrine and instruction in righteousness*, (2 Tim. iii. 16.) then we certainly can do better with it than without it; and what *Solomon* says in general, will hold good in this particular; that *it is not good for the soul to be without knowledge*, (Prov. xix. 2.) Besides, as this position argues a lazy indifference touching the truth of man's important interest, much to be ashamed of, so is it as well pleadable against all reformation of doctrine in any church, even in the darkest times of it: And as to that part of the objection that relates to disturbing the peace of the church, it is sufficient to reply, that where any part of its peace should happen to rest upon the ignorance of any concerning truth, it is so far to be considered as a false peace, which ought to be disturbed; and in that case men are to be roused from their lethargy, that they may be made to see the things that belong unto their true peace: And as to the matter of angry or causeless disputes, let them look to that who take or make the occasion for them; for truth is in no wise chargeable with consequences that arise only from the abuse of it, or with *the perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds*.

Secondly, To represent this doctrine as a matter of mere speculation, the truth of which we need not be solicitous about, is doing great injustice to it, seeing it is highly practical in its tendency and right use, and next to the fundamental articles of the Christian faith, most worthy to be embraced; as it unfolds many dark enigmas in the course of providence, explains and justifies God's dealings with men, and displays his justice, mercy, and goodness in the kingdoms of this world, thereby supplying increase of matter for our thanksgiving and praise to his adorable Majesty: It exalts the character and dignity

dignity of our blessed Saviour, as the separator of every breach in the system of this world, the Redeemer from every curse, the Reconciler of all things unto God in himself, and the Restorer of Paradise forfeited and lost: It opens a new world of faith, exhibits a ravishing scene of the divine wonders in nature renewed and perfected, and represents all things as brought under subjection to him, whom God hath appointed to be King over all the earth: And, lastly, it gives accomplishment to the end for which God created man, making him little lower than the Angels, that he might take his delights with the children of men, and bless them, and that they might worship him in righteousness and true holiness; that so all his works, both in the heavens and under the heavens, might praise him. These are not speculative niceties, but subjects of high importance and influence, enlarging the heart in love towards God and man, and serving as so many incentives to piety of life, and the practice of every relative duty and social virtue: They fire the heart with an ardent longing to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living, and to behold our Saviour and loving Friend on his glorious Throne, distributing his gifts and blessings among his redeemed ones; whilst we with our brethren, in our several classes, rejoice together in love and the discharge of every endearing office, free from sorrow, and free from sin; whilst every spot and blemish of remaining imperfection daily dies away, as we advance towards perfect purity and immortal glory.

As I am desirous to enrich this work with the sayings of great and good men upon this subject, wherever I find them, I shall here present the reader with the following quotations from three very respectable authors. The pious and learned Dr. Knight, late Vicar of St. Sepulchre's, London, in his sermon *on the conflagration and renovation of the world*, among other ends of this renovation, assigns

assigns the following; viz: That the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, may be better discerned in his *New Works*, than they were in the *Old*, and also, that righteousness may reign and flourish in the new frame and system of things; on which occasion he expresses himself thus: "The Spirit of God, which animates the Saints, will then unite them together under Christ their Head; in the same knowledge of divine truth; in the same love and obedience to God; in the same affection one towards another; and in the same endeavours to promote the whole: The Being of God, his perfections and authority will be fully acknowledged; his laws obeyed with cheerfulness; his mysteries understood, or received with humility; his justice revered; his goodness admired, and himself worshipped in spirit and in truth: The œconomy of the Word in a body of flesh, and the dignity of his nature will no longer be matter of contradiction and strife, but confessed in a manner becoming those, who enjoy the redemption obtained by his blood, and himself be joined with the Father and Holy Spirit in the worship and praises of angels and men: Religion will be pure without hypocrisy, virtue without presumption, love without dissimulation, honour without pride, power without oppression, and knowledge without conceit: No one's abundance will create envy, where every one is full; no man's distinction, where every one is satisfied with his own lot, and selfishness will be lost in the spirit of love."

The devout and self-denying Mr. *Wogan** was a faithful and patient waiter for this blessed kingdom, and has given us a very comfortable page for

* Author of a valuable work in 4 vols. octavo, intitled, *An Essay on the proper Lessons appointed by the Liturgy of the Church of England*. See vol. 4. 27th Sunday after Trinity.

the use of the drooping Christian, in that part of his work where he expounds *Isaiah* lxx. 10. in connexion with *Hosea* ii. 15. both which chapters are thoroughly prophetic of Christ's peaceful reign on earth. "A good beginning (will the pious but afflicted Christian say) I see indeed this valley of *Achor*, which you call a door of hope, but where is that *Sharon*, that glorious and flourishing state of the church you speak of? Above these 1700 years have we waited for the accomplishment of this divine promise; but alas! what do we hear, or see, or read of, but sin and misery, as well within as without the church? Not only vanity and vexation in the things of the world, but lamentation, and weeping, and mourning among the children of God; nay, for the most part greater and more lasting troubles to the disciples of *Jesus*, than to the carnal and profane." *Answer*: "True, O pious soul; this is the present state and condition of the church, and hath been so ever since our blessed Master ascended into heaven, and went into that far country, to receive for himself a kingdom which he had purchased with his own blood: But we have his word and most faithful promise, that he will return and put a final end to all these complaints; and that he will then change this miserable scene of sin and sorrow into songs of triumph and everlasting joy: The voice of weeping shall then be no more heard, nor the voice of crying, because sin, the great and only troubler of the world, shall then be done away. But when and how (say you) will this blessed change be? Why, God himself declares it by his prophet: *Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth*: Then shall be that blessed change; for *Christ* shall descend from heaven with power and great glory, to reign with his Saints upon earth: Then will his church be a *Sharon* indeed, and this *Achor*, or door of hope, introduce

"introduce us into everlasting, ever happy habita-
 "tions: Till then, let us have patience, that after
 "having done and suffered the will of God, we may
 "receive the promise: In the mean time, tribula-
 "tion is our portion in this present world: But the
 "same *Jesus*, who foretold it would so happen,
 "hath bidden us also to be of good cheer, because
 "he hath overcome the world, and so shall we, if
 "we faint not."

These good men did not think and speak of this
 doctrine of Christ's triumphant reign on earth, as a
 matter of speculation; but it was to them a fund or
 principle from which they drew much matter of
 blessed hope, to support them under the various
 trials and troubles of life, and to animate them to
 perseverance in their Christian warfare. And to the
 same purpose the celebrated *Mede*, so often referred
 to in this work, expresses himself on the same
 subject in one of his private letters: "I find, says
 "he, more true contentment in the contemplation
 "of these things than the greatest dignities, which
 "ambition so hunteth after, could ever have afford-
 "ed me; and I give thanks to Almighty God, who
 "hath made the light of these wonderful mysteries
 "to kindle that warmth in my heart, which I felt
 "not till I began to see them, and which have made
 "me that, which they found me not."

The difficulties that attend our conceptions, on
 this subject, in many of its parts and circumstances,
 and which a fertile fancy or a doubting mind can
 readily raise on every subject, have been improved
 into a variety of objections to this doctrine; but
 should we sit down resolved to suspend our assent
 to every truth, till all the difficulties that the wit of
 man can entangle it with, be fully satisfied, our
 Creed will be brought into a very narrow compass;
 nay, perhaps, not one single article of it will be able
 to gain admittance in the course of the longest life;
 and therefore it is, that the *credenda* of our religion
 are

are proposed to our faith, and not to our reason: Truth (if we except such portions of it as carry with them a kind of intuitive evidence) may be compared to a remote object, consisting of different parts and aspects, all of which the eye cannot take in at one view; and even such parts of it as will admit of this, will form delusive appearances, if we behold them at an improper distance, or through an unsuitable medium, or if there be any defect in the organs of vision. Now the mind of man, in its present state of weakness, lies under still greater disadvantages, in regard to truths relating to his future state of existence, than the eye in the forementioned circumstances, as well because of the disproportion of its faculties to the nature of the subject, its distance and difference of condition hindering all distinct perception of it, as also on account of the mists arising from various prejudices, which, like so many false mediums, occasion numberless misapprehensions of it, even in the minds of wise and good men: But this defect in our knowledge is well supplied by the better substitute of faith, for we may believe with assurance what we know in part. However, this may teach us, that it is much more easy for a person of a shallow understanding, to start objections on such subjects, than for a wiser man to answer them all. It should be deemed sufficient in cases of this nature for the credibility of any doctrine, that it be supported, as to the substance and reality of it, by a proper authority suited to the nature of the subject; and as to its different modes and circumstances, it behoves us to be modest in what we have to offer both for and against, things that lye so far beyond the reach of the most enlarged capacities. The subject before us lays its claim to this plea; nay, it lays claim to an evidence more diffusive throughout the Scriptures both of the Old and New Testament, not only typical and figurative, but also literal and express, than perhaps any other doctrine that

that can be mentioned. Upon this Rock it stands immoveable, and therefore we may be bold to defy all opposition, that mistake, prejudice or false criticism can raise against it. Nor should the difficulties that may attend the consideration of it in some particulars, lessen our faith in this blessed kingdom, but rather serve to exalt our estimation of it, seeing the more perfect it is, the farther will the comprehension of it lye beyond the reach of our present faculties, as all our ideas are now borrowed from nature in degeneracy: Besides, it is unreasonable to make the want of adequate ideas, an objection to the reality of paradisaical glory, whilst we allow it to be none against the blessedness of the angelical kingdom, which we all hope for, and still far surpasses the former; a happy state, in nature renewed, we can form some imperfect judgment of, but it cannot enter into the heart of man to conceive the bliss prepared for the children of God in the highest heavens. It has, I think, been fully proved, that we have abounding promises and prophecies of a future happy state of the church on earth, and these are the main of its evidence; and the same is more or less distinctly represented in Scripture under sundry types and allegories, which may be considered as a chain of testimonies continued through the sacred Canon: Now, if in this thread of revelation running from the beginning to the end of our Bible, and crossing such a rich variety of important subjects, we should here and there find some knots which we cannot easily untie; such difficulties must be allowed common to it with other material articles of faith, which the Scriptures treat not according to man's art and method, but hold forth for the exercise of a resigned faith, and not to gratify an officious curiosity: And as to any difficulties that may arise from a philosophical view of this subject, they will appear to carry no weight of obligation with them, when we consider, that, in this renovated state of the world, the powers of

of nature will be changed, and a new system of its laws and properties take place, through a breaking forth of the heavenly-physical powers, which will be the working and governing principles in outward nature, for paradise has its root and ground in heaven, and is only a more sensible manifestation of it in a lower sphere; and therefore to set up our mechanical philosophy as the test of what is possible or impossible in nature restored, is just as wise, and to as good effect, as to put on spectacles to see what is transacting in the moon. It was from an over-attachment to such a strait-laced philosophy, that an author before mentioned in this work, cries out, A paradox! upon hearing of a supposed communication betwixt the raised and living Saints in the millennial kingdom, though the Scriptures not only authorize, but evince the same truth in Beings far more distant in condition of existence, viz. betwixt the blessed angels and frail men: And I must own, that it presents itself to my mind as a highly pleasant theme, to think how the peaceful abodes of holy men and women will then be blessed at times with unexpected visits from the Patriarchs, Prophets, and Worthies of old times, to hold loving discourse together on the things of God, and the delightful subject of redeeming love: Nay, what room have we to doubt, whether the Holy Angels from heaven will not take their turn in such friendly interviews, and converse as familiarly with men, (though less disguised) as *Raphael* did with *Tabitha* and his family.

But if the philosopher will needs be wise in the things of another world, let him clear his way as he goes, and first be wise at home. And here, to begin with the most obvious things, let him explain the greenness of the grass, the saltness of the sea, the cause of the different qualities in vegetables, and what are their specific powers: Nay, let him explain himself, the progress of his own formation

and

and growth in body and mind; the union and reciprocal actions of soul and body, and the generation of his thoughts: Let him then proceed to give us a perfect natural history of animals, minerals and fossils, and to explain the planetary influences and the nature of fire: Then let him pass on from the kingdom of nature to that of providence, and lay open the hidden mysteries of the divine oeconomy in the government of the world, and reconcile all the parts of its administration with the perfection of God's attributes; but here also he will find the task too hard for him, and that his judgments are unsearchable, and his ways past finding out. Now, if there is so much darkness in the things that are before us, how modestly should we judge of those which as yet do not appear? The ways of God, in every system of creation, are a great deep, which we can only see into by the light he gives; and therefore, instead of turning difficulties into objections to any part of his works, it will become us better to learn a lesson of humility from the ignorance that belongs to us.

I might here properly take my leave of objections, to pursue my way through what remains to be offered on this subject; but there is one which looks it so full in the face, and has been so much insisted on by opposers, as inconsistent with, if not contradictory to the description given us of this happy country, that it must not be passed over in silence; I mean the armies of *Gog* and *Magog*, spoken of in Rev. xx. which went up against the Saints to make war against them. Here is an innumerable company of wicked Beings brought upon the stage of the new earth, which was destined to be the habitation of the Saints, and leaguering together for their destruction: Now, how came they there, and what hopes could they form of success from so rash an enterprize? It might be sufficient here to reply; that where a prophecy comes evidenced to us by divine authority, we are not

not to reject the substance of it, because of our ignorance how some particulars relating to it may stand together; that predictions of this kind seldom contain a detail of modes and circumstances belonging to the plan, but only acquaint us with the main event; and that it is enough for us to know, that as the administration of the kingdom will be in the hands of the Son of God, he will be well able to secure the felicity of it against all attempts from his enemies: But the Rev. Mr. *Johnson* before mentioned, in the preface to his first volume of Sermons, has untwisted this knot in a way which merits our attention; and if it be objected to as a mere hypothesis, I shall only say, that where reason sets itself to invent objections to a Scripture doctrine, a reply founded on a reasonable supposition, should be deemed a sufficient answer, as the authority of the latter is as good as that of the former. Mr. *Johnson* * supposes, that “as a great part of the world never heard of Christ, and yet the gospel of the kingdom was to be preached in all the world for a witness to all nations; so such of them as have died in ignorance of the Christian dispensation, will be raised from the dead to have a time of probation allowed them in the uttermost parts of the earth, in a condition suited to their state; and shall have the gospel preached to them by Emissaries from the kingdom: That many of them will be converted and established in grace, and have their portion with the Elect; but that a great number of them will be seduced by Satan, on his enlargement at the end of the thousand years; will invade the kingdom, and be destroyed by fire, as mentioned in the Revelations.” Such a supposed dispensation of grace and trial as this, vouchsafed to the poor heathens,

* He does not take to himself the credit of this hypothesis, but adopts it.

does certainly, in the eye of human judgment, set the divine proceedings towards the human race, upon a foot of nearer equality in mercy, enlarges our conceptions of God's goodness, assigns greater extent of efficacy to the Christian sacrifice, the Redeemer's blood, and removes that rock of offence, and abomination of a system, which excludes the far greater part of *Adam's* fallen offspring from all benefit in the covenant of grace established by God in Christ, the Second *Adam*, who tasted death for every man, without excepting one single individual. Mr. *Johnson* allows, that such a purpose of mercy in God towards the heathen world, is not expressly or particularly revealed in the Scriptures, and he quotes the two following probable reasons assigned for it from *Staynoe's* Treatise of Salvation: "First, " Because this resurrection and probation of the " Gentiles does not concern those who have the " Scriptures, as by these they may come to the " knowledge of the Saviour, which is as much as " concerns them: And, secondly, Had this resur- " rection and probation been put into the Scriptures, " yet those who had them not, could have known " nothing of the matter in this life, and so as " to them it had been put into the Scriptures " in vain."

Though Mr. *Johnson's* foregoing account of *Gog* and *Magog*, be only offered as a probable interpretation of that dark passage, yet it derives credibility from the *Gog* and *Magog* of *Ezekiel*, chapters xxxviii, and xxxix. who are there represented as the heathenish nations and enemies of *Israel*, whose destruction is there foretold to be with great hailstones, fire, and brimstone. If by these we are to understand ungodly Heathens in the present world, they may be considered as a type of the *Gog* and *Magog* mentioned in the Revelations; if they mean the same, they are a proof of the point in hand; however, there are circumstances in the account

account which the prophet gives of them, that lead us to take them in the former sense, and among others that mention, which the Prophet makes of many people in confederacy with *Gog*, who shall partake in his punishment; and is not here a word of threatning for the false Christians; who, though they take to themselves the name of *Israel*; yet are not of the true *Israel* of God, but *Ishmaelites* in nature, men of a heathenish spirit, and oft times more than heathenish in their lives, who join with the *Gog* and *Magog* of this world to oppress and persecute the true children of faith: Far worse will it go with them who now so hold the truth in unrighteousness, than with the poor blind *Gog* and *Magog*, who may obtain mercy for what they now do in ignorance and unbelief, and have their lot for probation in the first resurrection, whilst the apostate children of the kingdom shall be cast out, and have their lot where is weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Matt. viii. 12.) The exposition here given of this mysterious passage in favour of the gentile world, gives occasion here to remark; that it is not necessary to suppose, that the whole plan and purpose of God's mercy, in the full extent of it, is expressly declared in the writings of the New Testament; and that because of the ill use that many would make of such a discovery, and thereby disqualify themselves for it. Our Lord tells his disciples: *I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now*; (John xvi. 12.) and of the great abundance of things revealed to *Esdras*, some he was commanded to *publish openly*, and some (70 out of 204 books) he was to *deliver only to such as were wise among the people*; (2 Esdras xiv.) giving us hereby to understand, that there are different kinds and measures of truth suited to different persons and times of the church; and though *Jesus Christ*, the fountain of truth, and the foundation of all God's mercies to man, be sufficiently revealed in Scripture

for the salvation of all, yet this hinders not our divine Teacher from communicating out of the rich treasures of his wisdom, to certain among his faithful servants in every age of the church, many precious and rare discoveries, both through the Scriptures, and by the immediate teachings of his Spirit, not only for their own use, but also for the benefit and comfort of such among their brethren, as are in a disposition to receive them. I cannot end this section without observing, that the foregoing explication of *Gog* and *Magog*, seems to me confirmed by *Rev. xxi. 24.* where speaking of the glory of the New *Jerusalem* which should need neither the Sun nor Moon, as having the Lamb for the light thereof, it is added: *The nations [Heathens] of them which are saved, shall walk in the light of it,* signifying hereby, that though the Gentiles will not be admitted, during their state of probation, to inhabit the New *Jerusalem*, that metropolis of the blessed Kingdom, but have their residence at a remote distance from it, yet so diffusive will be its splendor, that they shall receive benefit from it; and as it will yield unto them bodily light, so doubtless likewise that which is spiritual, by the divine teachings of those who shall be sent from this city of the Great King, for their instruction in godliness.

Under this article of *Gog* and *Magog*, there remains one objection to be considered, and that the rather, as it has been urged as an absurd paradox against the belief of the *Millennium* †: The author, whose paradox it is, delivers himself as follows: “Who can think that the malice of these men should so far exceed their wit, as that knowing by daily experience that these raised and glorious Saints are immortal and impassible, they should yet hold it safe, or possible to oppose them with any hope of success.” The objector here takes for granted

† See *Revelation unrevealed.*

what.

what we allow not, viz. that all the blessed Saints of this kingdom are such as were raised from the dead in glorified bodies; whereas we hold, that many who are alive at Christ's second advent, will pass into this happy state, and though their material bodies will be exalted to high degrees of purity, differently according to their different classes, yet many of them, at least, will wait therein till their final change from mortal to immortal shall come to pass in the twinkling of an eye at the last trump. Secondly, It does not appear, that this army of *Gog* and *Magog* will be so well acquainted with the invincible power and safety of the Saints, as he supposes, (any more than the Devil was with the Divinity of our Saviour when he tempted him) for they are represented as dwelling in the four corners or extremities of the earth, and so beyond the sphere of manifested paradise. And thirdly, As to the madness of their enterprize, we are no ways answerable for that: They are said to be deceived by *Satan*, and people that are deceived must be supposed in an error; and how far they might be seduced to believe, that being joined by the powers of darkness, they might be a match for the Saints we know not; however, this we know, that sin is of an insatiable nature, and deprives such as are under the power of it of all right judgment, otherwise we should not hear of the Dragon and his Angels fighting against the strength of God; nor of our first parents disobedience; nor yet see wicked men live as they do, in defiance of God's laws and threatenings.

As many are the objections which have been raised against the doctrine of the *Millennium*, so not a few are the prejudices which indispose men for the reception of it: And here the strong delusions of many both among Jews and Christians about the nature of the *Messiah's* kingdom, together with their impostures and enthusiastic attempts to establish it upon earth by human means, have had
much

much effect this way. The Fanatics of *Munster* soon after the reformation, and the Fifth-Monarchy men in *England* in the last century, as mentioned before, are well-known instances of this kind, who, by their scandalous riots and rebellions, did all in their power to render the doctrine itself obnoxious to civil government. Of the like class was *Sabatai Levi*, the Jew, who about a century ago at *Smyrna*, and other parts of the East, drew after him many deluded followers among that people, pretending that he was the *Messiah*: As also about the same time on *John Roth* in the Low Countries, who got ready standards for the twelve-tribes of *Israel*, which, he said, he was to re-establish; and he also imposed upon some credulous people; but one of the chief of these adventurers, who gave out that he would behead all the Kings of the earth, and begin at *England*, set sail in a little bark, and was no more heard of, which put a stop to their knight-errantry. Thus does the grand Deceiver go through the world, seducing the minds of sensual and credulous men with false semblances of the truth, that so he may bring it into disgrace with such as are weak in judgment; but we are not ignorant of his devices, nor unprovided against them; for he that hath given us sound doctrine, is always ready to give us the spirit of a sound mind, that we may be able thereby to distinguish truth from its counterfeit; and indeed such pretenders to reformation in *Israel*, are easily known by their fruits, for the ambition and worldly-mindedness that so evidently appeared in these disturbers of government, plainly shewed them to be very unfit instruments to make ready a people prepared for the Lord; whereas the true children of the kingdom are of an humble mind, much dead to the things of this world, and waiting in patient hope till the Lord *Jesus* from heaven shall build up *Sion*, and make his glory to appear, not by human policy or carnal weapons, but by a convincing display of his

his divine power; and they are obedient to their superiors in all things lawful, giving honour to whom honour is due; and the Spirit of truth which guides them, is also the Spirit of peace within them; and therefore they cannot sow the seeds of division in church or state, being against no order that is not contrary to God's order, enemies to no peace, but that false and fatal peace which is of the world, the flesh and the devil, leading to destruction; Out of this they call their brethren with a friendly warning, not into any sect or party, but into that kingdom of righteousness and holiness, where the Prince of Peace is King, and into that fellowship of the Spirit with the Father and the Son, and with all Saints, in which the true unity is to be found. These are the persons to whom the promise is made of being the happy subjects of Christ's glorious kingdom upon earth, and from these we may expect the fullest discoveries, and the clearest knowledge of the Scriptures concerning it. I shall here dismiss this part of the work with the following exhortation to the candid reader.

It was an usage in the primitive church, at least as old as *Tertullian's* time, and mentioned by that Father, for Christians to pray, *Ut partem haberent in prima resurrectione*, that they might have part in the first resurrection; and as they believed that Martyrs were entitled by promise to a certain distinguished lot of inheritance in that kingdom, the over-forwardness of some in those days to embrace martyrdom is hence accounted for. But how is the case altered with us now, when the greater part either dispute the truth of a first resurrection, or at least treat it as an useless doctrine? But, dear reader, can any thing be useless that God hath so plainly revealed in his written word; nay, can any thing want great importance, that Christ hath done or purchased for us? Who can tell what changes and revolutions, what progress in discipline and purification

tion may be requisite for a soul to pass through in its way to the courts of the most high God, and to qualify it for the beatifick vision? All nature has its regular and gradual process towards perfection, even in the most simple weed that grows upon the earth; and how much more may we suppose it costs to redeem a soul, and to conduct it to the complement of its full salvation! Few perhaps are so well satisfied with their state at the time of their departure out of this life, as to think themselves already so far perfect, as that nothing more remains to be done, or done away in them, but that they are already qualified for the joys of Angels, and meet for the fruition of the glory of God. Some like doubts and fears may happen to the best of men at that time, and perhaps to such the ofttest: And, under these uneasy thoughts, I think it may afford no small consolation to their minds, to have this anchor of hope, that though they are not as yet fully prepared to enter into the palace of the great King, yet there is a place reserved for them at the marriage-supper of the King's Son, where they will be welcome guests, and partake of a blessed inheritance with the Saints in his kingdom, when every thing in them that offendeth shall be done away, and every thing that is yet lacking shall be supplied, till they are changed from glory to glory into the condition of just men made perfect. Forbear then, my dear reader, to call this an useless doctrine, or to think it a light matter whether thou believest in it or not, for it is an article of precious faith and a fund of joyful hope, that will stand by thee in many a trial and trouble: It will keep thee from fretting thyself because of the ungodly; and from being envious against the evil doer, whose way doth now prosper, knowing that yet a little while and the ungodly shall be clean gone, and then the meek shall possess the earth, and be refreshed in the abundance of peace. (Psal. xxxvii.) And here thou art presented with a glorious view of the triumphs

triumphs of godliness, and of Christ's sovereignty on earth: He declared indeed just before his ascension, that all power was given him in heaven and in earth; but he hath deferred taking into his hands the administration of his kingdom, as to the visible part of it, till old things shall pass away, and all things become new. In the mean time, he suffers the reign of Antichrist to run out its full period; and the god of this world with his powers of darkness to bear rule for a time; and he continues patient though he be provoked every day: But when the time appointed of the Father is come, and he hath accomplished the number of his elect, he will gather his Saints together, and thus royally attended, he, who is called *Faithful and True, with a name written on his vesture and on his thigh*, KING of KINGS and LORD of LORDS, (Rev. xix.) shall appear gloriously in the heavens as the Rider on the white horse, coming forth conquering and to conquer: (Rev. vi. 2.) The whole earth shall stand in awe of him; his enemies shall fall before him; and his advent shall be proclaimed with shouting: "Tell it out among the heathen, that the Lord is King: Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth, and with righteousness to judge the world, and the people with his truth." (Psal. xcvi.) How does this winding up of providence set all things right, and extricate the mind from innumerable perplexities concerning the course of things in this present evil world! How does the opening of this wonderful scene to the eye of faith, spread light upon the Scriptures and rejoice the heart! And how does every system of divinity that owns it not, involve itself in darkness and difficulties insuperable! Reader, if thou hast faith in this matter, keep it as a choice treasure and lose it not; and I am the more earnest in this exhortation, as it has been to me a cordial in much affliction, and is now, under God, the staff of my

my declining age, nor will I let go my hold of it for all that this world has to give or take away: But there is a reason of far greater weight for my recommending to thee the serious consideration of this subject with an affectionate zeal, viz. because the signs of the present times throughout the world, seem to give strong indications that the providence of God is now big with some grand event, and that we are at the eve of an awful crisis: Be it so or otherwise, it behoves us to be as men waiting for their Lord, when he shall come to the marriage; and he who believes that the time of his coming is nigh, has certainly a strong additional motive to preparation and watchfulness. We have too long gone on criticizing and disputing upon religion, till very little of it is left amongst us, and the greater part scarcely know where they are, or what they believe: nay, many band together in wicked associations and clubs to fortify themselves in unbelief: But cast not in thy lot with such, for death and hell are in their paths. If thou art yet wavering and unsettled in thy mind, chuse the safer side of godliness, for the best that the bad man has to hope for, is the worst that the good man has to fear; and when his false hope and refuge of lies shall fail him, as it certainly will, how dreadful is his lot! If thou hast but a grain of faith, or even a willing and desirous mind to believe (with a heart in any good degree weaned from the love of the world), pray unto the Lord, and he will have compassion on thee, to help thy unbelief: and then will enable thee to go on from faith to faith, and from strength to strength till thou shalt appear before God in *Sion*. I say not this to engage thy assent to this doctrine in particular, only let it have its due weight of evidence with thee in common with others; it is for thy interest and comfort I am speaking; and if thou can'st believe with thy heart in the Lord *Jesus Christ*, as he who is ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead,

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(Acts x. 42.) and the author of salvation to all them that obey him, (Heb. v. 9.) having thy heart established in grace for obedience to this faith, (Rom. i. 5.) thou shalt receive the end of thy faith, (1 Pet. i. 9.) even the salvation of thy soul.

The SIGNS of the TIMES.

AS about the time of our Saviour's nativity, there was an expectation among the Jews of the *Messiah's* coming, though without any certainty as to the exact time of it, except in some few holy writers for the *Consolation of Israel*, to whom it was revealed: So likewise, that his approaching second advent, when he shall come to take possession of his kingdom, will be revealed to some, is not to be doubted: Besides, there is a kind of divine sagacity in the minds of some men, which gives them impressions of things to come; and perhaps no remarkable event ever happened in the world (history affords us many instances of this) of which some had not presentiments more or less distinct; nor should we be so backward to admit the agency of the divine Spirit on the human intellect, but for a fashionable scepticism in divinity, which teaches men now a-days to question the truth of every thing supernatural since the first age of the church. It is worthy of remark, that for about a century past, the belief and expectation of Christ's millennial reign on earth have prevailed more (as to what appears) than in thirteen hundred years before; and that many learned and pious men of different churches and nations, have agreed with wonderful consent touching the approximation of this great event; though it must be confessed, that such among them as have employed great talents in endeavouring

endeavouring to explicate and apply the prophetic iconisms and numbers thereto, have not succeeded according to their expectations. The great and good Mr. Mede, who for heart and head was perhaps exceeded by few in his time, undertook to explain the *Apocalypse* by a system of his own framing (though perhaps no book of the sacred Canon is less reducible to such a methodical plan) in which he sets up Rome imperial or papal, as the mark and scope of all the prophecies relating to the beast, the whore, the false prophet, and Babylon the great, and empties every vial of its plagues upon her head: And though he often found himself embarrassed by the straitness of his scheme, to find out suitable events and circumstances in the history of Rome, and to accommodate and time them answerably to the prophetic visions, yet it must be owned, even where he was most pinched, that his wonderful invention and the dextrous management of his learning, helped him to draw likenesses in miniature, which shew an exquisite imagination; he was often forced to take up with petty events in history as he could find them, which bore no proportion to the grandeur of prophecy; but then no man could make more of them than he did; and he seldom fails to please with an air of plausibility, even where his interpretations can by no means satisfy: He walked in fetters of his own forging, and yet he walked better in them than most could without them; he was an excellent expositor where the literal sense of the Scripture is only concerned, but where it holds forth a mystical or spiritual meaning, he generally falls short of the dignity of the subject: To instance only in his exposition of the inner court or temple, which St. John was ordered to measure together with them that worship therein, Rev. xi. 1. This inner court or temple he expounds of the visible state of the church during the first 360 years of it, before it became corrupted by an impure worship,

worship, (*Mede's Works*, page 558); whereas all spiritual writers interpret it of the mystical body of Christ, his living members who worship the Father acceptably in spirit and in truth, as distinguished from nominal Christians signified by the outward-court worshippers, who have the form of godliness without the power thereof, a name that they live, but are dead, (Rev. iii. 1.): The former are called in Scripture *God's building*, (1 Cor. iii. 9.) and *the temple of the living God*, (2 Cor. vi. 16.) and they are to be measured by John with a reed of the sanctuary for a place in the *New Jerusalem*; whereas the latter, *which say they are Jews* (true Israelites) and are not, but are the *synagogue of Satan*, (Rev. ii. 9:) are ordered to be left out of the measurement, as being of no account in the sight of God. Mr. Mede's construction of this passage confounds the inner and outer court worshippers, during the primitive times, under one and the same denomination, though they were as distinct then as at any time since; and not only so, but it leaves the church destitute of an inner court during the time of her apostacy or declension; whereas the Lord never leaves himself without witnesses, even in the most corrupt times of the most corrupt church, but has a remnant or seed to glorify him, even holy men and women, connected indeed in visible communion with the outer court worshippers, but of a very different order, and precious in the sight of God: These constitute the invisible church, signified by the woman in the wilderness, and are the children of a mysterious birth, having a *white stone* given them, and in the stone a new name written which no man knoweth, save he that receiveth it, (Rev. ii. 17.) they are truly strangers and pilgrims upon earth, lightly accounted of by their brethren that are in the flesh, persecuted of Satan, but preserved of God, till the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord, at the resurrection of the just.

As the prophetic iconisms or images of the subsequent state of the church, and of remarkable events to happen therein, have been hitherto unfolded with little perspicuity, nay, much uncertainty of interpretation; so neither has it gone better with the prophetic numbers. Many men of learning and piety, who have been strong in the faith of Christ's reign on earth, and had their hearts warmed with the hopes of its near approach, have set themselves diligently to enquire, at what particular time this great revolution would take place; and among others, *Alstedius*, *Archer*, *Brightman*, and *Beverly* in the last century, formed their calculations, most of them agreeing that it would happen about or before the year 1700. As the event happened not according to the predictions given, all computations of this kind have fallen into disgrace with many, even to the hardening themselves against any other warnings of it that may be given, though this is making an ill use of the mistakes of well-intentioned men, who hang out the best lights they have for the caution and safety of their brethren: Besides, great allowance is to be made for errors in chronological disquisitions of this kind, as the mystic numbers in Scripture are involved in much obscurity; nor is it always easy to adjust with exactness the epocha or first punctum of time, from whence the calculation is to proceed, as is the case in particular in that famous prophecy of Daniel's seventy weeks: Nor are we rashly to pronounce such to be false prophets (if men fearing God) who fix a time for the accomplishment of scriptural predictions, though the thing foretold does not come to pass at that particular time, seeing they may, for what we know, have proceeded rightly according to the sense of the letter or number given in Scripture, as we know not with what reserves of mercy prophecy may be delivered, and the completion of it hastened or delayed in subserviency thereto, as happened in the

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case of Nineveh : And our Lord tells us, that the days of the last tribulation shall be shortened for the elect's sake, Matth. xxiv. 22. Whether there may not be something in the spiritual world analogous to the virtue of magnetism in outward nature, that attracts the attention of serious men to the consideration of momentous changes shortly to come to pass, I will not take upon me to determine ; yet I must own, that the expectation of so many in the last century (as was observed before) of the *Messiah's* approaching kingdom, weighs more with me to strengthen my faith in it, and to direct my thoughts the same way, than any errors in their calculations as to the precise time of it, to produce any contrary effect. That so many writers on this subject (though I have met with very few of their writings) of different persuasions in other things, should so agree in pointing their calculations towards the commencement of the present century ; and that public witnesses in the church should now appear for the same truth, sacrificing to this testimony of *Jesus* all worldly hopes, looking for complete redemption in *Israel* as drawing nigh, and encouraging their brethren to forsake the *Egypt* of an apostate world, to hasten in preparation unto the coming of this day of God ; (and many more such witnesses I believe will shortly appear) these things laid together carry in them a lesson of warning not to be despised or neglected, but listened to as a voice crying to the people of *England* in their present wilderness-state ; *repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!* And it will become us better and behove us more, to examine into our state, to see what manner of persons we are, and to prepare the way of the Lord in our hearts, that so we may be found clothed in the true wedding-garment at his coming to the marriage, than to criticise and cavil on the words of the message, or to turn into ridicule those

those that deliver it. But we are given to expect, that as it was heretofore in the days of Noah, so it will be now: The interests, pleasures, and vanities of this world will harden the hearts and stop the ears of many against the loudest calls to repentance: And as to the *Babylonian* merchants of this day, whether they trade in purple and fine linen, in places of honour or places of profit, or in merchandise brought from far; whether they carry on their traffice in the church, the state or the change; whilst their hearts are glewed, nay, rivetted to the world through the love of it, what trumpet can awake them? What thunder can alarm them? What earthquake can shake them? What witness can persuade them? What woe can convert them?

Most of us are apt to look towards Rome only for the signs of the times, as if that were the sole residence of Anti-Christ and his family; and as though, for a token of his destruction, we were first to see the walls and battlements of that city and church tumble down, as did those of Jericho aforetime, at the sounding of the rams horns: But look around thee, spectator, and thou shalt see Anti-Christ and his retinue also behind thee and on each hand of thee; and beware lest he be not also within thee: Thou mayst know him by his false pretences to the truth, or by his opposition to the truth as it is in *Christ Jesus*; as likewise by his other marks and characters: He is the beast in the natural, sensual man, and the red dragon in the man of persecution; he is the serpent in the sly deceiver and subtle hypocrite; the false prophet in the lying lip of interpreting the Scriptures; he is the whore in those that commit fornication with the civil powers and great ones of the earth for filthy lucre-sake, having men's persons in admiration, because of advantage; and *Babylon the Great*, which are the kingdoms of this world, is the throne of his power, where he vends his false wares
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and distributes his favours to those that have received the mark of the Beast on their foreheads ; for in this generality of extent is *Babylon* described in Rev. xviii. 3. But let no one use this as a pretence for not paying respect and obedience to persons in lawful authority and to government, for this is the ordinance of God, (however the enemy may slip into it) and we must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but for conscience sake : Nay, mystical *Babel* is in the root of our fallen nature, and born into the world with us all, which the spirit of Christ alone can cast out ; and therefore if we diligently examine ourselves, we shall all, or almost all, find more or less of this cursed thing in our tents. The woes therefore denounced in Scripture on the foregoing characters are not limited to any particular place or society of men, but are commensurate to the extent of those characters every where. Rome will doubtless drink, and deeply too, of the cup of suffering, for all her worldly-mindedness, persecutions, and other abominations ; and all the impenitent and ungodly in every other church must pledge her in the same ; but praised be God ! for many, very many sons and daughters both in her and them, among high and low, of every tribe and class, that shall be redeemed from *Babylon*, (Micah iv. 10.) a goodly number which no man can number ordained to glory, and to be the joy of the whole earth. It does not appear that the most corrupt part of Christendom shall be first in the visitation of wrath, nay, we are told that *judgment must begin at the house of God*, 1 Pet. iv. 17. which, taken in a mystical sense, means the spiritual or true, inner-court worshippers ; or if it be applied to the greater purity of doctrine and constitution in any outward church, and we lay claim to this character in a distinguished sense as belonging to us ; in this case we should do well to look at home first for the signs of the times, and to beware, lest we be found

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no better than reprobate silver in the house of the Lord, when he comes to make up his jewels.

Among the signs of the times preceding the kingdom of Christ triumphant, we may reckon the witnesses of its approach, sent forth as heralds to proclaim the advent of the great King. Now these will be different both in the kind and degree of their testimony, according to the difference of their light and talents, and to their nearer or more remote distance from the period we are speaking of. Some will appear in this office under more general and confused apprehensions of the time as drawing on, without any thing distinct or clear concerning it; and these may be considered as an inferior sort of harbingers preparing the way at a distance: And others will see it with a sharper sight, but being hurried on by an over-hasty zeal and confidence, will be apt to overlook the intermediate space as nothing, and so think and speak of it as just upon the point of commencing; as was the case with some in the last century, and about the beginning of this. Some will give their testimony in the way of rational deductions from the literal sense of the Scriptures compared with the state of the times as therein foretold; and this method of treating the subject will be best suited to the apprehensions of the generality, who are more in the sphere of external knowledge: Others will be led to explicate the prophetic emblems and numbers, adjusting them to remarkable events and revolutions in the kingdoms of this world, and forming calculations thereupon, and generally not without some mistakes arising as well from the imperfection of human knowledge, as also from their inferior part, not yet sufficiently defecated and enlightened: And some few, initiated in this kingdom of God in a mystery, and favoured with an inward experience of its heavenly powers, of both sexes (for male and female are one in Christ) will be raised up to preach the kingdom

kingdom and its nigh approach in a declarative or prophetic stile; and though their testimony will be rejected by those who admit of no truth, but as offered in the common methods of argument and proof, yet it will be held precious by such as are in a disposition to receive it in the way of faith. But here a word of caution seems necessary; that no man run before he be sent, nor take to himself this office without being called to it, mistaking the sallies of a warm imagination, or the impulses of a natural zeal, for the motions of the divine Spirit: All the propensions of self-will, and even the desire of designation to this office should be jealously watched over as so many hindrances to any such vocation, for they are not the forward and bold, but persons of humble minds and a mortified spirit, whom the Lord delighteth to honour in this way; not such as seek it of themselves, but such as are sought out of him for it; not the wise of this world, but the children of simplicity, for these are the babes to whom he revealeth his secrets.

The learned *Bengelius*, I am told, has published calculations of the times when this world shall end, and the millennial kingdom begin, but I have not seen any of his works; and as I am not skilled in such calculations, so neither have I any thing to offer in the way of prediction, believing only in general, that we are very near the time of this great crisis; that the signs of it do evidently appear; that the woes which are to usher it in, are just going to break forth; and that many persons who have already passed the meridian of life, will not taste of death till they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven. The Rev. Mr. Richard Clarke* supposes that the first sabbatical year will open before 1766: His calculations are certainly

* See his *Prophetical Numbers of Daniel and John*, and *his Feast of Trumpets*, p. 100.

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ingenious, at least, and particularly more adapted to the types and signs of times under Moses, and a short time will shew if they are strictly just; though I must own that the preparatory work, both as to grace and judgment, appears not to me far enough advanced for so speedy an accomplishment, and that some events foretold in the Scriptures yet to take place, seem too big to be included within that compass; however I am inclined to think, that within that limited period, the signs of the last times will come on so thick and striking, as to claim the serious attention of the public to the warnings of that friendly Monitor. What space of time, more or less, may be sufficient for finishing the effusion of the vials described in the *Revelations*, for the conversion of the Jews that are to be the first fruits of that people, and for other subjects of prophecy not yet fulfilled, cannot be precisely determined; however that of the two witnesses mentioned in Rev. xi. if to be understood in a personal character, shoot beyond this mark, allowing that the 1260 days assigned for the time of their ministry, mean only natural days, which I suppose they do in this place. Many of the prophecies have both a mystical and a literal sense, and accordingly a double completion, and therefore the giving a personality of character to these witnesses, sets aside no other testimony against the apostacy or corruption of the church, which Mr. Clarke and some other learned authors suppose to be meant thereby: Besides, the speciality of number, the personal acts that are ascribed to them, what is said of their dead bodies, and their restoration to life, and many other particulars, seem to make for this interpretation: Nay, it was a common belief among the Fathers of the church, that Enoch and Elias were to be these two last ambassadors to the world, for its warning and conversion; and Ephrem Syrus in particular says, (see his Homily on *The End of the World*) that

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before the end of the world, "The Lord will send "*Enoch* and *Elias* (*Elijah* the *Tishbite*) to preach "righteousness to all mankind, and to guard them "against the delusions of *Anti-christ*," which he supposes will at this time assume a body of flesh, lord it over the earth, and seduce a great part of it to his obedience; and the description of his reign, and the miseries he will bring upon mankind, as given us by this Father, and also by *Hippolytus* and *Lactantius*, are enough to make one tremble; in particular his horrid profanations and contempt of God, his power by the agency of his evil spirits to cause all kinds of disorders in the elements, his subversion of all morality, and his tyranny over all that fear and obey God; for among his other cruelties he shall cause a great famine and engross all provisions to himself, and only deal them out to those that will receive his cursed mark and worship him, that so he may damn their souls. And here we may observe, that it is no other than the spirit of *Anti-christ*, the God of this world, that rules in the hearts of the tyrants and covetous great ones of the earth, whilst they grasp at all, that they may oppress their poor and needy neighbours, and extort from them an idolatrous kind of homage and worship for handfuls of barley and pieces of bread, Ezek. xiii. 19. In a word, the confusion and anguish, the lamentation and mourning, from all kinds of misery, that shall then prevail in the earth, as set forth by the above Fathers, and also several others of them, is enough to make one wish to die, rather than live to see that time; or should it be our lot to come under so severe a trial, may the good Lord keep us stedfast in the faith, and give us the Spirit of martyrdom that we fall not into the snare of the Devil! But neither let us deceive ourselves, for the spirit of *Anti-christ* is now in the world, and was in the world in the days of the apostle, (1 John iv. 3.) and great abominations he doth in it through his

his willing instruments and members; nay, his present invisible kingdom, as it now stands in the mystery of iniquity, may be more dangerous and full of delusion than his future personal reign, as the Devil is less likely to deceive when his cloven foot appears, than when he tempts and beguiles under the more specious appearances of decency and the form of godliness: However, when he comes to reign with fulness of power in his visible kingdom, the dreadful effects of his malice will be the most severely felt. To the woes of this his personal reign the xxivth chapter of *St. Matthew*, and the xiiiith of *St. Mark*, seem principally to refer, speaking of the tribulation that will then be such, as was not from the beginning of the world: The former chapter does likewise refer to *Daniel* for the prophecy of these times, and in particular for the abomination of desolation mentioned in *Dan.* chap. xi. and xii. wherein the reign of this wicked monster is foretold: And as this reference was made by our Lord long after the time of *Antiochus Epiphanes*, it demonstrates that the fulfilling of the prophecy was to take place under the Christian church: Nor can it with any propriety be construed as fulfilled at the pollution of the temple, when *Jerusalem* was sacked by *Titus* in any other than a typical sense, as after the dispensation of the gospel took place under the *pentecostal* revelation of it, the temple at *Jerusalem* was no longer to be considered as the *Holy Place*, for all relative holiness belonging to it then ceased. How hard do some expositors strain every nerve of criticism to set us free from all fear of the divine threatenings and judgments as belonging to ourselves? Is not this prophecying of smooth things to prophecy deceit? Let it be farther observed here, that the abominable character given us in *Dan.* chap. vii. 25. and which can be no other than *Anti-christ*, is mentioned by *St. Paul*, (*2 Thess.* ii. 3.) by the name of the
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Man of Sin that shall be revealed before the second coming of *Christ*. So that this doctrine of Anti-christ's personal reign is not only supported by the judgment of the Fathers, but seems countenanced by the authority of the Scriptures: And it also challenges our assent if viewed by the rule of analogy, and as an inference drawn from parity of reason; that as the great mystery of godliness had its manifestation in *Christ*, so the mystery of iniquity should likewise be manifested in a visible Anti-christ. As these two great principles of good and evil have both alike man for the subject of their operations, and both a kingdom in this world; and as man in his present situation betwixt the two kingdoms of light and darkness is represented in Scripture as the dwelling of the divine or of the diabolical spirit, so such a principal manifestation of the latter in the human nature, as may in a more emphatical sense be stiled *The Anti-christ*, carries with it much of a reasonable supposition; nor do I see how any one who, with so many Protestant Divines, holds the Pope of Rome to be Anti-christ, can call in question the still fuller Revelation of him in a worse character.

What has here been said on the personal reign of Anti-christ, as it is offered with reasonable proof, so also is it with much moderation of sentiment, and not obtruded on any for belief; for Christian unity implies not sameness of opinion in all things, but unity of faith in essential points, and charity in all: However, the subject is interesting, and capable of being pursued through many important considerations, one only of which arrests me here, before I pass on to other matters, I mean those execrable societies hinted at before, grown so common in this kingdom, consisting of men hardened in unbelief through the deceitfulness of sin, who join together in determined opposition to the faith of *Christ*, and

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to the making converts to infidelity; thus doing all in their power to bring back the charge of Anti-christianism from Rome, to fix it on ourselves with aggravated shame, as it is a greater disgrace to oppose the truth of Christ than to hold it in error and superstition. These are professedly Anti-christs according to St. John's definition, (1 John iv. 3.) who tells the Christians in his days, that as they had heard that Anti-christ should come in the last time, i. e. one in that character eminently so stiled, so were there then many Anti-christs, (1 John ii. 18.) or men led by his spirit to oppose the gospel, and subvert the faith of others: And he must needs be a stranger in our *Israel*, who knows not what a swift progress infidelity has made of late years amongst us, or is to be told how revealed truths are almost every where spoken against, and is so kept from acknowledging that there are many Anti-christs in these days, many indeed who both for their number and figure afford a melancholy sign of the times, and of the approach of that great Anti-christ that should come, whose fore-runners they are. Nor let the decent but lukewarm professor, who like Gallio careth for none of these things, think too well of himself, because he comes not under this predicament of opposers; for they that can see and hear their Saviour dishonoured and denied, without any emotions of a godly zeal for his truth and character; they that can seek alliances with the wicked great ones of the earth for the sake of advantage; and they that can read such books as *Sans Souci* without horror and detestation, are but one degree removed from the spirit of Anti-christ.

The decay of Christian faith is mentioned in Scripture among the signs of the last times, for it is said; *When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith in the earth?* A true faith in his person and offices among few in comparison, and faith in the kingdom he comes to establish, among still fewer:

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And here, setting aside the many who pretend not to faith, what shall we say of the greater part of those who lay a sort of claim to it? Why, that their faith is good for little or nothing. What is the faith of them that live in pleasure? All such being pronounced dead to God, (1 Tim. v. 6.) it can be no other than a dead faith. What is the faith of them who only or chiefly pursue the means of getting wealth? Why, as the principle that governs them is stiled Idolatry in Scripture, (Col. iii. 5.) it must be an idolatrous faith. What is the faith that bringeth not forth the fruits of good living? It is just as good as the barren tree that is fit only for the fire. What is the faith of them that live to the world, the ways and fashions of it, in any sense of the expression? Why, not that faith that overcometh the world, (1 John v. 4.) for all such are overcome by it, and therefore theirs cannot be a gospel-faith. What is philosophical faith? To doubt, dispute or deny every thing that is not level to the comprehension of our reason. And what is political faith, but an engine of State-craft, using religion for a pretence to carry on the schemes of ambition, greediness and revenge throughout the world, at the expence of the welfare and blood of the deluded multitude, and of every virtue under heaven: It is the whetstone on which men of false honour or brutal rage sharpen their swords, that they may cut the deeper into the hearts of their brethren; and when any such take the name of God and religion in their mouths, they are guilty of profanation. These have nothing to do with the distinctions between *Lutheran* and *Calvinist*, *Protestant* and *Papist*, whilst they themselves have less of true religion than the peaceful *Hottentot*. If we pass on to the serious, such as are in earnest, and mean something by faith, how much even of this will be found short of the gospel-standard? How great a part of it is a faith of particularism, consisting in

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opinions or nice distinctions concerning modes and circumstances of government, discipline or unessential doctrines; or else in a self-appropriated confidence, with many words of Scripture fitted to their own sense and system, a system, like the Cone, narrowing from its base to a point and terminating in *Self*? In these particular systems the generality stand fiercely contending for the faith of their party, shutting up themselves and shutting others out, that no stream of affection from the bowels of charity may flow towards millions, for whom the Lamb of God shed his blood in the boundless latitude of his mercy and love: Hence it is that many a serious seeking Deist is prejudiced against the truth of the gospel, whilst he finds more of extensive philanthropy and benevolence in the principle of a generous humanity, than in the professed Christianity of such sour bigots to a strait-laced system. How much then of that which passes in the world for faith, if weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, will be found wanting, and how little left upon the comparison, for a fearful sign of the times? Now let it be observed here, that true faith is no such starveling shriveled thing as many represent it, but is comely with a smooth brow and serene aspect, bearing even outwardly the signature of its heavenly extraction: for it is a principle of divine operation, even the life of God in the soul of man; it is the pure element of his grace, in which Christ spiritual opens his kingdom within us; and as this advances, divine charity or love springs up and flourishes in the soul, enlarging the heart towards God and man, and bringing forth in us the peaceable fruits of righteousness. Here all things go on well, for in this kingdom we are at peace with God, ourselves, and others, neither is there any biting or devouring among brethren: It admits indeed of distinction as to external communion among Christians, nor excludes diversity of sentiments as to many particulars.

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in the same common general faith, but then it is a principle of moderation in them all, not building up walls of partition as betwixt house and house, but is as one beautiful and spacious edifice consisting of many apartments, having a free communication one with another, where difference only serves to embellish the whole with a graceful variety: Here *Ephraim* doth not envy *Judah*, nor doth *Judah* vex *Ephraim*, but all is love, joy and peace. Such are the blessed effects of a true faith: Evermore, Lord, give us this faith!

But if the decay of faith is given by our Lord as a sign of the last times, so also is that of love: *The love of many shall wax cold*, Matth. xxiv. 12. And this prediction applied to our days affords a melancholy subject for reflexion, whether we consider love here as a human virtue or a Christian grace: If we take it in the former sense; the little of true philanthropy in general, appearing in the want of kindness and hospitality to strangers; and of philadelphiaism in a more particular sense, through the decay of disinterested affection among such as stand in the mutual relation of neighbourhood and society, together with the great decrease of family comfort and love. These supply full proof to the point before us; nor is the charge mine, but the complaint of all whose hearts are formed for the blessing of love, and as such the only true judges in this matter; whereas they that can live in discord, as the proper element of their nature, like the Salamander in the fire, are not only content to take the world as they find it, but love to have it so, for they can see nothing desirable beyond the present state of it: But, *O my soul, come not thou into their secret, unto their assembly mine honour be not thou united*, Gen. xlix. 6. Where the bond of sweet peace and fellowship first knit by mutual affection, becomes untwisted, the generous principle of brotherly

brotherly love soon changes its nature, and contracts into a spirit of selfishness, as the diffusive rays of the Sun when confined by a burning-glass, converge to a focus: Hence an insatiable thirst to procure and accumulate wealth, and to draw all to self, shutting up every source of benevolence towards others: And not only so, but the heart of man in this degenerate state becomes a fit soil for the enemy's husbandry, wherein he sows his cursed seeds of jealousy, envy, hatred and strife, banishing all innocent cheerfulness and confidence among men, and so turning the great blessing of conversation, according to the true nature of it, into a snare and a danger, whereby many are driven to chuse the solitary life rather than expose themselves to the intolerable evils of society. These things are mentioned by the prophets among the evils of the latter days, in many places; and who seeth not the accomplishment of them in ours? But if such be the waxing cold of love considered as a human virtue, what cause have we not to complain of the same, if considered as a Christian grace? It was the advice of *Joseph* to his brethren, *See that ye fall not out by the way;* and the command of *Jesus* to his followers, *Have peace one with another;* but where are they that follow the advice of *Joseph*? How few that practise this command of *Jesus*? What judging and censuring, what reviling and fierce disputings have we here among angry Christians! whilst *Ephraim* thus envies *Judah*, and *Judah* so vexes *Ephraim*. Why surely, my brethren, you know not what you are about, nor what spirit you are of; for if our common danger from evil men and evil spirits, nor our common warfare in an enemy's country, nor our common hopes of a blessed inheritance in the heavenly *Canaan*, nor our common redemption in *Christ Jesus*: If none nor all of these can unite us in brotherly love, we mistake our name and nature, and with all our boast of profession

profession and zeal, are not of his peaceful flock, but wolves in sheep's clothing. When *Moses* saw two *Hebrews* striving together, he said unto him that did the wrong; Why smitest thou thy fellow? And does not the same question come home to you with a much stronger emphasis, O ye contentious Christians? It does (if you have not lost the feeling heart and hearing ear) crying out and saying, O man! what art thou doing, and whom dost thou vex and strive against? Is he not thy brother for whom Christ died? Are you not members in one body under him your Head? And is it not as unnatural for thee to hate and injure thy fellow-member as for the hand to smite the face? Take heed what thou doest! Brethren! I speak to all of every denomination, know you not your high calling? You are called to love, to be kindly affectioned, to be tender-hearted, to bear with and help one another, and to the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace: How comes it then that you thus break the peace, and nourish hatred in your hearts? Is Christ all love, and you all wrath? How then can he be your Lord, or you his disciples? You profess to set your faces for *Sion*, and to be travellers towards the heavenly country; but consider, my brethren, that is the land of peace and love; and there is the city of the great King which is at unity in itself; there is the sweet communion of Saints, that jubilant fellowship of the redeemed ones, and nothing but the voice of joy and songs of praise, from unison-hearts tuned to love, are to be heard in their dwellings; what then will you do there? Beware, O man, whoever thou art, how thou seekest an entrance into the *New Jerusalem* without the seal of God in thy forehead; for many will boldly advance, even up to the gates thereof, with the language of *Sion* in their mouths, and with much knowledge of doctrines in their heads, and with broad phylacteries on their garments inscribed with many

many things said and done for *Christ*, to whom it shall be told from the battlements of the city— *yet lackest thou one thing*; and if that thing lacking be love, all the rest will prove but lost labour, there will be no admittance for them there. Let this be said to thee, thou titular Christendom in general, who playest the hypocrite with the name of Christ in thy mouth, whilst void of his Spirit, nay, having strife and envy and war in thy heart; pretending a zeal for the purity of Christian faith at the time that pride, wrath and covetousness are the idols thou worshippost. How wilt thou appear when called upon to give an account of the violence, oppression and persecution that shall be found within thy borders, and of all the desolations which thou hast brought upon the earth; through thy wounding of Christian peace and love among brethren, and thereby causing the holy name whereby thou art called, to be blasphemed among the Gentiles? *Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works, lest thy candlestick be removed out of his place, Rev. ii.* Though this be spoken, as I trust, from something of pure zeal for the Lord and his truth, yet is it also spoken in acknowledgment of my unsuitableness to this office, and with sincere confession of my being the most unworthy among those that worship the Father in spirit and in truth; but these things must be said by somebody, and how does my heart wish from sounding bowels of tender compassion and mournful affection, to give a longer and a louder call to all the divided churches in the Christian world, in this time of danger and impending woe, that laying aside their animosities and debates; and being rooted and grounded in love, and in fellowship with all Saints every where, they may be able to comprehend the breadth and length, the depth and height of that love of Christ which passeth knowledge; that so when the *Lord Jesus* shall come from heaven

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to bless us, each one may present her multitudes of sons and daughters *faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.*

It is a sad subject we are upon, but we must go on with it; as it is better to know the danger which threatens us, that we may avoid it, than to fall into it through a false security. Among the many dreadful signs of the last times laid down by our Saviour in the gospels, and particularly in *Matth. xxiv.* he not only foretells the enmity that shall be in men against revealed religion, and such as preach the truth as it is in *Christ Jesus* without respect of persons, but also their great degeneracy in departing from the obligations of morality and natural religion, as their treachery one to another, and the abounding of iniquity in the earth, which if considered jointly with what *St. Paul* foretells of the same perilous times, (2 *Tim. iii.*) they will together exhibit a frightful but true description of the present state of the world. And here the general failure of strict truth and justice in dealings, is an article of sad reproach upon the Christian world at this time not to be denied, whether we consider the frauds commonly used in weights and measures, and the price or quality of what is sold; and if here be taken in the unreasonable expectations of the buyer, and his desire to purchase under the true value, we may of a truth affirm, that buying and selling is at this time seldom carried on without sin. The unlawful combinations and monopolies among traders to raise an exorbitant profit from their wares, is another great evil amongst us, common and unredressed by those whose office it is to apply the remedy; and to this must be added that most iniquitous practice of adulterating commodities, even of necessary use; it being well known, that the bread, the beer, the wine, and the medicinal drugs which we buy at a high price, are generally debased with impure, if not unwholesome mixtures: Thus are the principles of life and health corrupted;

corrupted ; and whether this may not properly be termed an indirect way of poisoning, so far as health is hereby impaired, or the restoration of it hindered, cannot, I think, be doubted. It does not occur to me that this last kind of treacherous dealing is mentioned in Scripture ; if so, we may suppose that it was not, or but seldom practised in those days, but is the growth of later improvements in wickedness. To these corrupt practices in matters of commutative justice may be added those that attend the administrations of public justice in law-proceedings ; as the exorbitance of fees, the multifarious arts used to perplex and protract the issues of judgment, causing intolerable expences and vexations to the heart-broken client ; the indecent raillery and banter of bold men to baffle evidence and put modesty out of countenance ; the sophistry, quirk and false colouring suffered in pleadings, to the disgrace of serious truth and the offence of hearers, together with all the hired, practised pains to defend an unjust cause, and so putting darkness for light, and misleading the minds of those that are to decide in judgment. But who can recount all the tricks and traps of so many among the inferior practitioners in the law, by which many a poor man is ruined every day ? This is not said to reflect disgrace on a profession honourable in itself, but to give it a share in that leprosy of corruption which has overspread the whole earth. Thus is fulfilled amongst us what the Prophet foretold : (Isaiah iii. 5.) *The people shall be oppressed every one by another, and every one by his neighbour.* And the degeneracy of the Jews a little before the time of their captivity (for that people was a type of the Christian church in all things) may be considered as a sign of the sad depravation of morals among Christians before the time of the last judgments. Now as touching the former, the same Prophet complains as follows :
 (Isa.

(Isa. lix.) *Our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us: Judgment is turned away backward; justice standeth afar off; truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter.*

The signs of the last times may be considered, either as the great abounding evils that follow by natural consequence from the impiety of these times, or as judicial inflictions by way of punishment, happening out of the ordinary course of nature, and so more properly stiled judgments. To begin with the former. A departure from the fear of God in general will consequently relax the sense of every obligation to the relative duties, and of course there will in proportion be less reverence for, and less of dutiful behaviour to superiors amongst inferiors: This is remarkably exemplified in these days, as I believe the fifth commandment was never less in force and operation than now; and so the bold and irreverent behaviour of children to their parents becomes their scourge for not bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord: And as to the misbehaviour of servants, it is generally complained of, especially among the genteel and polite; but the blame lies at their own doors; for, living as they most of them do, so much without God in the world, their servants are under no good influence or restraint from their examples, and so rebel against them as they rebel against God. These evils in particular are noticed by the Prophet, (Isa. iii. 5.) among the curses occasioned by sin: *The child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honourable.* From the same decay of the fear of the Lord comes the loss of due regard to the obligations of an oath, whereby the strongest fence to property is broken down, and all remedy from the civil magistrate cut off, to the unspeakable detriment of society: The loss occasioned by customary, false swearing in the public

public revenues is confessed to be very great at this time ; and the deficiencies caused by such loss must be made up by additional taxes on the subject, and so the innocent suffer through the guilty. To proceed: Avarice, that it may increase wealth, begets oppression ; and luxury, in order to support the pride of life, begets avarice of another kind, whilst both concur in producing the same effect, viz. the rack-renting of tenants ; and where this is attended with a fondness for pastimes and vain amusements, an over-proportion of the gentry will resort to the larger towns, in order to pursue their schemes of pleasure and dissipation, by which means the country will not only lose the benefit of good example and good government from persons of the higher class, but be deprived of its due share of wealth*. Thus all things will go wrong apace
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* It is to be remarked here with regard to our own nation in particular ; that a departure from rural simplicity to an affectation of gentility and politeness in the inferior classes, has almost ruined the country people both in their morals and circumstances, and within this last century well nigh extinguished an useful order of men amongst us, viz. the yeomanry or gentlemen-farmers, who formed a kind of middle class between the true gentry and the lower-renting farmers, and who by their plain but plentiful way of living were a main support of the poor labourers and their families, and also of benevolence and good neighbourhood in the country ; but suffering themselves to be drawn into a false and fashionable taste (which they were no ways fit for) by their superiors, their lands are now passed into the hands of the over-grown rich, and their descendents now hold upon high rents and hard fare what their forefathers enjoyed as their own property. The great difference for the worse occasioned by this change in the manners of the country people, the increase of parish-poor, the loss of chearful simplicity, and as to most of the innocent comforts of a rural life, is not to be expressed. This observation might be carried farther, and point out how the same
fashionable

both in town and country, whence will arise poverty and general discontent in the latter, carelessness in their conduct through desperate circumstances, combinations to cheat the king, their landlords and their minister, dissolute morals, and ruin in the end.

The destructive evils arising to society from the vicious passions of men unrestrained by the fear of God, will appear still more conspicuous and fatal, if we make the application to persons of great power and authority in the world; and here the consequences, according to their extent and degree, may arise to a very formidable sign of the times. Thus ambition and thirst of dominion in Christian princes will produce mutual jealousies, deceitful negotiations, tricking in politics, decay of national faith, and bloody wars oftentimes about matters of little consequence, especially where the civil powers are in too close connexion with mercantile bodies of men, and so drawn in to support their particular quarrels and interests at the expence of the treasure and blood of their subjects: In this case, false maxims concerning public welfare will be adopted; clashing interests and competitions between the merchants of this and that nation will be found cause sufficient to send forth fleets and armies to fight all the world over; and the unthinking multitude

fashionable folly in a higher degree taking possession of the ancient gentry of this kingdom, has exterminated so great a part of them from their old family seats and demesnes, which have been bought up and are now buying up by the wealthy merchants; so that our land is stocking apace with a new race of gentry and nobility, who, without the hospitality and generosity of their predecessors, sluice off the wealth of the country to hoard it up in the stocks, or to squander it away prodigally in *London* or *Paris*. It may be said without the gift of prophecy, that it will not require many more wars and heavy taxes to finish the ruin of this country.

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deluded and bewitched by the sound of the word *Trade*, will madly cry out for war, though thereby they heap taxes, poverty and ruin upon their own heads. From these fermenting passions of mankind in the case before us, unspeakable evils flow in upon society, to the banishment of sweet peace, social love, and every virtue and grace that may endear us to God and one another, in the room of which spring up hatred, rapine, murder, confusion and every evil work, transforming men into savages, and the world into a kind of temporal hell: Good God, what ravaging, what plundering, what scalping is here!

It is to be observed under this head, that war considered singly in itself is not offered here as a sign of the last times, but only as it is circumstanced and joined with other signs, or as it becomes more general throughout the world, and more destructive in its effects than any foregoing war: Now that which is foretold in the Prophets and the Gospels among the other last plagues, appears plainly to mean an universal war: Thus in particular *Jeremiah* chap. xxv. speaking of the judgment of the sword that God would send on particular nations, he proceeds to extend his prophecy to the whole earth—“ I will call for a sword upon the inhabitants of the whole earth, saith the Lord—The Lord hath a controversy with the nations—he will plead with all flesh, and give the wicked to the sword:” And *Isaiah* chap. xxiv. compares the few that shall be spared from the great desolation, to the few olives that are left after the shaking of an olive-tree, or to the gleanings of grapes when the vintage is ended: And the same comparison is used, 2 *Esdras* xvi. in which chapter we have a fearful account of the desolation that shall be caused by the sword and the other plagues in the last days: And therefore where our Lord speaks of nation rising against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, *Matt.* xxiv. among

among the other signs of his approaching advent, we are to understand nothing less than war throughout the world, for all the signs of the Messiah's kingdom must bear a proportion suitable to the grandeur of the event, and therefore it may be mentioned as matter of astonishment, that so many expositors, even of note, should confine our Saviour's predictions, as recorded in *Matth.* xxiv. and elsewhere touching the judgments of the last time to the destruction of *Jerusalem*, seeing they were given to the disciples upon their request to our Lord, that he would tell them what should be the signs of his coming and of the end of the world. What is spoken there of *Jerusalem* and *Judea*, are very capable of a mystical sense; and though the destruction of that city for the sins of the Jews be allowed to have its reference in the line of the prophecy, and granting its due share by the way in the judgment-work foretold, yet this hinders not those predictions from referring principally and ultimately to those last judgments that should usher in the peaceful reign of the triumphant *Messiah* with his Saints on earth, and from representing to us in the sufferings of apostate *Jerusalem* the punishments to be inflicted in the latter days on apostate Christendom; especially when we consider that the whole œconomy of the Jews, their temple, city, various revolutions, desolations, rejection and restoration, are so many typical exhibitions of the Christian church in its several periods and states: These things are spoken of in their history for our instruction and admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. The best reason that can be given for interpreting these prophesies as fulfilled in the destruction of *Jerusalem* is taken from ver. 34. *This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled*: But this arises from a mistaken sense of the word γενεα, which, as Mr. Mede judiciously observes, (*Mede's Works*, p. 752:) signifies not

only *ætas* or *sæculum*, but also *gens* or *progenies*, not only the age of a man or a century, but also a *people* or *progeny*; and accordingly interpreting this passage as spoken of the Jewish nation, he expounds it thus: "The nation of the Jews shall not perish till all these things be fulfilled;" or, in other words, that they should not cease to be a people, however dispersed throughout the world, till these things should have their full accomplishment. How does this restored plain sense of one Greek word set all right in this place, whilst at the same time it gives light to another prophecy relating to the preservation of that people in their distinction from all others till the second coming of the Son of Man, the completion of which thus far we are eye-witnesses to: Besides, there are several particulars in this chapter, which cannot in any sense be understood as fulfilled by the calamities brought upon the Jews by the besieging and destruction of their city, more especially that part of the prophecy which tells us, that *immediately* after the tribulation of those days, all the tribes of the earth shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, ver. 30. Let us, therefore, wait in patient hope and all readiness of expectation for this second advent of our Lord, when he shall come to establish the *Jerusalem* from above on the ruins of that which is from beneath.

The last plagues are not to take place till the measure of transgression be filled up, and the man of sin attain to his perfect stature; but then according to his growth and the progress of the mystery of iniquity, a proportionable revelation of the righteous judgment of God is to be expected. As the vials and woes mentioned in the *Revelations* will be the finishing of the plagues, so it is reasonable to believe that the time appointed for these will be very short, as well by reason of their extreme severity, as because of their abridgment for the elect's sake, who shall be preserved, many of them,

them, as by miracle from the rage of the wicked, who *shall be like mad-men*, as we are told, *2 Esdras* chap. xvi. *sparing none, but still spoiling and destroying those that fear the Lord*: However, the plagues precursory or preparatory to the last, will be of longer duration, and go on increasing till the judgment-work be finished by the triumphs of mercy in the blessed kingdom. The fore-running chastisements (which are already begun) will, by a merciful restraint on the passions of men, have certain pauses or short cessations in them, granted for serious consideration and repentance to the inhabitants of the earth; and as some (we hope many) will answer this gracious design of God's providence, so the generality, we are told, *Eccles. viii. 11.* will go on to harden themselves more in their impenitence and wickedness. The late war, if viewed in the full latitude of its horrors and dreadful consequences (little apprehended of many) or in the greatness of its extent beyond what was ever known before in the world, is to be reckoned as one of the plagues fore-running and preparatory to the last; nor are we to consider the present cessation of it in the light of a lasting peace, but only as a pause or breathing time till it break out again with augmented rage and horrors. In its precursory view it is to be considered as a trumpet sounding the alarm to the succeeding woes; in its renewed progress, as running into one of the last plagues; and therefore the true waiters for the kingdom will not flatter themselves with false hopes of any long continued peace, but keep themselves in readiness for the increasing evils to come upon the earth. Among the signs of the general desolating war to ensue, there are many that offer themselves to the attentive observer, as the little good effects that appear from the past calamities of war on the minds of men in the way of repentance and reformation of life, or rather still greater

greater depravation of morals and worldly mindedness; the not giving to God the glory of our deliverances and success, but ascribing it to human prowess and counsels, nay, discontent under peace restored through thirst of more trade and more territory, both of which inordinately pursued tend to corrupt and ruin any people, though, through the infatuation of avarice and ambition, men see it not: And lastly, the spirit of discord prevailing in the minds of men, shewing itself in party-distinctions and animosities in the state, breach of the relative duties betwixt superiors and inferiors, dissensions in neighbourhoods, family-quarrels, and domestic strife abounding every where; all this is war in its principle and curse, though men fight not with swords and guns, and are the prognostics of more open violence and hostilities, shewing, that fuel is already prepared for that devouring fire that maketh desolate, and that the seeds are even now sowed for that harvest, which is appointed for the sickle of the destroying Angel. False reasonings and a deep sleep with regard to the threatened judgments of God and the signs of their approach, indispose the greater part from believing these things, though I must own that my heart is ready to quake within me at the apprehensions of them, and but for trusting in confidence, that the end of God's arising to judgment will be to save the meek of the earth, (Psal. lxxvi. 9.) and for the manifestation of his great mercy towards all that shall be qualified objects of it, I had rather bear the reproach of a false prophet all my days than behold the calamities that are coming upon the earth, as fore-shewn by the signs of the times; but this promise have we, that *Zion* shall be redeemed with judgment, (Isaiah i. 27.) and so the greatest severities that shall befall her redeemed sons and daughters, will be no other than the chastisement of her peace in the end. Under this article of war may justly be censured the

the cruelties adopted in the manner of conducting it, equalling if not exceeding the customs of many Pagan nations, as impoverishing the innocent under the mock-name of contributions, exterminating quiet people, men, women, and children, from their possessions and country under pretence of disaffection, and that of following the example of barbarous savages in scalping: These things, in the true representation of them, are concealed from the greater part, or so palliated with political reasons as to make them pass; but are detested of those who have not lost all tincture of humanity; and they that go about to justify such practices, will justify the burning of Negroes alive or the leaving them to starve on gibbets, as is sometimes practised in our foreign plantations: Such persons may justify inquisition-cruelties for me; nay, as I cannot consider them in the character of men, were they to go about to justify the Devil, I should not think them worthy of an answer. This puts me in mind of what is told us of the *Indians of Calicut* in the *East-Indies*, who worship a frightful image of the Devil to which they sacrifice children, and give as a reason for this hellish worship: "That God did indeed at first create the world, but that men so far corrupted themselves, that he turned the government of it over to the Devil." Wherefore do men who sacrifice to the Devil, according to his will, deny their master, and refuse to be called *Diabolians*? O merciful *Jesus*, hasten the time of thy wished-for kingdom, when all thy worshippers shall love as brethren, neither shall cruelty nor war be any more known.

Though war be an evil apparently proceeding from the will of man, and under the direction of human means, yet it is also to be considered as a judicial infliction in a proper sense of the word, wherein man is made the instrument of his own punishment: Thus, for the sins of a people, a spirit

spirit of error and deceit may be suffered to infatuate their governors and mislead them into the way of destruction, as was the case of *Ahab* seduced by the lying Prophets: And thus wicked men by the consent of their minds to what is evil, become the willing tools of the Devil, and he is permitted to rule over them as the master they have chosen: *His servants we are to whom we obey*, Rom. vi. 16. However, the minds of the greater part are most affected by those judgments or signs which are dispensed through extraordinary operations in the natural world, in the way of dreadful appearances or destructive consequences; and therefore the great governor of the world is pleased on extraordinary occasions to manifest himself to the children of men by such visible tokens for warning or punishment: Accordingly, all great changes in the world have been ushered in by some portentous phenomena; much more may it be expected, that such grand and interesting events as the coming of *Christ* and the renovation of the world should have their prognostics and suitable apparatus, as foretold in the Prophets and in the Gospels; nor are these times without their alarming signs in the heavens, in the earth, and in the waters, answering thereto; witness earthquakes in divers places within these few years, repeated and multiplied beyond what was ever known since the creation of the world, whereby many populous cities † with great numbers of their inhabitants were destroyed; as likewise warning earthquakes in this land and very many parts of the Continent, insomuch that accounts of earthquakes are now become so common as to be read in the public papers without any degree of surprize; so the warnings of God lose their force on a hardened people through the multitude of his monitory mercies.

† *Lima, in South America, Lisbon, Tripoli, in Syria, Mequinez, &c.*

Commutations

Commutations in the waters with sudden swells and falls, not only in the sea, but even in lakes and ponds, contrary to the known laws of nature, make another sign of the times; to which also belong dreadful inundations in many parts of the world, one of which in *China* we lately heard of, whereby more than a million of lives was lost; and yet this alarming article in our public papers was less attended to than would have been the loss of a ship's cargo of tea. Could then the Prophet mean ourselves when he said, (Isaiah xxvi. 9.) "When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness;" or rather not his following words belong to us, (ver. 11.) "Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see." What dreadful accounts of hurricanes and tempests have we had of late from abroad? And one at home in *August*, 1763, causing darkness at noon-day as in the night: What balls and bodies of fire have been seen flying through the atmosphere, with other meteors of different appearances, giving light in the night as at noon-day? What eruptions from burning mountains, what floods of liquid fire issuing from the bowels of the earth have we lately read of? In particular by a letter from *Engelhom*, in *Sweden*, of a thick and bright shower of fire that fell there in *August*, 1763.*

May not these be considered as so many pre-eruptions or fore-flashes from the universal magazine of fire shut up in the belly of nature, now labouring for enlargement, and ready to burst into an external birth, when the Lord of the whole earth shall give the word of command to this active minister, to execute the will of the great *Jehovah*! Some of these things indeed have happened before separately, but never with such concurrence of prodigies and other signs as in our days. O England!

* See *Lloyd's Evening Post*, No. 970.

England!

England ! how do thy unbelieving sons call out for signs on those that speak to them in the name of the Lord, and yet cannot discern the signs of the times displayed in all the elements throughout the earth, nor the day of their visitation ! But if these things cannot be considered as monitory presages of the Son of man's coming to reign on earth, let them be dreaded as flaming omens of the approaching final Judgment, that so this way they may lead to seriousness and repentance. But here, alas ! we are furnished with another sad sign foretold by an Apostle in the following words : " There shall come " in the last days scoffers, walking after their own " lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his " coming ? " &c. *2 Peter* iii. If this prophecy did not particularly point to the infidelity of these days, it does however find its accomplishment in them, whilst almost all put by the consideration of these things, saying, " All things are as they were from " the beginning of the creation ; " whereas they have not always continued the same, as the Apostle tells them ; for the world was once destroyed by water ; nor will they always continue the same, for it shall again be destroyed by fire : And if men have continued the same ever since the time of the flood, and no better for all the warnings and judgments of God ; nothing mended in their principles and manners, after so many messages and miracles by *Moses* and the Prophets, by *Christ* and his Apostles, they are worse than *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, (*Matth.* x. 15.) and are themselves a sign that the judgment lingereth not, but is hastening to its accomplishment. Now such scoffers strengthen themselves not a little in their incredulity by that irreligious kind of philosophy, which teaches men now-a-days to explain away God's warnings and judgments into unmeaning effects from natural causes, that so, after refusing to believe him in his written word, and denying all communications be-
twixt

twixt his Spirit and their hearts, they may also exclude him from giving them any notices of his will in nature, and so live as without God in the world; for after all, such philosophers, be they *Epicurean*, *Cartesian*, or *Newtonian*, are no better than a more refined species of Atheists, who labour to persuade themselves and others, that all things happen without any providence or interposition of the Almighty in the government of the world. The Heathens shewed more of reverential belief in some over-ruling divine powers; for upon the appearance of any prodigies in nature, they ran to their temples and altars, to worship and propitiate them in their way; but the Christian philosopher by his fancied superior wisdom sees nothing in these things to lead him to God; for he sets himself to account for them some how or other from nature, and so thinks he has nothing to fear: But if nature has all power without wisdom or goodness to direct it, he has most to fear; but if it be endued with wisdom and goodness as well as power, then let him at least worship nature for his God, if he will not worship the God of nature: If he will not say, God help us! then let him say, O Nature, help us! Unless he chuses rather to say, O *Baal*, hear us! But let such men get rid of their fears as well as they can, they will have more than they care to own; and though through the present obduracy of their hearts they should be able to hold out against many plain warnings, and remain impenetrable by the force of lesser judgments; yet when the time shall come for the full accomplishment of the last woes, and the pouring out of the apocalyptic vials, and *there shall be signs in the sun and in the stars, and upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity*, (Luke xxi. 25.) what heart so bold, as not to quake for fear at beholding these things! And when the powers of heaven shall be shaken, and the Son of man shall appear in visible majesty with power and great

great glory; ye mockers who now deride the promise of his coming, and ye incorrigible sinners who defy it, what then will ye do? For how shall his enemies be able to stand before him in the great day of his wrath? O think of this all ye that forget God, lest he pluck you away, and there be none to deliver you.

Another sign of the last times is the opposition and enmity that the truth will meet with in those days; when the faithful witnesses for God and his Christ will have a trying time of it, and suffer many things from the men of that generation. St. Paul gives us a sad account of those perilous times, (2 Tim. iii.) and among other marks thereof, says, that men shall be *despisers of those that are good*, and therefore no wonder that we hear him say presently after, that *the time will come, when they will not endure sound doctrine*. And are we not fallen into those times? We are: The contempt of true godliness, and the hatred of the truth that makes manifest and condemns the evil of the times, is a proof of this assertion; and therefore every one that lays open the terrors of the Lord and his righteous judgments on a sinful world, as revealed in the Scriptures, must expect that many a one will represent him as a troubler of *Israel*, and say of him in his heart, if not with his mouth, as *Ahab* said of *Micaiah*: *I hate him, for he doth not prophecy good concerning me, but evil*, 1 Kings xxii. 8. Reader, bring thyself to this test, and thou shalt know what manner of spirit thou art of.

That the generality will now no longer endure sound doctrine is evident, if we consider how many there are that have no true faith in *Jesus Christ* as the Saviour of the world, but think and speak of him only as a Law-giver, that came to establish a better rule of morality than had obtained before; and therefore to preach him in his character as the Son of God; in the virtue of his atonement; in

in the power of his grace ; and in the ministrations of his Spirit in our hearts, will be offensive to all such, and they will presently cry out ; Give us morality ; not that they have a greater zeal for morality than other men, or abound more in good works, but it goes against the pride of their hearts to believe in a salvation, that is not of debt, but of grace : They chuse rather to claim it as a reward of some fancied merit in themselves, and to flatter their delusive hopes, that they are at any time sufficient of themselves to help themselves. But wherefore this crying up of morality against Christianity, to set such good friends at variance ? Is not a right faith in Christ the best foundation for morality, or have they found out the way to lay a safer and better ? How then do we make void the law through faith, when we establish the law on so sure a foundation ; for does not a true faith work by love ? And is there any such good security for obedience as this, seeing love is the fulfilling of the law in all its parts ; and if we love Christ truly, we shall certainly keep his commandments faithfully ? Which gives occasion to that saying : Love, and do what you will. But in truth, these men only use the pretence of morality as a cover to their infidelity.

But secondly, If some are so all for works (meaning their own self-righteousness) without a Saviour ; so others are all for a Saviour to save them in, and not from their sins, by an outward imputation, and not the inward renovation of a gospel-spirit, the act of believing supplying with them the place of receiving : They are wholly for faith, but then it is that particular faith of persuasion, that they are the elect ; that assurance of faith, that they are justified, even whilst the peaceable loving fruits of the Spirit, denoting them to be the friends of God and man, are yet wanting : They honour Christ in his external offices

offices and in the history, but deny him in the mystery as the true Second Adam and our spiritual Father, making us partakers of the divine nature through the quickening power of his Spirit. They reverence indeed the Scriptures, but what other key do they give them than the dim light of erring reason, whilst they deny all divine teachings, even in the most spiritual truths, by immediate communications from that word of God which liveth and endureth for ever, as though he who is the light of the world, and the fountain of all truth, had no intercourse with our spirits, or had confined himself to convey heavenly instruction to our minds through the less certain and less satisfying medium of written characters; whereas the writing of his laws in our hearts, whether through or without the external ministry of the letter, by the illumination of his Spirit, is the promised privilege of the new covenant, *Jerem. xxxi. 33, 34.* Now how hardly will all such endure that sound doctrine of Christ in us, the hope of glory, (*Col. i. 27.*) of the kingdom of God within us, (*Luke xvii. 21.*) as revealed in our hearts by his Spirit; of his light shining in our hearts to give us the knowledge of his glory in the face of *Jesus Christ*, (*2 Cor. iv. 6.*) But why this setting up the letter against the Spirit, which is the only true life and power of it? Wherefore all this opposition to any part of this great mystery of godliness, seeing Christ is confessedly a mystery, the soul of man is a mystery, and the whole of our salvation from beginning to end is a mystery; and what is there more mysterious in God manifested in our spirit than in our flesh? Nay, is it not even rational to conclude, that where the malady is, there the remedy must be applied; if then the serpent be in us, the bruiser of the serpent must slay him there; if darkness, the light within can only dispel it; if sin, there the righteousness of Christ must expel it and have the dominion; and if death be in our fallen

fallen nature, the life of God in the soul of man can alone be our helper. Nothing in nature is brought about by imputation (as that word is generally understood) but all things by power; and therefore nature which affords us an image of every other divine truth, affords us none of this supposed one; but a Scripture-word with a wrong meaning of our own put to it, too often is called and passes for the word of God: *Christ* is no otherwise imputed to us than as he is *made unto us of God wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption*, 1 Cor. i. 30. for he is the great Word of his power working in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure. O how does a human belief in the natural understanding, drawing all things in favour of a system of man's devising, set up itself against the faith that purifieth the heart, (Acts xv. 9.) and is of the operation of God! (Col. ii. 12.) Lord, give us humble minds and the simplicity of little children, that we may dispute less and love more!

But thirdly, How great is the number of decent professors who believe as if they believed not, and scarcely know what they believe, the chief of whose religion is going to church, praying as decently as they dress, and preserving so much of character as may pass with the world; and indeed where true godliness is out of fashion, character in religion becomes an easy purchase. Now how will these endure sound doctrine? How to hear of the divine life in all its parts, of the necessity of the cross, and of entering into the kingdom of heaven through the strait gate of strict discipline, mortification and self-denial? How will they bear to be told, that the world lyeth in wickedness; that though we are in it, we must not be of it; and that we have never more cause to suspect the soundness of our state than when all men speak well of us? How many have we every where of such smooth professors who will not endure sound doctrine, lest they should be

disturbed in their false peace, and so be converted and healed; but chuse rather to take their chance, as they call it, and so sail carelessly down with the tide of fashion they know not whither? The case is more common than is imagined, and I think will appear so on the issue of the following supposition: And here let us image to ourselves *John the Baptist*, that faithful witness, who knew no flattery, and sought no favour from men, as sent with a message of repentance and reproof to our great metropolis of *London*, and to preach at full Change to all there assembled, against covetousness and setting their *affections* on things on earth; and addressing himself to such as love their money more than God, should call them a generation of vipers, put them in mind of the wrath to come, and pronounce on every tree not bringing forth good fruit, that it should be hewn down and cast into the fire: How many of our *Babylonian* merchants, who study only how to buy and sell and get gain, would be ready to cast dust into the air, and cry out, Away with such a fellow from the earth, for it is not fit that he should live! Let us again suppose that he were to escape their hands and to pass on to the Court, (and how strange would such a character appear there!) see him here declaring freely against all conformity to this world, and seeking the honour that cometh of man only; reproofing the vices of the great with an impartial severity, telling them how hard it is for them to enter into the kingdom, and pronouncing the judgment of God against all that do such and such things. What think we would be the effect of such plain dealing? Why, at least, that it would turn their politeness into rage, and that they would say of him as was said of *Elisha* on his visit to *Jehu*; Wherefore came this mad fellow here? Lastly, follow him to the Camp, that rendezvous of men of honour, who in satisfaction for an affront demand the blood of the offender, and hear him preaching

on those words: *Love your enemies; bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you.* How contrary must every part of his sermon appear to the maxims of military men! And if in decency they should forbear to dispute the authority of his message, yet how many of those well-behaved gentlemen, at least would say with one consent; In these things I pray thee have me excused? May it not then with truth be said: That the time is come, *when men will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears,* (2 Tim. iv. 3.) and where the former part of the prophecy is fulfilled, it will not be long before they find teachers ready to scratch those itching ears and to suit their doctrine to their taste: If they are willing to pay well for prophesying smooth things, they will meet with smooth men enow, to represent the way as broad and the gate as wide as they would have it. Where the fault first began in that apostate state of the church complained of by the Prophet, (Jer. v.) is not said, as whether the Prophets first tickled the ears of the people for the sake of advantage, or the people bribed the Prophets to that office; but this he says of them; "A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land: The Prophets prophecy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means, and the people love to have it so." But there is another dreadful subject of prophecy still behind, as delivered by St. Peter, (2 Epist. ii.) namely, that false teachers should arise, who should *privily bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them.* Now such are all they, who deny the corruption of man's nature and his derivation of original sin from our first Parents through their horrible fall; and assert, on the contrary, his natural sufficiency to please God and

and keep his commandments without any inward supernatural grace or the operations of his divine Spirit. As this is denying man's alienation from God by nature, and his woeful bondage under sin, so is it a denial of our Saviour in his character of *the Lord that bought or redeemed us to God by his blood*, (Rev. v. 9.) it is to rob *Jesus Christ* of the merit and honour of man's salvation, and to rob man of his most comfortable hope and refuge on this side heaven; for every one that is not under the power and infatuation of sin, must know and feel his misery by nature, and that he is absolutely insufficient of himself for his own happiness, and to walk before God in righteousness and holiness of living; and, if he thinks otherwise, he is not only blind, but full of Luciferian pride: This is that leaven of *Socinus*, which has subverted the faith of many; and as far as this Anti-christian doctrine is defended and preached in any church, so far is that sign of the *abomination of desolation sitting in the holy place*, (Matt. xxiv. 15.) come to pass therein; and should any church become totally infected with the same poison, it would then be in the character of the whore sitting upon the beast, as described in the *Revelations*. It is said of the seducers before-mentioned, that they shall *privily* bring in damnable heresies, to distinguish them from open opposers and professed infidels, nay, to signify that they shall outwardly profess the truth, nay, bear office in the church, and perhaps be high in ecclesiastical dignity, and yet no other than wolves in sheep's clothing: They will hang out false lights to deceive the unwary, and pretend to be advocates for the doctrines of grace and the office of the Holy Spirit, whilst they only use the words, but mean nothing by them, nay, whilst they use all the deceivableness of false criticism, and mockery of profane jesting, to explain away the true meaning of grace, and to ridicule the operations of the Holy Spirit. But in order to
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bring all such to the greater shame, the Lord will raise up in his church men and women of low degree to detect their fallacy, and withstand them to the face; nor shall these men of *Gath*, with all their carnal weapons of sophistry and vain words, be able to stand before them, for each one shall be as *David*, and go forth in the strength of the Lord. Blessed *Jesus*! the Author, Conductor and Finisher of our Salvation, strengthen the hearts of thy servants in these latter times! when so many depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, (1 Tim. iv. 1.) that they may bear their testimony, with all becoming zeal, to the honour of thy divine Majesty, and also (if called to it) patiently suffer for thy truth sake.

As the last times will have their signs in the general apostacy and opposition to the truth that shall be in those days, as also in the severe judgments of God throughout the world: So likewise may we look for comfortable signs of the approaching blessed kingdom in extraordinary dispensations of grace among the appointed heirs of it; and that as the *man of sin* is to have his full revelation in the subjects of his government, so the man *Christ Jesus* in the power of his Divinity, will reveal himself in the hearts of many sons and daughters through uncommon measures of his sanctifying and enlightening Spirit, far beyond what was ever known upon earth. Thus at the very time when wickedness in general shall abound in the earth, grace and truth shall abound also, not so much in any particular church, as in particulars of all churches. *Daniel* prophesying of the last times says, "Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased," Dan. xii. 4. And yet *Amos* speaking of the same times, foretels a famine of the word, (Amos viii. 11.) and that men shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it. Now both these predictions, notwithstanding their seeming contrariety,

contrariety, may meet in the same days, for they respect different runners, and different seekers, and different preachers. Men that run only in their own will and their own way, and not according to the will and way of the Lord, may run long enough before they reach the mark; and they that seek him only for their own ends, and that by such sort of seeking they may give a little false quiet to their consciences, whilst they pursue the things of this world with their whole hearts (which the Prophet calls *making God to serve with our sins, Isaiah* xliii. 24.); such seekers will be no true finders, but according to the idols that are in their hearts, will their answer be, *Ezek.* xiv. 4. The Prophet *Daniel* in the same chapter hath given us the distinction betwixt the true and false seekers: "None of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand." Now who are the wise here meant? Not the wise in their own conceit, nor the wise to dispute and criticize, but the wise in heart, even the man that *feareth the Lord; him shall he teach* in the way that he shall chuse, *Psal.* xxv. 11. Nay, the *fear of the Lord* is called the *beginning of wisdom*. All such shall know him from the least unto the greatest, (*Jer.* xxxi. 34.) whilst the wise of this world with all their head-knowledge and learned lumber shall *meet with darkness in the day-time, and grope in the noon-day as in the night,* *Job* v. 14. Therefore the *knowledge that shall be increased*, according to the Prophet *Daniel*, means nothing less than a fruitful, influencing knowledge, a knowledge of things pertaining to God and true godliness, even a saving knowledge of *the Lord our Righteousness*, as meant in that exhortation of the Apostle, "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ," *2 Pet.* iii. 18. Now it must be confessed, that amidst all the darkness of critical, political, polemical, and other unedifying kinds of divinity so called, which have pestered

pestered and tormented the church of Christ for so long a time, to the sport of Infidels and the growth of Deism, much light of sound doctrine hath risen up in this darkness, both at home and abroad, within a century past; and perhaps nothing has more hindered many from seeing and acknowledging this truth, than a blind obedience to custom and prejudice in favour of a certain set of authors, erected into a standard of orthodoxy by the bigots of a system. Thus the doctrines of original sin through the corruption of our nature by the fall; the insufficiency of a mere moral righteousness for our acceptance with God; the necessity of the internal light and influences of the Holy Spirit; the nature of regeneration, &c. have been more insisted on, and evinced from a clearer knowledge of the Scriptures in this and the foregoing age, than has been done since the early times of Christianity; and though on this foundation many have built a superstructure of human inventions no better than wood, hay and stubble, to be consumed by the fire that trieth and purifieth; yet others have held these great truths in righteousness, and a sound understanding: So that amidst all the darkness and strife of a contentious theology, and the dead formality of an outward worship, doctrinal knowledge has increased with many throughout the several churches as a sign in its gradual progress towards the opening of the kingdom in due time: Light has been in their *Goshen*, whilst others have wrapt themselves up in the thick cover of their own darkness.

But, as knowledge in religion is only a blessing according to the right use and improvement of it under a ministration of grace; so it is only here spoken of, as it has been followed by a work of the Spirit of God upon the hearts of many, under different appearances and instruments, according to its time and degree of manifestation, though chiefly

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to one and the same effect, viz. in convincing them of sin and their lost estate by nature, and in making them dissatisfied with that lukewarm, lifeless, unmeaning thing which so much passes for religion in the world, that so they might enquire more diligently after the things belonging to their peace, and seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness with their whole hearts. A remarkable work of this kind happened in *England* about the opening of the present century, and may be considered as a sign or prelude to greater things that should fall out in the succeeding course of it. Great numbers were deeply impressed with more than ordinary concern about their spiritual welfare; very alarming warnings and calls to repentance were publicly given; many formed themselves into religious societies; and meetings for pious conference and exhortation were held in divers places, both in *London* and the country, and resorted to by many of the gentry and nobility; one of which, on account of the several persons of fashion of the female sex in particular that attended there, was called in derision by the mockers of the times, *The Taffata Meeting*. Many persons at that time, both among the clergy and laity, were led to bear their public testimony against the lifeless faith and empty forms of professing Christians, and to protest boldly against the heathenish diversions and vain fashions of the age; and some under a persuasion that the end of the world was nigh at hand, earnestly exhorted their brethren to prepare the way of the Lord, and to make ready for his appearing; and though much of defect and delusion appeared mixed with the zeal of some, as the spirit of error is ever ready to counterfeit, that so he may disgrace the truth; and in a great number of persons of different denominations, this is the more to be expected; yet the solid piety, and affectionate warnings of others concerned as instruments in the work, made lasting

lasting impressions on the minds of many, to the bringing forth the fruits of good living, some of whom are still alive to testify to this truth. For a more particular account of the work here mentioned, I refer the reader to a book called the *Great Crisis*, by R. Roach, B. D. who was a diligent observer of the times in that day.

Nor are we here to pass over in silence, but rather to give heed with more serious attention to that awakening, which has appeared of late years amongst us in the minds of many of every class, as to the state of their souls, and the things pertaining to salvation, whereby great numbers throughout the kingdom have been brought to renounce their vain confidence in the form of godliness, and in particular that cursed idol, self-righteousness, and to cast themselves upon the Lamb of God (that taketh away the sin of the world), for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption; and so in the midst of a land besotted, asleep or dead, have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come: (Heb. vi. 5.) Thus *Gideon's* fleece was watered with the dew of heaven, whilst all around was dry. (Judges vi. 38.) Where any remarkable stirrings of grace appear among a people with suitable effects on the lives of those, who are the subjects of it, and evidencing itself, not by affected peculiarities of opinion, self-elevation, or party-distinctions; but by humility, the fruits of a sound conversion, and an universal charity, we are not to look upon such a work as a light thing, but as a matter of serious importance designed for our use and application; nor is it enough to justify our opposition or indifference, that it comes not to pass according to the settled order of human institutions, or because it does not square with our maxims of fitness and regularity; for we are not to give laws to God, who is not bound by human prescription, but is pleased at times to vary his proceedings from the

the ordinary course of things, as well to assert his sovereign authority, as to give distinction to his interposition; nay, thus much is implied in the very name and nature of an extraordinary work; and therefore to take offence at this, is to deprive ourselves of the benefit intended by it, and may lead to the hardening of our hearts in the day of our visitation: Nor is it less dangerous to make stumbling-blocks for our feet of the infirmities and slips of our brethren, seeing that a work of the Spirit of God is consistent with much weakness in the instrument; and he that will receive no message from the mouth of an imperfect man, must have rejected the testimony even of prophets and apostles, who had their gradual increase and different attainments in grace, as well as the servants of God in our days. Let us lay aside prejudice and evil speaking, and put on charity; let us bear in mind how short we ourselves come of those, we so often slight and vilify; let us walk in simplicity and lowliness of mind, and seek the Lord with our whole heart, and then we shall be more ready to hear, and also more fit to receive what any one has to offer to us on the part of the Lord, and reverence the messenger, whatever be his denomination or character.

The forementioned part of *Daniel's* prophecy, that in the last days *knowledge shall be increased*, (that is, in the children of the kingdom) may now be considered on the way to its accomplishment in a more especial reference to certain, enlightened instructors, whom the Lord hath fitted, and prepared as vessels of honour, by whom to open the treasures of divine knowledge, and to reveal the depth of the myteries of grace and godliness to their brethren; I mean the spiritual writers, who in these last times have been set as so many bright stars in the firmament, to lead benighted men, who had lost their way, to the city of God; to call them off
from

from their angry disputes and blind zeal for little things, to the more weighty matters of religion, and into the paths of the divine life. Some such living witnesses of the power of Christ manifested in his Saints, have, from time to time in every age of the church, been raised up and preserved, as the spiritual salt and light of it, and may be considered as answering to the order of Prophets under the Jewish œconomy, who were appointed to be extraordinary declarers and expounders of the divine law and will, though not of the tribe of *Levi*; to testify against the corruptions, both of priests and people, when settling on the lees of an outside tabernacle or temple-service, and to hold forth to them the necessity of a more spiritual worship: But in these last days of the foregoing, and present centuries, such able ministers of the Spirit, both in the clergy and laity, far exceeding in power of ministration, what had been known in the like way for many preceding ages, have by a special designation of Providence been distributed through the divided churches of Christendom, and sent forth as the trumpets of the heavenly King, to proclaim his royal advent in Spirit and in the power of his Grace, thereby to prepare many sons and daughters for the glories of his triumphant kingdom to be established upon earth.

These highly favoured servants of God, called the spiritual or mystical writers, little read of many, and much disliked of some (for reasons well known to themselves) though esteemed precious and honoured by such as are in a disposition to profit by them, have appeared in a difference of character, though of the same order, and employed in conducting the same good work: Thus, some have appeared under the harshness and severity of a *Mount Sinai* dispensation, or with something of rebated vigor in the character of *John* the Baptist,

whilst

whilst others have been called to discharge their office with the mildness of an evangelical Spirit: The former may be considered as the Lord's messengers in his character of the Lion of the tribe of *Judah*; the latter, as bearing the olive-branch of peace before him, coming in his character of meekness as the gentle Lamb of God, thus separately answering the purposes of the Apostle's distinction: *Of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear,* (the terrors of the Lord) *pulling them out of the fire,* Jude 22, 23. Mrs. Bourignon and Mrs. Guion were two famous instances of this difference of character in the mystic class; but as the impartial severity of the former, in the quality of a reprover, enraged both Papists and Protestants against her, so neither could the patient and meek spirit of the latter defend her from persecution by the zealots of her own church. The history of these two holy women, is a history of the persecutions they suffered from their youth to their old age, and so they were made partakers of that blessing which is promised to all those that are persecuted for righteousness-sake. Let it be remarked here, that as some are called to the office of reprovng in every church and every age of it, so though they may seem at times to bear hard upon failings and characters that may be thought to challenge a milder treatment, yet we should be cautious how we charge them with uncharitableness in their office, so long as they appear to be actuated by a godly zeal, and not by any blameable passion in their nature: Where truth and the business of reformation are concerned, respect to the credit of any profession or order is a human consideration, that may be carried too far; and though correction may sometimes appear not so rightly directed, or to fall too heavy, yet perhaps we may all of us, upon an impartial scrutiny, find matter enough within to justify a severity that appears outwardly

outwardly unequal or misplaced. These mystical writers of late abounding in the churches, whether considered as friendly reprovers, instructors or monitors, are here mentioned with other collateral signs of the times, as messengers sent out to make ready a people prepared for the Lord, and to serve as so many burning and shining lamps passing through the darkness spread over the earth, to give notice of the Bridegroom's coming; and of these it is, that a judicious author* speaks as follows:

“ Besides the outward and visible churches in their
 “ several forms and professions, there is scattered
 “ through the Christian world an invisible church
 “ in her wilderness-state, there fed with manna,
 “ and possessing in privacy the living powers of
 “ God, and worshipping him as in an inner court
 “ in Spirit and in Truth: Some of them disjoined
 “ from the forms of the day; others appointed with
 “ St. Paul, to take a vow or shave the head among
 “ them, that so becoming all things to all men,
 “ they may have opportunities of sowing among
 “ them the seeds of spiritual religion, and of tinc-
 “ turing such as are susceptible with the power of
 “ the kingdom; yet reserving themselves chiefly for
 “ the worship of God in the temple of their hearts:
 “ These, together with all those who are vitally
 “ united to Christ in the various forms and pro-
 “ fessions of the day, shall, upon the glorious
 “ advent of Christ to his kingdom, come forth, to
 “ the amazement and confusion of the merely
 “ external and nominal Christendom, as a bride
 “ adorned for the nuptials, and terrible to her
 “ enemies, as an army in array under the banner
 “ of the triumphant *Messiah*. *Christ*, the true
 “ shepherd, shall feed this his church; his Spirit
 “ shall be her only teacher; and all her children

* See *Introduction to The Imperial Standard* by R. Raach, B. D.

" shall know the Lord from the greatest to the least.
 " The windows of heaven shall be opened in
 " blessings, and the earth shall pour forth her
 " increase, and submit all her kingdoms to her true
 " and rightful Sovereign. There shall be a com-
 " munication between the church triumphant in the
 " heavens, and the church triumphant upon earth,
 " in a constant flux and reflux of divine powers,
 " sensations and joys. Satan shall be chained, and
 " the hostile properties in nature, (bound up in
 " harmony) give no more annoyance, but all things
 " concur to promote the peace and sabbath of the
 " kingdom. God shall tabernacle with men, and
 " his joy and glory will be the portion of every
 " regenerated and virginized soul, as possessing a
 " heaven upon earth. *Hallelujah! Amen.*"

Mention of the mystical writers is not here introduced, as if they were all by character professed witnesses to the millennial doctrine; for though several, especially among the latter mystics, have declared a strong faith in it, yet many of them have been silent about it, and like others thought differently of it, it being the distinguishing part of their character, to be witnesses to Christ's spiritual kingdom, and to the inward mystery of godliness, holding forth that same *Jesus* who was crucified at *Jerusalem*, and known by most imperfectly after the flesh, as the great power of God to be revealed inwardly in our hearts by his Spirit: . And in this their office they have been the great preparers of the way for his kingdom of outward glory, the hewers and polishers of many precious stones for the *New Jerusalem*; for the spiritual children only will be the *First-born* that shall inherit the *double portion* of heavenly and earthly blessings. These spiritual builders, therefore, derided under the name of *Mystics* by the carnal and unwise,

unwise, are the gracious gift of God to men in these last days, the fathers and mothers (for they are alike of both sexes) of many spiritual sons and daughters, and so filling up apace that goodly company of Saints, which shall ere long make glad the city of our God with merry hearts, and joyful songs, and love unspeakable. I should be wanting to the subject I am upon, were I not to speak of these good stewards of the manifold grace of God with the honour that is due to their names; for faithfully have they discharged their ministry in every part of their office, whether we consider them as laying open the deceits of Anti-christ, and exposing to full view the corruptions that have crept into the several churches; or as warning men of their great danger by pointing out the false remedies they rest in for their help; calling them out of the darkness and errors of their ways into the light of life, and leading them right by their examples of self-denial, heavenly mindedness and charity: Or lastly, whether we consider them according to their different gifts, as opening the spiritual sense of the Scriptures, unfolding many wonderful secrets in the kingdoms of nature and grace, and using every argument and motive which zeal and love can supply, to prevail with their brethren to forsake the vanities of time, that they may be blessed with the riches of eternity. Glorious Saints! happy are you, whether living, dying or departed, whether united to Christ in his suffering states, or made partakers of his joy, crucified with him, or beholding his glory on Mount *Tabor*. The world indeed knows you not, but you know it, and therefore are not of it. Most have rejected your testimony, but not all, for many have been convinced and converted by that demonstration of spirit and of power which is in your words and writings, and have received from you of that unction wherewith you have been anointed of the

the Holy One, and who will be as so many precious jewels in your crown of rejoicing at the last day, when you shall shine as the Sun in the Kingdom of your Father.

The signs before mentioned, both in a work of judgment and of grace at this time concurring and increasing, do, in their opposite spheres, point to one and the same end, viz. the restoration of all things, by the perfecting of the Saints, and the extirpation of the incorrigibly wicked: And this difference of signs arises from the different natures of the kingdoms, in which they are manifested, according to that distinction of St. *Austin*: "Two
 " Loves founded two cities upon earth; the love
 " of *Self* founded the city of this world, which is
 " called *Babylon*; and the love of God was the
 " builder of the city of God, which is called
 " *Jerusalem*." Now in these two cities or kingdoms the signs must be suited to the different natures of the inhabitants respectively; and so this twofold dispensation converging to one point, if judiciously applied, will reconcile some seemingly repugnant prophecies concerning the last days: Thus *Amos* says, (*Amos* v. 20.) *It shall be darkness and not light, even very dark*; but then in verse 18, he speaks of it as respecting the ungodly: And yet *Zecharias* (chap. xiv. 6.) speaking of the time when the Lord shall come with his Saints, says; *It shall come to pass that at evening-time it shall be light*: To what other meaning than this? That to the children of the kingdom light shall rise up in the darkness. This double work of judgment and mercy running parallel in the two opposite kingdoms, is also signified by the evangelical Prophet, (*Isaiah* xxi.) where, after describing the final destruction of *Babylon* the great, he introduces the burden of *Dumah* (that *Idumean* or *Edomitish* race which was the type of the heathenish

OR

or false Christians) crying out in mockery to the watchman or spiritual monitor (declaring the dark and dead state of the church) and saying, *Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?* To which call the watchman answers thus: *The morning cometh, and also the night: If ye will enquire, enquire ye: return, come.* As if he had said: There is hastening on a time of great judgment and of great mercy; and if ye desire in good earnest to know what the Lord is about to do in the earth, lay aside your derision, and enquire as ye ought to do, in repentance and turning unto the Lord, that he may have mercy upon you in the great and terrible day that is coming upon all flesh, that so your darkness may be turned into light*!

This

* The children of the kingdom at times are not without their darkness, doubts, and fears, for they stand in two principles; and though they have the light of life in their spiritual or regenerate part, yet in their animal nature, which is under the law and the curse, they have a judgment work to pass through, and their faith is tried with much obscurity befalling them with respect to their own state. However the candle of the Lord, which is the divine fire and light within them (though extinguished in the wicked) leaves them not in total darkness, but penetrates their night. It is otherwise in the passage to regeneration, where the work is carried on by a speedy transition, and not in the more usual way of a gradual process, for in the former case the soul passes through an exercise of great anguish and total darkness for a short time, proceeding even to despondency. This seems signified by *Abram's* deep sleep, when a horror of great darkness fell upon him at the going down of the sun: (Genesis xxv.) denoting the struggle and great conflict betwixt nature and grace, when the light of the former ceases to be the ruling principle in the soul, and that of the latter succeeds to it. After this horror of great darkness that beset *Abram*,

Abram

This mixt state of good and bad at the awful period of Christ's second advent, is expressly mentioned in many parts of the New Testament, where some things are spoken of that world or generation of men that lyeth in wickedness, without faith, without

Abram saw in his vision a burning lamp that passed between the pieces of the sacrifice; by which we may understand the true light of life, which is the lamp of the Lord; (Psal. xviii. 28.—Prov. xx. 27.) and then immediately follow these words: *In that same day the Lord made a Covenant with Abram.* But what other Covenant are we to understand here, than the blessing of the New Covenant, that day of Christ which *Abram* then saw; in which Covenant is the new heart, and new spirit, and the blotting out of sin, (Jer. xxxi. 33.—Ezek. xi. 19.—Heb. viii. 10.) to which Covenant is annexed the Promise of the good Land so often made to *Abram* and his seed. Let not such as see only a literal narrative, and not also a mystical sense in this passage, be offended with those who see both, not only here, but throughout the history of this renowned and typical character. That is a manifest error which some maintain and defend, not from their own experience but from their system; that the regenerate do always walk in the light and comfort of God's Holy Spirit; for they have their obscure times, as was observed before, when their *light is neither clear nor dark, not day nor night*, (Zech. xiv. 6, 7.) and yet one day known to the Lord. To such a mixt state of darkness and light, I am fully persuaded that persons in this dispensation can testify: But then although, as to their outward infirmities in their common-nature, they appear like other men, yet are they far otherwise. As we are now in the *Evening* of the *Sixth Day*, I believe it is a time of uncommon darkness in general, even with the children of the day; and that they are now passing through an eclipse; and yet I do believe also, that some among them may have already passed through it, and that the millennial glory does even now dawn upon their souls; though much is to be done in the earth, before Paradise will have its manifestation in outward nature.

love,

love, without God ; and others of the children of the kingdom, who are bid to look up, and take courage under the fearful signs and judgments of the last times, as being told, that their complete redemption from sin and suffering draweth nigh. And this consideration calls for a word of warning, and a word of consolation, to both respectively.

Men and brethren, can ye not discern the signs of the times held forth to you in judgment and in mercy, and in the course of this world, as foretold in the Scriptures? And is there not a cry gone forth, and now going forth; in this midnight state of the church, saying: *Behold, the Bridegroom cometh! go ye out to meet him!* (Matth. xxv. 6.) Or is it with you according to that complaint of the Prophet: (Jer. viii. 7.) "The stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed time, and the turtle, and the crane, and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the Lord." You cannot say, that you want warning; for the Lord hath set his watchmen upon the walls of *Jerusalem* with command not to keep silence: And among them who have been found faithful to warn their brethren of their danger, how many in return for their labours of love have been requited with mockery, and the casting out their names as evil! But wherefore do you hate your best friends who only awake you, that you may not sleep the sleep of death? Or what would it profit you if you should gain the whole world, and lose your own souls? And as to you, the more decent professors, who pretend some sort of affection for the heavenly Bridegroom; how many among you are to be told, that as yet you are no better than foolish Virgins, whilst with the Lamp of an outward profession in your hands, you remain void of the Oil of Grace in your hearts.

It

It is now midnight, and before the morning-watch the Bridegroom cometh; why then do you spend your time in disputing and contending about which has the best Lamp, seeing that without the Oil of Charity, the best will be of no more use than the worst, to light you to the Marriage?

And now for a word of consolation to the patient waiter for the kingdom, though in much tribulation: And here let me bid you God speed! and to be of good heart; for he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry, and his reward is with him. (Rev. xxii. 12.) He will soon manifest his power and great glory, and come among us; and then the kingdom of Anti-christ, and of the Dragon, in all its forms of tyranny, oppression and ungodliness, shall be broken in pieces, and the meek of the earth, now despised and trampled on, shall possess the gates of their enemies; and all the Lord's afflicted servants, many of whom are now hardly allowed to eat their morsel in quietness, and some of them have scarcely a morsel to eat, *shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord*, Joel ii. 26. There shall then be no enmity, but all as fellow-members of the same body will help and love one another, and rejoice together: Nay, there shall be no more jealousy, or fear of harm, throughout the animal creation; but the lion and lamb shall lye down together, and the birds of the air shall perch upon the hands of men: Paradise, as a heavenly tincture, shall assimilate and temper all the discordant properties of the elements, harmonize the whole system of nature, and make all things new; the holy Angels shall be our fellows, and God and men be as loving friends, and every thing that hath breath shall praise the Lord.

The

The prospect of this restitution of all things to their original constitution and beauty, and of man to his original happiness in paradise (if not greater) when the espousals between Christ and his *Beloved* shall be fully ratified; all the promises concerning his royal glory shall be fully accomplished; and when the whole creation shall be delivered from that bondage of corruption, under which it now groans, to the unutterable praise of the great Redeemer: The prospect, I say, of so blessed a change to take place on earth, is so highly desirable and transporting, that I cannot see how the reader can refrain from subscribing with me to what Dr. Hickes has so warmly delivered on this subject in the following passage: “Who would not desire
“to reign with *Christ* upon earth? Who would
“not wish to be a citizen of the *New Jerusalem*?
“To see the grand Jubilee, and live in the blessed
“*Millennium*? Or not desire such a happy revo-
“lution as this must make upon earth? Who is
“there that would not long to see this *acceptable*
“*year of the Lord, the Marriage of the Lamb,*
“*the glorious kingdom of the Messiah,* and say in
“his heart, *Come, Lord Jesus! come quickly!*
“I verily believe, there is not one among the
“Clergy, unless he should be an Atheist, who
“would not be glad to see the approaches of such
“a blessed change, little less to be desired than
“heaven by them and all other men. It is well
“known how many Clergymen have written on the
“blessed *Millennium*; and that some of them now
“living have, upon computation of the prophetical
“times, foretold the commencement of it within a
“very few years; and God grant their computation
“of it may be true! Certainly, there is not one
“believing Clergyman in the church who will not
“join with me in this prayer, and heartily wish he
“may live to see such a state of earthly happiness,
“as

" as is incomparably more desirable than to be a
 " Bishop of the most opulent church. For my own
 " part, were I a king, great and happy as *Augustus*
 " *Cæsar*, I would willingly put my sceptre in the
 " hand of King *Jesus*, and lay my crown at his feet,
 " and cry as loud and as heartily as Mr. Lacy:
 " *Hosannah in the highest!* Blessed is he that
 " cometh in the name of the Lord: *Hosannah in*
 " *the highest!*"

The learned and pious Dr. Henry More has enlarged on many curious particulars relating to the millennial kingdom, in his *Divine Dialogues*, which abound with much of religious entertainment, both rational and spiritual. In Dialogue IV. page 281. he observes, that the great purpose of that early begun and long continued negotiation of the Son of God with us, terrestrial creatures, " has been the
 " enlarging the kingdom of God, even to these
 " earthly regions; that the kingdom of heaven may
 " also be upon earth, perfectly corresponding to
 " the heavenly pattern thereof: And therefore the
 " ultimate end of the dispensations of Divine Provi-
 " dence is, to reduce the church to an angelical
 " state or condition:" And accordingly in page 313, he puts the following words into the mouth of *Philopolis*, with which I shall conclude my testimonies. " This Angelical Kingdom, as you call it,
 " wherein God's will shall be done on earth as it is
 " in heaven, is a kingdom of righteousness, and
 " peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. O how am
 " I transported with the view of so glorious a
 " prospect! I shall henceforth pray, *Thy Kingdom*
 " *come*, with a more peculiar emphasis than I have
 " ever yet done in all my life."

A Meditation

A Meditation on the 67th Psalm,

*As applied to the Second Coming of CHRIST to
Reign with his Saints on Earth.*

HOW great is the goodness of God! who dwelling in light inaccessible, which no flesh can behold and live, hath revealed himself to us by his beloved Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and so in a way suited to the weakness of our mortal nature, to conduct the great work of our redemption. But he who heretofore humbled himself in meanness and disgrace, even to the death of the cross, will appear again a second time in dignity and honour, when he shall come to glorify, and to be glorified in his Saints, and to fashion them like unto his glorious body: "Before him shall be gathered all nations, and he shall separate them one from another as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats," *Matt. xxv. 32.*

In that great day may

Verse 1. God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and shew us the light of his countenance, and be merciful unto us!

How unsearchable are thy judgments, O Lord, and thy ways past finding out, even by them that love thy name! But if such be the dimness of those that are called the children of light; if so weak be now their faith, so short their sight in the things of thy kingdom; how great is the darkness of those that sit in the shadow of death, who know thee not, and never heard of thy name!

But

But do thou, who art the way, the truth and the life, hasten the time for the fuller manifestation of thy grace, thy goodness and thy glory,

Verse 2. *That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations.* This alludes to a supposition offered in this work, concerning the Heathens being allowed a time of probation in the New Earth.

Thy sovereignty, O God, is very great, and to be acknowledged of all in the distinction of thy favours, but not in excluding any from thy mercies; for *the Lord is loving unto every man, and his mercy is over all his works*, Psal. cxlv. 9. He did indeed confirm a Covenant of special favour by oath unto *Isaac*, and appointed the same unto *Jacob* for a law, (Psal. cv. 10.) even an inheritance in the Land of Promise, wherein they in this life were only strangers: Nay, perhaps he hath ordained a certain number of his elect servants unto fore-appointed glory by a decree which altereth not: "But is he the God of the Jews, and not also of the Gentiles? Yea, of the Gentiles also," *Rom. iii. 29.* for he hath promised, that he will *speake peace to the Heathens*, *Zech. ix. 10.* and that *all the isles of the Heathen shall worship him*, *Zeph. ii. 11.*

Nor will we murmur with the selfish Jew or partial Christian, because of the extent of this great salvation, when he shall come to enlarge the borders of his Zion, but rejoice the more, and say,

Verse 3. *Let the people praise thee, O God; yea, let all the people praise thee!*

What

What tyranny and oppression, what wrong and robbery do now prevail upon earth! where might overcomes right, and *the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he*, Hab. i. 13. And will it always be so? It will not; for when the Lord of Glory shall establish his throne in *Sion*, and *the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the Saints of the Most High*; (Dan. vii. 27.) then violence and oppression shall be known no more, (Isaiah lx. 18.) but mercy and truth shall meet together, righteousness and peace shall kiss each other, *Psal. lxxxv. 10*:

In the comfortable hope and expectation of this thy blessed reign, O Lord,

Verse 4. *Let the nations rejoice and be glad; for thou shalt judge the folk righteously, and govern the nations upon earth,*

Verse 5. *Let the people praise thee, O God; yea, let all the people praise thee!*

What striving and fighting is here for the largest share of this world's perishing goods! What appropriating of the common blessings of nature, and so frustrating the designs of Providence in having provided sufficiently for all! Hence it is, that the needy cry out for lack of bread, whilst the covetous hoard up their superfluous wealth, and the prodigals spend it in riotous living; so turning their blessings into curses, by withholding what is due to their poor brethren: But in *Christ's* kingdom it will be far otherwise, for there every one in his different rank of glory will have enough, and be content with his portion and lot, whilst
nature

nature produces her riches without stint in variety unspeakable: Her fruits will be all perfect, without any worm of corruption at the root, and free from every noxious quality and intoxicating power: The returns of appetite will be continued, that the returns of innocent gratifications may supply the more frequent occasions of praise and thanksgiving to the bountiful Giver of all good things: All the productions of the new earth shall be exalted to a celestial virtue and essence, and, like the fruit of the tree of life, exhilarate the heart: *Corn shall make the young men cheerful, and new wine the maids, Zech. ix. 17.* No enjoyment will be wanting that can minister delight to pure and innocent beings, and every enjoyment will be sanctified with religious gratitude.

In all fullness and perfection of this sense is the following promise given:

Verse 6. *Then shall the earth bring forth her increase; and God, even our God, shall give us his blessing.*

The greatest comforts lose much of their true relish, when held by an uncertain tenure: But how insecure are we here, both in our persons and possessions, from foreign or domestic foes! living in constant jealousies and fears, and under greater necessity of providing for our defence against our own species, than even against the wild beasts, insomuch that this world may be compared to a den of thieves and robbers, against whose open attacks or secret treachery we are never in perfect safety: But in the kingdom of *Jesus Christ*, the Lord will be our defence, the power of the Almighty will be our safe-guard;
of

of whom then shall we be afraid? The reason why we are in such continual danger here from one another, is because there is so little of the fear of God in the world, to restrain the wickedness of men; so little of the true power of religion to subdue the evil that is in human nature; but in the millennial kingdom, all the subjects of it will be children of the regeneration †: The filial fear of God will be upon them all, as the fear of man will be upon all the inferior creatures. Thus all things will be in their proper order and place, as heretofore in Paradise before the Fall, when all the creatures, by the law of their natures, were in subjection to man, as man was in subjection to God.

Under this blessed theocracy, what can disturb our tranquillity and peace, or rather what can be wanting to our joy and complete happiness? seeing that,

Verse 7. *God shall bless us, and all the ends of the world shall fear him.*

† The Heathens, as observed before, who are admitted to a probationary state in the New Earth, will not be the proper subjects of the blessed Kingdom, nor, by reason of the incapacity arising from their different condition of existence, partake in paradisaical felicity, till they shall be confirmed in grace: However, they will have a glimpse of the glory of the holy City, and walk in the light thereof, to animate them in their Christian course, *Rev. xxi. 24.*

And now, dear Reader, what hast thou to object against a doctrine so well attested, and so full of comfort? That righteousness, truth, and innocence; that joy, peace, and perfect reconciliation betwixt God and man might be restored on earth; must be the wish of every one that is not lost to all sense of difference betwixt good and evil: but that which would naturally be the wish of every reasonable man, becomes the object of our hope, nay, an article of our faith, when revealed and promised by the God of truth. Where then is the offence of a doctrine which holds forth that as near at hand, which should be our greatest joy to see already come to pass? We pray, that disorder, sin and misery may have an end; but that end will only be, when *Christ's Kingdom shall come*, that *God's will may be done in earth as it is in heaven*: Let us pray then, that the Lord will accomplish the number of his elect and hasten his kingdom: And as *he which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly*; (Rev. xxii. 20.) even so let it be the prayer of our faith, and the prayer of our hearts, saying, *Come Lord Jesus! come quickly!*

The

The CONCLUSION.

IT remains to advertise the Reader, that as the main scope of this work was to represent the credibility of this doctrine of Christ's glorious Reign with his Saints on Earth, from such authority of divine and human testimonies, as occurred in the course of it; so I trust that I have in all good conscience, according to the best of my judgment, made an upright and undisguised use of them, and been exact in all my translations, quotations, and references, using caution all the way, not to impose upon the reader, or myself. Had I been better supplied with proper books, of which I found a want at times, this performance would have been much more complete; but I am well content, that my many and great defects both in learning and judgment may be supplied by the abler pens of such among my Reverend Brethren of the Clergy, or others, who may come after me upon this subject. And if I shall be found to have advanced any thing in the foregoing pages, that is contrary to sound doctrine, and the tenor of Catholic faith, I declare myself ready upon conviction to make a public retraction of it. As my principal intention has been only to support the truth of the doctrine of the *Millemium* as to the substance of it, so I desire to be understood, as laying no more stress upon the particular modes and circumstances of it, than scriptural authority will justify, reserving however to myself the lawful right of private judgment, and innocent opinions

opinions which clash not with any principles of true religion, which are here modestly offered, not obtruded on any, leaving many particulars (which perhaps some have too rigorously insisted on) to the private persuasion of the Reader.—Accordingly I have attempted, nothing in the way of decisive proof:

First, As to the exact space of time appointed for the duration of this kingdom, whether as meaning a thousand years according to our computation of time, or any longer period.

Secondly, Whether the administration of it will be under the constant abiding presence of our Lord's visible humanity, or only occasional manifestations of it, whilst the government, for the most part, may devolve upon the Apostles and Patriarchs as his vice-gerents under the immediate influences and conduct of the Holy Spirit.

Thirdly, Whether the universal conflagration shall be before, or after the millennial reign.

Or, *Fourthly,* Whether the true and proper subjects of this blessed kingdom (exclusive of the probationary Heathens) will consist only of the living Saints, and such as shall be immediately raised from the dead upon our Lord's advent, as the Martyrs, and other *first-fruits* unto God (and the Lamb, *Rev. xiv. 4.*) (implying *after-fruits* in the same dispensation) or whether there shall not be a continued succession of the redeemed ones raised from the dead, following according to their order and time; (*1. Cor. xv. 23.*) as was the belief of *Irenæus* and *Tertullian* among others, and which I think is deducible from, and gives light

light to some passages in Scripture*. These and many more particulars relating to the *New Jerusalem* state are left to others who see more circumstantially into it, or till they shall be manifested in due time.

If after what has been offered in support of this doctrine, any reader should still continue unpersuaded, and not inclined to allow of any such happy condition appointed for the Saints, short of their ultimate and complete felicity in heaven, yet let not such be offended, if the belief of an intermediate and inferior state of bliss on earth, serve as a motive to godliness in others: Besides, were this doctrine destitute of that full proof from Scripture which it carries with it, and presented itself to us only in the modest form of an hypothesis; even in that view it has more to recommend it, as it is more interesting, than some ingenious theories of the earth, which have met with such a favourable reception: However, I here beg leave to refresh his memory with a short recapitulation of some important heads enlarged upon dispersedly in this work, as they may serve thus collected to engage him in a more successful attention to the subject.

* Mr. Mede, page 618, gives the following Remark: "Some of the Fathers supposed, that the divine fire of Christ's body at his coming, should stretch even to the souls of the dead; and that such as had departed out of this life not fully purged of sin by repentance, should not be found fire-proof at that day, but be refined *cum morâ & dolore*, before their resurrection to Christ's kingdom. *Cyprian, Epist. 52.*" It is not to be doubted that the Romish church did build up the hay and stubble of their Purgatory on this ancient doctrine of a state of purification after death.

Now,

Now, the belief of such a glorious dispensation to take place on earth, may serve as a means to wean the hearts of such as are under strong attachments to the love and pursuit of happiness in this world, from all insnaring fondness for the perishing things of it, and to animate them to patience and self-denial in their Christian course under the encouraging prospect of precious promises of better things in a far better state of it. It solves many dark riddles in the ways of Providence; opens many mysteries which are a stumbling-block to reason; and answers that objection of this world's being only a place for folly, sin and misery, by shewing that all the evil which *Satan* hath introduced in it, shall turn to his own shame, when the Second *Adam* shall wrest his usurped dominion from him, and expel him into the regions of his own darkness. It justifies the ways of God towards man, by providing a gratuitous retribution to the Saints in time, for the greater injuries and sufferings which they have endured in time for righteousness-sake; plucks the sceptre of government from the tyrant and oppressor, and puts it in the hands of the servants of God. It gives full display to the wonders of God's wisdom and power in the beauties and riches of creation; opens a free communication betwixt heaven and earth, and so brings near things that were afar off. It exalts Christ where he was abased, and glorifies him, where he was crucified; and divides between the two component principles of this world, good and evil, giving to the Prince of each his separate Throne and Kingdom. It reveals the Sacred TRINITY in more conspicuous distinction than any other doctrine, as it represents the Eternal FATHER exalting the Majesty of his Beloved SON over a world of his own redeeming, whilst the

the HOLY GHOST adds such power to the sanctity of his Saints, that miracles will be common things. In a word, a settled religious faith in this holy and glorious state of the church, as prefigured, foretold and promised in the Scriptures throughout, pours amazing light on the sacred Volume; is a key to many wonderful secrets in the system of this world, and opens Paradise lost in Paradise restored, whilst man rises to supreme bliss by a gradual ascent on the scale of perfection, and is changed from *glory* to *glory*: It comforts the suffering Christian under all his trials and afflictions during this short reign of ungodliness, and, in a well-grounded hope of his glorious inheritance with the Saints, fills his heart with joy unspeakable. *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, Rev. xx. 6.*

Reader, may thou and I be of this happy number! *Amen!*

F I N I S.



