A LETTER

TO THE

REV. WILLIAM DIGBY, M.A.

IN REPLY

TO HIS "FRIENDLY APPEAL TO THE CONGREGATION OF SALEM CHAPEL, TORQUAY."

BY

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"We are neither called upon to come to our conclusions hastily, nor to hold them when arrived at with obstinacy, contempt, or insolence. No; these are the properties of ignorance and arrogance; they are the inseparable companions, not of him who is inspired with a love of truth, but of the candidate for popular fame, influence, and consideration; and are always first to stigmatise and to condemn what perhaps they have neither the ability nor the patience to consider or understand."


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A LETTER, &c.

SIR,—A copy of your recently published letter has come into my hands. You are pleased to entitle this letter, "A Friendly Appeal to the Congregation of Salem Chapel, Torquay." Your production is not only addressed to the members of Salem Chapel in particular, but professes to be a kind of encyclical epistle—for the benefit "of all whom it may concern." It concerns me: therefore I requested, and the request has been cheerfully conceded, that I might have the honour, if honour there be, of replying to you: and that I might have you "all to myself."

For the opportunity which you have afforded me, I thank you. For the comprehensive wording of your title page, I again thank you, as you have thereby taken away from me all appearance of the character of an intruder. You have no grounds for a refusal to hear me on the topics of your letter: but supposing that it were otherwise, still there are other and, with me, most weighty reasons why I should at all hazards venture to address you.

Sir, I have said that your appeal concerns me. I say further: it concerns me much, very much, more as a member of society, than it concerns any individual of the "Salem Chapel congregation." It concerns me thus, because, occupying the position I do or did occupy, if the charges alleged by you can be substantiated from Scripture, I, above all others whom you address, am in a most fearful position. A glance at my name and designation will have informed you that there was a time when I rejoiced to call myself your brother minister, and brother successor of the Apostles. My present appearance as the advocate of the Protestant right of private judgment, which right I believe you to have grossly insulted and betrayed, may dispense with all avowal, on my part, that I am your brother minister no longer.

Before I examine your position, allow me to tell you, in all sober seriousness of mind, that acting according to the dictates of my conscience, and under the influence of a conviction derived, as I am persuaded, from the Bible—I believe in the doctrine of the past Second Advent, and so believing, identify myself with the leading features of the views which are the object of your animadversions. Allow me to acquaint you further that I am, and ever have been, most anxious that my views of revealed truth should be subjected to the fiercest ordeal—that I have published a work with the express design of eliciting a refutation of those views, if such were possible, but no refutation,
no reply even, has yet appeared, and I suspect none ever will: the work in question has been pronounced by a minister of your own Church, one of no mean reputation, to be unanswerable so far as the doctrine of the past Second Advent is concerned. Allow me to say, moreover, that if you or any other individual will answer to the satisfaction of a child, two or three questions—which I shall propose to you from the Scriptures, and on the ministry which you claim, then I will throw down my arms of opposition; I will retract every word I have spoken in favour of the views which you condemn; I will burn every shred and particle of what I may have written, if possible: and I will openly and honestly make my confession of errors and transgressions—if it please you—according to the fashion approved as orthodox, clad in a white sheet, and in the presence of as great a concourse as can be tolled together. And, once more, let me advise you that I know nothing of "Salemites" or "Salem Chapels;" I would just as soon desire to be called a Rechabite or a Mormonite as a Salemite. I and my friends abjure and abhor all party and distinctive names whatever: "ites," "isms," and "ists," are one and all equally offensive to us. As we do not acknowledge either churches or ministry since the Apostolic times, we are not a gathered body calling ourselves by any name: and consequently we have neither membership nor discipline, but are merely individuals concurring in the same leading doctrines. We neither call our lecture rooms churches, nor our lectures ministry, being merely designed for mutual advancement, and for the diffusion of what we believe to be truth.

When I received a letter inclosing your appeal, and was informed that you held a dignified station in the English Hierarchy (which you have forgotten to acknowledge)—and when previously to perusal of said appeal I was told that you had been essaying the attempt to demolish the past Second Advent scheme by quoting Greek, I thought within myself—well, what with the rev. gentleman's position in the establishment, and what with the exhibition of scholarship which may be consequently expected, I conclude we shall have to buckle on our armour in right down good earnest, and make ready for the fight and go out to the battle. I was for the moment overwhelmed with such a transport of ecstatic enjoyment, that I could, in a kind of benevolent furor, have bestowed a crown-piece on the first beggar who might have chanced to have come to the door. But O! for the vanity of human wishes! I looked at your appeal—I then approached my fingers towards it—I touched it with more reverence than when I took it from the envelope not knowing what it was—in an indescribable state of suspense I lifted it—cast first of all a hurried glance at the title page, and I saw—What did I see? O what? I saw the title "a friendly appeal," and I pronounced on this—good, very good. But then I saw more. On glancing further down the page, the conviction—aye, as you make so much of certainties—the certainty flashed upon me that you had not acknowledged your "preferment." You style yourself plain Rev. William Digby, M.A., instead of the Rev. William Digby, M.A.———————————————— Why was this? I wish to impute nothing to you which cannot fairly be carried out, but it was, I think, an unusual proceeding: was it because you did not wish to cast that which was holy (in your eyes) to the dogs: or were you indeed, when the printer called upon you for your title page, smitten with a consciousness that God had forgotten to name Archdeacons, Prebends, Rectors, Vicars, and perpetual Curates and their tithes, when he set forth an array of the officers of his own Holy Catholic and Apostolic Establishment? But the motto from Scripture with which you have adorned your title page was the cruelest blow—the unkindest cut of all—a downfall of all my hopes. Here it is—"There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, where is the promise of his coming?" I assure you,
Sir, I read this more in pity than in anger: though it were enough to rouse a spirit of virtuous indignation in the minds of any to whom it was applied—
not by an Apostle—oh, no! for then peradventure we could have borne it,—but by an individual, claiming indeed the divine commission and preaching of an Apostle, together with a title which Apostles never dreamed of—an individual who can be silenced by a Sunday school child if asked to show one single sign of an Apostle. Your motto was sufficient to show me both the tone and the matter of your appeal. Here, in your very title page, you have most impertinently assumed the power of a Peter and a Paul, when you know that the parties you assail deny you possession of any the least portion of those powers. Here you have pronounced, as it were “ex cathedrā,” that these are the last days; surely a less weighty Scripture might have been more modest. Here you have at one fell swoop condemned me and my friends as scoffers, walking after our own lusts, while we calmly assure you that we love God and love our neighbour, with a warmth of brotherly affection at least equal to your own. Here you have numbered us with Jewish rebels and apostates who deny the first coming of Christ, to say nothing of the second, forgetting in this miserable blundering that we acknowledge both—a coming once “in the flesh;” and a coming again “in the spirit;” and acknowledge both on the clear and express foundation of promises a thousand times repeated. Here you have pronounced that we are even as others—as yourself—“looking out at a window and crying through the lattice, Why tarry the wheels of his chariot, and why is his chariot so long in coming?” And here, to use your own expression, “that the Scriptures may not be broken,” (as, I grieve to say, you have broken them whenever you have quoted them,) you have given your opinion that we are Jews, babbling about “the sleep of our fathers,” Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and Samuel, and all the prophets! and for us Jews you have declared a sentence that when he, your Sisera Christ, does come a third time, according to your own confession (p. 5), the day of his coming will be to us “the day of perdition of ungodly men.” Sir, you tell us that a bundle of Exeter newspapers was sent to you. In these papers you might have lighted upon a full and particular discussion of the “last days.” Have you ever read a line of these papers? Have you perused Mr. Wilkinson’s work on the Last Days, which is printed in these papers? Nay, did you ever read Peter’s sermon ii. Acts? At least do you not know that this chapter of Peter’s second epistle, whence you have taken your motto, is open, like all other chapters, to discussion, and for every man’s opinion: and that great luminaries of your own Church reject your opinion? You may tell us, as is most likely, that Hammond, Lightfoot, Whitby, and others, are no authority with you; then suppose I say you are no authority with us. Why judge us? Why condemn us? Is this your exposition of the sixth article of your Church, “that whatsoever is not read in Scripture nor may be proved thereby is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation?”

But to leave your title page, of which I hope you will one day be heartily ashamed, I open your friendly appeal. Friendly! And yet no sooner has the word dropped from your pen than you tell the public that it is a friendly appeal to scoffers and revilers of all that is holy and just and good. Me-thinks there were small friendship in that! But your motto is only a sample of your friendly dispositions. You are by no means sparing of hard names. You taunt the congregation and sneer at the oracles, as you call them, of “Salem Chapel,” for their ignorance of Greek. I fear me the taunt will rebound with force a hundred-fold increased on your own head; and from your own production you shall stand condemned. You virtually style the most learned commentators of your own Church “fools and insane;” and
yet this infallibility of judgment is attended with a proposition of your own
views of Scripture, which is composed of a world of "ifs" and "I believe,"
and probabilities, and "may be." You charge me and my friends with
propagating "impieties, and blasphemous and soul destroying errors" (p. 9);
yet your charge is professedly nothing more than your opinion, for "you pre-
tend to no more" (p. 14), and Johanna Southcote or Joe Smith could pretend
to as much. You profess "truly to reverence the blessed volume of Scripture"
in one page, and in another immediately following you favour us with a
parody on xviii. Rev., which I am pained to pronounce to be both indecent
and profane; and, as a climax to your ministerial propositions, you tell the
public that the belief that all prophecy is fulfilled "is, you must say, of so
revoltingly irreligious, or atheistical and immoral, a tendency as to warrant
you in \textit{affirming} that no person whom a birth from above, and spiritual
conversion, has joined to the Lord, can for a moment endure it." And this you
call a friendly appeal! Faugh! it smells of brimstone: it hath a villanous
odour of noxious combustibles about it: it is redolent of Smithfield and the
Inquisitor's shop. This you call "reproving, rebuking, exhorting with all
long suffering and doctrine." This is the way in these days "to convert a
sinner and to save a soul from death." This is "pure religion and undefiled
before God and the Father;" this, to quote your own words, is \textit{what you}
mean by "speaking the truth in love;" this is doing the work of an evangel-
list, and making full proof of your "faithful and evangelical ministry."
Such a parade of the work of an evangelist may be your idea of the "glad
tidings of great joy," as it appears you are of those who rejoice in the
high-sounding and exclusive epithet of "\textit{Evangelical}."] I must tell you
that I pity the people that call you "pastor and teacher;" or who may be
persuaded that you can "feed them with knowledge and understanding;" or
who have received and reduced to practice your notions about "a birth from
above and spiritual conversion, and a being joined to the Lord, and a fear of
the Lord."

Now, Sir, you may style me as, in this friendly appeal you have styled my
friends, "a fool," (how friendly!) and may claim the authority for this which
I see you have claimed, "answer not a fool according to his folly." I think
for once, \textit{only once}, we may take a leaf out of your book. We may borrow
one of your favourite expressions, "\textit{probably}," and say it is probably best
to depart in dealing with you from the general rule and that it is best to answer
a fool according to his folly. After a careful consideration of your produc-
tion, the conviction is forced upon me, that I have no hopes of being the
means of conveying to you the smallest modicum of instruction in divine
things. I wish I had; but you are so manifestly wise in your own conceit,
and I know it is written, "Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit, there is
more hope of a fool than of him." I shall not stop a moment to consider
how or in what spirit I should answer you \textit{best}, lest from the nature of your
production I should contradict what I promise. There are matters too easy to
be refuted: your appeal is one of them. This facility which attaches to it
is my difficulty; and, let me tell you, there exists not a doubt in my mind
but that even your own evangelical associates, however willing that the doc-
trine we hold should be amply refuted, are grievously annoyed at the exhibi-
tion you have made of yourself, and anxious that your childish performance
should die away, unnoticed and unheeded by those whom you assail.—But to
my disagreeable task. The first words of your appeal are, that "that you
have no desire to enter into controversy with any man; but only to speak the
truth in love." Of your love-speaking-truth we have had enough; we whistle
it down the wind. It is of such a nature as to cause a man to marvel what
\textit{lusus naturae} he has come across, and also to lead him to conclude that a
passage which you quote against the "Salem Congregation" may have more meanings than one (and you are fond of "double threads") (Note A):—I allude to the Scripture, "they know not what they do," i.e., these evangelicals know not when they talk about "speaking the truth in love."

You repeat your dislike to a controversy. It were needless; for he would be a strange creature that could desire a controversy with you. You say, "having given my opinions upon any subject, and my reasons for holding them, as briefly as I can, I there wish to leave the matter." Your opinions? Yes! your opinions authorise you to take the sword of judgment into your hand, and to cut asunder 600,000 of your fellow creatures in America, besides others at Torquay and elsewhere, as the destined heirs of the blackness of darkness for ever. "Having given my opinion, I there wish to leave the matter." I can well believe you for once: would that it were as easy to take you at your word when you tell us, a page further down, that you are a member "of a faithful and evangelical ministry, and not of a Levitical priesthood like that of Rome"—not after the order of Aaron, never a holder of Church preferment, which a Jewish priest would have thought a paradise—not a receiver of Levitical tenth's to the tune of hundreds per annum. The perusal of your effusion has given me no very exalted opinion of your sagacity; but your reiterated desire to avoid a discussion is tantamount to a confession not only that you expected a discussion, but that you intended to escape from it, if proposed. Don't be alarmed, neither I nor my friends have any intention of challenging you out.

You next pronounce—"I address myself to reasonable beings, and let them judge what I say." I am tempted to answer you somewhat as Jehu answered the couriers of Joram: "What hast thou to do with reasonable beings? turn thee behind me." What about the reasonableness of your opinions? You say (p. 15),—but they are but vain words,—that the saints are waiting (where?) for Christ, (are they not now with Christ, Phil. i., 23?) that he may take them to himself with their bodies (the capitals are your own), and you quote John v., 28-9, and you beseech the reader if, after reading this quotation, he dare say, "that the resurrection is already past" (the capitals are mine). Yes, Sir, I dare say it,—that two resurrections are past. Did you know there were two? And so far as these verses of John's Gospel are concerned, I will prove what I say, in such a way, at least, as to put you to an everlasting nonplus. What have you to do with reason or reasonable beings? You think that the "graves" mentioned in your quotation are literal graves. Do you think that the "bread of heaven" mentioned in the following chapter is literal bread? What is your opinion, "for you pretend to no more?" Literal graves! Reason asks you how can thousands of bodies that were once in graves, but of which not a particle now remains there, come out of graves? What do you mean by your opinion? And do you call this a general resurrection, when thousands of bodies never were in graves at all? Reason asks you, as you believe in the resurrection of the dead body—not of the dead person,—what relation exists between the original, putrified, decomposed, and dissipated body, and the sublimated, glorious, incorruptible fabric which is to succeed; what the relation, in virtue of which I can call such body mine, and say, "Behold my body, raised from the tomb and animated anew?" A child can propose to you this question, and see its force; no resort to Omnipotence, nor any crying aloud to your ministerial qualifications, will enable you to answer it.

Again, in your notion of an end of the world, which in your opinion is "now nigh at hand" (p. 15)—excuse me, if, seeing that you speak every Sun-
day of a "world without end," I prefer Peter's and Paul's "nigh at hand" to yours:— in your notion, you believe that the universe is a mere appendage to our earth, and that the millions of stars which the telescope discovers, which are other suns, all thousands of times larger than the earth, are shortly (have you named the precise day?) to come tumbling from the sky and drop upon the surface of this atom of a globe; that is, boundless space is to measure its length on and by a hair's breadth? It is clear you are no astronomer, though you do claim to be a successor of the Apostles; and if you be a philosopher, as you would seem to intimate when you say, "You are not addressing PHILOSOPHERS." (How fond you are of capitales and ITALICS! are they arguments with you?) I say, if you be a philosopher, then, "they are strange things that are dreamt of, and there are more things than are dreamt of, in your philosophy." What have you to do with reasonable beings, or philosophy, or common sense? You will hardly after this reiterate an opinion you express on the belief that mystical Babylon is old Jerusalem, viz., that the person holding such belief is not fit to be reasoned with. Your opinion turns out to be an edge tool; it has cut your fingers. You may reiterate, till you act upon, a second opinion delivered on the same belief, viz., "that the person believing it is a person with whom all discussion had better be avoided." It would have been well for your own reputation if you had set the first example of this advice. Let me exhort you in future never to lose sight of it. What a farce for you, or any other evangelical, to talk about an appeal to reasonable beings, or to call in medical advice in the shape of reason, when it is your common practice to set a brand upon reason as something exclusively belonging to infidels, if your three favourite dogmas of an end of the world, a resurrection of the body, and a literal day of assize be on the carpet; and to set a brand upon reason, because you are conscious that upon any principles of reason the doctrines are wholly indefensible.

Your next favour is a pretty accurate statement of some of our opinions. To this statement you append this observation: "The one foundation upon which these strange and startling positions are all made chiefly to rest, is mainly, as far as I can discover, this, that all the things foretold by our Lord in xxiv. Matt., and in the corresponding passages in the other Gospels, were to be fulfilled, and have been therefore fulfilled accordingly, within the lifetime of the then existing generation." Not at all, Sir. I shall be most happy to prove them, from any page of the New Testament you please to appoint me. Neither I nor my friends draw our views from detached portions of Scripture. We have not selected a Bible of our own from the Bible of God, as we charge your Church and all other Churches with having done. We profess to take a comprehensive survey of the grand circle of prophecy and its fulfilment which took six thousand years in describing; and it is because we see the fulfilment that we see the circle described, and not a segment of a circle only. I will as briefly as possible set before you a statement of our foundation, and you may call it our one foundation, if you please; and the argument I shall use will not be an appeal to reason merely, though it will be an appeal to reasonable beings. It is this—Scripture is its own interpreter; Scripture must be its own interpreter; and there is only one way in which Scripture can be its own interpreter.—This is my opinion, and the reason for holding it is as follows: The Church of Rome is a I of all Churches, now that the old Jewish Church is no more. (Note B.) The entire system of the Church of Rome, in regard to the interpretation of Scripture, proceeds on the assumption that something more is required to the interpretation of Scripture besides Scripture itself. According to the views of Christianity which generally prevail, this is correct. It is the assertion of every sect, that the fulfilment of all prophecy is yet future. If all prophecy is not fulfilled, then I
object and say—The Bible is defective, imperfect, only a partial revelation: it cannot be its own interpreter; for it is not self-sufficient. If the Old Testament Scriptures were taken apart by themselves they would be deficient; they would confer no more than knowledge in part. This will be readily allowed. If the New Testament Scriptures speak of prophecies to be accomplished after the writers of those prophecies, and the inspired witnesses to those prophecies, had disappeared from the earth, then do we want a third Testament—a third series of Scriptures; and we demand, in order to the inditing of this third series, an unbroken succession of divinely-inspired ministers or witnesses, from the time of the last of such characters mentioned in the Scriptures in our possession to the present time, and onwards to the end of time. But where are those characters and where be their writings? “One fact,” as you say, “is worth a thousand arguments.” Show me one living fact here. We want an additional written Scripture to explain and to bear witness to, unfulfilled portions of the existing imperfect revelation. We need a succession of prophets to give us an infallible account of the uncleared mysteries of their predecessors, and to point us to the time of their fulfilment. Holy men of God spake in old time as they were moved by the Holy Spirit of God. No prophecy was of their own invention or suggestion; so, by parity of reasoning and according to the argument of an Apostle, no prophecy could be of their own or private interpretation; therefore, as holy men spake, so holy men must interpret, by one and the same instrumentality, and with one and the same evidence of a divine mission, till there was nothing left to be interpreted, as stated in iv. Ephes., 11-13: “And he gave some apostles, &c.” The consequence of a denial of this position is, that the principle of the Church of Rome must be granted, to the triumph of the sneering sceptic, and “all the confusion, ignorance, sectarianism, crusades, religious murders, intolerance, bigotry, pomp, pageantry, and display; creeds, dogmas, dogmatists, and priestcraft, which have existed and exist to this day,” must be excused as the inevitable consequence of a defective revelation; that is, in plain terms, God himself is charged with having noted down events in his Word which must necessarily be attended with this catalogue of the crimes and follies and miseries of mankind; and yet Christianity (not Judaism) is called a religion of Love.

Now, sir, what say you to this? Can you refute it or find any living man acknowledging the inspiration of the Scriptures willing to refute it? If you have the power of the Holy Spirit which you claim, (p. 9,) you can refute it, for that power was “a mouth and wisdom which all adversaries were unable to gainsay or resist”—that power was in the gifts of wisdom and knowledge and faith, and healing and working of miracles, prophecy, discernment of spirits, gifts of tongues, and the interpretation of tongues; but, can you show me and my friends any tangible demonstration—any sign apparent to infidels as well as believers—of this power of the Holy Spirit existing among any of the self-styled bishops, priests, deacons, archdeacons, ministers, and mystagogues, who claim official consequence in what they call the spiritual government of a Church, the Church or Churches? If you can refute my argument; if you can answer these questions you need not have recourse to dates and mistranslations: if you are wanting here, dates and mistranslations will not avail as a prop for your cause; and though you had stated a thousand opinions, and more, had endeavoured to build them on Scripture, still you would have been wide of your mark. You are an Evangelical: then propose this that I have proposed to you, to that modern Babel, the Evangelical Alliance at their forthcoming meeting in London, and they will say to you—LET HIM ALONE. You affect to pity the members of “Salem Chapel” as poor misguided simpletons, doing the work of the Jesuits without
knowing what they are doing. Is the principle of Scriptural interpretation just laid down to you, and the demand of proof now asked of you,—is this Jesuitry? and can you find anything at all resembling it among Jesuitical proceedings, or Jesuitical productions? O! sir, methinks the "simplicity" you speak of is all the other way!

I now come to your Greek: and what evidence of a gift of tongues or the interpretation of tongues shall we find there? We shall see all in good time. Having expressed your opinion that our views "are manifestly contrary to the truth of history and to your actual experience," of which sort of evidence I make no account whatever, as it is exactly the argument on which the Jews rested their rejection of the Messiah, and by which they crucified him—you go on to observe that "you will show that the supposition which makes all the things spoken of in xxiv Mat. to have been fulfilled in the life time of the then existing generation of men, is founded on a mistranslation and misunderstanding of the words in the original language." These are great words—perhaps "great swelling words of vanity," but I may observe upon them that I am glad to find you acknowledging the new testament signification of "generation," according to the exposition laid down by Whitby, and assented to by scholars of every denomination. Your account of the "mistranslation" I shall quote at length, as I consider it a ne plus ultra of critical acumen. "Our Lord, when he spoke in the foregoing chapter Mat. xxiii, 36, unquestionably and exclusively of the thing that were coming upon Jerusalem, declared that they should all come to pass upon that generation: and so they did. The inspired Greek word here is tauten, which signifies "this." This passage then is most correctly and properly translated in our version. But, when in the next chapter, xxiv, 36, our Lord uses a similar, but not identical form of speech, relating to other and far more distant events to be accomplished long afterwards, (and which are not accomplished yet,) he makes a change in the pronoun and says, not that this generation (the generation then extant) shall not pass, &c., but "that generation (aute), to wit a generation long after to be born, which should see the beginning of those signs of the last times—the same generation (or some of them) should see also the end of them when the Lord shall come not in a figurative or invisible way as at the destruction of Jerusalem, by his armies (the Romans) whom he sent against it, but in person, when every eye shall see him. Let any person who is capable of consulting the Greek Testament for themselves (?) and who can distinguish between the plain grammatical meaning of tauten and aute, see whether what I say be so or not." There—I am delivered of a burden, and am thankful. Now, sir, I shall prove that we have here, at all events, a tangible demonstration of—something. I maintain that both passages are correctly rendered in our version; that the whole of your remarks are utterly absurd and nonsensical; that you do not appear from any one page of your appeal to be capable of consulting the Greek testament, and that no scholar would listen for a moment to what you have to say on any question of grammar, Greek or English, without expressing a wish that you might have the argument all to yourself. Now then,—tauten is tauten and not aute in Matt. xxiii. 36, simply because it is governed by the preposition Epi—aute, aute, touto: hic, hoc, hae. If Matt. xxiv. 34, had read as in Matt. xxiii. 36, "all these things shall be upon this generation;" the word "generation" being governed in English grammar by the preposition "upon," would be governed in Greek by a corresponding preposition epi, and the pronoun would be in the same case with the noun, and yet mirable dictu! would still be the same pronoun. Sir, you might as well tell the "congregation of Salem Chapel" that when I say "this friendly appeal," or "upon this friendly appeal," I do not mean the same friendly appeal; or that when I say "this William Digby" or
"upon this William Digby," I have not the same William Digby in my eye; as gravely inform them that when their Lord said "this generation," or "upon this generation," he had not one and the same generation in his thoughts. Sir, I do consider myself degraded that I should have lived to undergo the drudgery of setting right a member of "a faithful and evangelical ministry" in the rudiments of the Greek grammar. Do you really not know the first principles of speech: that a word has but one radical significance but many modifications and contextually suggested meanings, which are more or fewer according to its usage in the language to which it belongs? And are you quite ignorant that by this property of speech a number of words comparatively few, are made to express any possible combination of ideas? thus, that autos, autos, tauta, are all the same word autos with a contraction of the article, autos being à autos: tauta, ta auta, &c., which are variously rendered according to the joint exigencies of the context and our own idiom? But you must pardon me if I refuse to enter further into "grammatical questions" with you. Your authority and your context for translating genea aute, Matt. xxiv. 34, that generation, exists nowhere but in your own arbitrary system; that it "relates to distant events which are not accomplished yet," Whiby, who understood Greek surely as well as yourself, says, "These words afford a full demonstration that all which Christ had mentioned hitherto was to be accomplished . . . in that very age or whilst some of that generation of men lived; for genea aute, this generation never has any other sense in the New Testament than the men of this age." He then quotes Matt. xi. 16, xii. 42 and 45, xxiii. 36; Mark viii. 12; Luke vii. 31, xi. 29, 32, 50, 51, xvi. 8. Acts ii. 40. Of these Mark viii. 12, has both words in juxta-position, or both pronouns if it please you. Would you translate—"Why doth that generation seek a sign? No sign shall be given to this generation?" But, enough of this portion of your friendly appeal. Of a surety there are no laurels to be gained in a controversy with you. This is the first and it shall be the last time I will notice a production of the same stamp as this of yours; supposing that another nonsuch could appear, which is not very "probable." I assure you we have no further need of witness to your ministerial qualifications on the score of an interpretation of tongues. But you are not sparing of the most ample witness; you would satisfy your bitterest enemy; you would afford him more pleasure than a cat enjoys with a mouse before crushing it. In a note on the word "mistranslation," you say, "this word is perhaps too strong a word." No doubt that motion will be carried nem. con. After having owned that your charge of mistranslation is invalid, and taken away one of your two props, you again (p. 7) repeat the charge and say, that "the plain meaning of the words in Matt. xxiv. 34, is point blank against the Salemite interpretation;" and again you repeat it (p. 12), and again (p. 15) you repeat it; and after all this repetition you again abandon it! Was ever any thing so preposterous! What can any reasonable being, as you are so fond of appealing to reasonable beings, think of your disavowal a second time after your repeated avowals? "You are satisfied to leave it as it stands in our authorized version, only, provided, that 'this' be understood of a generation which our Lord was prospectively addressing," &c. How very reasonable! Really you beg so hard for it that one is almost ashamed to refuse you. You take occasion to be facetious on Mr. Stark's exposition of Rev. xviii.; you say, "there surely exists among us now as of old, a confusion worse confounded." Why if there was ever a confusion worse confounded and the worse confounded confusion, worse confounded still, it is in your confusion of tongues, and your famous essay at an interpretation of tongues. After this, I grant, you may well ask "have we any certainty of anything; or can we trust to the evidence of our senses." Some would reply, we have no certainty concerning your reasoning faculties, and for this uncertainty we can trust to the evidence of our senses. But
I draw the curtain of oblivion around your Grecian qualifications. Requiesscant in pace. I would fain not disturb them more. I did think once for the moment that I would ask you to sign a petition to Parliament for another authorized version of the New Testament, seeing that you build so much on mistranslations; but I think of this no more. Greek or English Testament: new or old translation: it matters not: it seems all one to you. I intend to get up this petition during the summer, not that I expect it will be attended to. No, I remember too well being one of a number who signed a petition for the amendment of the prayer book, when the Archbishop of Canterbury told us that “no alteration could be made in the prayer book but what would be for the worse.” I have lived to be of the same opinion; it is incapable of amendment. You see I have ever been “a trouble in Israel.”

I might be excused if I here closed my reply, as I think any jury of “sane men” would discharge me from the trouble of defending myself further; but a little further prosecution of your appeal might be useful to here and there a reader of these pages. I make no remarks on your ability to discuss questions of English grammar: though it is quite evident that you cannot write your own mother tongue grammatically (see p. 10, line 8, word “any,”) and evident also that the charge urged by Dissenters is true, viz., that all the ministerial qualification required in the Establishment is an ability to read the Book of Common Prayer. In the faint hope that I might be of use to you, allow me to conclude the grammatical and Grecian portion of your friendly appeal with the following quotation from Dr. Campbell’s Dissertations on the Difficulties of Scripture:—“Our opinions on religious subjects are commonly formed, not indeed before we read the Scriptures, but before we have examined them. The ordinary consequence is, that men afterwards do not search the sacred oracles in order to find out the truth, but in order to find out what may authorize their own opinions.”—(Vol. I. p. 78.)

Having demolished prop No. 1, let us examine minutely prop No. 2: which two props were “to tumble the whole Salemite system to the ground, and, like the baseless fabric of a vision, to leave not a wreck behind.” You are happier in your poetical quotations than when you quote the Greek Testament. Let me congratulate you. Now then—I will show from other Scriptures written after the Gospels, that prophecy was not to be perfectly fulfilled before the expiration of the first century, that Mat. xxiv. 34, did not bear this meaning.” Your other Scriptures are John’s writings, and what is your proof? “We have no certainty from without respecting the precise date of the editing of almost any of the books of the New Testament.” Very well: do you give any from within? from internal marks? Let us see. “It seems highly probable”—oh! seems and probable—“from the manner in which the Jews and Jerusalem are spoken of in John’s Gospel as what once was, and was only to be remembered or referred to in writing, that even it was written at an advanced period of his life.” As you give no evidence of your meaning, if meaning you have, we will pass this by, and proceed:—“And in this fact alone”—what fact? do you call a probability a fact?—“if it be a fact”—O aye! if, that alters the case—“but we have moreover”—nay we have nothing as yet, so there needs no “moreover” about it—“not only the three Epistles of John when an elder or senior, written probably after his Gospel”—another probably!—“to which allusion seems evidently to be made in the first Epistle”—another seems! (Note C.) “but furthermore”—nay we have nothing even yet, so there needs no “furthermore”—“we have the whole of the Apocalypse appearing (!) to have the plainest internal marks of being the last of the writings of the Apostle, written by an express command during his banishment to Patmos.” John says not one syllable about banish-
inent: he was, like all other Christians of that day, "in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ." Ah, Sir! "assertion is too often suffered to pass for argument," with you at all events. But to proceed. You fix the date of the Revelation at about A.D. 96, and here are all your internal marks:—"Does he not?"—nay, does he?—"plainly tell us in chap. i. v. 2 of the Revelations that he was the same individual who had before written the Gospel? Compare Rev. i. 2, with John xx. 31, and xxi. 14." No, Sir, he tells us nothing of the kind. If your comparison were of any value it would go to prove that John the Baptist had written a Gospel, for we read of him many times—"the same came for a witness, to bear record of the Light," John i. v. 7. This is one of your internal marks; now for the other: there are but two:—"In the book of the Revelations there is an entirely new scene in vision opened to us subsequent to the destruction of Jerusalem." Indeed! Prove it. Not a single syllable have you offered in proof. You will excuse me if I refuse to hunt for proof for you. But this is not all your opinion on prop the second, you go on to say—"And if?"—what! "if" again—"if without going into further particulars"—not a single particle of a particular have I discovered—"if I be right here which I submit to the judgment of all sane men"—more appeals to reason and reasonable beings: I am sick of them. "Then again"—again indeed!—"in the fact, the plain historical matter of fact"—again I ask you what fact?—and above all what historical fact? I thought you were speaking of internal marks—"in this plain and not to be denied fact"—three times I ask what fact?—"for if"—another "if," good gracious! is the man really stark mad? "if the last of the prophecies of Scripture was not so much as edited until within about five years of the end of the first century; it follows that the fulfilment of the same, which, as we now positively know from experience, was to occupy the space of at least eighteen full centuries."—I give it up: another experience is more than I can endure; and when glancing my eye a line or two farther down I see something more about "persons of sound understanding"—I confess that I cannot submit to to be dragged, and will not attempt to drag my readers, through any more childish Evangelicalism like this. I will not, for it is useless, ask you if you have read Mr. Wilkinson's masterly letters (twenty or more) which appeared in the newspapers sent to you, proving, yes, let me say it, proving from internal marks, the only proof worth a straw, that the Apocalypse was written, circulated, and read, before any of the Epistles, before any other New Testament book was written. I will not ask if you have read Dr. Tilloch's work: or whether it would not have been worth your while to have considered the arguments of Bishop Newton, Dr. Lardner, Sir Isaac Newton, Dr. Hammond, Dr. Lightfoot, Andreas, Arethas, Grotius, Dr. A. Clarke, Dr. Lee, and others, who held that the Revelation was written at all events before the destruction of Jerusalem, and who were not Salemites. I care not to go any further with you on the subject of your second prop, than just to submit to you the following extract from Gibbon's Decline and Fall. Remember Gibbon is acknowledged as the most accurate historian we have:—"A mysterious prophecy, which still forms a part of the sacred canon, has very narrowly escaped the proscription of the Church. In the council of Laodicea (about the year 360) the Apocalypse was tacitly excluded from the sacred canon by the same churches of Asia to which it is addressed, and we may learn from the complaints of Sulpicius Severus that their sentence had been ratified by the greater number of the Christians of his time. From what causes, then, is the Apocalypse at present so generally received by the Greek, the Roman, and the Protestant churches?"—I shall only quote the cause which affects you:—"The advantage of turning these mysterious prophecies against the see of Rome inspired the Protestants with uncommon veneration for so useful an ally." (Vol. I, chap. xv.) Now then, what becomes of your note on the
Revelation—how read we? "We know from Church history that the Revelations was one of the last books of the New Testament that was received into the inspired Canon." But how this can possibly prove it to have been the last written passes my comprehension and yours also. Gibbon tells you that it had a hard struggle to get a reception at all. You speak of "Church History" in proof of your position, and yet you told us there was no certainty from without! Church History, too! Must I tell you my opinion of your Church History? It is this: The History of the Church and the History of Priestcraft are one concern. Church History and Gulliver's Travels are of equal value: I place as much account on one as on the other. So much for your other prop. If this is all that can be alleged against "the doctrine held and taught at Salem Chapel," that doctrine will spread abroad like a palm tree in Libanus, will lengthen its cords and strengthen its stakes, when Church History is waste paper, and remembered only as a mournful record of the crimes and the follies and the misfortunes of mankind.

What more shall I say on this "friendly appeal to persons of sound understanding?" Our chariot wheels drag heavily: the road is none of the best; we are only at page 8. You next pronounce "that a belief that all prophecy is fulfilled already, and that the end of the world and the resurrection of the dead are long since past!!!(the exclamations are yours) is an utterly untenable hypothesis." What! do your props make it untenable? or your experience? or your opinion? or what? Sir, the belief in the fulfilment of all prophecy already is the belief of the present Professor of Hebrew at Cambridge, who holds evangelical opinions on prophecy to be unworthy of the slightest notice. (Dissertations pp. 224, 367.) Your belief in the non-fulfilment of all prophecy already is soon accounted for: as otherwise how are you to style Rome the mother of harlots, and the man of sin, and the scarlet lady, and the woman Jezebel, drunken with the blood of saints? You talk next of "everlasting death." Where in the Bible did you find the expression? There is nothing of this phraseology in Scripture; and your ignorance of this fact may be taken as the sum and substance of your opinion on any 'death' whatsoever, first or second. If I had any reason to think that you knew anything of Greek, I would remind you that the originals of the words 'eternal,' 'everlasting,' and 'for ever,' in the Greek and Hebrew Bible, do not express what we mean in English by eternal, everlasting, and for ever; yes, or for ever and ever. These are terms with a limit to be explained by their adjuncts: and this one fact is enough to scatter to the four winds your priestly evangelical figment of hell torments and everlasting death—as it necessarily follows that all reward and punishment must have an end if language have any meaning; or if an eternal nothing can be at the same time an eternal something. Your opinion of the word "everlasting," would prove that the life of Samuel was everlasting, 1 Sam. i, 22, or of a servant, Deut. xv. 17, or of the Jews' possession of the land of Canaan. My opinion of the word proves to me that a future existence for any or for all, must be free, sovereign, unconditional, Godlike, Godworthy, Divine.—What have we next?—"If all prophecy is fulfilled there is no hell or everlasting damnation of soul and body to be dreaded or to be saved from!" Hear this, Professor Lee, and pause! Ah! my dear sir, it is abundantly evident that Heaven could be no Heaven to you unless you must have a Hell. You implore the favour of "the zealous God of Truth;" he would indeed be a zealot if he were fashioned after your model; but it is written, and did you never read it, "my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither your ways my ways, saith the Lord!" Sir, "your rock is not as our Rock, our enemies themselves being judges." The Satan you exalt is a mere creature of your own imagination, and it
appears we might say the same of your God. And here again you trouble us with some more Greek—"everlasting damnation." Where in the Bible did you find this? Strike that word "damnation" out of your sermons, and substitute "condemnation!" There is no "damnation" in the Greek Testament; there is, I grant you, in the English, plenty; and I could tell you why, but I forbear. You pursue your list of nothings,—"no sin to be pardoned,"—some might say there is a good deal, and that most grievous in your friendly appeal—"for there is no law, and where there is no law, &c." What law do you appear for? The ten commandments, which God gave to the Children of Israel, but forgot to give to the people of England? Are you indeed a Jew, and is this your law? Then why don't you observe your Sabbath on Saturday. Why break the law every Sunday morning at the communion table? Or is it not the Jewish law of Tithes that you advocate? it surely is not the Christian evangelical law—"that he that loveth God should love his brother also;" i.e. every man, for every man was neighbour to him that fell among thieves. If you do say that you love your brother, I pray you keep your charity at home so far as I am concerned.—"No literal resurrection of the dead as stated in 1 Cor. xv." This is another of your opinions. And here is another; "afterward they that are Christ's at his coming: then the end or resurrection of damnation!!" My Greek Testament reads not so: not so does my English Testament. You are an oddity of evangelicalism.—"If the judgment be past every man may do that which is right in his own eyes;" we need not travel far to be convinced of this; your friendly appeal is evidence enough on this point.—"If the judgment be past, then Satan would be the God of this world and that which is (about) to come." Your props have failed to show that the judgment is not past. Let me here remind you of your own prayer for the members of "Salem Chapel,"—"Lord lay not this sin to their charge!" or, in the spirit of the crucified Jesus, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." If the judgment be past, your opinion, to quote your own words, is "atheistical, impious, and immoral;" and though you affirm, when you style us "old Heretics under a new name," that "there is nothing new under the sun," your friendly appeal will strike most people, or I am much mistaken, as very like something new indeed; but it is not; the Jews who crucified the Lord of Life were beforehand with you here, as everywhere else.

But I am weary of your appeal. Let me glance at your "postscript." Your postscript is intended "to confirm—if confirmation be needed—your translation of Mat. 24, 34, upon a wresting of which the entire system, &c. &c." Verily, confirmation is needed. And what is it? Luke 21, 24, which you quote as follows:—"And they (the Jews) shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations, and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until, &c." First, let me advise you to quote correctly. There is a colon after "nations" in this passage, as it stands in the authorised version.—"Here is a prophecy which did not even begin to receive its fulfilment till after the destruction of Jerusalem." Look at Luke xxi.32, and tell me (oh, I see you do tell us; it is "this," and not "that" aue generation!) what generation was not to pass away till all things were made manifest, and the times of the Gentiles among the number. Did not the signs in verse 25 begin to receive their fulfilment till after the &c.? and if they were not all fulfilled in the timeline of the then existing generation, tell me what could Christ mean but to mislead and perplex his disciples when he said, verse 31, in reference to the treading down of Jerusalem among other things, "So likewise ye, when ye shall see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand." But you give for once a reason for your opinion.
"This second and longest captivity of the Jewish people did not commence till their city and temple were no more." Well, and what of this? Does it prove that if the captivity continues to this day that the Jews shall again be restored to Palestine? Is this your opinion of the latter part of the passage? Christ says nothing here about a restoration from the "captivity," unless you mean to say that because Jerusalem was trodden down of the Gentiles it necessarily follows that it should be built up again. You can find no argument whatever upon the word "until." But do you not know that the treading down has reference to the end of the Jewish war? that there was a beginning and ending of the destruction of Jerusalem, or the Jewish polity, in accomplishing the predictions delivered by the prophets, and that "when he should have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people," all the things of Daniel's prophecy should be finished? Now what becomes of your fourth or Roman monarchy? Your exposition of xviii. Rev. P of the Man of Sin? What do you think of the scattering the power of Daniel's people? Is it not like the Lord's "leading captive into all nations"? Does Daniel say one word of a return from this scattering? Does Christ? Does any one of the Apostles? How is it that if the Jews are to be restored to Palestine the Apostles forgot to make any mention of that return? They were come to Mount Sion, to the city of the living God, to the heavenly Jerusalem, this we do know; but we know nothing about the rest, not one word. But suppose again I turn round upon you and tell you that the people now called Jews are not captive now in any sense of the word: that in your sense of the word there can be no captivity in rejection; that utter rejection from the Jewish covenant and the very name of Jew, will not agree together; that rejection and utter destruction of the Jewish covenant and privileges at the fall of Jerusalem necessarily involved annihilation of Jewish existence, and that there is no difference, not the shadow of a shade of difference, in the eye of God, between him you now call a Jew and a Hotten toot or a New Hollander. Suppose I tell you that what happened to the Jews at the fall of Jerusalem happened to the ten tribes long before, and that the ten tribes were cut off for the sin of Jeroboam, and God never afterwards saw or acknowledged any the least difference between them and the Gentiles, among whom they were scattered, but that both equally and alike were to hear the preached Gospel; that xi. Rom. (which you might have quoted with more of a show of strength than this passage of Luke,) depends as to its fulfilling limit on the duration of the conditional polity: that this is evident by mention of "faith," and "unbelief," and "ifs"—conditional Church terms all of them, for that these terms should pass away is manifest in that Peter told the Christians of his generation, that shortly, at the end of all things which was then "at hand" they should receive the end of faith, even the salvation of the soul; and that, consequently in that end, "all Israel was saved." Suppose I enter into these things, what sort of an exhibition will you make in a controversy with me? But I take you on your own ground. You are fond of appealing to experience. You tell us that Mr. Stark's next door neighbour is a Jew; ask him if his experience tells him that he is in captivity; if Torquay will not bear a comparison with Jerusalem, or which is the best place for carrying on his business of a jeweller; if he has any notion of emigrating to Palestine; if he ever heard that Hyam and Co. intend to open a shop in Jerusalem; nay, ask yourself if you would exchange your Church prospect for ecclesiastical preferment in the Cathedral they are now building on Mount Sion; ask these things in a spirit of serious inquiry and then we may listen perchance to your next-door-Jew-neighbour arguments, which you say "might convince the most credulous and the most simple of the Salem congregation, with whom assertion is too often suffered to pass for argument"—that is, as far as I can comprehend your meaning, convince them that the Rev. William
Digby, and Hyam and Co., are ready to march at a moment's notice en route to the Holy city. You will excuse me if I refuse to enter any further into this subject with you, as it is so manifestly beyond your comprehension. As far as my experience of self-styled Evangelicals goes, (and I have had too many dealings and too much converse with them,) this subject of the restoration of Israel is to them a "deep Serbonian bog," a very "slough of despond."—"Those times of the Gentiles were to be extended over a cycle of eighteen centuries, and this we know with certainty, if we can know anything with certainty." What proof you have offered for your certainty I cannot possibly discover except it be that Mr. Stark's next door neighbour, Mr. Jacobs, is a Jew, or else that, as you say, "the Mosque of Omar occupies the site of the temple in the Holy city." How holy? have you a reverence for Mahometanism? You reiterate your opinion (for you pretend to no more) about these times of the Gentiles with another attempt at proof, but what proof? That "the 1260 days of Daniel are mystical days, or 1260 years." There may be a difference of opinion here. Are you that same William Digby that had a controversy some years ago with Maitland, respecting these very days of Daniel, and did you not find occasion to repent of and to lament your temerity? You next tell us that Popery has only 75 years to live, "which is precisely (?) the period stated in the Psalm that is read in our burial service (xc.) as the ordinary longest period of human life." Can I avoid asking you how long is it since you read either burial service or Psalm? I can find 70 and 80 years, but no mention of 75 in that Psalm. After this attempt at Scripture comparison what are we to think of the conclusion you build on it, on your 75 years? "It is then not only possible but probable, and not only probable but certain, that some born to witness the beginning of these 75 years days of judgment, shall not taste of death till they see the son of man," &c. This is Pelion on Ossa, and Ossa on Olympus, a triple crown of argument worthy of the infallible Roman Demigod. Then, as a finishing stroke, you tell us of infidelity having "once destroyed its mother and made a league with her again in these days." I suppose you are a witnessto this resurrection, or is it an ecclesiastical bull?

A word or two more and I have done. You say (p. 15), that some of those who were born when the seventh and last trumpet began to sound towards the close of the last century, as you believe, "shall not taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming visibly in his kingdom." Do look again at your "visibly," and then I beseech you, nay, I implore you, for your own sake—for the sake of "a faithful and evangelical ministry"—look at the Bible. Indeed, indeed, you are a wonderfully reasonable being, and a wonderful estimate of the calibre of the "Salem congregation" you must have made. Notwithstanding John writes, when the seventh trumpet shall begin to sound, the mystery of God shall be finished: and the Apostle of the Gentiles saith, "Behold, I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, for the trumpet shall sound," &c., yet it is your opinion that the seventh and last trumpet hath now been sounding through fifty years, and that there are some now standing among the present generation of men who shall not taste of death, "till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom!!!" What conclusion can I or any other reasonable being come to respecting your opinion? Who could blame me if I held up this portion of your friendly appeal to the public by the use of the most cutting satire? What person is there, possessed of a glimmering of common sense, who will now venture to condemn me for saying that I could not undertake to consider how or in what spirit I should answer you, lest the complexion of your appeal should cause me to forfeit my word? I fearlessly affirm that
I stand acquitted with respect to every sentence I have written; and as fearlessly I call for your own grateful thanks, that on this portion of your appeal I am disposed to spare you, and have spared you, by passing by much, very much, that I might have sent forth into the world respecting it. You take occasion to contrast the credulity of the Church of Rome, and the incredulity—as you style it—of "the Salem congregation:" and you say that the incredulity which denies the resurrection of the body hath only "the larger swallow of the two." I am ashamed to transcribe this unbecoming comparison; but I will do no more by way of retort than suggest to you, whether the comparison might not be most apropos to your own opinion of the seventh and last trumpet—acknowledged as it is by you, but I suspect by no other individual. What species of ministerial qualification is this?

The last portion I shall notice is your parody on xviii. Rev. In your observations on Mr. Stark's table of correspondences, which goes to identify mystical Babylon with Jerusalem, you state that the things recorded as found in Babylon—merchandise, precious stones, light of a candle, sound of millstones, &c., might be found at other places as well as at Jerusalem. Look at the table again, I beseech you, and you will find a fact—a most clear and momentous fact, viz., that the blood of the prophets was the most striking feature of its application to the city, "that great city spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified." I suppose you will endeavour, like the commentator Scott, and other Evangelicals, to twist this, so as to persuade the people that Rome was meant, or perhaps "the new town of Torquay, in Devonshire." Now consider, mark, learn, and inwardly digest, how a child would cut you up root and branch, and reduce you to a most deplorable state of helplessness. You say that in Matt. xxiii., Christ was speaking "unquestionably and exclusively of the things that were coming on Jerusalem," and that consequently they did all come to pass on that generation—that is, that "the blood of all the righteous men shed upon the earth," Matt. xxiii., 35, came upon, and was required of, that then existing generation. Well then, if this exclusively belonged to Jerusalem and the Jews; and if at the fall of Babylon, "Apostles and Prophets were to rejoice over her, because God had avenged their blood upon her;" and if in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain on the earth, Rev. xviii., 20, 4; how can a "sane man" apply this to Papal Rome? However in the world could the blood of the prophets be found in papal, yes, or in pagan Rome, when there were no prophets existing to be slain six hundred years before the very name of Pope or Popery was heard of: when there were no prophets remaining to be slain hundreds of years before the fall of the imperial city; and above all, when we have it from the mouth of the faithful and true witness, that it was not possible for a prophet to perish out of Jerusalem, or beyond the day of Jerusalem's final doom? Where now, let me earnestly ask, is the "monstrous absurdity" of Mr. Stark's exposition that you speak of? so monstrous as "not fit to be gravely refuted" by the grave William Digby? Where is it? and what have we to do with Rome's "seven hills?" Do you not know that Lisbon is built on seven hills; and Constantinople too; and that, therefore, as far as this goes, these two cities have as much claim—have as much right of preoccupancy—to xviii. Rev. as Rome? and above all, that if any of the three are the mystical Babylon, we happen to stand in this unfortunate position, that we have no infallible expositor to give us anything like certainty which of the three is the Babylon? But enough of this. Pardon me if I refuse to defile my pages by transcribing your indecent parody. Your identification of Babylon with Torquay is most unhappy for you, as I read nothing in xviii. Rev. of Gas-Lights and Tap-rooms; and, let me say it, nothing in this your friendly appeal to convince...
me that you are a light of any description: you are harmless: you will not lead the most simple astray.

A word or two more, and then I shall have examined every iota of your production, and more, refuted you in the judgment of enemies as well as friends, with respect to every opinion you have advanced. You say—“these things, i.e. that Babylon and Torquay are identical, cannot be disputed.” Now, I would here request your attention to Jer. xxv., 10. No doubt, if you had held ecclesiastical preferment among the Jews living at the time when this prophecy of the seventy years’ captivity was delivered, you would have bearded the prophet, and pronounced oracularly to his face—it may as well mean some other people as the Jews, “for there is mirth and the voice of the bridegroom, and the light of a candle, and the sound of millstones, in other places besides Judea.” (See also Isaiah xxiv., 7-12.) “If any man be contentious in disputing, the fact is at hand to confute him.” (P. 21.) I assure you, I for one will not dispute your facts: they are too wonderful for me: they are of such a nature that it would not in the least surprise me if, some day, you should take it into your head to maintain the startling proposition that the Man in the Moon and the Rev. William Digby, M.A., are one and the same individual.

The last thing that calls for some notice is as follows:—“The great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth is Rome, that both was and is; it can be no other: Jerusalem never was the metropolis of the world in any sense.” Suppose I say this is only your own opinion, and your own experience: both which may be as opposed as possible to the mind of God. What exposition would you give me of these words of Christ, “Ye are the salt of the earth; ye are the light of the world, a city set on a hill cannot be hid”? Who were these? The disciples of Christ only? I say no; because these words were addressed to the multitude, and they were, moreover, no further applicable to the Lord’s disciples at that time than to the rest of their countrymen, as the disciples were not yet qualified for teaching the system of doctrine, known by the name of the Gospel; because, in fact, they did not know it themselves. They had then no notion of a Messiah, but as a temporal prince, to lead them to conquest and empire; a notion which subsequently identified the Jewish apostates with the man of sin opposing and exalting himself above all that was called God, and was the object of adoration; i.e. above the imperial majesty and dignity of Caesar: that is, it was this notion—the denial that Jesus Christ was come in the flesh—the lifting up the eyes to the hills for a fleshly Messiah—it was this notion that filled the minds of Jewish rebels and apostates, with the idea of one day possessing a supereminent jurisdiction over the kings and princes of the earth; and, as before long, I hope to show at some length, it was this notion for which it was said of the mystical Babylon that she was the great city having jurisdiction over the kings of the earth; a notion which interprets (and I am confident nothing else will) the strong language of Daniel in his description of the fourth power, and Paul’s man of sin, and John’s description of the doings of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet.

I have done. For your friendly appeal valeat quantum. I had some thoughts of laying aside altogether what may be considered our own peculiar notions; I thought of giving you the admission that a pretence to the title of a minister of Christ is not an unchristianity; that it is no unchristianity to maintain what I believe to be the shocking notion that this or that individual is the channel of spiritual communications; that it is no un-
christianity to propound as truth an end of this visible system of things; a resurrection of dead bodies; or a literal judgment to eternal torments. I thought of granting you all this, and then appealing to you on your own ground, in the way of this question:—How is it that with Christianity among us we are governed by so many unchristianities; that, for instance, we have numbers of our fellow-subjects starving 30 weeks out of the 52 on third-rate potatoes; hundreds, and hundreds to that, who are said to have immortal souls that know not the very name of christianity—that in this Christian country we have the foul and revolting iniquity of legal murder called hanging; the old Jewish law of an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, instead of the Christian principle of love; and that the clergy, the Christian ministry as they are called, preach up the salutary effects of capital punishment? How is it that there are wars and fightings among us, and that the poor caricature on humanity—a soldier— is more honoured than the schoolmaster; that we have Christian bishops, like the Bishop of Winchester, last year but one, blessing and consecrating and saying prayers to the God of love and peace, over the colours of a regiment of licensed man-slayers? Yes, I thought of appealing to you on these grounds, but space forbids, even supposing I had the inclination. I have done: and let me repeat, for your friendly appeal, valeat quantum. You will forgive me if I pass by your noted and musts and flatly impossibles. These things have no weight with me. You seem to be one of that numerous class of individuals, so accustomed to dictation in their own narrow sphere, as not to be conscious when they are only begging the question, or that any proof on their part is necessary for what they allege; the worst of all classes of character, because the most hopelessof all. I can make no apology; none whatever, if it be said by you, or any other person, that I have been at times unnecessarily severe upon you. I assure you I have forborne much—very much—that I could have inflicted had I given way to my own personal feelings. I have tried hard—very hard—to discuss some portions of your appeal, as though it were capable of discussion. But I could not; and if it could be done otherwise than I have done it, I heartily wish another had attempted it than myself. That other, be he who he may, would have failed. There is—there can be—but one way of dealing with a production like yours. Had you shown any evidence of a mind fitted for receiving or giving instruction—had this friendly appeal borne the marks of a man of any measure of sense and discretion—then none would have been more gratified and obliged, none would have endeavoured a reply in a more courteous spirit than myself, for I am indeed anxious to evince the possession of such spirit whenever opportunity may offer. In your present state of mind and feeling, anything of this sort is thrown away upon you. I leave you. I need not (unless you wish to show yourself to be indeed infatuated) repeat my advice that you meddle no more with “the Congregation of Salem Chapel,” as their views are so manifestly above your capacity to comprehend, and consequently beyond your ability to refute. No; but as you are fond of fulfilling prophecy, I think I may venture upon one which shall be as infallible as any of your own expressed opinions—we shall have no more friendly appeals from the Rev. William Digby.

With my best wishes, I subscribe myself your's obliged

ROBERT TOWNLEY.

LIVERPOOL, FEBRUARY 28, 1846.
NOTE A.

"There may possibly be an intentional ambiguity here, corresponding to the double thread of prophecy which pervades the first part of the chapter, rendering it capable of a twofold application." (Friendly Appeal, page 16.) I knew that my antagonist would have to come, in the end, to the stale and oft exploded theory of modern Christianity. But is not this "intentional ambiguity" a little at variance with the belief of "the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures?" and is it not strange how the Scriptures can be a rule of faith—how they can be so clear that he that runs may read them—for what purpose they could have been given at all—if we have "ambiguities" of this startling character?

The double thread scheme has been amply refuted by one of the most profound Scriptural scholars of the day, Professor Lee, in a work published sixteen years ago. I shall content myself with transcribing a portion of his remarks. Having examined all the most difficult portions of prophecy with this object of a "double thread" in view, he says—There can never be any necessity of having recourse to a double sense. The rule here urged in favour of a single interpretation of prophecy ought also to be extended to the historical accounts of the Scriptures. It has been a practice, and still is, to take the liberation from Egypt, or Babylon, as typical of the Christian life, &c., while, in fact, they were events brought about solely for the furtherance of God's purposes—for the fulfilment of certain prophecies, or to illustrate his dealings with his church. When these are cited, divided and subdivided, and particular doctrines elicited, just as if this contained under its primary meaning another still more recondite and mystical, corresponding in all its parts with the more sublime declarations of the Gospel, I must object, &c." (Diss. page 280.) On this point I need say no more. See an illustration of these remarks in Evans's Sketch of all Religions: sects—Jumpers and Shakers. When my argument on Scripture interpretation can be refuted, it will be time enough to talk about double threads.

On "intentional ambiguity" I would submit the following from the same author (Lee). "The character of imposture has ever been to be dark, mysterious and double-tongued. Such were the celebrated oracles of old. They spoke, but they spoke not to be understood until the event should be fulfilled: and then, which way soever things went, the prediction was found sufficiently plant to conform with them. It is, indeed, grievous to hear persons among ourselves often talking about unfulfilled prophecy, as if this was the case with the sacred writers, when, in fact, a want of knowledge must lie at the bottom of all such notions. Another evil resulting from this indefinite view of prophecy is—it opens the flood-gates to every species of fraud and mysticism." (Page 224.) See also my tract on Gibbon, especially the quotations from Bishop Newton and Dr. Benson.

NOTE B.

The following was delivered by the Rev. Peter Hall, one of the Speakers of the Reformation Society, at a meeting held in Exeter, and reported in the Western Times, February 7, 1846:—

"The next point is Apostolical Succession. The position asserted is, that the right of ministration appertains by descent to the Bishops and Clergy ordained by them as successors of the Apostles; and that apart from that succession there can be no Sacrament and no Church. 'If there were always Bishops, was there not always a succession?' I cannot say: apparently there were always Bishops. But all Bishops were not Diocesans: they were not always endued with the same authority or the same office. The character varied exceedingly in different ages of the Church. But I suppose there were always Bishops, because I can never open a volume of ecclesiastical history without reading something about them. Possibly there may have been always a succession, though no one has ever been able to show us a succession. But it must have come to us..."
through the Church of Rome: those who took it from Rome were Reformers, and whatever they had got from Rome, Rome took away from them. Moreover, the Catholics have a doctrine of INTENTION; they hold that to make a sacrament complete, there must be an intention to exercise the priestly power; consequently no Catholic couple know whether they are actually married,—no man knows whether he is actually baptised,—still less, does any Priest or any Bishop know whether he has been actually ordained; for who can be sure of the secret intentions of the person who consecrates?

This extract may serve to show that there can be no Apostolic succession. Then on what grounds and in what way does Mr. Digby consider himself called on "to RULE as the evangelical and faithful ministers and elders?" (p. 10.) It is written, "Obey them that have the rule over you—whose faith follow." It would be a difficult matter to determine what faith of the present rulers it would be right to follow, since there is such a division among the rulers themselves,—a hundred discordant creeds crying out, "We are of God: the temple of the Lord are we." It will not do for Mr. Digby nor any other person to talk about "the operations of the Holy Spirit in the heart," of "spiritual experiences," "internal calls," or of "extraordinary visions and revelations," as substitutes for miraculous powers.

A perusal of the Exeter newspapers sent to him would inform him that on these points "the disgusting vagaries of Johanna Southcott, the wild ravings of Richard Brothers, or the dreaming rhapsodies of Emmanuel Swedenborg, are as convincing as the solemn asseverations of John Wesley, the fiery exclamations of George Whitfield," or the friendly appeals of William Digby.

While writing the above I received a sort of second edition of the Friendly Appeal, in which I find the following:—"N.B. On looking into the Greek Testament (!) I find that the word in Matt. xxiv. 34, is not autē without the aspirate, but haute with the aspirate, which is of course the nominative to tautein, and like it signifies this. I have here, therefore, to acknowledge an oversight." My remarks were in print before this arrived: but supposing they had not been, I should not have altered them. I am sorry, for Mr. Digby's own sake, that he could not "let bad alone." His appeal has been printed in haste; it will have to be repented of at leisure. My remarks will go to show, that aspirate or no aspirate, the case is not remedied—(see Matt. xii. 41, 2, in the original): nay, he shows it himself. Having made certain useless observations on the Greek MSS. he observes, "but indeed, even were the generally received reading (!) haute, that (!) to be retained, it does not exclude us from affixing the meaning to it of a generation of a latter day: required as I have shown (!) by the context. An example of the same kind occurs in Luke xvii. 34, taute te nuktī, 'in this night,' rendered, however, in our version, 'in that night,' viz., of his coming: with reference to the necessary requirements of the context." Will any one tell me what is the object of all this parade of learning? If our translators have rendered indifferently "this" or "that," what is Mr. Digby contending for with his "aspirate and no aspirate?" And what night? What context? "In that night two men shall be in one bed: two women grinding together: two men in the field: the one shall be taken and the other left." This is paralleled in xxiv. Matt.: in the context which we are told requires a generation of a later day; what coming is it? At the end of the world? But how can one man be left in his bed: one woman at her mill: one man in the field, when at this coming end of the world all the fields and mills and beds in Creation shall disappear "like the baseless fabric of a vision, and leave not a wreck behind?" I must most earnestly beg to be excused, in future, the consideration of any further evidence of this sort of "a watching for souls as one that must give account." The acknowledgment of an oversight of this fearful description, attended as it is, with fearful denunciations on those who never thought it possible to commit the oversight, is rather too much, when connected with a pretence to RULE as an elder "whose faith follow."

I may here state that I can learn nothing of Mr. Digby beyond that he is a clergyman of the Establishment—that he is said to be an Irishman, or from the sister country—that he has been holding forth at Trinity Church, Torquay,—and that he is mentioned in the Torquay Directory as an Archdeacon residing at Lucerne. He may or may not be an archdeacon—this I have no means of ascertaining. At all events, he either does or did hold ecclesiastical preferment of some sort; and ought to have acknowledged this FACT, in justice towards his opponents.

I see also that in this second edition there is something additional about FACTS: the word "fact" occurs half a dozen times in a few lines. I have said it: I will not dispute my assailant's facts. *Nihil tetigit quod non ornavit.*
NOTE C.

"Here then, again—as has often been remarked concerning the vagaries of human opinion—extremes meet." (Friendly Appeal, p. 11.) And again: "Thus the two extremes of credulity and incredulity meet together." (Ibid p. 21.)

Very true: extremes do meet, and we need not travel out of the pages of the friendly appeal to witness the junction. William Digby and Robert Taylor are agreed in their conclusions respecting the date of John's Epistles. It is not a little singular that this Robert Taylor, the most furious infidel of his day, should have taken his most serious objection against the truth of the Scriptures, from the very fact that John asserted that the last time was come when he existed, which he says is proved to be false, by the general expectation of the second coming of Christ, which is now encouraged by those who manufacture creeds with a facility equal to their having obtained patents for so doing. In his Diegesis, p. 105, he accuses the Apostle of gross duplicity and falsehood, and says in reference to the words "Little children it is the last hour," here is a full confession of the modern date and character of this Epistle:—1st, The time which could be spoken of as the last, with relation to Christianity, could not last at least have been late, and late enough to have given the persons so addressed time to have heard of the prophecy that Antichrist should come; and 2nd, to have had faith in it, and expectation of its accomplishment beforehand; 3rd, and if the time when this Epistle was written was the last of Christianity, there can have been no Christianity in the world since then: and lastly, if then, while the Apostle was living, Antichrist was come, and it was the last time, the Christ whom John intended to preach must have been much earlier in the world than that time." And I here say, that if the Son of God did not then come, Robert Taylor is right; but every page of the Bible testifies to me, loud as a trumpet with a silver sound, that he did come, and therefore the poor, bewildered, yet clever sceptic, Robert Taylor, is wrong.

Let me here glance at another assertion which I find in the friendly appeal. "The Lord shall come not in a figurative way, but in person, when every eye shall see him," (p. 5). Now mark:—"Every eye is to see him at his coming." Every eye means the eyes of every man, woman, and child, who have ever existed. Now let the cavillers look the matter full in the face! Paul says, the Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God. This is what is yet to come say our opponents,—and it is then that every eye shall see him. But what saith Paul?—"The dead in Christ shall rise first." 1 Thes. 4, 16. And how is this corroborated by John, Rev xx., "I saw the souls of them which were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years; but the rest of the dead lived not again till the thousand years were finished?" How then can every eye see him, supposing his final coming has not taken place, since there are eyes which are not to be opened from the sleep of death till he shall have lived and reigned with his saints a thousand years? Come forth Hierarchs and Sectarians and solve the mystery which your inventions have created."—Devonshire Chronicle, Nov. 3, 1840. Did Mr. Digby read this?
BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

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