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TORQUAY:
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THE FORCE
OF THE
CHRONOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION
OF PROPHECY.

To assert weakness as a feature of any set of historical facts, seems to convey the implication that the supposed facts are not real, and that the things generally regarded as facts are in reality fictions. For the same fact whose existence is in question, cannot at the same time be true and untrue. If true, mere weakness of surrounding incidents or associations will not make it untrue; neither will it become true by any mere surroundings if it is in reality untrue. The truth or falsehood, that is, the reality or unreality of any fact is to be established to our minds by evidence. Evidence does not make it true. Its function is to exhibit or prove what is true to the conception of any one examining into the verity of the fact or facts which may be in question. Hence, it is evident that weakness may be the characteristic not of the fact itself, but of the mere adventitious circumstances by which the reality of its existence is conveyed to the mind of the inquirer; or it may be that the inquirer himself is incompetent to recognise a fact, or to comprehend the external circumstances commonly called evidence, by which the existence of a fact may be surrounded. Farther, although the existence of a fact, or set of facts may, from assignable causes, be difficult to establish, the fact may be, notwithstanding, real and indistructable as truth itself. This must especially be the case with facts which do not fall within the sphere of one's own personal
observation; and even when it does so it by no means follows that what evidence is sufficient to demonstrate to one's own mind where personal observation is employed, would be sufficient to prove the truth of any fact to another mind not similarly circumstanced. And hence, weakness might arise without in the smallest degree being an adjunct of the fact in question. That many actions were performed, that many facts had a real and therefore a proveable existence in past times, of which there is now no record, and of the existence of which, therefore, no evidence can be produced, is too self-evident to need proof. The weakness of their surroundings cannot alter facts or make that untrue which was true. Fact is independent of the inquirer, just as the truth which any fact conveys, is separate and distinct from the mind which educes it. Hence, facts may be real, but entirely free from or even antagonistic to the deductions which have, or may be, drawn from them, and it is simply absurd on the detection of false conclusions, to argue that the premises are therefore false, or that the premises are untrue because unsound conclusions have been deduced.

Yet this is the mode of reasoning adopted by the writer of a pamphlet recently published, entitled "The Chronological Weakness of Prophetic Interpretation." The writer states (p. 3), that he had some years before attempted to find "a nearly contemporaneous fulfilment of the prophetical sayings of Christ," and had "interpreted them generally of the destruction of Jerusalem, and the subsequent establishment of Christianity. This theory" (he continues) "he had been compelled on more mature consideration to abandon." He is hence "no longer able to relieve the sacred historians from the charge

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of error when they asserted in their honest ignorance the end of all things to be imminent in their own time." Now, does it fairly follow, that because this author has felt himself constrained to abandon his "theory" that the sacred historians are liable to the "charge of error"? If he now pro-
pounds a correct "theory" in opposition to his former one, the admission confesses to an "error" on his part, either in his present or his former "theory," if not in both. For, if in the former, why not in the latter also? Does he now possess any immi-
nity from "error," not possessed before? Change of opinion, i.e., change of "theory," may indicate nothing more than vacillation resulting from an im-
perfect or incomplete view of his subject. It may be honest as far it goes, but inasmuch as its scope is
everous, and its effects, if real, stupendous, the change on this subject ought to be urged with be-
coming modesty, and expressed with intelligent reserve. To charge the sacred historians with "error," and with ignorance, even though "honest ignorance," implies the possession of conceptions other than modest, and demands evidence in its sup-
port of a maturity of consideration and fulness of knowledge, of which this pamphlet furnishes no ex-
ample. If "the sacred historians" were in "error" on the special subjects referred to in this pamphlet, it its prima facie probable that the "error" extended to other points of doctrine, and to other facts. Is our author prepared for such a sweeping conclusion? If he is, why not frankly avow that the whole Christian system is "a cunningly devised fable," based on "error," and propagated in "honest ignorance"? Or if they were not in "error" on other points of doctrine, and other facts, it is, at least, probable they were free from the alleged "error" in the former—our author's "more mature considera-
tion notwithsanding. This is at the least probable: a probability in no way affected by the confessed change in our author's opinions regarding the sacred historians; or, if affected by it, the probability that he is in error is only strengthened by the change, and the readiness with which it has been brought about.

But this is not all he has thought it necessary to assert as the result of "more mature consideration." He states (p. 55), "Whilst with all sincerity and earnestness, we would vindicate the character of Jesus from the charge of wilful imposture, we are, at the same time, of opinion that the mistakes of that early period are not altogether due to the misconceptions of his followers . . . . . . the probability may be inferred that he was the author of them." That is: that he (Jesus) was the author of the mistakes of "that early period"! He also states in this connection—"Far be it, however, from us to charge Jesus with an intention to deceive." But his "more mature consideration" having led him to abandon the theory he had formerly propounded, viz., "that most universally expressed and scriptural truth, that our Lord came, as he said, to destroy Jerusalem and close the dispensation," he now states—"not even to shield our Master can we consent to eliminate the eschatological element from the teaching of Jesus, without a conviction that we should be guilty of taking away the pith and marrow of its distinctive doctrines." He hence discards as improbable and worthless "the conjecture that the disciples could have mistaken their Master's meaning . . . . and, he continues, we prefer to think as more respectful to him as well as to them, that there may have been questions upon which even he, all full of love and goodness, may have entertained opinions common to his age and country." "It appears improbable that
the disciples could have persisted in announcing an event of such a stupendous character as the return of their Master to judge the quick and the dead, except on the authority of Christ himself." That is, as it appears, because he now finds it "difficult to conceive" that his former "theory" is true, he arrives at the conclusion, not only that the sacred historians are chargeable with error, but that they made their announcements in propagating error at the cost of their lives, "on the authority of Christ himself."

This is the conclusion deliberately written and published by "A Beneficed Clergyman of the Church of England." The unfitness of a clergyman of any Christian Church deliberately arguing under the guise of a love of truth, that the Author of Christianity was the Author of errors of fact, which were propagated by his disciples and recorded by the sacred historians, does not seem to have presented itself to this holder of a benefice in the Church of England. The tremendous consequences to mankind involved in the question—What is truth? are alleged as the reason for him writing a deliberate attack on the dignity and veracity of Him who claimed to be "The Truth"; but does not seem to have suggested the practical conclusion of giving up the position of "a beneficed clergyman,"—the position of one sworn in the most solemn form of obligation to defend and propagate what he here pronounces false and untenable, and with respect to which he cannot shield his Master from the alleged authorship of falsehood! When Christians learn to recognise it as truth that the religion of Jesus depends not on the advocacy of men, and that it is above the attacks of its enemies, whether covert or open, they will not be disquieted by such assaults.

Fifteen years ago, a work was published, appa-
ently by this same clergyman—a work of great talent and power, though not uniformly consistent in its reasoning, the theory of which was that “Our Lord came, as he said, to destroy Jerusalem, and to close the dispensation, and gather in the elect at the same period.” And this work remains unanswered to the present day. That work bears the author’s name; this pamphlet does not. The identity of authorship appears from internal evidence to be sufficiently clear. The self-contradiction without the candour of formal refutation, is more than sufficiently painful. And without the remotest desire on the part of the present writer to say or write an offensive word, shows most palpably how utterly incapable the author really is to deal with the subject he has undertaken to write upon. Talent and learning are high gifts prostituted when employed without the mental equilibrium necessary to their wholesome use. The first work was thought by its author to merit one of the highest appointments in his Church. It brought upon him neglect, opposition, and suspicion from those who had the power to give its author preferment. Is it possible the author could have understood what he had written, and entertain such vain expectations? He had propounded a doctrine, which rightly and logically understood, defined the termination of all priesthood, the cessation of all spiritual gifts, and of all ecclesiastical authority; but his work should have raised him to a high place in ecclesiastical dominion! His book demonstrated a doctrine which proclaimed every Christian a priest, who, in virtue of his commonwealth rights, had the privilege of himself presenting his spiritual sacrifices before God, and he hoped for a Bishopric! The righteousness of Christ, not the clothing of Lawn, is the adornment of all the members of the family of God made righteous and clean in the Blood of the
Lamb once slain, and by the perfection of the sacrifice of the Lamb slain once for all were delivered from the bondage of priest, of ceremonial, and of ecclesiastical rule, and therefore he hoped to be made a lord over God's heritage! The children of the world are wise in their generation. Sad and bitter disappointment—penalties, not promotion, rewarded his labours. And now, "more mature consideration compels him to abandon his theory"! In isolation, in neglect, in bitterness, but without self-knowledge, unchastened by the past,—too wise to be instructed, too self-sufficient to be silent, he again enters the arena of conflict, to unsay what he had said, but apparently without the courage deliberately to attempt to refute that which is irrefutable, except by striving to dispoil the foundation of all truth, pull down her temple, and cast athwart the universe of human faith in sacred and divine things, the pall of moral death and of loathsome corruption.

Had the author of this covert attack on the foundations of Christianity confined himself to a refutation of false theories of interpretation,—theories stricken with "weakness," because false, as in his former work, much he has written, even in this one, would have been well said; if he had confined his allegations of "Chronological weakness" to such imaginative interpreters as Mede, Elliott, Cumming, Irving, and their legions of followers, he would have placed his foot on solid ground and might have defied attack. But, with such a course, he has not been content. Following the new forms of old error, he has preferred to join that company of churchmen of which Gibbon, Colenso, and certain Essayists can be recognised as his companions, and whose inquiries tend much more to sap and overturn the foundations of christian belief than to remove the accumulated crusts of learned lumber by which they have been
surrounded, their character obscured, and their beauty marred.

It is impossible to think that the language of the New Testament, although unfolding a spiritual order of things, is otherwise than plain and intelligible to the understanding of the "common people," to whom the bulk of mankind belong. That the language made use of referred to such events as were transpiring in the Apostles' days, and was intended to teach the near approach of the Kingdom of Heaven, and the establishment of a new and more transcendentally glorious order of things than then existed, must be clear to every reader of the New Testament, who is uninfused by a desire to be wise above, or in opposition to what is written. A "Beneficed Clergyman" admits this; but instead of expounding the nature of that state then to be unfolded, he ignores its character entirely, and argues that the events which really did occur did not correspond with the expectations which were entertained by the Apostles and their followers, and which if not originated by Christ himself, were, at least, taught by him. By all the teachings of the New Testament writings Christ was the author, the fountain, the foundation of Christianity. He claimed to speak with "authority" (John xiv. 24.), as is manifest throughout all His teaching. And although He constantly asserted the derivation of his authority, as well as his power to teach, from the Father of all men, he claimed, nevertheless, to hold a position of equality with Him. (John x. 30). His position as a messenger, servant, and son, rendered it necessary that He should perform the works which appertained to these conditions, possess the qualifications in their limitations no less than in their extension, peculiar to these states, and utter no knowledge inconsistent with them. Adaptation and progress were therefore
ever present incidents of His position. Possessing "All Power," All Knowledge, All Wisdom, and being the fountain of All Blessing, He, nevertheless, as a servant, manifested the wisdom of His condition in His actions, and notably in His teaching. In a marked degree this was so in the instructions He imparted to His disciples with respect to the time when the events He announced should take place. Many good reasons, suggested by the events and conditions of the time, might be adduced to show why "the times and the seasons" should be officially unknown to Him (Matt. xxiv. 36), and yet that that fact should not exclude Him from solemnly declaring, as He did, that "that generation should not pass away, till all these things" (the things of which He had been speaking) "should be fulfilled" (ver. 34), or that some were then actually listening to His discourse who "should not taste of death, till they should see the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom" (Matt. xvi. 28). To assign such reasons, however, is here unnecessary, if it be only admitted that our Lord was in reality Divinity in human form. And if "a Beneficed Clergyman" does not admit this, as indeed his style of reasoning makes doubtful, he must be argued with from a different point of view, and on entirely different principles from one who still calls Jesus "Our Lord,"—in words, acknowledging Him even while he is denying the correctness of His doctrine, and the truth of the facts on which it is built. He must not feel surprise that his professions are thus contrasted with the scope, yea, the direct assertions of his writings. He must indeed be a bold man, and with-all, a wise, who can accuse the "Son of God" with the authorship and the propagation of "error." There must be some means of arriving at first principles on which to reason, and by which to test, those covert onslaughts made by men from whose position
and antecedents, other things were naturally to have been expected. Scepticism must be a state of terrible negation, without light, without vitality; cold, blanched, and sickly; void of sympathy, emotion, or the life of truth. With such a state of mind there is no reasoning. Arguments are wasted and valueless where no power exists to comprehend them. May God grant that "A Beneficed Clergyman" has not crossed the river of death to wander in a region of sterility and gloom.

With the aim of this writer to shew the untenability of certain Advent Theories, which allege a *still future* fulfilment of the predictions of our Lord and His Apostles, we have no quarrel. That our Lord meant to convey the idea that the Son of Man should come in the clouds of heaven within the then existing generation; that within the lifetime of some of those He personally addressed, the whole state should be changed; and that during that time a new and better and higher state of things should be established, not in heaven, but on earth, is fully and joyfully admitted. But that the event did not correspond to the expectation, or rather did not correspond with the teaching of our Lord and his Apostles, is most explicitly denied. He states:—"We shall endeavour to show from the writings of the New Testament that the coming of the Son of Man in the clouds of heaven was an event expected, *although not realised* within the limits of the existing generation, &c." (p. 10). Here we join issue. We are agreed as to the limited period within which was to be realized the Coming of the Son of Man: we are nor agreed that this was not realized.

As these pages may fall into the hands of those who still expect a *future Coming of the Son of Man*, it may be well to refer to the language of the New Testament respecting this Coming and its period. It
is but repeating the line of argument pursued by "A Beneficed Clergyman," so far as we are agreed to quote the texts he refers to.

The fountain head from whence flows all New Testament teaching on this subject is undoubtedly our Lord's discourse as recorded in Matt. xxiv., xxv. chap. with which Mark xiii. and Luke xxi. chaps. are parallel, and teach substantially the same doctrine, based upon the same facts, and surrounded by the same circumstances and signs. The question put to our Lord by the four disciples who sat by him on the Mount of Olives, over against the Temple, was one which chiefly related to time—to the time of His coming again to destroy Jerusalem and establish the Kingdom of God. "Tell us when shall these things be, and what the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the age." (Matt. xxiv. 3; Mark xiii. 3-4.) However numerous the events included in these questions, they hang entirely together in the minds of the interrogators. And based upon the destruction of "these stones and buildings," comprising the Temple in Jerusalem, the connected idea of time runs through the whole of our Lord's reply. Further, although the series of events was progressive and continuous, no indication whatever is given of protracted or disjointed periods, or of indefinitely extended intervals. The very opposite is patent in every line of our Lord's reply to the question. His warning and instruction conveyed in the reply was:— "Take heed that no man deceive you, for many shall come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and shall deceive many." Wars, with their usual accompaniments, famine, pestilences, and even earthquakes, should distinctly mark that time. These were but the beginning of sorrows; but when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, then let them
that be in Judea flee into the mountains . . . . . . for then shall be tribulation such as was not from the beginning of the world to this time; no, nor ever shall be. And except those days be shortened there should no flesh be saved. Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened . . . . . . and then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven; and then shall the tribes of the land mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, &c. "When the branch of "the fig tree is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh, so likewise ye, when ye shall see these things know that it (he) is near, even at the doors, verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away till all these things be fulfilled." The language here quoted from Matthew's Gospel is found with only slight shades of variation in the Gospels of Mark and Luke, and in all the time is marked by the same signs of indentity. Luke states:—"These be the days of vengeance that all things that are written may be fulfilled," and in common with Matthew and Mark, asserts unequivocally, that "this generation shall not pass away till all be fulfilled." (Luke xxi. 32). In the words of "A Beneficed Clergyman," "We are persuaded that it is simply impossible for an unprejudiced and honest inquirer who reads his New Testament with a view of finding out the truth, and not for the sake of a foregone conclusion, to avoid the force of these "whens" and "thens," or to escape the conclusion that Jesus was giving directions for an immediate and not for a far distant emergency." The various signs alluded to as the characteristic of that time, and as the special features which were to accompany the coming of the Son of Man, all received their fulfilment within the time stated, as may
be gathered from Josephus and his contemporary historians. Moreover, the whole of the New Testament writers in their allusions, and arguments, and illustrations, confirm the conclusion that all received a strict fulfilment, or what some would call "a literal fulfilment," within the time appointed. But our author, admitting all this, says, "the event of the Advent itself never came." (p. 15).

With much minuteness of detail, he confirms the acknowledgment of the facts, that all the signs, all the sufferings, all the historical occurrences, all, in fact, but the one fact which these things were intended to demonstrate, "The Coming of the Son of Man in the clouds of heaven,"—"the event itself never came." In the face of such testimony any "unprejudiced and honest inquirer who reads his New Testament with a view of finding out the truth, and not for the sake of maintaining a foregone conclusion, would most naturally arrive at the conclusion that the event in question must also have taken place." In reaching this conclusion, he would, in all fairness, discuss the nature of the event, and also the demonstrative power which the event itself possessed to exhibit the various features predicted of it by the different sacred writers who allude to it or describe it. He would find, along with many others, this characteristic in the record of Matthew itself: "As the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be." Can any honest inquirer say that this did not take place? To say so, and at the same time admitting that all the other facts were accomplished, while claiming a power of discrimination by no means indisputably present, were to indulge in a capriciousness of exegetical demand which seems to dethrone reason and honest inquiry, to "maintain a foregone conclusion." The momentary existence of
the lightning's flash might be denied on the ground of any one of the thousand and one defects which ever accompany human observation. But the tree riven and blasted, the heath scorched and charred, the desolated city, or the blackened masses of poor humanity struck down in its course, mutilated and deformed, demonstrate the presence of the momentary lightning in its terrible power, and it was said "so shall also the Coming of the Son of Man be." And do not the facts, necessarily coincident, which our author admits did take place, sufficiently evidence the existence of this one event, this one sign! Were the tribes of the land made to "mourn," and yet the power which inflicted the mourning be absent? Have we arrived at this perfection of reasoning that an effect of so stupendous a character had occurred without a cause, or that the cause, being present in power, produced not the effect predicted of it. To call this reasoning were trifling with language, and those vast things which language expresses,—an attempt to extinguish a conflagration by producing smoke. Does our author call his an honest conclusion from such premises? Is it not rather the perfection of disingenuous folly, requiring an immeasurable amount of credulity to believe it possible to palm that off as an honest argument, which, though consistent with sceptism, is quite inconsistent with sanity! No one knows better than the author of this pamphlet that he is construing the hyperbolical language of the East, and that, too, with a strictness which allows nothing for the difference between the idiom of the Eastern and Western hemispheres. Well, be it so, and use the same rule throughout. The prediction says,—"The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heaven shall be shaken, and
then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven.” Did this sign take place with the others, or was there a failure of the signs as well as the thing signified? What sign was this? Was all this literally fulfilled? Literally fulfilled, and yet “the recorded prophecy was true only in part, and failed at the crisis to which the foregoing signs had seemed to direct attention.” Is this writer so credulously foolhardy as to believe that “honest inquirers” can allow their faith to be overturned by his mere assertion, that “the event itself never came.” How much more like the truth to believe that, although it came, he had no eyes to see it! Yet this would in no way affect its truth. The inability he now evinces to perceive a spiritual fact in the midst of externally demonstrative evidence of the presence of that fact, shews nothing so clearly as the absence of anything spiritual in his conceptions, and a total forgetfulness of the language of our Lord Himself: “the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life” (John vi. 63). “Weakness” in this respect is sadly compatible with the omnipotent strength of Divine Truth, and with the fact that it is “the spirit not the letter” which distinguishes New Testament doctrine and fact on this as on other points.

“For the Son of Man shall come” (i.e., is a-coming) “in the glory of the Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. Verily, I say unto you, there be some standing here, who shall not taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom” (Matt. xvi. 27, 28). “Thou hast said: nevertheless, I say unto you, hereafter” (i.e., from just now) “shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven” (Matt. xxvi. 63, 64). “Verily I say unto you, ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of Man be
come" (Matt. x. 23). Our "Beneficed Clergyman" having quoted and commented on such passages as these, proceeds (p. 20), "No man with a reputation for scholarship will be found daring enough to explain away the sense of nearness implied in the terms 'from just now,' 'from the now'; or to deny that according to the common acceptation of the words the Advent was to be seen by those whom Jesus addressed. It is not, however, with feelings of exultation, but, on the contrary, with sorrow, that we call the reader's attention to the fact (?), that this expectation of an immediate Advent was not verified by the event . . . . . . It is plain, then, that we must make our choice between two alternatives . . . . . . either our Lord Himself was in error, or that the latter-day anticipations recorded in the Gospels did not proceed from him." May there not be another fact involved in the alternative, viz., that "A Beneficed Clergyman" is "in error," and therefore unfitted to reason on such facts as the Gospel records? Does he call himself a minister of Him whom on the most fundamental fact of the whole Christian system, he says "was in error,"—a fundamental fact, which, if impeached, the whole Christian system is open to impeachment! In error, yet he retains his benefice! In error, yet eating the bread of a church which boasts herself the depository and champion of the truth, and writes "with sorrow" to proclaim the falsehood,—the error of Him "who laid down his life and took it again," who died and rose again from the dead, that his people might have life,—might have that "immortality" of which He is the author, who is "the King eternal, immortal and invisible, the only wise God" (1 Tim. i. 17). He is "in error," because, though everything else he said, or promised, had been fulfilled and accomplished, "as he said," except the "Advent," it was not verified by the event! What
can this man's conception of Truth be? And what can he think of the Author of truth; yea, truth's Embodiment? And yet he retains his benefice! For what purpose? O poor, poor, humanity. How deep her debasement! how boundless her pride! how impious her presumption. May the God of truth and love grant to ignorance the small virtue of silence. It cannot be with the God of Truth this "clergyman" is dealing, nor can "the Truth of God" be in any respect under his care. He is doing his poor best to sap its foundations, and overturn the faith, leaving the weary, the ignorant, and the timid to tread a path which he brands as falsehood, which he affirms is built on "error" and which appeals to facts which he says never occurred! No. Thank God, Truth was not confided to his keeping, nor is its truthfulness in the slightest degree affected by his assaults or his sorrow!

But he proceeds in his second section, p. 21, to argue the unity of the texts which connect the coming of Christ with the destruction of Jerusalem—the identity of the time of these two events, although the events themselves were not identical.

In this place the following texts are worthy of being kept in mind, being those referred to by our author in his remarks in this section. "When he (Jesus) was demanded of the Pharisees, when the Kingdom of God should come, he answered and said, The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation. Neither shall they say, lo, here, or lo, there! for the Kingdom of God is within you. And unto the disciples he said, the days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and ye shall not see it. . . . . For as the lightning that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Coming of the Son of Man be in his day." (Luke, xxii. 20-37).
"Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes; and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them ye shall scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city. That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth. . . . Verily, I say unto you, all these things shall come upon this generation," &c., (Matth. xxiii., 34-36). "St. Paul, equally with his Master, connects the Advent with the calamities about to come upon the Jewish people."

"Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you, and to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, &c." (2 Thess. i., 6-10). In Acts xviii., 5-10, it is clear that it was the Jews then living who troubled the Christians of Thessalonica, and it was with a special reference to them that the Apostle wrote—"Yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and Safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape" &c., (1 Thess. v., 1-5). The reference is made here, not to a distant period, but to the existing Jews, "who both killed the Lord Jesus, and persecuted us . . . to fill up their sins alway; for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost" (1 Thess. ii. 14-16), that the suffering saints might take courage and look to the promised rest when their adversaries should be destroyed at the Advent of Christ. The same connection between the Advent and the punishment of the Jewish nation is kept in view by St. James, whose letter is addressed to "the Twelve tribes," "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come (i.e., are coming) upon you . . . ye have heaped up treasure together for the last days . . . ,
ye have condemned and killed the just (one) and he doth not resist you, Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the Coming of the Lord . . . for the Coming of the Lord draweth nigh," (James v. 1-9). It is manifest that these warnings and encouragements had reference to the same events, to the consolations and deliverance to be experienced by the then living saints, from those that "troubled them" at the period of the destruction of Jerusalem, in James' day so near at hand, as that he could say, "the Judge standeth before the door." The limit of all this was the destruction of Jerusalem.

What did the destruction of Jerusalem mean? What does it still teach? Jerusalem was the city in which had been built the Temple dedicated to the worship of Jehovah. In it He had condescended to manifest His Presence by emblems palpable to the eye of the authorized priest, who was officially the direct and appointed intermediary between God and that people. It was not permitted that the people should build other temples or have other priests. The appointed ordinances of worship required that all the males of the nation should go to this temple three times in each year, or oftener, to worship Jehovah, from all parts of the country, and from all other countries into which Jews had travelled. The forms of worship were sentient and symbolical, ritualistic with recondite meaning. The government of the state was Theocratic, that is, every part was administered by Divine Rule, operating directly through divinely authorized and appointed administrators. It was also national—because it recognised the people as a special and peculiar, and sacred people, whose national existence depended upon the national observance of ordinances of divine appointment, intended to pourtray in action the doctrine of the expectation of a Messiah, a Deliverer and Saviour.
This state was not only thus established by direct divine interposition, but by the most marked and palpable evidence of this divine sanction. It is clear, therefore, that a politico-religious state so authorized, and so established, represented Divine Rule Government and Power Embodied. And so long as it continued, it was an Established Institution based upon a Divine Foundation, and sustained by the Power which instituted it. But in its essential character and relations, it was not permanent, because adumbrative. It was merely a temporary state, serving only initiatory purposes, although the bulk of its priests and people, misconceiving its character, regarded it as permanent and expansive, if not also aggressive. It had been established by the most plain and palpable miraculous evidences of Divine interposition, and clearly was entitled to retain its position and privileges, so far as divine sanction was concerned, until a power equal to that by which it was established, appeared to set it aside. The change involved in overturning the then existing order of things, was variously understood. By the mere Jew, the existing order was understood to mean a politico-religious system of universal dominion and conquest, giving to the Hebrew race a supremacy and universality, which up to the time of this change, had been enjoyed only in the land of Palestine, in a miniature or typical degree. Others emanating from the Jewish stock, and having a clearer perception of its real though recondite character, and which for the sake of brevity and distinctness we call Christian, regarded the contemplated change as of a religious character, involving a change of the law, the priesthood, the forms of worship—the whole worshipping relations and national character—in a word, of the whole state: and this accomplished by the exercise of Divine Power, in the establishment and mainten-
ance of the New Order of Things, independently of any power whatever possessed by or supposed to be inherent in the Old State. A change of so vast and extensive a character effected by Divine Power, effectually superseding the former establishment, and setting up a new order of things, which claimed by its intrinsic merits and position to be superior to that which it superseded, more manifestly divine in its origin, more extensive in its sphere, and more permanent in its character. The very fundamental existence of the new state depended upon the supersession of the old, and the consequent destruction of all the prominent features of its character. But the new state was one of peace. It was not political, or even politico-religious. Its ministers were not statesmen or soldiers, but men of peace, without worldly influence, riches, or power. They could suffer and rejoice in the midst of affliction, but they could not use the sword. Their mission was to pull down and overturn a politico-religious state, with its consecrated priests, its magistrates, and all its physical and established power. But it was by Argument, by Doctrine, by the use of a Power which did not in its administration recognise the sword of the magistrate. Using human instrumentality, it nevertheless did so only in such a way as to show the utter impotency and the needlessness of such instrumentality, in a work of so purely spiritual a character as that they were engaged in. Their war was not with "flesh and blood," but against "principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of that age, against spiritual wickedness in high places." The measure of their power was their ability to succeed. They did succeed in indoctrinating the minds of men of all classes and ages with the New Truths, or rather with the new views of the truths conceived of old by prophet, and by seer, and ex-
amplified by king and priest. But their success was necessarily incomplete, until the physical or carnal elements of that state religion embodied in the Temple and its Worship, were destroyed. And this they freely and openly avowed, was the evidence—the crowning evidence, which established the reality of the divine power by which they acted, and through the direct intervention of which their success in the face of such obstacles was achieved. The destruction of Jerusalem was therefore not the destruction of a city merely, it was the final desolation of that which had been “the City of God,” not merely the overturning of the place where the visible emblems of Jehovah had dwelt, but the pulling down of all Ritual Worship, by the establishment of the Unritualistic, and the Real, in its stead. In the true words of “a beneficed clergyman,” “it was the breaking up, not of a dynasty, but of a dispensation; not of a city and nation, but of a religion—a religion established by God himself, and which for 2,000 years was the only religion vouchsafed to man.” It was the proclamation of the great fact, not in Jewry only, but to the utmost bounds of the habitable globe, that Jehovah was no longer confined to “Temples made with hands,” but that in every place “Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Rom. x. 13). The destruction of Jerusalem was not the Coming of Christ, but it was the crowning evidence of the fact that the power of the Crucified One was established as He had said, that he was in possession of the kingdom as He had said, that in the extinguishment of all religio-political power there was established as a consequence, the spiritual and omnipotent Power of Him who had been humbled to death, but who, raised from the dead, was exalted to the Throne of all Power, “angels and principalities being made subject
unto Him." It was the demonstration by palpable evidence, by physical and appreciable facts, of a spiritual and intangible state—a state which could not from its nature, and from the nature of the human faculties be demonstrated by any other than by positive results, emanating from a pre-announced and pre-determined spiritual cause—a cause, whose nature rendered it incapable of demonstration except by the removal and destruction of all organised power and authority which was in opposition to it.

To assert as our author does, that all the predicted signs of the Advent of Christ took place, but that the event itself did not happen, is not only the "eschatology" of hyper-criticism, but the very climax also of hyper-scepticism if not of hyper-absurdity. Were a blind man to assert that, although the earth brings forth its abundance, although the beauty of the various colours and tints of the flowers of the field, produced under the genial and colour-giving rays of the sun, gladden the heart, and instruct the understanding, and in ten thousand ways comfort and bless mankind,—the sun does not shine, in what way could he be answered? Men could not reason with him. There is no common ground of knowledge upon which argument could be based. To reason with such, therefore, would be labour lost, and the matter would be abandoned on the melancholy conclusion being arrived at,—he is blind. And such would be the proper way to answer our author, but for the sad event that "a beneficed clergyman of the Church of England," whose legal status is that of a defender and propounder of truth, is likely to be instrumental in leading astray some who may trust his supposed functions, and be deceived by his specious and vicious reasoning. Alas, that the day has not yet arrived when men's minds can readily perceive that all merely visible organisations called
churches are but human corporations,—incorporations of specially marked, and perhaps broadly expressed, features of human frailty, human knowledge, or ignorance, human conscientiousness and partially enlightened sincerity; and when united with the power which parliamentary enactments endow some of them, of worldly aggrandisment, worldly ambition, and defined worldly social status, but possessing spiritually, no power to expand or illustrate truth; no ability to originate its thoughts or explicate its glorious facts; and no eyes specially to behold its bright, pure, and immortal realities. Yea, rather whose special privileges are far more likely to mar, obscure, or destroy, rather than enforce and illustrate the spiritual beauty and harmony of Divine Truth. Spiritual truth is the blessing imparted to the few; and "A Beneficed Clergyman" is possessed of nothing arising out of his "benefice," or his clerical status, to enable him to see what others cannot perceive, or attach to his teaching aught of authority to enforce, or power to instruct. Among men, human weakness and vanity might pass for wisdom, if it only knew how to be silent!

At p. 25. the Epistles of St. Paul are appealed to to show that the speediness and nearness of the Coming of Christ in the days of the Apostles, are "either directly asserted or indirectly implied," but that it was all "an error," "a willing enthusiasm which has never been equalled." (p. 33). "The first emissaries of Christianity," says he, "lived in an atmosphere of thought and feeling within which it is difficult for us to penetrate." And yet, admitting this difficulty, he asserts their absorption by an unequalled "enthusiasm," to be "perfectly natural, when the circumstances are borne in mind which kindled and encouraged it." What were these circumstances? "The Apostles may be said to have been men, not of one book, but
of one thought, a thought deeply interwoven with, 
and lying at the root of, all their teaching. Would 
they set forth the necessity of repentance and faith 
in Jesus as the Messiah? they exhorted their 
countrymen to “save themselves from this untoward 
generation.” (Acts ii. 40). Would they deter from 
Apostacy? they spake of “fiery indignation which 
shall (soon) devour the adversaries.” (Heb. x. 27). 
Would they exhibit the doom of the false teachers of 
those last days? they represented their “judgment 
as now of a long time lingering not, and their dam-
nation slumbering not.” (2 Peter, ii. 8) ...........
Would they sum up the substance of Christian 
doctrine in a single phrase: they taught that 
“denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should 
live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present 
world.—

If afterwards there appeared in the history of 
the church instances of a tone which is pure and 
high without being enthusiastic, this may be referred 
to the fact that the urgent necessity of proclaiming 
the Advent within a limited period had ceased to 
exist’’! Can this mode of undermining the founda-
tions of Christian Truth be adopted by “a beneficed 
Clergyman” without exposing to himself and others 
the fact that he is acting as an enemy, not as the de-
fender of the truth would do? Why did the necessity 
of proclaiming the Advent “within a limited period 
cease to exist,” but by the fact, that the Advent had
really taken place, as the Apostles and their Lord said it should; and had taken place, too, at a time when all the Apostles, or all but one, had passed from the sublunary scene of their "enthusiasm," and therefore were placed beyond the sphere of personally enacting a falsehood, or of carrying out "a cunningly devised fable," if such were "devised" by them or their Master. If an ill-founded "enthusiasm" such as our author implies, ever did exist, its existence was nurtured by every thing of a human or worldly kind that was adverse to its propagation. Neither wealth nor worldly wisdom sustained it. Worldly power or political agency were not only not invoked in its favour, but were directly and explicitly eschewed. Yea, the whole power of the mightiest empire in the world, goaded on by the most bitter and implacable national enmity to be found in human records, were arrayed against it. Religious rites, priestly dominion, the established and long-existing order of things, and with these personal and family ties, individual interests, worldly wealth, reputation and honour, were all opposed to the realization of the object of an "enthusiasm," which had lost the personal supervision of those whose alleged "error," concocted and sustained it. Monstrous assumption! Purblind reasoning! Enormous fatuity!

Yet it ceased to exist! Yes, because "all things that were written were fulfilled" at the time, and surrounded by the evidences which were foretold as the accompaniments of the main fact, which, till their accomplishment, sustained this much-decried "enthusiasm." It ceased, because, then the vengeance which had impended on that "untoward generation" had fallen upon it, in accordance with the warnings previously given by Christ and His Apostles: because "the quick and the dead" in entire harmony with all the Scriptural announcements, had been then
judged, at “his appearing and kingdom” (2 Tim. iv. 1; Acts x. 42). Because the abiding consciousness of the truth of the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, was verified in the fact, and removing the occasion for the continuance of the so-called “enthusiasm.” It ceased, because the allotted period had arrived, pregnant with its fruits of vengeance poured out on them that knew not God, and obeyed not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. It ceased, because “this present world (age)” as then existing, then did pass away, and the blessed and glorious manifestation of the glory of the Great God, and our Saviour, Jesus Christ, did then take place, on the establishment of “The New Heavens, and New Earth,” which Jesus and His disciples had announced in their day as to come. (Titus ii. 11-14; 2 Thess. i. 6-12. et freq.)

Either this was so, or they were “false witnesses for God.” However enthusiastic, or self-denied, or sincere, the Apostles as the messengers of God, were either true or false,—false, if the events did not take place, as they expected and said; or true, if the events did receive the expected accomplishment. If all the signs and tokens, and external manifestations, did take place, as our author admits, how irrational and absurd is it to attempt to argue that the one event, “The Advent,” to the presence and reality of which all these testified, did not take place! It is morally impossible that the former should have taken place without the latter, as an inseparable consequence. It by no means enters into the matters of fact, that those who read the Divine Word with the rationalistic eyes used by “A Beneficed Clergyman,” should be able to perceive these glorious realities. For, by a strange perversion of language, “rationalist” is the denomination given to men who assume to discuss spiritual truth by the aid of intellectual power merely; who treat Divine Truth by the same pro-
cess they use for the development of physical science, although its essential nature precludes the idea of mere intellect, however penetrating, being capable or dealing with it, of comprehending it, or even appreciably fathoming its conceptions. (1 Cor. xi. 14.) These would-be-giants of so-called rationalism grin broadly, or sneer sardonically, when the spiritual is suggested as the true signification of these events—and so they dispose of the whole matter; vainly attempting to justify their unwisdom by publishing afresh the worn-out weapons of the sceptic, as if they had never before been worsted in their onslaught on truth. But can the finite comprehend the infinite; can the less embody the greater; is man's intellectual capacity the measure of Divine intelligence? If this is what is meant by the efforts of such writers as we are now dealing with, let them have the rational courage to say so; the manliness to fight under a banner which other human intelligences have the power to understand and cope with. But do not let them, under the profession of "a love of truth," pull down her temple, or daub with mere mud its divinely proportioned enrichments. The seeming affection of the serpent may induce it to coil itself gracefully in the bosom of him who has charmed it, but its poisoned fangs are then only nearer the heart of its victim, and its breath is the messenger of death, the more certainly fatal, because the more unexpected. In such a case, all that could then remain, would be "the slowly subsiding movement of an earlier enthusiasm!"

The New Testament teaching referred to by "A Beneficed Clergyman," in his fourth section, pp. 33-39, viz.:—"Texts which represent the end of the world as imminent in the Apostolic age,"—is not less explicit or less uniform, as to the period spoken of as "the end"—"the end of the world,"—"the end of all things,
The exposition of the parable of "the tares of the field," Matt. xiii. 36-43, elucidates clearly the meaning of the word "Age," αἰῶνά, mistranslated "World," in this and other texts, as well as the near approaching consummation, to which that age or world was then about to be subjected. The same ideas are repeated in the parable of "the net cast into the sea," accompanied by the same explicitness of definition as to the approaching end, which was to arrive within the life-time of the then existing generation: "So shall it be in the end of the age—ἐν τῇ συντελείᾳ τοῦ αἰῶνά—the angels shall come forth and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire, there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." (Matt. xiii. 47-50.) As the time of "the end" more nearly approached the writings of the apostles express, with increasing distinctness, "the end of the world, to be imminent in the Apostolic age," 1 Cor. x., 11, "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come—τὰ τέλη τῶν αἰῶνων κατήντησεν. In Heb. ix., 26, the Apostle referring to the sacrifice of Christ, affirms of it, that it was in "the end of the world" it had taken place,—now once in the end of the worlds —ἐπὶ συντελείᾳ τῶν αἰῶνων—hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself," proving incontestably that the period of the consummation was then supposed to be imminent. St. Peter declares (1 Peter, iv., 7), "The end of all things is at hand"—ἡγγίκε—impending. So also in the promise given by our Lord to his disciples, the promise was to extend to the end of that age, although it did not, and could not, extend to any period beyond that time, notwithstanding the modern claims to apostolic succession put forth by Church-men and sectaries, which they profess to base on
this promise. Matth. xxviii., 20, "Lo, I am with you all the (remaining) days even unto the end of the age." "He that endureth to the end shall be saved," (Matth. x., 22). "Who shall confirm you unto the end" (1 Cor. i. 8), "If we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end" (Heb. iii., 6-14). By a rare ingenuity our author has found that "the end" in these and numerous other passages, is not "the end of the Jewish dispensation, but the end of the age to be accomplished, as was confidently expected, at the Advent of Messiah." This is a distinction without a difference, for but one final end formed the subject of apostolic expectations; an end which formed the termini of all preceding states, and dispensations, and was superseded by a new state, consequent upon the end, but which has itself, no end or terminus. The expectation of the near approach of that end in the apostles days had power of the most marked description, in regulating the actions as well as the opinions of the people of that primitive age. To them it was an intense reality, which exercised an important influence on the pursuits of daily life. But in our day, it appears to have lost its power over strong minds, and to have become an indifferent, if not a questionable event. Surely if the then "immediately impending catastrophe" of those days really did take place—really did overtake the men of that generation, it cannot be subject of surprise that a similarly active consciousness of its near approach should not now rest heavily upon the hearts of men in the present generation, unless, indeed, error is intrinsically more powerful than truth. That the continual assertion of the near approach of the Coming of our Lord in our day, notwithstanding the empirical dogmatism of Dr. Cumming, and the multitude of wonder-loving but unthinking followers, who now live on religious sen-
sensations, rather than on an intelligent conception of religious truth, does not cause itself to be felt in any more potent degree than "to cause weak and silly women to part with their possessions and goods," seems strongly to show that the vitality of truth has now departed from the facts which produced such intensely real a possession of men's minds in the days of the Apostles, resulting from the now prevalent erroneous expectation of the accomplishment of that which was fully realized eighteen centuries ago. "Weak and silly women," alas! do sometimes attach themselves to those who claim to have power to teach them, and therefore readily "part with their possessions and goods," not unfrequently for the benefit of those they follow after. If no higher benefits than these result from the prevailing sensational expectation of the speedy Coming of the Lord, it is no harsh construction of such relations to hope that the fate of the blind leading the blind may not be theirs. It may, perhaps, be fairly questioned, if weak and silly women did not part with their possessions and goods for the benefit of those they follow, how far their leaders would be found to indulge in the vagaries of opinion, and practice, which now abound in the religious world. However that may be, our author, with singular fertility, has discovered that "it is perhaps as much to the fear created by its extraordinary disclosures, as to the enthusiasm of its first preachers, that the success of Christianity during the first century is to be attributed." Alas, how difficult, if not impossible, for certain minds to distinguish the Gospel of Love, the proclamation of salvation, the promulgation of the day of deliverance, which formed the subject of Apostolic preaching in the days when the Apostles published salvation with the living voice, from the flats of judgement, damnation, and unending punishment, which our modern
preachers delight to fulminate, as the gospel of the Grace of God. Whatever may now be called the Gospel of Salvation, the Gospel of fear was not that preached by the Apostles of Jesus Christ. They preached the Gospel of Love, which cast out fear; of truth, which extinguished ignorant enthusiasm; of salvation, which delivered from death, and the impending calamities of that time. No appeal to fear, no threat of vengeance entered into their gospel. Their mission was to proclaim Love, Salvation, Life, Brotherhood; a mission which many of those who now claim to be their successors, armed with legal power strangely pervert and calumniate. They went out and proclaimed a reign of love, while Jehovah whom they served retained the power of vengeance in his own hands. "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord," (Rom. xii. 19). There is no record which shows fear as the result of the Apostolic preaching, and those who heard but "believed not," were far more distinguished by their bitter hatred, their resolute unbelief, their readiness to brave all vengeance. And indeed it was their hardened unbelief and lack of fear which so distinctly marked the character of the impenitent of that day. So much was this so that the language of the wise man was singularly applicable to them. "Because I have called and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded: but ye have set at naught all my counsel, and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh. . . . . . When distress and anguish cometh upon you. . . . . . Then shall they call on me, but I will not answer. . . . . . They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore they shall eat of the fruit of their own ways, &c." (Prov. i. 24-32). This language ex-
presses with the pointedness of truth, the strictly retributive character of the punishment of that time, the direct consequence of the scoffing unbelief which prevailed, but utters not one word which can be construed into the allegation that the Gospel success was as much indebted to fear as to the enthusiasm of its first preachers. The language of 2 Thess. i. 7-10, only re-echoes the sentiments of the wise man. And indeed it may be added, that enthusiasm in the ordinary acceptance of that word, had as little effect in stimulating the zeal of the first preachers, as fear had in making the first converts to Christianity. The argument is an utter fallacy, and the inference drawn from it as untenable as the assumption.

The “first emissaries of Christianity” did not “confine themselves to the direct proclamation of the Advent of Jesus in the clouds of heaven, with all the holy angels with him, to judge the quick and the dead, to dissolve the material universe, and to inaugurate the Messianic Reign.” “The announcement of an approaching end of the word (i.e. of the material world) does not appear in any instance to have been proclaimed by the Apostles, or believed by their disciples; and the end of the material world not having occurred, could not therefore in any way affect the faith of those who heard the Apostles preach. The false allegation expresses nothing but the tortuous construction of Apostolic and Messianic language of those whom the Apostles themselves denominate “the scoffers” of the last days, a designation, which, although “the last days” have long since passed away, much better defines the aims of certain in our own day, than the loud sounding name of “Rationalists” in which they seem to delight. The continued proclamation of the Advent of Christ was a part, but not the whole of their preaching, its period the goal or end of the afflictions they endured,
and of the privations they suffered in the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. These events were the links in the great chain of spiritual facts which completed the manifestation of "the ways of God to men." How strangely impressed does our author appear to be with the strength of the case made out by "the scoffers of the last times!" Is it the sympathy of strong minds? Then alas! it is also the sympathy of minds mutually blinded to the truth.

At p. 39, he proceeds to quote certain "texts which speak of the days of the Apostles as the last days," and to unfold his doubts and insinuate certain implied failures of historic facts in connection with these texts. With much force he says:—"It is remarkable that the writers of the New Testament not only spoke of their own times as the last times, but defined them still more clearly as "these last times," or "these last days"—the period thus carefully designated, necessarily preceding the time of "the end," or the last day of the last days. Hence the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews declares that God, who in many portions and in many ways "spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by the Son," (Heb. i., 1-2) where the days of Christ's public ministry, and those which immediately followed, are called "these last days." The period of our Lord's manifestation upon earth is described (1 Pet. i. 20) in almost similiar terms: "who was verily fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifested in these last times for you." So with reference to the punishment of the unrighteous Jews at the Advent of Messiah, it is declared of the unscrupulous accumulators of wealth in (εις) the last days, "Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall eat your flesh as it were fire" (James v. 3); whilst
on the other hand, it is affirmed of the holy elect of the same period that they are “kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (Peter i. 5). With equal determination of the period expressed by “the last days,” St. Paul informs Timothy, that in the last days perilous times shall come, for men shall be lovers of their own selves, &c. ;—from these Timothy is exhorted to “turn away” (2 Tim. iii. 1-5); implying that the last days in which these monstrous forms of iniquity should be manifested were those in which Timothy was himself living. So in the second Petrine Epistle it is affirmed “There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, ‘where is the promise of His Coming?’” where the writer not only associates the time of the Coming with the last days; but, as we have previously shown, declared that event to be close at hand. Similarly St. Jude, referring perhaps to the passage last quoted, represents the mockers of the last time as having “crept in unawares” in his own day: “Beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the Apostle of our Lord Jesus Christ, how they told you there should be mockers in the last time who should walk after their own ungodly lusts . . . . . . . these (he says) are they who (now) separate themselves, sensual, having not the spirit” (Jude xvii. 19). And to this may be added the testimony afforded by the first Epistle of St. John, the writer of which plainly considered his own times as the last times. ‘Little children it is the last time (hour); and ye have heard that (the) Antichrist shall come, even so now are there many Antichrists, whereby we know it is the last time’ (1 John ii. 18) . . . . . The phrase, then, ‘the last days,’ significant as it is of an approaching consummation, would seem to be consistent in the lips of those who
expected the end of all things within the term of their own natural life, and falls in harmoniously with other eschatological anticipations of the period." So far our author.

In the preceding section he treats "the end of the world" as if it meant "the end of the material world," and if this is correct, it is only a fair consequence to regard "the last days" to be predicted of the "world that was then coming to an end." But no evidence is furnished, nor even is an attempt made to prove the identity of the "material world," with "the world" then passing away. It would have been an intelligent course, and one especially pressing on our "Beneficed Clergyman," to have proved this. And it would have greatly simplified the question had he done so before the legion of doubts were insinuated with which he concludes the section.

The following passage is quoted from "The Apocalypse Fulfilled," by the Rev. P. S. Desprez, B.D., p. 487: "It is well known that the passing away of heaven and earth is a figure often used in the Old Testament (see Is. lxxv. 17; Rom. x. 20), to denote some great change; and that in the passage of St. Peter to which we have referred (2 Peter iii. 10), the destruction of the material world is not the idea intended to be conveyed, is evident from the context, 'Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwell righteousness.'" This extract states the simple fact, and that "it is well known," and therefore it is only fair and reasonable that a "Beneficed Clergyman" should refute the "Rev. P. S. Desprez, B.D." And at the same time his attention may be here called to the "well known" fact that the destruction of Babylon is thus expressed in the scripture. (Isaiah xiii. 9-10). "The day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate . . . . . .
the stars of heaven, and the constellations thereof, shall not give their light; the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine.” It is well known that Babylon was destroyed; but that “the sun was not darkened in his going forth,” neither did “the light of the moon” cease to shine. “The phrase, then, ‘the last days,’ significant as it is of an approaching consummation, would seem to be consistant in the lips of those who expected the end of all things within the term of their own natural lives, and falls in harmoniously with other eschatological anticipations of the period.”

Hence the exhortations to patience so constantly occurring in the writings of the New Testament so far from implying that any suspicion had arisen which it was necessary to remove, as “that the appointed time for the Advent was passing away without fulfilment, tends to give weight to the position that the Apostles considered their own as the last days,” not of “the material world,” with “the end” of which they never concerned themselves, but “the last days” of that politico-ecclesiastical order of things which were the preliminary and initiatory stages of a purely spiritual, unpolitical but essentially cosmopolitan order of things. The transition from the literal and local to the spiritual and universal, in the nature of things, would give rise to doubts in the minds of many who only partially understood the nature of the change then about to take place. And fulfilling the special functions possessed by the Apostles it was the legitimate and proper exercise of these functions that St. Paul assures those then still surviving that they should not really occupy a more exalted condition than their friends who had already “fallen asleep,” but that “the dead in Christ should rise first,” and that they
who were to be found living and remaining unto the Coming of the Lord should be changed,—not as to their bodies, but as to their spiritual state, or condition. A change so vast and so spiritual, so unpolitical in its nature, might very naturally create unbelief or doubt in the minds of many. Indeed, the probable result of such a new order of things would most likely be a state of general unbelief, so that when the Son of Man should come, it might well be doubted whether any should be found who should still believe in His Coming, as our Lord himself foreshadowed should happen. (Luke xviii. 8). The fact of His Coming was in no way dependent on this state of doubt or incredulity, neither in respect of the nature of that Coming, or the precise time it should take place. Hence the Apostolic Epistles abound in exhortation to “wait for his (God's) Son from heaven” (1 Thess. i. 10); and in prayers that the Lord (may) direct your hearts into the love of God and into a patient waiting for Christ” (2 Thess. iii. 5). The whole state was then one of comparative obscurity, mingled with actual and frequently severe suffering, at the hand of those who derided and denied the truth, and scoffed at those who professed it. It was “the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ.” (Rev. i. 9). Hence the second epistle of Peter, (ch. iii. 9) addressed to those whose national position was to be entirely overturned by the change, replies to the taunts of their enemies as to the delay in realising their expectations, to the effect that “the Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” And this patience is urged by James (ch. v. 7-8) because “the Lord is at hand.” That many doubted and not a few denied the statements of the Apostles as
to the nearness of "the Coming of the Lord," proves nothing except that no exact information was then possessed as to "the day or hour" of this event. The existence of doubters in these days no more proved the failure of the fulfilment of the promise before the time had arrived for its fulfilment, than that because the sun was not seen to shine at midnight, it should therefore fail to shine at noon. Neither Christ nor his Apostles fixed "the day or hour" of his Advent. They fixed the then living generation as the limit within which it was to take place. And greater guarantees for sound judgment and correct opinion must be given by "A Beneficed Clergyman of the Church of England," than are to be found in the fact that in each succeeding work he has written, he has changed his opinions, from grey to white, and from white to black, before the painful facts of his many changes can in any way invalidate the stability of Divine Truth, or justify his claim to be heard as an exponent of the teaching of the Scriptures. The truth of God is as independent of human effort for its propagation and defence, as it is above human powers rationally to conceive its nature. Of this we want no stronger or more painful example than the mental and consequent social career of a "Beneficed Clergyman of the Church of England."

The mode of reasoning adopted by our author is, that, because "doubts" were found to exist, and these doubts for a time were but "half concealed" in the Apostles' day as to the "tardy fulfilment of the Messianic hopes," and because the Apostles found it necessary to exhort to "patience"—to a "patient waiting for Christ," that therefore, the expected period had passed, and the predicted and expected event had failed of its accomplishment. But such a perverse mode of reasoning, if admitted, would make Truth itself depend, not on fact or evidence, but on
the extent and the state of unquestioning credence which any given expectation had attained, and continued to maintain. Whereas all truth is independent of the mind that receives or rejects it, or doubts or dallies with its existence. If ten thousand believed a lie, however undoubtingly, it would not therefore become a truth; if ten thousand disbelieved, or doubted a truth, it would not thereby become a falsehood. Even if the particular conceptions of truth formed by this one or that one, were subsequently proved to be untrue, it would not invalidate the truth. It might give rise to doubts as to what the truth was, or as to how much of the thing conceived really was the truth, or the creature of misconception only. Hence to argue that, because the Apostles enjoined patience in waiting for Christ, it was an apology "which shewed that the period of the expected Advent had already expired," is a perversion of reasoning, which serves to show how exalted the "eschatology" of absurdity can become in intelligent minds, when they confound necessary distinctions, and attempt to gauge spiritual truth by the philosophic rationalism which ignores the existence of spirituality unseen by them. Are we to conclude that because our author denies that the fact of the Advent of Christ did take place in the Apostles' days, while he admits that every sign of that event did take place, that because he imagines that the Apostles apologise for the non arrival of the Advent by raising false hopes and alleging grounds of confidence falsified by the actual facts, that our Lord Himself is the authority for these false hopes; and that—sublime devotion!—"not even to shield" Him from the charge of misconceiving His own truth, will our author once more change his opinions? Are we to conclude that the Christian system is therefore "a cunningly devised fable"; a sublime system of dis-
appointed expectations; of baseless hopes; of unrealized glories! No! We prefer still to believe, notwithstanding his doubts, and to regard those doubts as no evidence of the failure of the Messianic predictions. They are indeed most painful evidence of our author's ignorance of spiritual truth conjoined with a restless mental activity, which in the midst of his changes, has not yet found a place of repose, and with all its fancied strength evinces his excessive "weakness" and vanity. The truth is independent of him. It lives not by his permission. It is not blasted by his breath. It is of God—and He is His own interpreter, defender, and expositor. It concerns not, therefore, poor humanity to feel disconcerted when instances like the present arise, of men whose position, profession, and privately assumed functions, would seem to constitute them defenders of the truth, but who prefer to use their supposed powers to defame and destroy it, and as far as in them be, "overturn the faith of some."

So far as our author's aim is to expose the inherent and necessary "weakness," and the untenable nature of the many millenarian theories, which, in these days, take up the fancy, and contribute to the sensational emotion of the multitudes of zealous, but scripturally ill-informed Christians, the present writer concurs in what he has written, believing that so far, he has written well, and has furnished much for the abettors of those wild theories to ponder over with the open Book of God in their hands. But when in the same condemnation he includes with them the Apostles of Jesus, and the first instructors in Christian Truth, and even Christ Himself, as the propagator of theories untenable in argument, and false in fact, the line of demarcation to be drawn is broad and strong. No enlightened Christian mind not under the dominion of the false teaching of the
modern millenarian schools on the one hand, or of the equally false, but more degrading control of the negation of intelligence, which only doubts, or cavils, or disbelieves, on the other, can have any hesitation where that line is to be drawn, and drawn most rigidly. Our author condemns modern millenarian theories, but includes Christ and His Apostles as the author and propagators of their false expectations. Could Millenarianism have received higher praise? It must be admitted of the latter that it believes that Christ and His Apostles were not in "error," and will, doubtless, still prefer them to the frigid negations of "A Beneficed Clergyman of the Church of England." But the truth lies with neither; and the mind of the intelligent and thoughtful Christian will turn afresh to the Word of God to learn "what saith the scriptures"; and having found what the teachings of Christ and His Apostles were, will hold that fact as the true antidote to doubts on the one hand, and false Advent theories on the other.

At p. 45, our author persues his line of argument by quoting the "texts which confine the exercise of the miraculous gifts of the Spirit to the Apostolic age," and so far as this argument is true it may be repeated here. In the age of the Apostles they spake with tongues, cured the sick, raised the dead, and did many wonderful and beneficent works, which were the constant accompaniments of their preaching, and the evidences of their mission, and of the truth of their doctrine (See Matt. x. 8-21; Mark xvi. 17-20; Acts iv. 33; v. 12, et freq). But these things did not continue in the church; they were endowments given to the Church for a time only. As "the things concerning the Son of Man had an end" (Luke xxii. 37), so the miraculous gifts of the Spirit had at once a design and a terminus. The duration of these varied gifts is said to last "unto
the day of redemption:” (Eph. iv. 30) “a time coeval with that of the Advent, when our “redemption draweth nigh.” (Luke xxi. 28). Hence St. Paul affirms, in expectation of the glory which should be revealed at the manifestation of the sons of God, “And not only they, but ourselves also which have the first fruits of the spirit; even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.” (Rom. viii. 19-23). Hence, believers are bidden “not to grieve the Holy Spirit, whereby they are sealed unto the day of redemption” (Eph. iv. 30); or, as the same idea is elsewhere expressed, “In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession. (Eph. i. 14). It is plain from the limitation observable in these passages, that the miraculous gifts of the Spirit were temporary, and not extending beyond the period assigned for the Advent; a position elsewhere recognised by St. Paul, where he says, “But whether prophesies, they shall fail; whether tongues, they shall cease; whether knowledge, it shall vanish away” (1 Cor. xiii. 8-10); or, as the same limitation is elsewhere asserted, “He gave some Apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect—πελευθερωσει—man, unto the measure of the stature—γῆλικοκαί—age—of the fulness of Christ. (Eph. iv. 11-13).

It gives force and pungency to the above quoted texts, that these miraculous powers (for the separation of the gifts of the Spirit into ordinary and extraordinary, is a theological distinction unknown to scripture) are no longer exercised. This fact, which
no one will dispute, involves one of two dilemmas. Either the period has not arrived unto which these gifts should continue, in which case they ought to be still present, or at any rate, in abeyance, in the Church; or the period unto which these gifts should continue has passed . . . . . ., since we no longer have the gifts. The followers of Mr. Irving having rightly concluded from scripture that certain gifts of healing, tongues, prophecy, &c., were to be exercised by christians until the time of the Second Coming, have been naturally led to expect a continuance of these miraculous powers, and, according to traditional theories are consistent in saying that they ought to have the gifts. Yes, they ought to have them, but where are they? Show us but one miracle, and it sufficeth us. This attempt of theirs to revive miraculous powers which were . . . . . . to be only of a dispensational character, demonstrates that the period by which they were bounded cannot be extended beyond its proper limits, and that the effort to fill up a space respecting which scripture is silent can only be attended with disappointment. Living, as we do, in the midst of common-place and ordinary christianity, it is difficult to form a conception of the wonder-working character of the Apostolic Age. . . . . . . . Men were then living, as it were, outside this world, and almost touching the eternal infinite. Miraculous powers were daily and almost hourly exercised, till, from their frequency, they well nigh ceased to be miraculous. Gifts of an unique and earthly kind fell upon an astonished world. Heaven came down to earth, and mortals were under the influence of "the powers of the world to come." The taught equally with the teachers gave signs of being under strong spiritual influences. Thus, when Peter preached the Gospel to Cornelius, "The Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word
for they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God." (Acts x. 44-46). When Paul baptized the disciples at Ephesus, "The Holy Ghost came on them, and they spake with tongues and prophesied." (Acts xix. 6-7). Then when the converts came together, "every one had a psalm, a doctrine, a tongue, a revelation, an interpretation," "for to one was given by the Spirit the word of Wisdom; to another, the word of Knowledge by the same spirit; to another, Faith by the same spirit; to another, the gifts of Healing by the same spirit; to another, the working of Miracles; to another, Prophecy; to another, Discerning of Spirits; to another, divers kinds of Tongues; to another, the Interpretation of tongues. (1 Cor. xii. 8-10). . . . . .

If we could realize the effect which some popular preacher of our times might produce, by healing the sick in the public thoroughfares of the metropolis, or by throwing hundreds of persons into ecstatic convulsions, we might form some idea of what the Apostles are said to have accomplished. "Visions and revelations of the Lord" were among their terrible credentials, and even "the third heaven" (2 Cor. xii. 2) was not inaccessible to their magnificent experiences. With the expiration, however, of that period the Gospel ceased to be preached in a miraculous manner. . . . . . Tongues are no more "a sign to them that believe not" (2 Cor. xiv. 22); prophecy no more "a sign to them that believe." We may not in the present day, without anachronism, "covet to prophecy," or "forbid to speak with tongues." The age of wonders when the Lord bare witness to the message to his ambassadors, and "confirmed the word with signs following" is gone by never to be restored." (pp. 45-48). This long extract, with certain verbal expressions here elided, so forcibly and truly puts the argument under this
head that nothing better, perhaps nothing equal to it could be written here. Hence the present writer adopts it readily with his acknowledgments to the author. It is to his deductions, not to his statement of the facts of the case here put, that he is constrained to take marked exceptions.

In his previous pages, our author's arguments are a congeries of theoretical negations, aiming, apparently, at the discovery of an invulnerable religious system by minute innuendoes and infinitesimal assumptions, which betray far more the animus of his purpose, than even a bold affirmative argument would have done. But at pp. 51-53, he boldly recants, though he does not refute, his former sentiments. Without this distinct recantation, it was possible to have misconceived his purpose, but with it there can be no further doubt of his meaning, as there can be none of his unfitness to discuss truth, the nature of which requires that it be "spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. ii. 14). To recognise the true, the real, and the vital, as being eliminated from the literal, the ritualistic, and the adumbrative; to perceive the cessation and removal of the latter and the eternal establishment of the former as the aim and purpose of Christ's teaching, as well as that of his miracle-endowed followers requires eyes of a temper and a power that form no part of a clerical or man-made priesthood, as they are above the reach of any merely academical teaching—as foreign to the domain of a mere "Beneficed Clergyman" or a Bishop, as they are to the fleshly mind of man. The power eschewed by our author is "the gift of God," a superinduction which the "wise men" of all ages and times have lightly esteemed, which adds no human faculty to its possessor, but enables him to rejoice in the perception of those glories so resplendently revealed. Had the sweet scentillations of this power rested on his
mind, his hand would never have penned the subtle attack on Divine Truth, which this pamphlet contains.

He states in his recantation, “We can no longer entertain the view that the Advent of Christ is a past event which had its accomplishment at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem.” That he ever understood the character and consequence of this view, may well be doubted. But he entered the lists voluntarily as its advocate, and boldly and directly challenged Dr. Cumming or any other advocate of antagonistic views, to refute his arguments. These arguments remain unanswered to this day. Their author greatly rejoiced in the strength of his citadel, and though now he plainly and in set terms throws down its battlements and recants, he does not refute his former arguments. These arguments were boldly and eloquently given to the public, and they are not now withdrawn from notice. The public are, therefore, in every sense, entitled to require of him that he should refute them. “If the blind lead the blind, they both fall into the ditch.” But who is blind—“A Beneficed Clergyman of the Church of England,” or the Rev. P. S. Desprez, B.D., author of “The Apocalypse Fulfilled in the Consummation of the Mosaic Economy, and the Coming of the Son of Man”? Which of the twain is “the leader” to be followed? The prudent course would be to set both aside, and take the Scriptures as the safe guide on such a subject. It cannot alter the truth that “A Beneficed Clergyman” no longer entertains this view; but it is important to notice even after his recantation, the admission that “all the signs” which were to precede the Advent of Christ, received their fulfilment at the time stated; and as these “signs” were given specifically to indicate and point out the period of His Coming (Matt. xxiv. 3), it is clear The
Coming itself took place at that time also, as Jesus said. No other alternative remains but the rejection of the testimony of Christ and His Apostles as false witnesses of God—an alternative from which all reverent readers of the Bible must recoil as from the sting of a serpent. The destruction of Jerusalem was itself but "a sign," a sign, which plainly signified the Presence and Power of Him by whom it was laid in ruins, through the mediate agency of Titus and his legions. And we contend for this Presence being then and there manifested in its two-fold aspects of vengeance on those who doubted and scoffed, and did not believe; and deliverance to those who were faithful to "the end"—a deliverance not of a political or national kind, but from the ordinances of death, the law of commands; a deliverance from the ministers of death; those official persons who up to that time had held legal and divine authority to administer "the law of death"; a deliverance from sin, which was constituted by that law, and consequently a deliverance to Life, through Him whom the law had to put to death; but who rose again from the dead, to Righteousness, by Him who was "the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believed"; and a deliverance to that Freedom in the Presence of The Great Lord of All, from all condemnation, law, or death, and the eternal establishment of Life as the heritage of His faithful then, and in all future time, without intermediate delay, without interregnum, and without the intervention of any ministrating agency whatever. (See 2 Thess. i. 6-10; 2 Cor. iii. 6-11; Rom. ii. 12, 16; x. 4; v. 20, 21; viii. 1, 2, 23, 33-39; Col. ii. 20; iii. 4; 1 Thess. iv. 17. et freq.).

It is an error to say that it "has been overlooked that the destruction of Jerusalem is not the Coming itself." It is not asserted that that destruction was
the Coming of Christ; but that the Coming of Christ was demonstrably evidenced by the destruction of Jerusalem, and that the latter only took place, notwithstanding the presence and instrumentality of Caesar's armies, as the evidence of the former. The spiritual and intangible could only be demonstrated by a power which would remove out of the way the physical and the tangible in accordance with a previously announced plan. This was the direct testimony borne by the destruction of Jerusalem, when denuded of the peculiar verbage in which it was announced. From that day to this, the relation of the people of God to each other, and to the whole of the Divine Plans, has been of a distinctly changed character. The Spiritual and the Real became established instead of the literal and the shadowy.

Our author continues,—"We may ask in vain for any proof of the manifestation of the Glory of Christ in any degree commensurate with the promise at the time of the destruction of the holy city, or of the fulfilment of the stupendous events which were to accompany the Advent, such as the resurrection of the dead, the rapture of the living, the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, the myriad hosts of attendant angels, the sound of the trumpet of the archangel, the convulsion of the material world, and the universal judgment." The short answer to these "great swelling words" is that our author defended the affirmative of all these points before the world, and his work is still unanswered. But as he has seen fit to argue for the "other side" it would have been more satisfactory if he had defined his meaning of the language he has thus employed. A little explicitness in this respect would have been more in place than mere declamation, however eloquent. Let us try to sift these grand phrases.

"In vain we ask for any proof of . . . . . . . . . . . the
The demand here made simply begs the question. It assumes what it should prove, and hence sets up a man of straw, that he may be most eloquently laid low—an amusing but not a very dignified line of argument, and one usually resorted to for effect in the absence of sound argument. "The convulsions of the material world!" Where are they predicated of the Advent of Christ? "Earthquakes" were among the "signs" which were to precede that event, but as all the "signs" received their fulfilment, the failure, as he alleges, being only the "Advent itself," it is clear that something else than "earthquakes" is meant by "the convulsions of the material world." These words viewed in connection with the phrase (p. 32), "the immediate dissolution of the material world" show that the supposed expectation which failed in the days of "the end" of the Apostolic age, is expressed in the words last quoted. But no such phraseology is used in Scripture; no text has been pointed to which expresses such an idea; and if "modern theories" have conceived such a thought, why should that be charged against Christ and His Apostles. If such a text could be found, from our author's own reasoning, it could not cause any difficulty, since "the signs which he (the Son of Man) had foretold were apparent." If the accompanying "signs were apparent," why were "the convulsions"—"the dissolution of the material world" not amongst "the signs" so "apparent"? Not being "apparent," this sign must have failed no less than "the event itself." If this sign has failed, may not some other of "the signs" have failed also? And if so, may not the assertion that "the signs were apparent though an immediate Advent was not verified by the result," be as void of proof as the accomplishment of the Advent itself is asserted to be? It is quite certain that our author did not see "the
dissolution of the material world" any more than "the Advent itself," and as he therefore cannot know anything about these events, why should he be expected to believe them on any evidence that can now be produced? It is not for the first time the discovery is made that "the legs of the lame are not equal"!

The text in 2 Peter, iii. chap., may be supposed to contain the allegations respecting the "convulsions of the material world," because our author has more than once referred to it in this sense. Does it teach that "the material world" was to be dissolved? The opinion of the Rev. P. S. Desprez, already quoted from p. 437 of his "Apocalypse Fulfilled," may be again referred to in answer to the supposed argument of "A Beneficed Clergyman." "It is well known that the passing away of heaven and earth is a figure often used in the Old Testament to denote some great change, and that in the passage of St. Peter, to which we have referred, the destruction of the material world is not the idea intended to be conveyed," &c. Where then is the idea to be found? Nowhere if not in the text of St. Peter; but, on the authority of the Rev. P. S. Desprez, no such idea is to be found in that text. The words "heaven and earth" in this text are used in connection with words which denote "some great change," but this "change" was not "the convulsion," nor "the dissolution of the material world."

A very cursory view of the text will show that those who used this mode of false argument in Apostolic times, were accused of "willing ignorance"; but no one could be "willingly ignorant" of that of which there was no revelation given. And in no part of the Scriptures are "the convulsions of the material world" taught. It follows that "the great change" herein referred to was some other than "the convulsions of the material world."

The parallel is drawn by the Apostle in his reply
to these "scoffers of the last days," between the "convulsion" occasioned by the flood in the days of Noah, and "the great change" about to be experienced in "these last days" which formed the point of the scoffer's objection, and of the Apostle's answer. The waters of the flood gradually arose over the tops of the highest mountains, not for the purpose of destroying the literal heavens and earth which had been constituted by "the word of God," but to destroy "the living creatures which were upon the earth." Accordingly it is said (Gen. vii. 20-23), "Fifteen cubits upwards did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered. And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: and all in whose nostrils was the breath of life, and of all that was in the dry land, died," &c. After one hundred and fifty days that state of destruction was abated by the subsidence of the waters, and the ultimate possession of the earth was given to Noah and his sons under a covenant with Jehovah, in which He promised, "I will not . . . again smite every living thing as I have done" (Gen. viii. 21, 22). Accordingly fertility is imparted to the earth, and the return of seed time and harvest is established while the earth remaineth. This "great change" was brought upon the world because "the wickedness of man was great upon the earth"; and its object was to punish that wickedness. Many references are made in the Scriptures to this abounding wickedness and irreligion, which go to show that a similar state of idolatry, sensuality, and wickedness, should again abound on the part of those, who, like the evil patriarchs of Noah's time, enjoyed special privileges in relation to the worship of God in the days of the Apostles, and upon whom, therefore, the
threatened vengeance was to fall. (See Luke xvii. 26-30; Matt. xxiv. 37, &c.) The same "word of God" which of old destroyed the world while the heavens were established and the earth standing out of the water and in the water, had declared that "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the things that are therein shall be burned up." This "great change" described in language very similar to that which had before been used to pourtray the destruction of "Babylon, Idumea, and Egypt," was evidently intended to depict a state of destruction to "the workers of iniquity," and of deliverance to the people of God, so complete and decided in its character that the appropriateness of the language becomes self-evident, and the folly and enmity of these scoffers equally so. The allusions were not intended to be made to the "material world," but to the "world which then was"—that is, to the dispensational order of things which, as St. Paul states (Heb. xii., 27), referred to "the removing of those things that are shaken as of things that are made." This is rendered evident by the Apostle in his reasoning throughout the Epistle to the Hebrews, especially in Chapter xi., where he announces the construction or framing of the ages τῶν αἰώνων (mistranslated the worlds) by the word of God (ver. 3), down to the text above quoted, Chapter xii. To this St. Peter obviously refers in the passage under consideration (chap. iii., 15-16). For the promise of the Coming of the day of the Lord, and the removing of the things which were shaken (viz., "the heavens and the earth"), should receive its fulfilment by the consequent establishment of "new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." Those therefore who asserted that "all things continued as they were from the beginning of the creation" were the wil-
fully ignorant," who would be wise above what was written, but who, notwithstanding their vain pretensions to knowledge were "the unlearned and unstable who (were found to) wrest the scriptures to their own destruction." With what consistency or truth such language can be applied to the "material world," while, the Rev. P. S. Desprez admits, that language similar, had been applied to "Babylon, Idumea and Egypt" it is difficult to conceive; and still more so is it in the face of his previous statement, that, "the destruction of the material world is not the idea intended to be conveyed" by St. Peter.

If the contradiction and absurdity of our author's writings are thus so apparent with respect to the "convulsions of the material world" can he be supposed to be more enlightened or truthful in his demand, "in vain," for proof of "the resurrection of the dead."? The tone of eloquent declamation assumed, to exhibit the great results of "more mature consideration" of these subjects, would have been greatly more pleasing had it appealed less to the general ignorance of the popular mind on such subjects for its effect, and depended more on a correctly and carefully written scriptural exposition of the truths referred to. What is the resurrection of the dead? What was that which "a Beneficed Clergyman" meant when he used language on this topic implying, if not asserting that it did not then take place? Does he apply this language to the resurrection of flesh and blood, to the raising up of the corpses of those, who, in the ordinary language of men, died? If so, the answer is short and explicit, —no such event was predicated of that time! If this is not what he intended, then what was it he failed to find proof of as occurring at that time, which he expresses by "the resurrection of the dead?" It seems only the part of candour and fairness in an
objector to use language in a sense his readers can understand. He uses this language either in the popular sense, as referring to dead human bodies, which the scriptures nowhere teach were to be the subjects of resurrection at that time, or in a sense of his own which he has not explained. And this, taken in its most venal aspect, must be regarded as a serious overlook in one who impugns directly and by implication the truth of the teaching of our Lord and his Apostles. Among the “errors” of the Apostles’ days was one, that “the resurrection was past already” (2 Tim. ii., 18). If this could be thus broadly asserted in A.D. 66, when living witnesses of the fact, if fact it was, could be readily found, is it not apparent that something else was then intended than is generally now meant by the phrase “resurrection of the dead.” A general resurrection of corpses at that time would surely have been self-demonstrative. If it took place then it wanted no teachers to expound it. If it did not take place and yet a “resurrection of the dead” was taught, is it not evident that the thing so taught could not have been the resurrection of dead bodies. And if a resurrection was then taught to be imminent, if not passed already, which was not a resurrection of corpses, what was it that was meant? How necessary it is to be explicit on such a subject as this! How much we lose in not knowing what our author means and with respect to which he “asks in vain for proof.” As “the disciples continued to propagate at the risk of their lives the doctrines, which, in the Gospels, are attributed to their master, the probability may be inferred that he was the author of them,”—therefore “the mistakes of that early period are not altogether due to the misconceptions of his followers.” Our author thus plainly traces the authorship of the mistakes of that early period to Jesus himself rather than
to his disciples, and as Jesus is really the author of Christianity as well as of these "early mistakes" it cannot be wondered at that "a Beneficed Clergyman" should ask in vain for proof" . . . of the resurrection of the dead!"

Alas, little proof is wanting of utter disengenuousness, or of a very qualified apprehension, if not a complete ignorance respecting the scripture doctrine of "the resurrection of the dead!"

It is very evident to the minds of New Testament students, that the Apostles taught that their disciples were really the subjects of a "resurrection from the dead" (see Rom. vi., 3-11; Col. ii., 10-15; iii., 1 &c. Eph ii., 4-7). If this could be so while the Apostles themselves lived, and while they were addressing those who were so "raised up," it is clear on the face of it that neither the subjects of resurrection nor their teachers had any idea of a raising up of dead corpses. And if this were true of Christian doctrine in the lifetime of the Apostles, why should "the resurrection of the dead" be understood to be the resurrection of the dead bodies of men and women when the age of the Apostles had reached its end? Is it not much more logical and prima facie correct to assume that, if a first resurrection, or a resurrection a first time, was not a resurrection of dead corpses, so neither was a second resurrection, or a resurrection a second time, intended to be. On the contrary, where the evidence is not of the most explicit and formal kind, every principle of sound interpretation requires that the second be of the same kind as the first. The subjects of resurrection first referred to, became thereby the subjects of a New State, with its new privileges, relations and conditions. But from its very nature, it was only partial and initiatory. It marked a change, conferred a new position of exaltation, and was endowed with a new and peculiar vitality. But at the Advent of Christ the change
was perfected, the privilege with which it was fraught completed, and the whole family of God, whether they had "fallen asleep," or had been "waiting for the change," were then "filled with all the fulness of God." And the resurrection of dead bodies was no more necessary to the perfection of this state than such a resurrection was to the full enjoyment by our transatlantic cousins, of the full privileges of American citizens when their Commonwealth was finally established. By the first they were constituted sons of God; by the second they became inheritors of the blessings and privileges to which they were redeemed and exalted, and with which they were invested by the bounty of Him, who, in his final Advent put "all enemies under his feet." Such in brief and without technical definition is the state denominated "the resurrection of the dead," and is no more connected with a resurrection of "dead bodies" than would be the elevation of "a Beneficed Clergyman of the Church of England" to a seat on the Episcopal Bench. True, the latter, were it to take place, would be evidenced on all sides, but the former is a more real and permanent, if a less carnal and less tangible elevation. There is this most important distinction, that whereas an episcopal elevation is essentially a carnal and worldly endowment, and therefore is only externally evidenced, "the resurrection of the dead," like all spiritual facts, must be "spiritually discerned," while to the natural man, such facts are always and necessarily "foolishness," for "he cannot know them" (1 Cor. ii., 14). Is it not then a natural result that he should "look in vain for evidence . . . . of the resurrection of the dead" at the end of the Apostolic age?

If the natural mind thus must fail to find evidence of "the resurrection of the dead," the same result and from the same cause would necessarily follow the
attempt to find proof of "the rapture of the living," or to perceive "the myriad hosts of attendant angels." But here again our author most inopportunely fails to be definite. What was "the rapture of the living" which was then to take place? Who were "the myriad hosts of attendant angels?" In what way do the scriptures express these two features of the characteristics of that time? He has not even recorded the scriptural accounts either of "the attendant angels," or of "the rapture of the living" saints. If he has failed properly to conceive the nature of "the resurrection of the dead" and the "convulsion of the material world" is there any reason why he should be more successful in perceiving the presence of "messengers," or realizing emotions which are essentially spiritual and only to be seen in any appreciable degree by explaining "these attending circumstances figuratively." A figurative explanation of these circumstances he calls "unnatural and forced." He has admitted in the words quoted from p. 437, "Apocalypse Fulfilled," that "figurative" language is found in the scriptures. This being so, why should such an explanation be considered either "unnatural" or "forced"? To be supernatural is not necessarily unnatural. If the fact of revelation be admitted at all it must imply the revelation of the supernatural. And how can the supernatural be conceived except by some adaptation to the powers of the natural. But the natural mind of man can form no conception of what is spiritual and supernatural except by the use of some figure, or symbol, or typical representation to bring these within the reach of the mind. Can it be competent to pronounce that "forced" which is essential to the recognition of the supernatural? It is at least most disingenuous to offer such an objection, unless it is meant to imply also a refusal to admit the existence
of spiritual facts as in any degree bearing on the points at issue.

Further, we are told "the establishment of Christianity was not sudden, like the Advent, but the slow growth of centuries." Again we must deplore the absence of explicit definition. If the Advent never took place in what sense was Christianity established? If after the failure of "the Advent" in accordance with the teaching of the Apostles and the predictions of Christ himself, Christianity was established even during "the slow growth of centuries" what was it that took centuries to attain the implied establishment? If the allegations of our author are to be credited, it must have been error and falsehood,—in no sense Christian, which became established. But the statement is unmeaning verbage. The corruptions and adulterations of Christianity were "the slow growth of centuries," but the Christianity preached by the Apostles was known and established in all parts of the then known world within forty years after the resurrection of Christ. Bishop Newton (Dissertations on the prophecies, Diss. xviii.) states,—"It appears, indeed, from the writers of the history of the Church, that before the destruction of Jerusalem the Gospel was not only preached in the lesser Asia, and Greece, and Italy, the great theatres of action then in the world, but was likewise propagated as far Northward as Scythia, as far Southward as Ethiopia, as far Eastward as Parthia and India, as far Westward as Spain and Britain. . . . . Our ancestors of this Island seem to have lain as remote from the scene of our Saviour's actions as almost any nation, and were a rough and inhospitable people . . . . but there is absolute certainty that Christianity was planted in this country in the days of the Apostles, before the destruction of Jerusalem." This is fully corroborated
by the well-known statement of Tertullian,—(second century) "In whom else have all nations believed, but in Christ, who lately came? In whom else have all these nations believed? i.e., Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, Armenia, Phrygia, Cappadocia; the inhabitants of Pontus and Asia, and Pamphylia; they that dwell in Egypt, and they who live in Africa, beyond Cyrene; Romans and strangers: Jews and other nations in Jerusalem; the various sorts of people in Getulea; the many countries of the Moors; all the borders of Spain; the different nations of Gaul; and those parts of Britain which the Romans could not reach, even they are subject to Christ; the Sarmatoe also, and Daci, the Germans and Scythians; and many other obscure nations, with many provinces and islands scarcely known to us: in all these the name of Christ lately as he came, reigns? (Cont. Jud. Lib. i.) St. Paul's own testimony to the preaching of the Apostles and the extensive progress it had made in his time is very explicit. "Their (the Apostles') sound went into all the earth and their words unto the ends of the world." (Rom. x., 18). "The Gospel which is come unto you as in all the world" "which was preached to every creature which is under heaven" (Col. i., 6-23). Than this no historical fact is better established, and the wild fancy, or fiction, that Christianity was "the slow growth of centuries" may well be left to the historical knowledge of general readers, still more to scholars, for its refutation. After the Advent of Christ a "growth" did set in which was not slow,—the growth of lords who claimed to rule over God's heritage. And to this false growth the existing class of Bishops and Beneficed Clergymen owe their origin and vigour. With these "the growth of Christianity" had no concern, further than to show that it existed very early, and had attained to an unexampled expansion and
popularity, so that through its influence perverted and misapplied, was found the road to worldly aggrandisement and power in Church and State.

Our author adds,—"The Coming of the Son of Man is represented as a terrific consummation with which the whole world is concerned, and to give timely notice of which event the Gospel should be preached unto all nations as a witness before the end should come; a proclamation hardly needed in the case of a local calamity, and irrelevant when addressed to Gentile converts in no way concerned in the destruction of a Jewish city." The disingenuousness of new-born zeal, proverbially bold, could hardly go further! The proclamation of the Gospel as a witness to all nations was "hardly needed in the case of a local calamity;" but if the "all nations" who were to hear this testimony were gentiles, they were "in no way concerned in the destruction of a Jewish City!" Doubtless, Christ and his Apostles who are alleged to have been "in error" as to the fundamental facts of Christianity, are in our author's view likely to have fallen into "error" also as to the elaborate and powerful machinery they brought to bear in the propagation of their errors! But were the Gentile Converts in no way connected with the destruction of this Jewish City (Jerusalem)? Our author himself testified, before his "more mature consideration" convinced him that he had at least been in error, as to the bearing of the destruction of Jerusalem on the Gentile world. "It . . . . . was the breaking up, not of a city and nation, but of a religion, a religion established by God himself, and which for 2,000 years was the only Religion vouchsafed to man." Had not this city been destroyed by the power of the Risen and Exalted Jesus, in accordance with his predictions: had "the powers" of the Jewish Church and nation been able successfully to deliver themselves from the promised
desolation, and to have come out of the last great conflict the victors, there would have been a palpable declaration to all men that Jesus was a false prophet; that his predictions had been falsified; that the power of Jehovah, which up to that time had been employed in defence of the Jews and of their city and polity, was in opposition to the teachings of Christ, and was still exerted on the Jews' behalf: that Jehovah was still as before he had been, their "man of war." Therefore, that the Gentiles were still as they had hitherto been, without the pale of the family of God: that they were still "without God and without hope" as they had been during the long ages in which Jehovah had especially regarded the Jews as his peculiar people. The issue involved in the terrible calamity of that time to every nation, was the most stupendous and vast that ever was raised on the theatre of time. It was, whether He, who had "bowed the heavens and come down" to earth, was truly what he had represented himself to be. Whether the blood shed on Calvary had been shed in vain. Whether "Moses" was the Lawgiver, and Sinai's broken tablets, the law still existing in the house of God, or whether condemnation and death—the only heritage of law, or Salvation and Life,—purely gospel blessings, were the established privileges of God's people. It was whether the condition of things involved in the proclamation of the Gospel, and which distinctly depended on the manifestation of The Power which destroyed Jerusalem—whether it be expressed in such phraseology as "the Appearing," or "the Coming of the Son of Man," or in some other way, was that of "the law of Commandments contained in ordinances," which ministered, and could only minister death, or that in which ordinances, ceremonies, sacrifices, and all that belonged to a state of mere expectation, were superseded and replaced by a state
in which Life Eternal was given; in which all sacrifices except "the sacrifice of praise continually" were done away with: in which "the hand-writing of ordinances" was blotted out for ever, and wherein "there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus," a state in which was demonstrated that "God is no respector of persons," whether they be called by the name of Jew or Gentile, Greek or Barbarian, but that in every nation whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Rom. x. 13).

The destruction of this Jewish City was the last note in the wail of religious exclusion with God for its author, and amidst its blood and thunder and fire and smoke the emancipated Sons of God in every nation and every clime could raise that loud song of triumph, and chant the sweet notes of praise, because God hath "visited and redeemed his people" out of every kindred and nation and tongue and clime and tribe. The Coming of the Son of Man was a terrific consummation truly, in which, emphatically, the whole world was concerned, and of which, by the preaching of the Gospel by the Apostles, timely notice was given to all nations, and Gentile converts and their sons to unnumbered generations were directly concerned. And from that day onward, through all time, the Family of God in all nations were to breathe the air of Freedom, Life, Peace and Eternal Salvation, and the proof of the truth or falsehood of "the ways of God to man" hung on "the destruction of a Jewish City."

How vastly astray must this writer have wandered: how little has he comprehended the truth he has deigned to impugn, to have admitted of him making such sad statements as are found in nearly every page of this pamphlet! Of spiritual truth there is not a vestige. Indeed the object of the writer appears
to be to bring all spiritual and supernatural truth down to the standard of human philosophy. And this is rationalism, though, existing in the "Church of England," is not likely to be acknowledged as it is here put. Oh, how elevated! To attempt by finite means and human experience, to measure the infinite. To pronounce dogmatically that not only the Apostles, but their Master too, were "in error" in making the announcements respecting his Advent which Jesus did, may sound grandly when characterised by such phrases as "free and honest inquiry;" it may look candid that "an admission of error should come from within the Church," rather "than that the charge of being upheld by falsehood should be hurled against it by hostile hands," but wherein does "the admission" differ from hostility, seeing the powers necessary to deal with such topics are obviously absent. If Christ was "in error" how can "Christianity" avoid the condemnation which error involves? How pronounce the "eschatological" element of Christianity to be false,—deriving its falsehood from its author, and yet regard "the moral" element as worthy of the confidence and support of those who claim to have a special love for truth! The immorality of this mode of reasoning would be self-evident to every mind which thinks about its character, were it not that there is a known perversity in the human mind to deceive itself, even in worldly affairs, and the tendency is immeasurably stronger in dealing with spiritual things. But surely no course can be more unphilosophical, or more unreliable than to measure subjects of spiritual and eternal moment by the limited powers, and the still more limited knowledge of the human, in relation to spiritual things, even when honesty of purpose and purity of aim, guide the continually erring judgment. If Christianity is not a divine superinduction—if it is not
a revelation from God, which it unquestionably pro-
fesses to be, it is nothing. It is either true or false; and if its author was “in error” in intimating the most solemn facts and circumstances in its develop-
ment, in what way can we be sure that that feature of it, which has been called “the moral element,” is free from “the error,” from which its author did not escape? If this is to be done by testing it by some standard of morality external to itself, it is but ap-
plying the test of the Less to the Greater. For the Greater can never be truly measured by the Less; and if this standard is external to Christianity, it is but a repetition of the absurd attempts, which have been made in all ages,—and in every age has most signally failed. CHRISTIANITY IS DIVINE, OR IT IS NOTHING. If divine, it proceeded from the mind of the infinite. To attempt to support as true morality that which is asserted to be based on falsehood, exhibits an obliquity of moral vision, which, whatever else it may be, is utterly unfit to deal either with the mo-
rality or the facts of Christianity. And whether this attempt is made by those within the Church or without her pale alters not the case, except in so far as the former, from their position, are those who “as-
sume a virtue” though they “have it not,” and are therefore likely to be as untrue to the morality, as they avow themselves to be to the facts of Christi-
anity.

Let there be a broad distinction drawn between those who take the facts and misapply or misinter-
pret them, and those, who, professing more candour, and a greater love of truth, ignore the facts alto-
gether, pronounce their author to be ignorant of what he announces, and what he announces to be false in fact, although it is the vital foundation upon which the whole superstructure rests. The former may be unwise, indiscreet, even ignorant and prejudiced
friends; the latter can only be regarded as enemies,—all the more to be treated with extreme watchfulness, that they cover their assaults with the garments of friendship, candour, and a love of truth above others.

Bible Christianity is Spiritual Truth. Rationalism is no more able to comprehend its character, or deal with its facts than the eyes of the blind are fitted to comprehend the effects of light, or the ears of the deaf to measure the melody of sweet sounds. Its attempts at reasoning, only exhibits its folly, based on vanity, which every spiritually enlightened mind resists, as it would the assaults of a deadly plague. The Church is of a truth in a bad case, when her clergymen retaining their Benefices, resort to the use of such weapons. But though the attempts of such writers are weak and impotent in the extreme, in what light can we regard the nature of that species of interpretation of prophecy, so very prevalent in these days, which can in any degree extenuate the covert attacks on truth itself, made by “A Beneficed Clergyman of the Church of England,” and the school of writers to which he has unhappily attached himself? It is unquestionably “error;” and, by forsaking the only safe Canons of interpretation, it has reared a system, or systems, utterly erroneous and “weak.” “Modern Advent theories,” whether denominated by such ill-defined titles as “Millenarianism,” or the equally enigmatical “Catholic Apostolic Church,” with its “three creeds,” and its Apostles sent forth “in these days to prepare a people to meet the King at his coming” are but the expressions of misdirected judgment, based upon a misconception and mis-interpretation of the language of our Lord and his Apostles, when referring to his Advent in Power.

Nothing can be more sound in the interpretation
of Scripture language, than to discover primarily, what that language meant when it was spoken, and the times to which it was intended to refer. Admitting that the language of our Lord is the language of Truth and Authority, an honest exposition must set forth the meaning it had when it fell from His lips; and to that primary signification all "modern theories" must submit. Truth is harmonious, simple, and cannot in any way be ruled by theory or opinion. All the signs which were to precede and accompany "The Coming of our Lord," were fulfilled with a distinctness and fulness, which admits of no doubt as to the Power which was working out the Great Result at that time. And so sure as these signs were fulfilled, so certainly did "The Son of Man come in His Glory and all the holy angels with Him" (Matt. xxv. 31). So in like manner were "the sheep divided from the goats at that time (ver. 32 &c.), and the "Judgment of the Great Day" pronounced (Jude 6; 2 Peter iii. 7-11; 1 John iv. 17, et freq). The "World," too, of Scripture, was brought to an End when the endurance of the saints received the promised reward. (Matt. xxiv. 13-14; Matt. xiii. 39-40; Rev. xiv. 15-20; Rev. ii. 26-29; Luke xxi. 29-33). In this plain and natural sense "the last days,"—"these last days,"—"the ends of the world," &c., (Acts ii. 17; Heb. i. 2; 1 Cor. x. 11; Phil. iv. 4) and many synonymous phrases had a consistent and intelligent meaning. With such plain and explicit declarations, with which the scriptures abound, in the face of the all but universal perversions and misinterpretations of their meaning by sects and parties of all names, that the truth of God should still be preserved is no small proof of its truth, and of the divine source from which it emanated. The ignorance and false zeal of Christians no less than the assaults of avowed enemies, have marred its beauty and obscured its force, and indeed
would have destroyed its vitality, had the truth been in human keeping. But it has been in the care and under the protection of its divine author, and by His Power will find its way to the hearts and consciences of men still as it has done in all past time. Truth is self demonstrative. In its nature simple and consistent. It is only by laying aside the false glosses of early education, abandoning the delusive expectations and carnal constructions of modern Millenarianism, and falling back on the plain, unequivocal and consistent teaching of our Lord and His Apostles, that we can escape from the delirious dreaming of Millenarian fancies on the one hand, or the cold and lifeless abyss of rationalism on the other. In the teaching of Jesus and His Apostles only can we find reliable truth, and it is the duty no less than the privilege of Christians to "search the Scriptures," and to abide simply by their teaching.

There is indeed a most solemn question for the consideration of all sects or bodies of Christians who ignore the plain teaching of the Scriptures as the sole authority, with respect to the Advent of Christ, and its co-etaneous events, and who substitute the false interpretations and unjustified expectations of a Future Advent, held out to them by their teachers—held out to be perpetually falsified. That consideration is, that their credulity, and the false interpretation it compels, furnish an additional battlement to the stronghold of modern Infidelity. For again the sound is heard, "Where is the promise of His Coming?" and the ranks of those who like "A Beneficed Clergyman" boldly proclaim "the error" of our Lord and his Apostles, as to what they taught, have been largely augmented of late. The issue between Truth and Falsehood on this subject is now narrowed indeed, to the point raised by such writers. Do the Scriptures, recording the teaching of our Lord and His Apostles, express The
Truth, unmixed with error, and is that Truth alone Authoritative? If it is, then it follows that the Advent of Christ is long since past: that it took place, \textit{as He said}, in the generation of men He addressed when in the flesh; and that all its surrounding events, with all their vast consequences, took place then also, \textit{as He said}. If "error" there be, it is "the error" of interpretation based on misconception of the facts and of their nature and consequences, not in the facts themselves. The more a future expectation of a fulfilment of prophecy is held out when all prophecy \textit{is already fulfilled}, the more are the ranks of infidelity strengthened. The more misinstructed Christians by literalizing expectations of Spiritual facts, lend their strength to those, who, to harmonise modern expectations with Scripture statements, accuse the author of Truth with "error," the more dishonour is done to the Word of Truth and its Divine Author. "Modern theories" of an expected Advent of our Lord are false and untenable, or Christianity itself is a vast error. This is the solemn issue practically raised by "A Beneficed Clergyman," with which the public teachers of Millenarianism have to deal. It must be dealt with after the manner of an alternative, and as such it is here commended to their consideration. If Christ's words are true (Matt. xxiv. 29-35), \textit{they have been fulfilled}. If he was "in error," then, alas, all future expectations based upon them must be without foundation—mere delusive expectations. But he who said "I am the way, the truth, and the life;" "who spake as never man spake," is "The Faithful and The True," "The Word of God;" and all interpretations of that word must fall within the boundary line of facts upon the occurrence of which He himself has based them, as The Test of His Truth.