WHEREIN

MILLENAIANS ARE WRONG

OR

CHRIST'S SECOND COMING

PROVED TO BE IMPOSSIBLE

UNTIL THE FATHER HAS MADE HIS ENEMIES

HIS FOOTSTOOL.

BY THE REV. JAMES GALL.

"The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou at my right hand until
I make Thine enemies Thy footstool."—Ps. cx. 1.

"Of the increase of His government and peace, there shall be
no end."—Ps. ix. 7.

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PREFACE.

SINCE the days of the Apostles, there has never been a period during which Christianity has made such strides as during the present century. Never was the Church of God more free, never better prepared, and never more determined to pursue its conquests; and, we may add, never was the world more open and ready to be christianised.

During the last century there were no Sunday Schools, no City Missions, no Religious or Benevolent Societies of any kind; no Carrubber’s Close Mission, no Mildmay Park, no Salvation Army. With the exception of the Methodists, who kept the lamp of truth burning in England, while all around was dark, the Churches were profoundly asleep, allowing the masses to grow up without God and without hope in the world.

At that time it was universally believed that the duty of providing for the spiritual wants of the people rested entirely on the Government of the country; which, while it acknowledged the duty, neglected it. The idea of the Church or the people undertaking it, never entered their imagination; for even to be called upon to support their own ministers, would, at that time, have been regarded as a hardship; and yet, while depending on the civil magistrate for their spiritual necessities, so little concerned were the Churches about the spiritual destitution that prevailed, that until Dr. Chalmers arose with his great scheme of Church Extension and his demands upon the Treasury, there was not life enough left even to raise a cry for the money.
What made matters worse was that there was no real liberty, either civil or religious. The civil magistrate took the charge of everything, both sacred and profane; while those who were not in authority had no power either to act or to resist. To interfere with politics was to rebel against the State, and to interfere with religion was to rebel against the Church. Lay preaching was strictly prohibited, and any attempt at popular organisation, no matter under what pretext, would have been put down with the utmost severity.

Abroad, matters were no better. On the Continent, Protestantism had degenerated into neology, infidelity and indifference; and Roman Catholic countries were sealed against any attempt to preach the Gospel, had any desire to do so existed. In Italy not even a Bible was allowed to enter, the East India Company had peremptorily refused to permit missionaries to enter India, and the millions of China were equally inaccessible. New Zealand and the Islands of the South Sea were inhabited by cannibals, and, although the London Missionary Society had sent out missionaries to Tahiti, there had not as yet been a single convert.

The first French Revolution was the signal gun that awoke the nations from their sleep of ages, and announced the commencement of an entirely new era in the history of the world. Like the earthquake at Philippi, when the foundations of the prison were shaken, the doors thrown open, and everyone's bands were loosed, a somewhat similar result ensued; the foundations of arbitrary government were shaken, a multitude of doors were thrown open, and the bands of tradition began to be loosed, so that the human mind was allowed to go free. That which was a curse to infidel France, became a blessing to Protestant Britain, because it was under the shadow of that Revolution that civil and religious liberty in this country was born.

The commencement of the present century was also the commencement of a second Reformation, grander and even more important than that of the sixteenth. The glory of
the first Reformation was that it enthroned the Bible, but it fell into the fatal mistake of committing the cause of Christ and the advancement of His Kingdom into the hands of the civil magistrate; the glory of the second Reformation consisted in its lifting down the burden from the shoulders of the civil magistrate, where it ought never to have been, and laying it on the hearts and consciences of God's own people.

The form which it assumed at its commencement was that of religious and benevolent societies, the London Missionary Society, the London Tract Society, the British and Foreign Bible Society, and the Sunday School Union, leading the way, all of them being formed about the same time, and all dependent on voluntary contributions. But, no sooner did the Church begin to taste the sweets of giving, and see the open door that was set before it, than immediately there sprang up hundreds of voluntary associations in all parts of the country, not only for promoting the cause of Christ, but for the relief of every form of human suffering. Instead of confining the work of the Church to mere preaching, every variety of Christian work began to be undertaken, and Sunday Schools began to be established in every corner of the Kingdom for the religious instruction of the young. This was followed by numberless other enterprises: feeding the hungry, relieving the distressed, strengthening the weak, healing the sick, lifting up the fallen—in short, walking in the footsteps of the Son of Man, who went about continually doing good.

The Christian public, having thus taken upon themselves the duties formerly supposed to belong to the civil magistrate, did not confine themselves to Home Evangelism. Imitating the London Missionary Society, other societies were formed, and missionaries sent out in increasing numbers, while money flowed in with increasing liberality. The barriers that once hindered the entrance of the Gospel were broken down one by one, until almost the whole world was open to Evangelism. India is now being evangelised, hundreds of Churches and Christian schools have
been planted throughout the Empire, and its hoary super-
stitions are tottering to their fall. China also is being
evangelised, and missionaries are pouring in to that long
benighted land. Japan, New Guinea, and the South Sea
Islands are being evangelised; and, in addition to all this,
the Bible has been translated into hundreds of languages
in countries where a century ago it was altogether unknown.
Central Africa, which until lately was unexplored, has now
been opened up, and Christianity and civilisation are
finding their way along the thousands of miles of inland
navigation, and carrying light and peace where at present
only darkness and misery prevail. Although much, very
much still remains to be done; and although there is
still much apathy and unfaithfulness, we have at least seen
the first streaks of a bright Millennial morning.

And yet, contemporaneous with all this, there has been
coming forth a voice, loud and earnest, from a small but
influential section of our Christian brethren, who call them-
selves Millenarians, and who see in all this not light but
darkness—not conquest but defeat. They see “the shadows
gathering deeper and broader everywhere, and darkness
denser than Egyptian settling down upon Christendom.”
Forty years ago our fathers were told that they were living
in “an age that was destined to concentrate in its history
more of the terrible and the calamitous than has ever
heretofore been witnessed, or shall be witnessed hereafter.”
These brethren can see nothing but corruption and
hypocrisy, not only in the world, but in the Church; and
they say confidently that, as it has begun, so will it con-
tinue, like the leaven which the woman hid in three
measures of meal, until the whole world has sunk into
utter apostacy. When the Son of Man cometh, they say,
He will not find faith on the earth.

These brethren having devoted themselves to the study
of unfulfilled prophecy, have arrived at these and other
startling conclusions. They tell us that it is quite a mis-
take to suppose that God ever intended the world to be
converted by the preaching of the Gospel; that would give too much glory to man, and too little glory to the Lord Jesus Christ. The Gospel dispensation, they say, is bound to be a failure, because those that preceded it were failures; because Mount Sinai was a failure, therefore Mount Zion ought to be a failure too; because Hagar and Ishmael were sent away, Sarah and Isaac must follow them; in other words, that when God took away the first, it was not to establish the second, but to prove that both of them were a mistake; and, when both have been proved to be failures, Christ will come and do the work Himself. That which the Gospel will fail to do, will be accomplished by the glorious appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ.

According to Millenarians, the only purpose that God had in view in the preaching of the Gospel was to "take out from the Gentiles a people for His name;" for, though it is necessary that the Gospel should be preached among all nations, it is not for their conversion, but only "for a testimony." When the last of the chosen few has been gathered in, whom God has proposed to save during the present dispensation, the Church will be complete, Christ will come, and the Marriage Supper of the Lamb will take place. Those who will be converted after Christ has come will form no part of the Church of God. They will form an inferior class, subjects, but not sons; and, although some of them will be present at the Marriage Supper, they will be there not as part of the Bride herself, but as friends and attendants of the Bride. The lowest of those who are converted before Christ comes will be higher in rank than the highest of those that will be converted afterwards. Some, though not all, maintain that even the Old Testament saints will form no part of the Church; and, although Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, will sit down with the Church in the kingdom of heaven, it will be at a lower table.

These brethren say that both the Church and the world are becoming worse and worse, and will continue to become worse under a preached Gospel, and at length Antichrist will arise; some say that it will be the Roman
Emperor Nero *redivivus*, or perhaps one of the Bonaparte family.* But whoever he may be, he will sweep Christianiry from the earth. According to some, he will make Babylon on the Euphrates his capital, which will become the centre of the world’s commerce, larger, more magnificent, and more populous than London. He will make war upon the Jews, and having besieged Jerusalem, just as he is about to take it, Christ will descend in power and great glory, and will destroy him and his army with the brightness of His Coming.

When Antichrist has thus been destroyed, and Satan bound, both Jews and Gentiles will be suddenly converted, like Saul of Tarsus, “by the visible display of Christ’s glory,” and the world will enter upon its Millennium of holy rest. Christ will then build Jerusalem—according to some—on the top of a high mountain, with a temple which will surpass in magnificence every other building of the kind, occupying a platform nine miles square; sacrifices will be offered up on its altar as in former times, but according to Ezekiel’s ritual. Moreover, they say that the Jews are to be a separate Church during the Millennium, and Christ will be their King sitting upon the throne of David, His kingdom extending to the Euphrates, as promised to Abraham. He will be literally “the King of the Jews,” as well as the Head of the Church.

It must not be supposed, however, that Millenarians are agreed in their views. There is a wide divergence, but these are the latest and most advanced, so far as we have been able to ascertain them.

We must ever keep in mind that there is a wide disdinction between the doctrines of Christianity and speculations regarding the interpretation of unfulfilled prophecy. Nothing can be more certain than the one, nothing can be more uncertain than the other. The one every Christian is bound to investigate for himself, the other ought to be

left to those who have sufficient learning, as well as sufficient leisure for the work. But there is a limit to the speculations of those who undertake the investigation, and beyond that limit they cannot be allowed to go without protest. In their speculations they cannot be allowed to come into hostile collision with any Christian doctrine, or any promise which God has made either to Christ or to His Church. So long as Millenarians, therefore, confine themselves to speculations regarding the interpretation of unfulfilled prophecy, the utmost latitude ought to be allowed them; but when, in order to support their theories, they deny, or undermine, any of those great truths which are plainly revealed in Scripture, the humblest Christian may take his stand upon the Word of God and oppose them. It is because we believe that these views are not only opposed to the teaching of the Bible, and fundamentally inconsistent with the doctrines of Christianity, but fitted to do grievous injury to the cause of Christ, that we feel called upon to do what we can to show wherein they are wrong.

Most readily do we acknowledge the high Christian standing of the brethren who are so enthusiastic in propagating these views, but not the less are we persuaded that Millenarianism is a disease that has broken out in the Church at a time when it is capable of doing the greatest amount of harm, and the more do we recognise the sagacity of the enemy in his choice of the soil where he has sowed his tares. These views are of a kind, that to have sowed them upon any other than the very richest soil to which he could get access, would have been a blunder. Irvingism, Tractarianism, Plymouthism, and Millenarianism, are all of them plants of that kind that could grow upon none but the richest soil, and there accordingly we find them. If the enemy wished to cast disparagement on the love and compassion of God toward a lost and guilty world, what better plan could he adopt than to get the most devoted Christians he could find, to proclaim that God in the present dispensation had neither the wish nor the inten-
tion to save more than a few? If he wished to cool the zeal of God's children, and to enable them to look with complacency on the millions around them going down to a lost eternity, how could he better accomplish his purpose than by getting eminent Christians to tell them that God does the very same? What can be more advantageous to the kingdom of Satan than to hinder the prayers of God's people for the conversion of the world, by telling them not only that that is not to be granted, but that it would not be for God's glory that it should? If he wished to magnify the superior power and attractions of outward grandeur and physical force, compared with those of self-sacrificing love in conquering the human heart, what better plan could he adopt, than getting men whose loyalty would be above suspicion, to tell the world that the Cross of Christ will fail to draw all men unto Him, but that the visible display of His power and glory will be more successful in winning men back to God. And finally, if he wished to prevent the Church from considering her ways in order to discover the causes of her shameful defeat, what device could be better fitted for his purpose than to persuade her that it is too late, and that, faithful or unfaithful, she will be defeated, as it is not God's purpose that she should succeed.*

Hitherto, so far as we are aware, these views have been controverted only by those who are opposed to the doctrine of Christ's premillenial coming, and who, viewing it as a question of unfulfilled prophecy, undertake at the same time to prove that the Second Advent will not take place till after the Millennium. Being burdened with

* It is this alone that has induced the author to study and write upon the subject. For many years it has been the business of his life to endeavour to convince the Church, that were we to return to the principles that enabled the Apostolic Church to triumph over every opposition, the world might be converted in a very short time. The only opposition he has met with has been from the Mil lenarians, who tell him that his views are unscriptural, and his expectations a dream. It has thus become a part of his mission to do all in his power to lift this stumbling-block out of the way.
this proof, their line of argument has little in common with ours, which is purely theological. We make no pretension to be interpreters of unfulfilled prophecy, and we are not opposed to the doctrine of the premillennial coming of Christ. We have studied the subject, and read not a little on both sides of the question, and the conclusion to which we came was that unfulfilled prophecy is written in a cypher, the key to which has not yet been found, but which when it is found will make it so plain that he that runneth may read, and all will read it alike. This has been the case with Egyptian hieroglyphics and the Assyrian tablets, and so will it be with unfulfilled prophecy. Until that cypher has been discovered, which it is probable will not be until after the prophecies have been fulfilled, all speculations regarding them, it is to be feared, are so much time and labour lost. It is not for us to know the times and the seasons which the Father has put in His own power, or to intrude into things which we have not seen; but these things are written that, when they are come to pass, we may believe. Even Millenarians are divided into widely diverging schools, and it is a remarkable fact that the only points upon which they are all agreed are those that are most clearly contradicted by Scripture.

Millenarian writers complain that Christians generally give so little time to the study of unfulfilled prophecy, and they quote the opening words of the Apocalypse, "Blessed is he that readeth and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein." But the blessedness which is attached to the reading and the hearing and the keeping of the words of the prophecy does not extend to those who speculate upon its interpretation. It is the keeping of the words of the prophecy after they have been read and heard that is the great thing, and that blessedness can be enjoyed by the humblest and most unlearned Christian that knows his Bible, as well as by the most learned and ingenious theorist. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and
is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; and unfulfilled prophecy is no exception. But it would be very sad if we could get no profit from it unless we discovered the right theory of its interpretation. Even the Apocalypse itself, which is acknowledged by all to be the most difficult of interpretation, is a precious legacy which has been left to the Church; but its interpretation is not at all necessary to enable us to learn the lessons which it was intended to teach. We there can see the general features of God's overruling providence in regard to the future destinies of the Church, and the temporary triumphs of her enemies; but they are revealed in such a manner as to forbid any attempt to translate them into future history. It is wrapped up in a symbolism so abnormal and fragmentary that no one could mistake its purposely mysterious character; and yet the lessons which it teaches lie so patent on its surface that he who runs may read them. In every page it iterates and reiterates the solemn fact that through much tribulation we must enter into life, that the enemy will long and successfully lord it over a suffering and persecuted Church; but, at the same time, it gives the joyful assurance that, however low the fortunes of the Church may be for a time, she will yet rise triumphant over all her enemies, and will yet sit with Christ upon His throne.

Mistaking the meaning of the word "prophecy" in 2 Pet. i. 19 (which means there "inspiration," not "prediction"), where the Apostle, after referring to the testimony which the Father gave to the Son in an audible voice on the Holy Mount, says, "We have a more sure word of prophecy whereunto ye do well to take heed as unto a light that shineth in a dark place;" our friends have applied this to the study of unfulfilled prophecy, as if the chief use of Scripture were the foretelling of future events. The voice in the mount which said "This is my Beloved Son, hear ye Him," was a testimony to Christ, not a prediction; and when Peter tells us that the Bible is a
more sure word of prophecy than even that voice from heaven, he speaks of the foundations of our faith in Christ's mission; and it is to the Bible that he says we do well to take heed as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, because it testifies of Christ. The application of this passage to the study of unfulfilled prophecy, and the idea of our speculations regarding it being more sure and more worthy of our attention than even a voice from heaven, are, to say the least of it, a great mistake.

We are told that prophecy is both a chart and a compass to the Church, to enable her to "steer her way amid clouds and billows," and that those who do not study it are "setting it aside as useless or unintelligible." Woe to the Church if that were really the case! A chart so mysterious that it requires years of study to know which is north and which is south, and after all remains a disputed point with these learned Christian men who have been studying it all their lives, does not look like a chart that God would put into the hands of His Church for her guidance. When God gives a chart, it is always for present duty, not for speculations in regard to the future, and it is so plain that the wayfaring man, though a fool, could not err in following it. The purpose of the Apocalypse is the very opposite of what is here represented. It is intended to teach us that the helm of the Church is in the hands of a Divine Pilot, who has given this very Apocalypse to let us know that it is in safer hands than our own.

When we speak of the study of prophecy we mean, of course, unfulfilled prophecy. The study of fulfilled prophecy is not only legitimate but instructive, and was that indeed for which prophecy was given, "that when it is come to pass ye may believe." And here we cannot help saying how much the Church is indebted to Mr. Guinness for his valuable labours in this department; the only thing we cannot understand is how, in the face of his own discoveries, he continues to be a Millenarian. He has proved to demonstration that, since the Reforma-
tion, the enemies of Christ have been going down and
down, and will continue to go down until Christ comes.*
If that be Millenarianism, we are Millenarians. Mr.
Guinness has shown that, since the Reformation, there
have been great tribulations and wars, with terrible
carnage; but he has also shown that, in every case, the
result has tended towards the overthrow of Antichrist
and the advancement of the Gospel. There may be, and
probably will be, in the immediate future, great tribula-
tions and bloody wars; and, indeed, Mr. Guinness even
gives us the probable dates when they will occur; but he
assures us that again the result will be the further weaken-
ing of the enemies of Christ, and the further bringing of
the nations to the feet of Jesus.

We regard Mr. Guinness's interpretation of the pro-
phecies of Daniel as admirable and conclusive; but he will
pardon us when we say that he has not been equally
successful with the Apocalypse; and we are not without
hope that, when he studies the subject in the light which
we have endeavoured to supply, his views will be at least
modified. Even at present, we suspect that very few of
his brethren altogether agree with him.

EDINBURGH, 1887.

* "Concurrent with the fall of the apostacies and the Renaissance
of the Jewish people, there has taken place within the last hundred
and fifty years a most notable revival of true faith and practical
goddiness among the Reformed Churches everywhere, so that there
is now an immensely larger number of truly converted and renewed
men and women in the world than ever before. There has been a
revival of the spiritual Israel, even more marked than that of the
natural Israel; and this has been accompanied by an influential and
widely spread evangelisation of the heathen, and by a marvellous
circulation of the Scriptures; missionary and Bible societies having
all sprung into existence during this 'time of the end.'"—Mr. and
WHEREIN MILLENARIANS ARE WRONG.

CHAPTER I.

The Father's Promise to the Son.

ONE of the brightest and most gladsome passages in the Word of God is that addressed by the Father to the Son in the 110th Psalm: "Sit Thou on My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool."

This verse is both the key and the key-note of the doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ, and its importance is indicated by the fact that it is five times quoted in the New Testament,* besides being ten times referred to in other passages.†

When Christ was born, He was born a King. By His descent from David He was the rightful King of the Jews, but not the Prince of the kings of the earth. When He came, He assumed the lowly title of "the Son of Man," which means, "the Son of Adam." He was the promised Seed of the woman; and the

* Matt. xxii. 44; Mark xii. 36; Luke xx. 42; Acts ii. 34; Heb. i. 13.
† Mark xvi. 19; Acts iii. 21; v. 31; 1 Cor. xv. 25; Eph. i. 20; Col. iii. 1; Heb. i. 3; viii. 1; x. 12, 13; xii. 2; 1 Pet. iii. 22.

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representative of the human race, who was to bruise the serpent's head and retrieve the disaster of the Fall. He did not deny that Satan was the Prince of this world; but He came to dethrone him and destroy his works, by His obedience unto death—first in the wilderness, and afterwards on Calvary. God signifying by His resurrection that the victory was complete; Satan was no longer the Prince of this world; he was cast out.

But there was yet more to be done. Our Lord had left the world in open insurrection. Herod and Pontius Pilate with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel united in denying His pretensions. He had come unto His own, but His own received Him not; and it was in view of this that the second Psalm was written: "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against His Anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us." From the time of our Lord's crucifixion till immediately before the day of Pentecost, the Church of God may be said to have been at its very lowest state of humiliation. With the exception of the little company of disciples, meeting in the upper room in Jerusalem, and a little flock of believers scattered among the mountains of Galilee, the whole world was in opposition, Jew and Gentile alike ignoring His claims. It was in these circumstances that the Father is represented as addressing His Son: "Ask of Me and I will give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession." "Sit Thou on My right hand until I make Thine enemies Thy foot-
stool." He had finished the work which His Father had given Him to do, and now that He had entered into His rest, and sat down at the Father's right hand, the Father undertook to do all the rest.

But why the Father? Observe, it is the Father that is to give Him the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession; and it was also the Father that was to make His enemies His footstool, while He was sitting at the Father's right hand. If all power was given to the Son in heaven and on earth, angels, and principalities, and powers being made subject to Him, why should it be necessary for the Father to undertake on His behalf? Seated at the Father's right hand, He had only to speak the word and more than twelve legions of angels would have flown to do His pleasure; why then should the Father undertake to do the work of making His enemies His footstool?

The answer is both interesting and instructive. If these enemies had been to be overcome by might or by power, the work of judgment would have been performed by the Son, because all judgment was committed to Him, and all power was given to Him both in heaven and on earth; He could rule them with a rod of iron, and break them in pieces like a potter's vessel. But that is not the way in which the reign of Jesus is to be established on the earth. If the heathen is to be given to Him for an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession, it must be a moral victory and a conquest of the hearts of men. It must be by the power of love, and by the subjection of their lives to His service; and that was a work which the Father alone could accomplish.
All authoritative might and power were given to the Son, because that was purchased by His obedience unto death, "Wherefore God highly exalted Him," but to add a single soul to His kingdom was not committed to the Son. The work of regeneration is exclusively the work of the Father. "Not by might nor by power but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." "All whom the Father hath given Me," said Christ, "shall come to Me, and him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out." "No man can come unto Me except the Father which hath sent Me draw him, and I will raise him up at the last day." It was most appropriate therefore that the Father should say, "I will give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance," "I will make Thine enemies Thy footstool."

In order to make sure that this is the function of the Father and not of the Son, let us examine the Scriptures to see what they say on the subject.

Throughout all our Lord's discourses, and indeed throughout the Bible, we find that the initiatory process of conversion is always ascribed to the Father and never to the Son. It was He that loved the world and gave His Son to be a propitiation for their sins. The planning of the work of Redemption was His; and the part which the Son was to perform in that work was arranged by the Father who gave Him the commandment what He was to do.

In the first place, the Father chose those who were to be given to the Son; and the Son joyfully acquiesced in, and thanked the Father for, the choice that He had made. "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes."
Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in Thy sight” (Matt. xi. 25, 26).

After having chosen them, the Father reveals Christ to them. “Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven” (Matt. xvi. 17).

Again, the natural depravity of the human heart is so great, that the sinner would never accept of Christ if the Father did not draw him by overcoming that enmity, and testifying of Christ. “No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw Him. It is written in the prophets, They shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and learned of the Father, cometh to me” (John vi. 44-46).

In the matter of conversion the Son is entirely passive. The Father gives those whom He hath chosen to Christ, and Christ receives them and gives them eternal life. Christ is the vine, the Father is the husbandman; Christ is the shepherd, the Father is the owner, who confides the sheep to the Shepherd’s care. The Father deals with sinners only, choosing, striving, revealing, witnessing for Christ, drawing them to Him, revealing Christ to them, and at length giving them to Him by the new birth. The Father does indeed give them eternal life, but it is only by giving them His Son. “This is the record, that God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life” (1 John v. 11, 12).

Where the work of the Father ends, there only the work of the Son begins. The work of the Father is evangelistic, and deals with the unconverted; the work of the Son is pastoral, and deals only with those
whom the Father gives Him; or rather the work of the Son consists in His dwelling in them as their life.

We see then that the Father does not perform the functions of the Son, and that the Son does not perform the functions of the Father. It is true that our Lord said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me," but that was a different kind of drawing. It is the sight of Jesus lifted up that draws the sinner; but even the sight of a crucified Saviour would have no effect if the Father does not by that means draw him.

Since the day that Christ ascended to the right hand of God, the Father has been drawing and giving souls to Christ in multitudes, in fulfilment of His promise; and as our Lord has assured us that no man can come to Him except the Father draw him, it follows that there is not a soul that has been drawn to the Saviour by the preaching of the Gospel that is not the gift of the Father, nor a stubborn soul that has been broken and made to bow its neck to the yoke of Christ, that has not been conquered by the Father's power.

When, therefore, the Father promised to the Son that He would give Him the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession, and when He bids Him sit on His right hand until He makes His enemies His footstool, the meaning must be that the Gospel is to spread over the whole world, and that Christ is to sit at the right hand of the Father until all opposition to Christianity has been put down, not by physical violence, but by the preaching of the Gospel and the work of the Spirit.

Looking at the promise in this light, we cannot but
acknowledge that even already the Father has in some measure fulfilled it, though not to its fullest extent. When Christ came, the kingdom of God might be compared to a grain of mustard seed hid in the earth, and the little company in the upper room in Jerusalem was little more; but it immediately began to send forth its branches in all directions, till in the fourth century it had become a political power which even profane history could no longer ignore. To-day it overshadows the nations wherever civilisation extends. In the days of Augustus how improbable was it that the name given to the little babe in Bethlehem should ever be known beyond the family of the carpenter, or the village in which He was brought up? To-day, what other name is so likely to be universally adored? No doubt there remains much yet to be accomplished, but He that has begun the good work will carry it on to the end. So far as it has gone, Christ has been sitting at the right hand of the Father receiving the homage of the nations; but He has not yet risen from His throne, and we look forward to the fulfilment of the Father’s promise that before the Son shall rise from that throne to come to the earth in person the second time, all His enemies shall have been made His footstool, and the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of God, as the waters cover the channel of the sea.

We have chosen this passage as the foundation of an argument to prove that Christianity will continue to spread over the world under a preached Gospel, until every other system has disappeared, and every opposition has been overthrown, so that the Second Coming of Christ cannot take place until the whole world has been converted. We do not say that Christ will come
immediately after that has taken place; neither do we say that He will not. All that we propose to prove is that He cannot come before that without involving, either that the Father has not kept His promise to the Son, or that the Son has acted in disobedience to the Father, either of which is of course impossible. That is to say, if God fulfil His promise to His Son to make His enemies His footstool before He returns the second time, there will be no Antichrist remaining when He comes. But, if on the other hand, when He comes the second time, He finds Antichrist still disputing His authority and defying His power, so that it will be necessary to put him down and destroy him Himself, in that case the Father would have broken His promise, by not putting His enemies under His feet before He rose from His throne; or the Son would have disregarded the command of His Father to sit at His right hand, until the promise was fulfilled.

These views are of course opposed to the Millenarian theory, which maintains that the world, instead of becoming better under a preached Gospel, will always be becoming worse; and that the enemies of Christ, instead of having been put under His feet, will have become masters of the whole world; and the Church, instead of spreading over the world, will have become almost extinct.

Millenarian writers say that this promise of the Father is not inconsistent with their theory, that the Church is to become weaker and weaker, and the enemies of Christianity stronger and stronger, until Antichrist having reached the zenith of his power, Christ will come suddenly and destroy him.

There are two reasons why this cannot be the
meaning of the promise. In the first place, making His enemies His footstool cannot mean destroying them, because nowhere in Scripture is the footstool mentioned in connection with destruction or even displeasure. To enable the reader to judge for himself, we give all the passages in which the word occurs.

1 Chron. xxviii. 2: "I had it in mine heart to build an house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and for the footstool of our God."

Ps. xcix. 5: "Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worship at His footstool."

Ps. cxxxii. 7: "We will go into His tabernacles: we will worship at His footstool."

Isa. lxvi. 1: "The heaven is My throne, the earth is My footstool."

Lam. ii. 1: "How hath the Lord covered the daughter of Zion with a cloud in His anger, and cast down from heaven unto the earth the beauty of Israel, and remembered not His footstool in the day of His anger."

Jas. ii. 3: "Ye say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool."

These are all the passages of Scripture in which the word footstool occurs, and there is not one of them in which there is any indication of destruction or punishment, or even displeasure. The passage in Lamentations, on the contrary, implies that at the footstool there can be no wrath or punishment. The one idea that seems to be implied in connection with the footstool is subject to authority, loyalty, and worship. It is impossible, therefore, to maintain that Christ's enemies being made His footstool means their being destroyed. If Scripture be the interpreter of Scripture, the meaning
must be that His enemies are to be made to submit
themselves to Christ's authority, and become loyal
subjects of His kingdom. The footstool of a monarch
is the place for doing homage, not a place of execution.

The second reason why Christ's enemies being made
His footstool cannot mean their destruction is, that it
is the Father who is to do it. The Father says, "I
will make Thine enemies Thy footstool." We have
already shown that the work of the Father is conversion,
the work of the Son is judgment. "The Father
judgeth no man but hath committed all judgment unto
the Son" (John v. 22). If, therefore, making His
enemies His footstool meant judgment and destruction,
it would not be the work of the Father but the Son.
"Kiss ye the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from
the way, when His anger is kindled but a little." "The
Lord at Thy right hand shall strikethrough kings in
the day of His wrath." There was no need, therefore,
for the Father to make Christ's enemies His footstool,
if that meant destroying them, He could do that
Himself; but, if it means subduing their hearts and
giving them to Christ as loyal subjects, then that was
the peculiar work of the Father, and was a valuable
promise, because no man could come to the Son except
the Father which sent Him drew him.

Even supposing, therefore, that we were to admit
that His enemies being made His footstool implied their
destruction, that destruction would need to take place
before Christ's Second Coming; that is evident from
the employment of the word "until," which implies that
His enemies are to be made His footstool before He
comes. If the promise had been: Sit Thou on My
right hand until Thou makest Thine enemies Thy foot-
stool, that would imply either that He was to sit at God's right hand until, without rising, He had destroyed His enemies; or that He was to rise in order to destroy His enemies. But, when it is said that He was to sit until the Father made His enemies His footstool, that implied that the Father must make His enemies His footstool before He rose. Surely it is not necessary to argue so self-evident a proposition. Take, for example, the command given to Joseph to take the young child to Egypt, and to remain there until he (the angel) brought him word. That surely implied that the angel pledged himself to bring Joseph word when he might return; and it also implied that Joseph was not to return until the angel did so. And so when the Father bids the Son sit at His right hand until He (the Father) makes His enemies His footstool, that implies that the Father is pledged to make Christ's enemies His footstool while He is sitting at God's right hand; and that Christ is not to leave His place until the Father has performed His promise. If Joseph had returned before the angel brought him word, either the angel would have broken his promise, or Joseph would have disobeyed his command. On the same principle, if Christ rose from His Father's right hand before the Father had made His enemies His footstool, that would imply either that the Father had not kept His promise, or that the Son had not obeyed His Father's command.
CHAPTER II.

Apostolic Comments.

We have said that the Father's promise to the Son in the 110th Psalm, is both the key and the key-note of the doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ, because wherever the Second Coming is referred to, it is almost always in connection with or founded upon this promise. Five times it is quoted, and in ten other passages of the New Testament it is referred to in this connection. We know of no other promise in the Old Testament of which the same can be said. Two of these references are of the greatest importance in consequence of the light which they shed on the promise, and the additional information which they supply. They are, in fact, inspired comments on the passage.

The first of these references occurs in Peter's address to the Jews, shortly after the day of Pentecost, on the occasion of his having healed the lame man at the beautiful gate of the temple, as recorded in the third chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. In the Revised Version it is as follows:—

"Repent ye therefore and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.

"And that He may send the Christ who hath been appointed for you, even Jesus.

"Whom the heavens must receive until the times of restoration of all things, whereof God spake by the
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mout of His holy prophets, which have been since the world began."

The first thing which we have to notice here, is the two inducements which the Apostle presented to the Jews, to repent and believe in Christ. The first was that their sins might be blotted out, from which of course we are to understand that their sins would not be blotted out unless they repented and accepted Jesus as the Messiah. The second inducement was, that Christ might all the sooner come, so that there may be times of refreshing from His presence.

But the second thing that we have to notice, is the reason which He gives why Christ could not come until the Jews, as a nation, repented and accepted Jesus as the Messiah. The reason was that the heavens must retain Him until the times of the restoration of all things whereof God spake by the mouth of His holy prophets. That is to say, Christ must remain seated at the right hand of God in the heavens, and the heavens must retain Him there, until the times of the restoration of all things, of which the prophets have spoken, arrived.

Much controversy has been expended on the question whether it is the "times" or the "things" that the prophets spoke about. It matters not for our purpose which the Apostle meant; and as our friends the Millenarians say that it is the "times" and not the "things" that the prophets predicted (and we think they are right) we would allow them to say what the restoration of all things included, and they have no difficulty in admitting that it includes not only the conversion of the Jews and their return to their own land, but the ingathering of the Gentiles as well. But
they say that these things will take place not before, but immediately after the Second Coming.

We admit that this is at least a possible meaning, because the *times* when these things are to take place, may include not only what happens immediately before, but what happens immediately after; so that if the Jews are converted and the Gentiles gathered in, immediately after the Second Coming, the Apostle's words would still apply, because the heavens would receive Christ until the *times* of restoration.

But although that might be the meaning of the sentence taken by itself, it cannot be its meaning taken in connection with what goes before. With such a meaning the Apostle could have no purpose in using it. We must observe that he uses it as an inducement for the Jews to repent, and turn; and, if so, their repenting and turning must have some influence in hastening the seasons of refreshing and times of restoration. "Repent ye, therefore, and return, that your sins may be blotted out, *that so* (*kopōs an*) there may come seasons of refreshing, and *that He may send* the Christ, whom the heavens must receive until the times of restoration." It was the coming of Christ that was held out to them as an inducement to repent and turn. The Second Coming of Christ was associated with all that was hopeful and glad; it would bring seasons of refreshing and restoration, and it was the burden of all the prophet's songs; but in the meantime it was impossible; there was a barrier in the way, and until that barrier is removed, the heavens *must* (*dei*) still retain Him, so that He cannot come. But he told them that it was in their power to remove that barrier, or at least to help to remove that barrier, and that could only be
done by them repenting and turning. So long as the Jews reject Christ as the Messiah, the seasons of refreshing cannot come; but every Jew that is converted is part of the barrier taken away, and the Second Coming brought nearer. If the Jews are not to be converted till after Christ has come, their repentance could have no influence in hastening it, and Peter’s argument would have no meaning.

In confirmation of this we may observe that in his 2nd Epistle, the 3rd chapter, and 12th verse, he uses the same argument, urging the Christians to whom He wrote to hasten the Coming of Christ, which they could only do by spreading the Gospel.

We shall now examine Paul’s understanding of the promise, which we find in 1 Cor. xv. 24-28.

24. Then cometh the end, when He shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power.

25. For He must reign till He hath put all His enemies under His feet.

26. The last enemy that shall be abolished is death.

27. For He put all things in subjection under His feet. But when He saith all things are put in subjection, it is evident that He is excepted who did subject all things unto Him.

28. And when all things have been subjected unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subjected to Him that did subject all things unto Him, that God may be all in all.

The additional light which this passage throws upon the promise is very valuable; but it has been greatly obscured by the superabundant use which the Apostle makes
of the pronoun He; so that it requires some little care to ascertain in each case what is the proper antecedent.

In the 24th and 25th verses, the pronoun "He" occurs three times, and were it not for the 27th and 28th verses, we would naturally suppose that they all referred to the same person. That is to say, "Christ will deliver up the kingdom to God, when He (Christ) shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power; for He (Christ) must reign till He (Christ) hath put all His enemies under His feet."

But on coming to the 27th verse, we are startled by finding that it is not Christ that is to put His enemies under His feet, but the Father, because the Apostle draws the inference that, since it is the Father that does it, He must be excepted.

"Putting all things in subjection," therefore, in the 27th verse, is merely another form in which the act is stated in the 24th, 25th, and 28th verses, "Abolishing all rule and all authority and power," ver. 24, "Putting all His enemies under His feet," ver. 25, and "Subjecting all things unto Him," ver. 27th and 28th.

The only one which has even the appearance of being different is, "Abolishing all rule and all authority and power," ver. 24th. But it cannot be different, because the reason why the Son cannot deliver up the kingdom to the Father till all rule and all authority and power has been abolished, is that He must reign till the Father has put all His enemies under His feet, according to His promise in the 110th Psalm. If they do not refer to the same thing, the one cannot be proved by the other. In fact it is easier to supply the proper antecedent grammatically in the 24th verse, than in any of the others. Thus:
Then cometh the end, when He (Christ) shall deliver up the kingdom to the Father, when He (the Father) shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power. The nearest antecedent in this verse is "the Father."

When the Father said, "Until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool," we should have thought that no one would have ventured to say that it is not the Father but Christ Himself that is to put His enemies under His feet; and yet our friends the Millenarians, find themselves compelled to adopt this interpretation in order to save their theory. But Paul confirms the statement in the Psalms, and even emphasises the fact that it is the Father who is to put all things into subjection under Christ's feet, by drawing the inference that He must be excepted "who did subject all things under Him."

Supplying the proper antecedents, therefore, the passage would read thus:

22. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.
23. But each in his own order; Christ the first-fruits, then they that are Christ's at His Coming.
24. Then (eita) is the end when He (Christ) shall deliver up the kingdom to the Father; when He (the Father) shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power.
25. For He (Christ) must reign, till He (the Father) hath put all His (Christ's) enemies under His feet.
26. The last enemy that shall be abolished is death.
27. For He (the Father) put all things in subjection under His (Christ's) feet. But when He (the Father) saith, "all things are put in subjection," it is evident
that He (the Father) is excepted who did subject all things unto Him (Christ).

28. And when all things have been subjected unto Him (Christ), then shall the Son also Himself be subjected to Him (the Father), that did subject all things unto Him (Christ), that God may be all in all.

When read so, there is no difficulty, no inconsistency, and no inconsequence; and it proves beyond a doubt that it is the Father who is to make Christ's enemies His footstool, and that Christ will not deliver up the kingdom to the Father until that promise is fulfilled. Consequently, He will not return to the earth until all His enemies have been put under His feet.

This passage, which is really a commentary on the promise contained in the 110th Psalm, is very valuable, on account of the light which it throws upon it in several particulars. We have shown that it proves that it is the Father that is to make Christ's enemies His footstool, and that Christ cannot cease to reign until He has done so; it also tells us what is meant by sitting at God's right hand. It is here called "reigning," and when He leaves God's right hand, He ceases to reign, and becomes subject. Sitting at God's right hand, therefore, means sitting for the time on the Father's throne; as He says in Rev. iii. 21: "He that overcometh I will give to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father on His throne." The Son had a throne before He overcame, and that throne, which is not the Father's throne, is the throne of His father David which He received by inheritance. It is the throne of the King of the Jews; that is, the King of the Church. "He shall reign over the House of Jacob for ever, and
of His kingdom there shall be no end” (Luke i. 32, 33). Upon that throne those who overcome are to sit with Him, as he sat with His Father upon His Father’s throne. They are to be kings and priests unto God. They are to be subject to Christ, and Christ is to be subject to His Father, that God may be all in all.

This passage also throws light on what is meant by His enemies being made His footstool. We took occasion to show that being made His footstool could not mean being destroyed. Now it appears that it means being made subject; and, what is very remarkable, the same expression is used in regard to Christ. “When all things have been subjected (hupotage) unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subjected (hupotagesetai) unto the Father.” Being made His footstool is here explained to mean being made subject, in the same sense as that in which the Son is to be made subject to the Father, when He ceases to sit with the Father on his throne. The work of the Father, therefore, will consist in making Christ’s enemies loyal subjects, as Christ will be the loyal Subject of the Father.

Still further light is thrown upon the promise and work of the Father in the 24th verse, by the use that is made of the verb katargeō (which we shall afterwards have occasion to examine in connection with 2 Thess. ii. 8). It is translated in the authorised version, “put down,” and in the revised version, “abolish.” The Father is to “abolish” or “put down” all rule and all authority and power, but the reason given implies that it is only hostile rule, authority, and power. “For He must reign till He hath put all His enemies under His feet.” All legitimate rule, and all legitimate authority and
power will be confirmed; the rule of the saints over the angels, the rule of the principalities and powers in heavenly places under them, and the rule of Christ over the Church, will be established and confirmed; but all opposition to the government of Christ, whatever form it may take, whether it be the rule (archē) of the devils, the authority (exousia) of the pope, or the power (dunamis) of the persecutor: these the Father will bring to an end, by the superior power of a preached Gospel carried home to the hearts and consciences of men by the Holy Ghost. It will not be necessary, therefore, for Christ to encounter and destroy His enemies when He comes. The Father will have already brought them all into subjection, and made them a willing people in the day of His power.

We have thus an inspired definition of what is meant by the Father making Christ’s enemies His footstool. It means putting down and abolishing all hostile rule, authority and power, such as infidelity, popery, Mohammedanism, and heathenism, and it also implies that the victims and votaries of these systems of error will be made subject to Christ, even as Christ will become subject to His Father.

It is not without significance that it is added, “The last enemy that shall be abolished is Death.” He does not say whose enemy it is, or who is to abolish it; nor is it included among the things that the Father is to abolish before the Son rises from His throne; and that for two reasons. In the first place, Death is not to be abolished before Christ rises from the Father's throne, but after He comes down to earth again; and in the second place, it is Christ and not the Father who is to abolish death. The Apostle had introduced the subject
by laying the foundation of the Christian's hope in the resurrection of Christ; and from the fact that Christ has risen, he argues that they that are Christ's must also rise. Christ had already vanquished death in regard to His own person, but His saints were still under its power. It was no enemy of His, therefore, but it was the enemy of His people. But the Apostle distinguishes this enemy from all other enemies, because it is not the Father who is to abolish it, but the Son. All Christ's enemies will be made subject or put down by the Father before Christ comes, but after they have been abolished, and all have been brought under His feet, one enemy alone remains, and that enemy is death. It is the enemy of all the departed saints, and it is also the enemy of all the living saints who dwell in mortal bodies, but after the Father has subjugated all the enemies of Christ, and after Christ has left His throne and surrendered the government into His Father's hands, one enemy will still remain, and that enemy must be abolished by Christ Himself, and that enemy is death. Not till Christ has left His Father's throne, and not until He comes to earth again will this last enemy be overthrown. Christ is the resurrection and the life, and every soul that has been given to Him by His Father He will in no wise cast out, but will raise him up at the last day. They that are in their graves shall hear His voice when He comes, and those who are alive and remain, shall in the twinkling of an eye be changed, the mortal shall put on immortality, and all the ransomed, the quick as well as the dead, shall rise to meet Christ in the air, never to be parted from Him again. Then will mortality be swallowed up of life, and then Death himself shall die.
Comment in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

There is yet one other inspired contribution to the exegesis of the Father's promise, and it is to be found in Heb. x. 12, 13: "But He, when He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made the footstool of His feet."

That this has reference to the promise in the 110th Psalm cannot admit of a doubt. The sitting at the right hand of God, and the expectation that His enemies are to be made His footstool, can refer to no other passage; and here He is represented as sitting in an attitude of expectation, expecting not something to be done by Himself, but expecting something to be done for Him by another. That other is the Father, and the thing which He is expecting to be done for Him is the subjection of His enemies, so that they may become His footstool. The word translated "expecting" in the original is very significant. It is the same word that is used to describe the attitude of the impotent folk at the pool of Bethesda, waiting for, and wearying for the moving of the water: and the attitude of Paul when he waited for and wearied for Silas and Timothy at Athens, after he had sent "a commandment to them to come to him with all speed" (Acts xvii. 16). So Christ is now waiting for the fulfilment of the Father's promise to make His enemies His footstool, and He cannot come the second time until that is done. Christ is the bridegroom, and the Church is the bride, and both are represented as waiting and wearying for the marriage; but that cannot take place till both Jew and Gentile will unite in shouting, "Hosannah to the Son of David: blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord."
CHAPTER III.

Parable of the Mustard Tree.

HITHERTO we have confined our attention to the doctrine that Christ will not leave the right hand of God in the heavens until the Father has fulfilled His promise in the 110th Psalm, to make His enemies His footstool; we now proceed to inquire what the Bible says in regard to the way in which that revolution is to be brought about; whether it is to be sudden, or whether it is to be gradual. Our friends the Millenarians say that the Gospel dispensation is to be a failure; that instead of Christianity spreading over the world under a preached Gospel, it is to become less and less until the second coming of Christ, when it will have almost disappeared from the earth.

The answer to this is found in the two parables of the mustard seed and the leaven, in which the progress of the Gospel is viewed, first from the standpoint of the Church, and then from the standpoint of the world.

In the 4th chapter of the Gospel by Mark, the parable of the mustard seed is introduced at the close of a series of parables, in which the central thought is the propagative power of the Gospel. It begins with the parable of the Sower, in which, after recounting the various measures of failure and success which attended the sowing of the seed upon different parts of the field, the seed upon the good ground brings forth fruit, some thirty, some sixty, and some an hundred-fold.

The lessons which we are to learn from the parable of
the Sower are, first, that as the farmer does not expect that every seed which he sows is to become an ear of corn, so ought not the Church to expect that by the preaching of the Gospel all men are to be converted; second, we learn the hopefulness of the Gospel harvest. As the seed that falls on the wayside, or on rocky ground, or among thorns, forms only a small proportion of that which is sown, the preacher ought to look forward to the universal prevalence of the Gospel, and he should expect that his own labour will not be in vain in the Lord; and third, we learn that as every seed that is sown upon good ground multiplies itself, so every true convert ought to be the means of converting other thirty, or sixty, or a hundred souls.

The second parable of the lighted candle follows up this last thought, in order to show that when a man is himself converted, he is bound to seek to be the means of converting others. A candle when it is lighted, is lighted for a purpose, and that purpose is to give light to all around it. If, on the contrary, it is hidden under the bushel of business or the bed of sloth, it fails to accomplish the very purpose of its existence. That which is whispered into our ear in the closet, is given to us that we may proclaim it on the house-top. It is given to us not for ourselves alone, but that it may be communicated to others; and according to the use that we make of it, so will it be increased or diminished. If we measure out largely of that which God gives us, we will get the more; but if we, like idle or selfish stewards of the grace of God, fail to do so, even that which we have will be withdrawn. Such is the teaching of the second parable.

The third parable of the growing blade teaches us a
lesson of dependence, but also a lesson of expectation at the same time. A bird may let fall a seed into the ground, and it will grow quite as well as if it had been sown by the hand of man. The power that produces the result lies partly in the seed itself, and partly in the sunshine and the showers. It is all of God. When a man drops seed into the ground, he has set a-going an agency that no longer depends on him. He sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed springs and grows up he knoweth not how. His work is finished, but God's work has begun, and that which He begins He will carry on unto the end: First the blade springs up, then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear, ready for the sickle when the harvest is come. Workers with God! how glorious the privilege! yet how humble should we be!

Probably in this last aspect of the parable, the Master glances from the individual work of the preacher to the great harvest of the world that belongs to God; and therefore, most appropriately He closes His discourse with the parable of the Mustard Seed, in which He leaves the consideration of evangelism as the work of man, to look upon the growth of Christianity as the work of God.

"Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth. But when it is sown, it growth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it" (Mark iv. 30-32).

The kingdom of God is the New Testament dispensation, which commenced upon the day of Pentecost.
Previous to that day, during the time of our Lord's ministry, the kingdom of God was "at hand," but had not actually come. The mustard tree, therefore, represents Christianity or the Christian Church, and the mustard seed represents the person of Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

The mustard tree is selected, not because it is large, but because the seed from which it grows is small. It is said to be "less than all the seeds that be in the earth." The chief object of the parable, therefore, is to call attention to the lowly character in which Christ appeared at His first coming. The little babe that was born in the stable of the inn of Bethlehem was the seed from which was to spring the world's regeneration. "He was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;" but that was not all, He must descend even lower still. A corn of wheat, before it can become a plant, must fall into the ground and die. Though in the form of God, and thinking it not robbery to be equal with God, "He made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Humiliation could go no further. This mustard seed therefore was the least of all seeds.

But the seed when it was sown did not abide alone. Having life in itself it sprang up; and on the day of Pentecost the little blade first saw the light in the persons of 120 believers, assembled in the upper room in Jerusalem, filled with the Holy Ghost. That was the commencement of the Christian Church, and from
that day it has never ceased to grow. From the upper room it spread first over Jerusalem, and filled it with its doctrine; then Satan became alarmed for his kingdom, and endeavoured to root it up by a fiery persecution, but, like the Israelites in Egypt, the more that it was persecuted, the more it multiplied and grew. The effect of the persecution was to scatter the members, and the scattering of the members multiplied the centres of propagation. 'Within three centuries it had undermined and overthrown the religion of the Caesars; and, notwithstanding the efforts of Satan to destroy it by treachery and corruption, it burst forth again at the Reformation with renewed power; and, with a printed Bible, every copy of which contains within itself the seeds of everlasting and irrepressible truth, Christianity is finding its way into every nation, and kindred, and people. It has already become a great tree which is yet destined to overshadow the whole earth. Alexander the Great carried his victorious arms over all the then civilised world; at the age of thirty-one he wept because there were no more worlds to conquer: but his empire was soon after broken, and after a time destroyed. But the religion of Jesus has in itself a vitality and power which nothing can withstand or destroy, and we have here the inspired assurance that it will never cease to grow until it is transplanted to heaven.

Although the two parables of the Mustard Tree and the Leaven appear at first sight to teach the same lessons, there is a difference between the two which it is well to mark. The parable of the Leaven views the progress of Christianity as regards the world rather than the growth of the Church, and that from the
The parable of the Mustard Tree, on the other hand, views the growth of the Church, rather than the progress of Christianity. Leaven is a living and propagative power, but it has no organised existence; it represents the individual influence of individual Christianity, by the leavening power of every leavened particle. The mustard tree represents the Church as a living organism, and, at the same time, the manner of its growth as an organism, and its usefulness when it is grown. The buds of this year become the twigs of the next, and the branches of the year that follows, till they become so great that the birds are able to take shelter under the foliage. This is exactly the way in which the Church naturally grows; the little meetings develop into congregations, and every congregation becomes the parent of congregations all around.

Another point of resemblance between the Church and the mustard tree is the slowness of their growth. The kingdom of God cometh not with observation, and the reason is that the kingdom of God is within us, and must be developed from within. The branches of the mustard tree are not stuck on to the tree, but grow from that which is already grown. It is this that proves it to be the work of God and not of man.

We do not see the trees grow, it is only by observing their height at different stages of their growth that we perceive it; and, tried by this test, we know that the Church is growing, and see how wonderfully it has already grown. To-day it is far in advance of what it was last century; last century it was far in advance of what it was before the Reformation; and at the Reformation it was far in advance of what it was in
PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD TREE.

the time of the Apostles. A gourd may grow up in a night, but it may also perish in a night; it is only the slow growing tree that lives long.

Another lesson to be drawn from the mustard tree is that the rate of increase is not always the same. There is a winter as well as a summer to the mustard tree; and so in the Church there are seasons of revival, when the Spirit is shed abroad, and conversions take place in thousands; but there are other times when the heaven seems as iron and the earth brass, and when Christianity seems to make no progress at all. Under the blighting influence of Romanism, the Church apparently ceased to grow, yet even then there was life in the root; and when at length the spring-time of the Reformation came, there was a season of refreshing which lasted for a long time.

But, although in the growth of the mustard tree there is this alternation of winter and summer, with their corresponding rates of growth, there is, notwithstanding that irregularity, a continual increase of the tree as a whole. And so we find in the history of the Church that, although there are what might be called spiritual winters and spiritual summers, yet, upon the whole, there is continual growth. Even within our own recollection the cause of Christ has advanced most wonderfully over the whole world.

Were there no other passage of Scripture to guide us in regard to the growth of the kingdom of God in the world, than this one parable of the Mustard Seed, it would be perfectly decisive. We are there taught first, the smallness of its origin; second, the slow but continuous progress of its growth; and third, the grandeur of its ultimate development, not by a sudden
and violent change, but by a natural and progressive development. These are the lessons which the parable is fitted to teach, and, what is remarkable, it is really capable of teaching nothing else. There are some parables that are intended to illustrate a number of evangelical truths, and there are others which are susceptible of the most fanciful interpretations, by the finding of some hidden meaning in every accessory. But in this parable, the only possible interpretation is just the three things which we have mentioned, and which therefore cannot be gainsayed.

Of course our Millenarian friends have not overlooked this parable, which seems so conclusively to contradict one of their most important doctrines—viz., that instead of Christianity spreading over the world until it becomes universal, it will gradually lose ground until it has almost disappeared, but they do not generally say much about it. They content themselves with saying that the mustard tree does not represent the kingdom of God, but the kingdom of Satan, in the world and in the Church.

It is difficult to deal with an argument of this kind, if argument it may be called. If it could be shown that in any other passage of Scripture, the kingdom of God means the kingdom of the Wicked One, it might be pleaded that that is its meaning here; but there is none. It is a mere assertion, and nothing more. To say that the kingdom of God means the kingdom of Satan is as unreasonable as to say that light is darkness. The only possible meaning of the kingdom of God in this passage is the New Testament dispensation.

We have met with only one attempt to show a reason why the mustard tree in the parable is intended to
represent the kingdom of Satan. One millenarian writer pleads that the mustard seed, being only the seed of an herb (*lachanon*) ought not to have grown into a tree; and it is this abnormal growth that he thinks proves it to be representative of the kingdom of Satan. Moreover, he points to the fact that the birds of the air are represented as lodging in the branches, and as our Lord in the parable of the Sower compared the birds of the air to Satan, when they picked up the seeds that fell by the wayside, he argues that the mustard tree could not represent the kingdom of God, but only the kingdom of the Wicked One. A very few words will dispose of these two arguments.

The author of this strange interpretation mistakes our Lord’s meaning when he supposes that the parable refers to any one particular seed that a man sowed in his field, and that happened to become a tree, instead of growing up only an herb as it ought to have done. Our Lord speaks of no particular seed in this parable; He speaks of mustard seeds in general, and He tells us that although it is the least of all seed, when it is grown it is the greatest among herbs. He does not tell us what became of the grain that the man sowed in his field. It might germinate and spring up, or it might be picked up by the birds of the air, and so they would make an end of it. But He tells us what the man expected when he sowed it. He expected it to become a tree.

The birds of the air lodging in the branches is not mentioned in disparagement of the tree, or even of the birds. The circumstance is mentioned only to illustrate the size to which the tree had grown. Our Lord never speaks unkindly of the birds of the air; for even in the
parable of the Sower He does not blame them. They only picked up the seed sown on the wayside, where it was impossible to grow, so that nothing was lost; because it was one of the ways in which His heavenly Father provided for these little objects of His care; and when He speaks of their building their nests among the branches, it was with no unkind feeling that He thought of their being better lodged than He.

But even though the birds had been unclean birds, it would not have been an inapt illustration of the growth of the Church and the grandeur to which it has attained. Its stately boughs and ample foliage have too often been the resort of those who ought never to have been there. The idea seems so apposite, that it would not have been altogether out of place; but our Lord does not say that they were unclean.

For the sake of experiment, let us suppose that the mustard tree represents not the kingdom of God, but the kingdom of Satan, and that the Church of God, instead of becoming greater and greater, is to become weaker and weaker, until it becomes almost extinct. There are two difficulties that present themselves. The first question to be answered is, When did the Church begin to go down? and we have never seen that question answered. If the Church is at present in a decline, what must it have been in its highest state of health and vitality? Name what period we choose, we have still to account for its having grown to such grand dimensions; so that we need the parable of the mustard seed to account for it after all.

The other difficulty is this. If the mustard seed represents the kingdom of Satan, how can it be said that at the time when our Lord spoke the parable, it
resembled a mustard seed, which is less than all the seeds that be in the earth? Satan's kingdom was never stronger than it was at that very time. If it be said that it was the Romish apostacy that was compared to the mustard seed, commencing with small beginnings, and growing into a monster system of wickedness and persecution, it would be strange indeed if, upon this the first intimation of its existence, it should be introduced to our notice under the title of "the kingdom of God." The papacy could scarcely obtain a better certificate of its Divine authority.

CHAPTER IV.

Parable of the Leaven.

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened" (Matt. xiii. 33).

The parable of the Leaven differs from that of the Mustard Seed, in that it views the progress of the Gospel from the standpoint of the world, not from the standpoint of the Church. Still the leading thought is the same, and that is the slow but continuous spread of the Gospel, until it pervades the whole world. As in the parable of the Mustard Seed, the beginning is very small, though the smallness is not so much insisted on, but the completeness of the change is in this parable brought more into view than in the other. It is merely said that the seed became a great tree, but how great it became is not mentioned; but in this parable, the result is the complete leavening of the whole three
measures of meal. The parable of the Mustard Seed tells us that Christianity will attain to great proportions, from the smallest of all beginnings—the parable of the Leaven tells us that it will never cease to extend till it has transformed the moral character of the whole world.

Modern science has discovered that fermentation is a living principle, and, like all other living things, it has the power of propagating its own kind. The flour into which the little piece of leaven is introduced is dead, and has neither the power nor the inclination to change its state; but with the leaven life is introduced, and that life continues to spread until the whole is leavened. Nothing could more beautifully or more accurately represent the vitality and the vitalising and assimilating power of Christianity.

Millenarian writers have less difficulty in dealing with this parable, and more frequently refer to it as confirming rather than contradicting one of their most cherished doctrines, the increasing degeneracy of the world, and the increasing apostacy of the Church. They regard it as a clearly expressed prediction of the rise and spread of corruption in the Church which is to increase and spread until it ends in total apostacy. Some, but not all, take notice that it was a woman that is represented as introducing the piece of leaven into the three measures of meal; and from that they draw the conclusion that, being a woman, the influence must be evil and not good. But they all maintain that the leaven that is spoken of must necessarily mean increase of corruption, not only because leaven is really a species of corruption, but because it is never spoken of in Scripture except as the type of malice, wickedness, and hypocrisy.

The argument from its being a woman that introduced
the leaven into the three measures of meal, is founded on a mistake. In the parables of our Lord we do not find this predominance of evil in the female characters that are spoken of. In the parable of the Ten Virgins they were equally divided, the wise and the foolish. It was a woman who lost the piece of silver, and lighted a candle in order to find it; and it was a widow that is set before us as an example for persistent prayer; while it was a man that was the unjust judge who neglected her. So far, therefore, the balance is rather in favour of the female sex, and will not help the Millenarian argument. If it be argued that it was by a woman that sin entered into the world, it may be answered that it was also a woman that brought the remedy. Besides, nothing could be more natural than that it should be a woman that is represented as putting the piece of leaven into the meal, because men did not generally bake the bread; as it was natural also that a man should sow the grain of mustard seed in his field, because women are not generally farmers.

The argument regarding the leaven is more rational, but certainly not more conclusive; because this is not the only instance in which Scripture uses the symbol of leaven in a favourable sense, and, if so, it does not follow that it is impossible in this instance. Leaven is a fit emblem of anything that propagates and spreads; and, as evil propagates and spreads, it may well be likened to leaven. But, as our Lord here expressly states that it is the kingdom of God that is like to leaven, that is sufficient to establish its applicability to what is good, as well as to what is evil, even though there were no other instance in Scripture. Our Lord in this parable intended to teach the propagative character
of Christianity, and He could not have adopted a figure more fitting or more appropriate for His purpose. To say that leaven is corruption is a mistake. The fermentation of putrefaction is corruption, but vinous fermentation or the fermentation of leaven is a very different thing, and is not corruption.

To say that leaven is never spoken of in Scripture, except as something evil is notoriously an error; because, although it was forbidden in certain sacrifices in the Levitical system, there were two in which it was expressly commanded. All these sacrifices were figurative, as were also all the other parts of the Levitical system. But there was one important feature of these symbols that is observable throughout Scripture, and that is the distinction between those things that represented the work of Christ, and those things that represented the work of the Spirit. Those things that represented the work of Christ had this as a necessary and indispensable character, that they should be definite and complete in themselves, and incapable of increase or diminution; whereas those things that represented the work of the Spirit had not any fixed or definite character, but, on the contrary, were capable of increase and multiplication: evidently representing on the one hand, the definiteness and completeness of the one sacrifice for sin, as well as the completeness of the justification of the sinner the moment he believes, contrasted with the indefiniteness and progressive nature of the Spirit's work, varying in its character, and growing and extending in its power.

For that reason, those articles of furniture in the Tabernacle which represented the work of Christ, were commanded to be made of a certain given measure, neither more nor less: the Tabernacle itself, which
represented the Person of Christ; the Ark of the Covenant, which was the symbol of His Presence: the brazen altar of burnt-offering, which represented His Atonement; and the golden altar of incense, which represented His Intercession, were all made to exact measurements divinely revealed. But those articles which represented the work of the Spirit—the golden candlestick and the laver—had no measurements prescribed, their dimensions being left to the judgment of Moses and Bezaleel in their construction. Those who have made models of the Tabernacle and its furniture must have been struck with this. They have no difficulty in regard to the Tabernacle, its boards, its coverings, its pillars, and its veils; all their measurements are to their hand; they can also reproduce the ark, the brazen altar, the golden altar, and the table of shew-bread, because they are easily made to the required dimensions; but when they come to the golden candlestick, which represents the enlightening, and the laver, which represents the purifying work of the Spirit, they have no measurement to guide them, and they may make them any size they choose, because no dimensions have been given.

Nor is this all, for, when Solomon built and furnished the Temple, which superseded the Tabernacle, we can observe the same principle conserved, but in another way. In the Temple as in the Tabernacle, there is but one Ark of the Covenant, one altar of burnt-offering, and one golden altar of incense, all of them representing the work of Christ. We ourselves would have felt the unsuitableness if it had been otherwise. But there are ten golden candlesticks, and ten lavers for the priests to wash in, which is a great advance upon the single candlestick, and the single laver of the Tabernacle, and
we see nothing incongruous or inappropriate in their multiplication. These represented the work of the Spirit, and are therefore not so fixed and definite as those which represented the work of Christ.*

As might be expected, we find that the same principle is observed in the sacrifices of the Levitical system. In all the offerings that represented the work of Christ, leaven was strictly prohibited: “Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leaven” (Exod. xxxiv. 12); “No meat-offering which ye shall bring unto the Lord shall be made with leaven, for ye shall burn no leaven” (Lev. ii. 11); “Take the meat-offering that remaineth of the offerings of the Lord, made by fire, and eat it without leaven, beside the altar” (Lev. x. 12). The fire and the blood are especially symbolic of the work of Christ, and wherever these were, no leaven was allowed to be present; evidently because leaven was the symbol of expansion and increase, and therefore unsuited to represent the work of Christ, which was definite and incapable of any extension or increase. It was the very same principle that required that those articles of furniture in the Tabernacle and Temple that represented the work of Christ should be of a fixed and definite size, and each of them single. But there was one offering, and only one, which represented not the work of Christ but the work of the Spirit; and in that one offering, instead of leaven being prohibited, it was commanded to be used; evidently to intimate that the work of the Spirit was not of a fixed and definite character, but was to be

* The dimensions of the lavers are given in 1 Kings vii. 27, but that is only a historical statement of what the dimensions actually were after they were made, not the dimensions commanded.
progressive and capable of indefinite increase and expansion: "Ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the Sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave-offering; seven Sabbaths shall be complete. Even unto the morrow after the seventh Sabbath shall ye number fifty days, and ye shall offer a new meat-offering unto the Lord. Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave loaves of two-tenth deals; they shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven; they are the first-fruits unto the Lord" (Lev. xxiii. 15, 17).

This was the feast of the day of Pentecost, when the first-fruits of the harvest were presented and waved before the Lord; and it was the day of Pentecost that was emphatically the day of the Spirit's work and power, when the first fruits of the Gospel harvest were presented to the Lord, as described in Acts ii. 1. The loaves that were to be waved on the day of Pentecost were commanded, not permitted only, to be baked with leaven; evidently to typify the expansive and progressive character of the Spirit's work. The hundred and twenty disciples that were present in the upper room in Jerusalem were the little piece of leaven that was hid in three measures of meal, and the first-fruits of three thousands souls that were waved before the Lord on that day, were the earnest of a world-wide harvest.

We have noticed that the table of shew-bread was in one sense a symbol of the work of Christ, inasmuch as Christ is the bread of life; but, in another sense, it was a symbol of the Spirit's work, inasmuch as it supplied the daily nourishment of the priests; and so we find that, as symbolising the work of Christ in the
Tabernacle, its dimensions were prescribed along with the golden altar; but, inasmuch as it was also a symbol of the Spirit's work, there were ten tables of shew-bread, as there were ten candlesticks and ten lavers.

In like manner, we find that there was one of the sacrifices in the Levitical services that partook of this same two-fold character, as representing both the work of Christ and the work of the Spirit. This was the peace-offering referred to in Lev. vii. 11, which was both a peace-offering and a "sacrifice of thanksgiving." As a peace-offering, it represented the work of Christ, who made peace through the blood of His cross; and as a sacrifice of thanksgiving, it represented the work of the Spirit, through whom that grace is to abound more and more. As representing the work of Christ, unleavened cakes were to be offered along with it; but, as representing the work of the Spirit, "besides the cakes, he shall offer for his offering leavened bread, with the sacrifice of thanksgiving of his peace-offerings."

Those who affirm that in Scripture leaven is never spoken of as representing anything but corruption and hypocrisy, find a difficulty in accounting for its presence along with unleavened cakes in the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and in the loaves that constituted the first-fruits on the day of Pentecost, because, unless they can do so, the parable of the Leaven must be allowed to represent the progressive character of the kingdom of heaven, as Christ said it did, and not the kingdom of Antichrist. They say, therefore, that in both these offerings, which were offerings of thanksgiving, a distinction is drawn between the perfect work of Christ, which is represented by the unleavened bread, and the imperfect character
of human thanksgiving, which, at the best, is mingled with sin. They say, therefore, that they are still justified in regarding leaven as a symbol of corruption, and that its use in the parable is to symbolise the progressive character of wickedness and hypocrisy in the Church and the world. But this cannot be the case in the sacrifices, because the leaven was commanded to be used, and, therefore, that which it represented must have been something good, not something evil. If in these offerings there had been no command in regard to the loaves, if it had been left to the convenience of the worshipper to use either leavened or unleavened bread, then we might have concluded that God intended them to understand that He was not very particular in insisting on "sincerity and truth" upon these occasions, if it be really true that in Scripture leaven is always to be understood as representing hypocrisy and insincerity. But as we find that in these offerings God commanded them to use leaven, and in one of them prohibited the use of unleavened bread, so that judgment would have fallen upon any one who presumptuously offered it, we should be forced to conclude that in these offerings God insisted on them introducing into His worship "the leaven of hypocrisy, malice, and wickedness."

But there is another aspect of the parable which our brethren have overlooked, and which should have made them hesitate in applying the parable to the kingdom of Satan instead of the kingdom of heaven, and that is the completeness and thoroughness of the change that took place in the three measures of meal; the leaven continued to operate "until the whole was leavened." It is of the very nature of leaven to do its work
thoroughly, when it begins. “Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?” (1 Cor. v. 6). It is neither partial nor incomplete.

In applying the parable to the kingdom of heaven, this feature is most significant and most appropriate; because Christ was to sit at God's right hand till all His enemies were made His footstool, and all rule and all authority and power had been made subject to Him. The knowledge of God is to cover the earth as the waters cover the sea, so that “they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know Him, from the least of them unto the greatest of them” (Jer. xxxi. 34).

But, if we apply the parable to the kingdom of Satan, it is impossible to escape the conclusion that the leaven of iniquity and corruption will continue to spread in the world until Christianity has disappeared and the Church is extinct. Millenarians have found it necessary to represent the judgment spoken of in Matt. xxv. as not the general judgment of the quick and the dead at the resurrection, but as the judgment of the nations which shall be alive at Christ's second coming. But, in that case, how will it be possible to divide where there is no division, and how can the Shepherd separate between the sheep and the goats where there are nothing but goats?
CHAPTER V.

Ezekiel's River.

The Old Testament Scriptures may be said to be altogether made up of pictures and prophecies of Christ and His Church; and it would be difficult to mention a single feature, either of their character or their history, which has not its counterpart or prediction. As might be expected, this precious doctrine of the humble origin and gradual but constantly increasing power of the kingdom of God is no exception. Even so early as Moses, we find it in his address to the children of Israel: "And thou shalt speak and say before the Lord thy God, A Syrian ready to perish was my father, and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty and populous" (Deut. xxvi. 5). And, just before the close of the Old Testament canon, Ezekiel was favoured with the vision of the River of Life issuing from the threshold of the sanctuary, which pictured the rise, the progress, and the future glory of the kingdom of God.

Ezekiel's Temple is confessedly the most enigmatical, as well as the most sustained and detailed prophecy in the Old Testament Scriptures. Unlike the instructions given to Moses on the Mount, it was a vision and a description of what was not, what had not been, and what was not commanded to be. It seems as if it had been placed at the very portals of the later prophecies as a warning, first to those who suppose that the inter-
pretation of unfulfilled prophecy is a Christian duty; and second, to those who imagine that prophecy is to be interpreted literally. As our friends the Millenarians err in both these ways, it is especially a warning to them.

No one professes to be able to interpret the details of Ezekiel's Temple and ritual, and so long as that is the case, we are justified in believing that the interpretation of unfulfilled prophecy is not a commanded duty; and to say, as Millenarians say, that it is the description of a temple that is yet to be built, and a ritual that is yet to be performed in the worship of God, is of all interpretations the most visionary.

In the first place, both the Temple and the River are a geographical impossibility, and that ought to have been sufficient to prove that the vision, like almost all other visions, was emblematic. The Temple is said to be built on a very high mountain, which could be neither Mount Zion nor Mount Moriah, because neither of them could be called a very high mountain, and because neither Zion nor Moriah are of sufficient dimensions to hold a temple so large as Ezekiel says it was.

But the geographical impossibility of the river that he saw is still more decisive. He says that the water at the fountain of the river trickled down from under the threshold of the sanctuary, and gradually increased in volume as it flowed. The angel that showed the prophet these wonders conducted him alongside of this growing stream, and measured it with his reed; and when he had counted a thousand cubits, he made the prophet wade across, and it was found that the waters had increased so that they reached to his ankles.
Again he measured a thousand cubits, and again he caused the prophet to wade across; and the flow of waters had so increased, that this time they reached to his knees. Another thousand cubits were measured, and again the prophet was required to wade across; but this time the waters were so deep, that they reached to his loins. A fourth time the angel measured a thousand cubits, but now the stream had grown into a mighty river that rolled along with such a volume that it could not be crossed, it was so deep.

The prophet did not proceed any farther than the fourth thousand cubits, so that we can only conjecture what became of it from the information communicated to the prophet by the angel. It proceeded eastward, and went down into the Arabah (see Revised Version), and thence into the sea. The consequence was that, the river flowing into the Dead Sea, healed its waters; and finding an outlet at the western branch of the Red Sea, it was supplied with a multitude of great fishes from the ocean, so that the fishers plied their trade along the shores of the Dead Sea, from Engedi to Eneglaim.

Returning along the river towards the Temple from which it miraculously flowed, the prophet describes the beauty of the landscape, and the blessings which the River conveyed. Along its peaceful banks there were growing on either side trees in vast abundance, nourished by its waters; and because the waters issued from the sanctuary, the trees were possessed of wonderful properties. They brought forth fruit of every kind for meat, twelve harvests every year. Moreover, the leaves of the trees were possessed of medicinal qualities for the healing of the nations.
It would be vain for us to plead that these trees could only be metaphorical, and that they shadowed forth the blessings which the religion of Jesus would convey to the nations of the world; or that the River could not be a real river, seeing that the water, having no natural source, could only exist by a perpetual miracle. We should be told that we have not yet exhausted the creative power of God, and that such trees are not impossible, even without a miracle. The same power that multiplied the loaves and fishes, could easily produce a constant supply of miraculous water, so that there is nothing impossible in its production. We acknowledge the argument as satisfactory to those who, upon other grounds, are prepared to believe it. But we have more serious objections to a literal interpretation of the prophecy, in the geography of the Holy Land.

The localities are sufficiently defined. Jerusalem is the site of the temple; the Dead Sea is exactly in the line of the river said to flow towards the east. Eneglaim is not yet known, but as Engedi is on the shore of the Dead Sea, Eneglaim could not be very far away; and lastly, Arabah is identified with the Wady-el-Arabah that lies between the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Akabah. We have no difficulty, therefore, in identifying the locality; but observe with what result. Before the waters of this river could rise sufficiently high to flow into the Red Sea, it must attain an altitude of about 2000 feet, to flow over and find an outlet through the Wady-el-Arabah. But, let us say that only 1800 feet would be needed, because the measurement of the height of the Wady has not yet been exactly ascertained, and more especially as the
water would find a passage westward as soon as it had risen 200 feet above the level of the Mediterranean. What then?

Engedi and Eneglaim, upon which the fishers are to stand to cast their nets, would be submerged 1800 feet below the surface of the water before the fishes which they were to catch could come up from the sea to reward their toil.

We next turn to the River, along the banks of which the trees are to grow with their precious leaves and fruit. At 1000 cubits from their source, instead of the level country through which the River is to flow, there is a precipitous descent from the "very high mountain," and, instead of a placid river flowing between two banks, with trees growing on either side, there would be nothing but a succession of roaring cataracts, plunging down the rocky defile where the good Samaritan picked up the wounded Jew, down, down, more than 3000 feet into the Dead Sea. Where, then, were the trees to grow? and how would it be possible for the prophet to wade across when the water was up to his loins? He would be swept away down the cataracts.

Again, before the great multitude of deep-sea fishes of which Ezekiel spoke, could find their way from the Red Sea, the waters of the Dead Sea would have to rise at least 1800 or 2000 feet before they could find their way through the Wady-el-Arabah to the sea. But before that could be done, the Lake of Gennesaret would be submerged, with Tiberias and all the villages on its shores, about 1000 feet deep. In fact, the whole valley of the Jordan would have become a great inland sea, and, unless the reported measurements be wrong, the waters of the Jordan and the new river together,
would find their outlet, not southward by the Arabah, but westward by the Kishon, and fall into the Mediterranean in the Bay of Acre.

As the evaporation in that locality is so great as to be sufficient to drink up the Jordan, with no greater surface than that of the Dead Sea, even with its present dimensions; supposing that another river, equal in volume to the Jordan, were to commence to flow in the manner described by Ezekiel; so vast is the trough, and so large would be the surface of the inland sea into which it would flow, that it would take a thousand years before a single fish could find its way into the river, if it were possible for such a river to succeed in filling that inland sea at all, which it could not do unless it were twice as large as the Jordan.

In the Apocryphal Gospel of the Infancy, the child Jesus is represented as amusing Himself with making sparrows of clay, and sending them off into the air alive; and we reject the legend, not because of its impossibility, but because it is out of keeping with all the miracles mentioned in Scripture. It is the benevolent character and reasonable purpose of the real miracles of the Bible that distinguish them from all the false miracles either of devils or men, and it is that which stamps them as Divine. There are no purposeless miracles to be found in Scripture. How then can any sober-minded Christian believe in such miracles as these, which are merely metaphors and visions converted into facts. It is not because of their stupendous dimensions that we reject them, although compared with them the drying up of the Red Sea was a mere trifle. It is their utter gratuitousness and want of purpose that stamp them as unscriptural. They are more in
keeping with the transportation of the Virgin's house in Nazareth to Loretto by angels, which even Roman Catholics find it difficult to believe in; or rather, it resembles the cleaving of the Eildon Hills by Michael Scott, which nobody believes at all.

Seeing, then, that Ezekiel's vision is not, and cannot be the prediction of a literal river, the question presents itself, What does this vision of the river represent? There can be only one answer. It represents Christ and His Church, as all other Old Testament types and prophecies do. The parables of the Mustard Seed and the Leaven may be questioned, and reasons may be offered why they should represent the origin and growth of the kingdom of Satan, and not of the kingdom of heaven. In these parables there was nothing either in the commencement or the consummation that indicated either good or bad. But it is not so with this river of Ezekiel's vision. It takes its origin from the threshold of the sanctuary, from which nothing which was unholy or unclean could come, and the trees which were nourished by its waters on either side were of such a character as to typify the beneficent and life-giving influences of Christianity wherever it finds its way. Their fruit was for food, and was renewed every month, and their leaves, which never faded, were for healing. It is impossible, therefore, to suppose that this river represented anything but the kingdom of heaven, and, if so, we are distinctly taught that its growth is to be gradual and continuous, and, although commencing like the grain of mustard seed, or the little piece of leaven, it would at length assume the grandest proportions. Its Divine origin is indicated by its issuing from under the threshold of the sanctuary, and this is represented
as the explanation of its fertilising power, "because it issued from the sanctuary;" and as the River, wherever it flowed, is represented as healing the waters of the sea—that is the Dead Sea—we are to understand that Christianity, when it shall spread over the earth, is to deliver the world from the curse and the misery of sin.

One of the inconveniences connected with the literal interpretation of prophecy is the difficulty of making all the various prophecies consistent with one another. We have a notable example in the prophecies of Ezekiel and Zechariah regarding the future of Jerusalem. We have seen what was prophesied by Ezekiel: a river is to flow forth from the threshold of the sanctuary, to fill the valley of the Jordan with an inland sea, and to find an exit into the Red Sea by the valley of the Arabah. Zechariah's prophecy is altogether different. He makes no mention of the River, but he says: "The Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west; and there shall be a very great valley. And half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south; . . . for the valley of the mountain shall reach unto Azal." "In these remarkable words," says Mr. Haslem, "we have a note of a change which is to be in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem. A valley is to be formed from the Mediterranean to the Dead Sea. In consequence, a channel shall be opened across Palestine, through which the waters of the Mediterranean Sea will pass through and fill the desert land beyond. There a highway shall be made to the east and to the west. It will render Jerusalem more accessible to all the nations of the world." The difficulty here is to know what is to become of Ezekiel's temple, because, if Zechariah be
right in regard to the valley, it will cut Ezekiel's temple right through the middle, leaving thirty square miles of the temple on the north, and thirty square miles on the south, and leaving the valley itself to measure twenty-one square miles between.

CHAPTER VI.

The Conquest of Palestine a Type of the Evangelization of the World.

No one can read the Scriptures without being struck with the frequent recurrence of the number Seven as symbolic of the structural character of God's works, both in Nature and Providence, from the Week of Creation on till the sevenfold seals, trumpets, thunders, and vials of the Apocalypse. In the genealogy of Christ, Matthew points out that there were six septenaries of generations preceding the miraculous generation of the Man Christ Jesus, which would otherwise never have been observed; and even scientific men have been surprised to find in Nature the number Seven as its prevailing type, particularly in physiology and pathology.

Seeing, then, that God's works and ways naturally crystallise into the form of seven, it would be strange if the great scheme of the world's history should be amorphous. Ought we not rather to expect that the promised thousand years of Sabbatic rest should be preceded by six thousand years of toil and trouble. There would thus be a symmetrical arrangement of the great whole,
corresponding with that which we observe reigning in all its parts. This has long been regarded as the world’s week, corresponding with the six days of creation; and, as our Lord was born on the four thousandth year, the creation of the sun upon the fourth day was a type of the advent of Him whom we regard as the Sun of Righteousness.

It has been satisfactorily proved that the birth of Christ took place four years before the commencement of the Christian era, that is, four years before the year called Annus Domini.

If, then, the world’s week be a period of seven thousand years, the last of which is the Millennium, and nothing seems to be more likely, the sixth thousand years are at the present time not very far from having run their course, and little more than a hundred years remains before the world is to enter on its Sabbatic rest. That is to say, making allowance for the four years of error in our chronology, the Millennium should commence immediately after the year 1996, when the sixth thousand years of the world’s history shall have been completed.

Does the Scripture give no encouragement to this expectation? We think it does; and it would have been observed long ago, had it not been that Commentators did not understand the true gnomon of prophecy.

The gnomon of prophecy is neither the birth of our Lord nor the day of Pentecost. The gnomon of prophecy is the temple in Jerusalem. Because it was from the time that the edict went forth to restore and to build Jerusalem, till the destruction of the city and the sanctuary, that Daniel’s prophecy extended (Dan. ix. 26).
It is from the destruction of Jerusalem, therefore, in the year 70, that the prophecies of the New Testament ought to begin, more especially as the Levitical dispensation came to a close at that time and by that means,—not before.

Now there are only two numbers in New Testament prophecy that we have to manipulate. The first is the number of the Beast, 666, and the other is the duration of the Beast, which is represented under three different forms, but all of them amounting to the same thing, a time and times and half a time, forty and two months, and 1260 days. These two numbers, when added to the year 70, which was the year in which Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed, give us exactly the year which we anticipate—1996. Thus:

The destruction of Jerusalem, . . . 70
The number of the Beast, . . . 666
The duration of the Beast, . . . 1260

1996

Even the six times seven generations which Matthew notices in connection with our Lord's genealogy seem to point in the same direction. The first fourteen generations were those before Jerusalem was built. The second fourteen generations were the time of the first temple. The third fourteen generations were the time of the second temple; and when the forty-two generations were completed, He of whom the temple was the type was born, and both temple and Jerusalem were "left unto them desolate," and shortly disappeared.

The 1260 days mentioned in the Apocalypse are the period assigned to four different subjects.

The Holy City is to be trodden down 42 months.
The two Witnesses are to prophecy in sackcloth 1260 days.
The Woman is to be in the wilderness 1260 days, or three and a-half years.
The Beast is to utter his blasphemies 42 months.

It is very probable that the 1260 days, like the 70 years of Jeremiah's prophecy, do not refer to a single span of years, but indicate several beginnings and several endings; but it would appear that the period commencing from the number 666 is the period after which the Holy City will be no longer trodden down of the Gentiles, when the two Witnesses will no longer prophesy in sackcloth, when the Woman shall no longer remain in the wilderness, and when the Beast shall no longer utter his blasphemies.

It would thus appear that before the six thousand years of the world's history have passed away, all Christ's enemies shall have been put under His feet, and the ransomed nations will be ready to enter upon the thousand years of millennial rest and peace. If that be the case, we have little more than a century in which the work is to be done, and the question naturally arises, Is it possible to accomplish it within that time?

We at once acknowledge that if the evangelisation of the world is to make no greater progress than it has done during the fifteen hundred years between the conversion of Constantine and the beginning of the present century, it would take thousands of years to accomplish it. But, in estimating the propagative power of Christianity, we must not confine our attention to that abnormal period in which God permitted human wisdom to have full opportunity of exhibiting its folly in attempting to be wiser than God, and to improve
upon His plans. We must rather look at that period in the early history of the Church, when, notwithstanding the enormous disadvantages under which she then laboured, Christianity spread over the Roman empire with such astonishing rapidity, that in three centuries it had undermined and overthrown the religion of the Caesars. Without learning, without money, without political patronage or protection, without even a printed Bible, and in the face of a fiery persecution, one hundred and twenty obscure individuals went forth from an upper room in Jerusalem, against the world in arms, and accomplished this marvellous success.

Is this a fact? or is it only a fiction? It seems almost incredible; and yet all history unites in proclaiming that it is true. Then why, let us ask, is there such a remarkable contrast between the omnipotence of Christianity then, and its sad incompetency now? Here are we in this country with a free Gospel preached throughout the land for centuries, the Church patronised by the State, and hundreds of thousands of pounds expended every year in the vain attempt to christianise the population. The civilisation, the learning, and the laws of the country are all in favour of the enterprise, and yet, what do we find? Worldliness, licentiousness, practical infidelity, and, in many places, downright heathenism rampant throughout the land; while drunkards throng our streets, and stagger against the very walls of our churches, bidding defiance to all our efforts to reclaim them. So far from imitating the conquests of the Apostolic Church, notwithstanding all our advantages, modern Christianity finds it difficult to keep even the ground it has won.

It is true that during the present century a new era
has begun, and a new departure has been made; but we are at present speaking of the contrast between the success of the Apostolic Church, and the shameful incompetency of the Church during the fifteen hundred years that followed the conversion of Constantine. We point to the fact that there was a power inherent in Christianity then, and we ask: Might not the Church, by falling back on the principles and modes of action which were so successful in Apostolic times, be equally or even more successful now? and might not that which was done once by the grace of God be done again? We are now near the close of the nineteenth century; might not the remaining work be done during the century that yet remains?

But, before speaking of the possibilities of the future, and the resources which are still at the command of the Church, we wish to call attention to a very remarkable prefiguration of our success in the conquest of Palestine by the children of Israel, which we take to be a type and figure of the conquest of the world by the children of God.

The wanderings of the children of Israel in the wilderness, from the time of their deliverance from the bondage of Egypt till the passage of the Jordan, and their entry into the promised land, have been regarded by the Church in all ages as the type of the Christian's experience from his conversion up till his death, and his entry into the heavenly inheritance.

But there is another typology which begins where the other ends, and which represents the experience of the Church as a corporate body from the day of Pentecost till the Millennium. The first typology is Evangelical, and represents the history and experience
of the individual Christian; the other typology is Evangelistic, and represents the history and experience of the Church militant as a corporate body. It commences with the preparatory circumcision at Gilgal, and it ends with the victories of David and the reign of Solomon.

The commission which was given to the children of Israel to conquer the land of Palestine, and to make no league with the inhabitants of the land, was the type of the commission which our Lord gave to the Church, to take possession of the world for Him, and to keep themselves separate from the world.

Some have supposed that the conquests of the Israelites in Canaan typified the progressive sanctification of the Christian after his conversion. That, however, is impossible for two reasons. First, because the spiritual warfare in which the Christian is engaged is purely defensive, from his conversion to his death. Like the wars of the Israelites in the wilderness, it was not aggressive, and therefore formed a contrast to the wars in which they were engaged in Palestine. The second reason is, that the progressive sanctification of the Christian during his wilderness journey is typified by the gradual dying out of the men above the age of twenty who had been slaves in Egypt, and who murmured at the report of the spies, not one of whom was permitted to cross the Jordan and enter Canaan. They died by thousands in the wilderness during their forty years' wandering, and it was only when the very last of them had been buried in the plains of Moab that the rest of the people were permitted to enter the promised land. That it was so, was proved by the fact that in the last battle with the Moabites there was not
even one of them slain (Num. xxxi. 49). This dying out of the Egyptian element was the type of the mortifying of the Christian's members which are upon the earth. The passage of the Jordan and the entry into Canaan signified the ending of the Christian's pilgrimage, when his sanctification has been completed before he enters into his heavenly inheritance. The drying up of the Jordan could mean nothing, if it was not a type of the Christian's victory over death, and the destruction of his sting. The typology of the Christian's wilderness pilgrimage, therefore, was completed in the wilderness, and needed no supplement in the promised land.

The Church needed a typology of the Christian's pilgrimage through life, beginning with his deliverance from the bondage of sin, and ending in his victory over death; but it also needed a typology of the evangelistic conquests which the Church has been commissioned to achieve in the conversion of the world, and it would be very strange if that were altogether wanting. This typology was fully and most graphically supplied in the history of the Israelites after their entry into Canaan, commencing with their circumcision at Gilgal, and ending with the reign of Solomon, the prince of peace. There was the same commission, the same promise of Divine assistance and success. There was the same command forbidding them to fraternise with the world without, and threatening them that, if they made a league with the inhabitants of the land, they would become as thorns in their eyes, and pricks in their sides.

But what we wish especially to notice at present is the correspondence of the actual results in both cases.
During the lifetime of Joshua and the Elders that outlived them, they feared the Lord. The last black drop of Egyptian bondage had been eliminated, and there was then a generation of Israelites more according to God's mind than had ever been before or has ever been since. Their conquests during this period were of the most extraordinary kind. No man was able to stand before them, and the Canaanites melted away, until their power was completely broken, though the country was still far from being possessed.

But after this, when the heroes of the wilderness died out, a new generation arose, who had not seen the wonderful works of God, and who, when they had grown weary of the wars, and forgotten the warning they had received, began to cultivate acquaintance and form connections with the people of the land, till they made a formal league with them, and put them to tribute. The consequence was that their strength departed, and they were no longer able to stand before their enemies, who became thorns in their eyes and pricks in their sides, as God had forewarned them. During the centuries that followed, and during all the time of the Judges, the conquest of Palestine made little progress until the time of Samuel.

This is an exact counterpart of the early history of the Christian Church. During the lifetime of the Apostles and the Elders that succeeded them, the Church of Christ was faithful to her trust. She went forth in the strength of God, and, notwithstanding the fiery persecutions with which she was assailed, Christianity spread over the whole Roman empire with a rapidity which nothing could arrest, like the conquests of the Israelites under Joshua. Keeping themselves
separate from the world, and seeking the kingdom of God and His righteousness as their only ambition, they went forth conquering and to conquer, so that nothing was able to stand before them.

Well would it have been both for the Church and the world if they had continued faithful to their allegiance; for, if their conquests had continued with the same rapidity, a few more centuries would have been sufficient to enable them to fulfil the commission which had been given them, and to achieve the conquest of the world. But, after three centuries, like the ancient Israelites, they grew weary of the war, and in the reign of Constantine, when persecution ceased, like the children of Israel in olden times, they made a league with the world, and put it to tribute. Immediately thereafter their triumphs ceased. The great apostacy predicted by Paul commenced, and Antichrist and the dark ages supervened. So far the likeness was complete; the dark ages corresponded with the time of the Judges, when the conquest of Palestine was arrested after the brilliant campaigns of Joshua and his successors.

Now, what we wish particularly to notice is this: that, after centuries of apostacy and disaster, the final and complete conquest of Palestine took place in an exceedingly short period of time. It commenced in the days of Samuel, under whose ministry the Israelites returned to their allegiance to God as they had never done before, and were in consequence restored to His favour. "The Philistines were subdued, and they came no more into the coast of Israel; and the hand of the Lord was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel." The tide had begun to turn, "and the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel.
From Ekron even unto Gath, and the coasts thereof, did Israel deliver out of the hands of the Philistines” (1 Sam. vii. 13, 14). From that time, first under Saul, but especially under David—that is, within two generations, viz., Samuel and David—the subjugation of the country was carried on with increasing rapidity, until all their enemies were entirely subdued. Then, but not till then, was the kingdom prepared for the reign of Solomon, the prince of peace; and it is a remarkable circumstance that Solomon in, his message to the king of Tyre, confirms the fact that the conquest was complete, almost in the very words of the 110th Psalm. He says: “Thou knowest how that David, my father, could not build a house unto the name of the Lord his God for the wars which were about him on every side, until the Lord put them under the soles of His feet.”

As it was with the conquest of Palestine, so will it be with the conquest of the world for Christ. It began with a rush in the days of the Apostles; and, after centuries of guilty inaction, it will be completed with a rush at the end. We have already entered the rapids; and every year is hurrying us on with increasing rapidity to the last great conflict, when all Christ’s enemies will go down before the conquering power of the Gospel. Such will be the slaughter, that the blood of the vanquished will reach to their horses’ bridles. This last great movement began with the present century, and, in all probability, will be completed before the sixth thousand years are expired.

We do not overlook the fact that the conquest of

* The words of Paul referring to the 110th Psalm are, “For He (the Son) must reign, until He (the Father) hath put all His enemies under His feet.”
Palestine was a carnal conquest effected by physical force, whereas the conquest of the world for Christ is a moral and spiritual conquest. But surely there is nothing new in that, because it is of the very nature of the types to be carnal representations of spiritual things. As well might we object to the typology of the wilderness, and say that the bondage in Egypt could not be a type of the bondage of sin; or the passage of the Jordan a type of the Christian's victory over death; and, if we do not object to the typology of the one, why should we object to the typology of the other; or how could we use the language of David in the Psalm, when he prays for the destruction of his enemies: "Through God we shall do valiantly, for He it is that shall tread down our enemies"?

As to God's decrees, we must distinguish between the unrevealed will of God, as the God of providence, without which no event can possibly take place, and His revealed will, which we are bound to regard as our rule of duty. They belong to two distinct and different administrations, and therefore must not be confounded; because that which is God's will in one administration, may not be His will in the other. In God's moral administration, it was His revealed will that the Jews should accept and believe in Jesus as the Messiah; but, in His providential administration, it was His unrevealed will that they should reject and crucify Him (Acts iv. 28). In God's moral administration, it was not only His command but His will, that the children of Israel should make no league with the inhabitants of the land, but that they should at once enter in and take possession. What He bade them do, He intended them to do; and, if they failed, they had no right to say that it was not
His will that they should succeed. But, although that was the case in God's providential administration, it was His unrevealed will that they should disobey Him, and that in consequence of their fraternising with the heathen, centuries should intervene before its final conquest. Were it not that these administrations are distinct and separate, the sinner might say, "Why doth He yet find fault, for who hath resisted His will?"

It is the peculiar attribute of God to bring good out of evil, and to overrule the sins of men for the furtherance of His own glorious purposes. Thus, the crucifixion of Christ, which was the greatest crime that was ever committed on earth, was made to become the greatest of all blessings. And so it was in regard to the disobedience of the children of Israel after the death of Joshua, and the apostacy that arose in the Church after the death of the Apostles. If it had not been for the disobedience of the Israelites, we should never have had the precious lessons handed down to us that are contained in the Book of Judges. Where else should we have learned so clearly that righteousness exalteth a nation, but that sin is the ruin and disgrace of any people? And where else should we have learned that so long as the Church fraternises with the world, so long will it be impossible for her to fulfil the commission which she has received? So long as Israel kept separate from the world they were victorious, but when they fraternised with the nations around them, they were defeated and oppressed. "These things happened unto them for our sakes, and for our learning on whom the ends of the world has come;" and unless God had permitted them to do and suffer these things, the lesson would have been lost.
In like manner, between the brilliant successes of the early Apostolic Church, and the final victories of the latter-day glory, God permitted a long interval of declension and apostacy. But this also has been overruled for wise and important purposes, which could not have been otherwise attained. After three hundred years of glorious achievement, in which the power of God was manifested in the spread of Christianity over the Roman Empire, there were upwards of twelve hundred years during which the great apostacy was allowed to reign supreme, substituting the carnal policy of man for the plain commandments of the Word of God.

One of the chief purposes that God had in view in giving up His Son to die, was to magnify Himself by proving that self-sacrificing love is the mightiest power in the universe. But the demonstration would be all the more complete, if other powers were allowed to come into the field, and, after having had ample time and opportunity of showing their strength, to fail. Now, the carnal mind would suggest that imperial authority and power, accompanied with outward magnificence and wealth, would be by far the most likely to succeed in bringing the nations to the feet of Jesus. Nothing seems more natural than that kings should exercise their authority in compelling obedience to the Prince of the kings of the earth; and that those who are His servants should be, above all others, exalted to dignity and power. Who else could be more worthy?

For twelve hundred years this carnal and most plausible gospel was allowed to have free course, and exhibit itself. The meek and the lowly Jesus was represented by lordly prelates lodged in princely palaces, and "throned" in magnificent cathedrals. The sword
of the civil magistrate was placed at the command of the Church to compel obedience and submission to the King of kings. This experiment was allowed to continue for upwards of twelve hundred years, nothing was wanting to enable it to make full proof of its ministry, yet what was the result? In a word—Pandemonium.

But, might not a modification of the same principle be more successful? Supposing that the sword of the civil magistrate were to be sheathed, and the fires of the Inquisition quenched, might not the cause of Christ be advanced by the exercise of magisterial authority and political patronage? Supposing that, instead of putting the enemies of Christ to death, they were merely to deprive them of their civil rights, compel them to contribute towards the support of the Church, and otherwise humiliate them. Might not Christianity be strengthened and promoted by having a seat in the Legislature, and receiving endowments from the State? This was called “National Religion,” and nothing appeared to be more becoming to a nation professing godliness and desiring to show its loyalty to Christ. Such was the conclusion to which the Reformers came in the sixteenth century; and, in all the Protestant States of Europe, the experiment was tried for nearly three hundred years. The result of that experiment was that every one of the National Churches of the Reformation fell asleep, the Reformation itself was arrested, and Popery got a new lease of life.

As God's purpose in the history of the Church was to show to the principalities and powers in heavenly places, not only now, but in the ages to come, the manifold wisdom of God; and, as the experiment was to be once for all, and never to be repeated, it was of the
utmost importance that these principles should have the fullest opportunity of showing what they could do and what they could not do, either for good or for evil. The time, therefore, although it was long, was not lost; and when, at the beginning of the present century, God brought these experiments to a close after they had been proved to be utter failures, it was only that He might bring forth into the field His own omnipotent power as the God of love, to show and prove its infinite superiority.

The present century corresponds with the times of Samuel in Israel, when the final conquest of the land of Canaan commenced, after centuries of inaction and apostacy. As Samuel began where Joshua left off, so did the religious movements of the present century resume the labours and the conquests of the Apostolic Church. Since the commencement of the present century, the progress of the Gospel has been perfectly marvellous; and not only the progress of the Gospel, but the facilities for spreading it, and the barriers that have been broken down. Europe, India, China, Japan, New Zealand, Madagascar, Central Africa and Mexico, have all been opened to the Gospel, though until lately they were closed.

But, great as has been the actual progress of the Gospel during the present century, the prospects of the Church in the future are still greater. The causes of the Church's failure have been discovered, and are being removed, and the resources from which evangelistic power is to be drawn are being utilised. Strange as it may appear, the first French Revolution, which was the commencement of a new era in the history of the world, was indirectly the means of introducing also a
new era in the history of the Church. It commenced with the formation of Religious and Benevolent Societies supported by the voluntary contributions of the people, and has been marching steadily onwards, developing new power and new plans, in which the work of evangelism no longer depends on the civil magistrate, who first starved and then betrayed it. The Church has now taken her own work into her own hands, and, instead of getting from the world, now generously gives, and is astonished at her newly acquired power, as well as the wondrous blessing that accompanies her labours.

But, what is more cheering still is, that the resources which have been only recently discovered, are inexhaustible, and have only as yet been little more than touched. The Church is at present organising, but when it has been completely organised under its pastors, and not only organised, but endued with evangelistic power by the baptism of the Holy Ghost, it will go forth upon its conquests sweeping all before it. The dry bones of Ezekiel's vision are coming together joint to joint, and the flesh and the sinews are rapidly covering the bones; and when the Spirit of God shall have been breathed into them, they will rise and form a great army, where lately there were only dry bones. Samson's hair, which was shorn by the Roman harlot, is fast growing again, and in the twentieth century will pull down the house of Dagon over all the enemies of the cross. We are at present, as it were, in the days of Samuel; but the days of Saul, and then of David, are coming, when God will put all His enemies under the soles of His feet, and then will the throne of Solomon be set up as the Prince of Peace.
Before concluding this chapter, we may notice a strange paradox that has become current lately. It is said that Christianity is losing ground, because the increase of the heathen population during the present century is greater than the number of converts.

If this means anything, it means that the increase of population is unfavourable to Christianity. To us it appears that the very reverse is the case. Supposing that the Christian population and the heathen population increased in equal proportion, it is evident that it would have no effect on one side more than on the other. But the increase is not equal in proportion; in fact, we very much doubt whether the heathen and Mahommedan populations have increased at all during the present century, except where they are under Christian government, as in India. In China and elsewhere, infanticide, polygamy, slavery, war, and nameless abominations have the effect of keeping down the population; and it is well known that Turkey is dying for want of Turks. In many places in Africa, the inhabitants have been exterminated. Christianity, on the contrary, tends to conserve and increase the population, so that even though there were to be no conversions at all, the tendency would be for Christianity to spread over the whole world by the operation of the natural law of "the survival of the fittest."
CHAPTER VII.

God's Honour pledged to the Success of a Preached Gospel.

WHATEVER difference of opinion there may be in regard to unfulfilled prophecy, there is at least one point upon which all are agreed, and that is, that there is a time coming when Christianity will prevail over the whole world, and when "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. xi. 9). In virtue of the promise of the Father to the Son in the second Psalm: "Ask of me and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost part of the earth for a possession," "all the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Him" (Ps. xxii. 17).

But the question arises: By what means is this change to be effected? and, until recently, no one supposed that it would be otherwise than by the preaching of the Gospel, as all previous conversions had been. But our friends the Millenarians have come to another and very different conclusion, and maintain that a preached Gospel is incapable of producing this effect, and, instead of the world being evangelised by its means, Christianity will be continually losing ground, until, at our Lord's second coming, it will have almost entirely disappeared. They do believe in the future universal diffusion of Christianity, and they
expect that all the kingdoms of the earth are to become the kingdoms of the Lord and of His Christ; but they confidently affirm that this is not to be accomplished by the preaching of the Gospel, or by any human instrumentality, but only by the Lord Jesus Himself, when He comes in power and great glory with all the holy angels.

They say that, as all the previous dispensations have been failures, the Christian dispensation is bound to be a failure also; and when all have failed, the Lord Himself will come, and will take the work into His own hands, and establish His kingdom over the whole world, and reign upon the earth for a thousand years. The surpassing splendour of His appearing, when He comes to take vengeance on His enemies, and all who obey not the Gospel, will have such an effect on men's minds as to overcome all opposition, and constrain them to submit to His authority.

"In former dispensations He tried many a check, but all failed; and now He has let loose creature lawlessness and evil, in order that, when it has reached its height, He may effectually interpose to arrest it, by sending His own Son into the world to destroy Antichrist, and to bind Satan. Then, under the righteous rule of Jesus and His Bride, shall holiness be established, iniquity swept away, and peace shed its vernal gladness over the long desolation of the earth." *

"The Creator and Judge of all shall take the work into His own hand, which the common system assigns to the miserable committees of our societies." †

* Dr. H. Bonar's "Prophetic Landmarks," p. 76.
"He is to sit at the right hand till the hour arrives when His long resisting foes shall be made His footstool; till the hour arrives when, like Joshua's captains (Josh. x. 24), He shall draw near to put His feet on the neck of these His enemies, and to take possession of His inheritance." *

"Thus, by seven distinct and altogether different tests (seven dispensations, including the Christian), it will have been proved that no possible circumstances can give man the power of recovering himself from sin, that he must either cry out for the help of the Lord or perish from His presence for ever." †

Such is the expectation of the Millenarians. But, besides the effect produced by the glorious appearing of Christ at His second coming, there are other two influences to be at work after His arrival; there is to be the binding of Satan, and the preaching of what is called "the Gospel of the Kingdom." The effect produced by the three combined will be such that the Jews will at once be converted, all the nations of the world will accept of Christ as their Saviour, and a reign of righteousness and peace will commence over the whole earth. It is to the first of these, however, that Millenarians attach the chief importance, as it is by that means that it is to redound to the glory of Christ.

The "Gospel of the Kingdom," in which men are commanded to be the subjects of Christ, is not supposed to be more efficacious than the "Gospel of Grace," in which men are entreated to become sons of God. But considerable importance is attached to the fact of Satan being bound and unable to deceive the nations.

* Dr. A. Bonar's "Redemption Drawing Nigh," p. 146.
† Pember's "Great Prophecies," p. 21.
We confess we do not see how this last circumstance should redound to the glory of God and of His Christ; it would appear to us to be rather the reverse. God could bind Satan now, if that were necessary, because there is nothing to prevent it. But, in the contest between the Spirit of God and Satan, it would not be for the glory of God that Satan should be prevented from putting forth all his power. In that case, it might be said that Satan was the stronger of the two. But, if God permitted him to put forth all his power and do his utmost, and when at length, by a preached Gospel, sent home by the Spirit's power, the kingdom of Satan is overthrown; then will he be "cast out," and bound as a conquered power, and it would then be proved that God and truth were victorious. But if, on the contrary, as the result of this long contest, Satan shall be the conqueror, and shall have chased Christianity from the earth, it would be strange indeed if God would acknowledge the defeat, and by physical force remove the conqueror from the field where he had proved himself victorious. This might be called a physical victory, but it would not the less be a moral defeat.

The moral field was the only field upon which it was possible for Satan to dispute with God the sovereignty of the world, but it would have been no disgrace to be overcome by Omnipotence. To suppose, therefore, that upon the moral field Satan should succeed in establishing his kingdom, in opposition to the Bible and the Holy Ghost combined, and that God at length should have to come to the rescue, and end the conflict after it had been decided in Satan's favour, would only prove that greater was he that was in the world than He that was in the Church.
But the binding of Satan is not regarded by Millenarians as the only, or even the chief means by which the world is to be converted. The great instrument that is to bring the nations into subjection to Christ's rule is the manifestation of His glory and power when He comes the second time to judge the world. What they insist on is the contrast between the failure of the Gospel as a means of bringing the world into subjection, and the immediate success that will attend the personal coming. The world, they say, will not, and can not be converted by a preached Gospel, but will, on the contrary, like Saul of Tarsus, whose conversion they quote as an appropriate example, be converted by the visible display of Christ's glory.

We quite sympathise with these brethren in their desire to exalt Christ, and to humble human agency, and we quite understand how, when Christ comes to judgment in power and great glory, a great change will take place in men's minds who were previously opposed to Him and His cause; but we think these brethren have made more than one mistake in coming to the conclusion that this will be more effectual than the preaching of the Gospel.

In the first place, we question whether the change produced upon men's minds, such as they expect at Christ's visible coming, can be said to be conversion at all; and, although they adduce the conversion of Paul as a case in point, we do not think that it is at all parallel. Conversion, as it is represented in Scripture, is a change of heart, a new birth produced by the Holy Ghost, testifying of the love of God in the cross of Christ. An intellectual conviction of the truths of the Gospel is not conversion; neither is conversion an
obedience produced by fear and compulsion, rather than by love and a new heart.

There can be no doubt that when Christ is revealed from heaven, with His mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, many will be very thoroughly convinced of their error and will very earnestly cry for mercy; but that is not conversion, because it is not a change of heart, and, without a change of heart, there is no reconciliation to God. The case of Paul is cited as an example of that kind of conversion; but Paul’s conversion was altogether different. It is true that the incident which took place on the road to Damascus convinced Paul that he had made a mistake, and that in very deed Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah. But that was not conversion. There were thousands in Jerusalem, as there are thousands in the present day, who knew that Jesus is the Christ, and yet who rejected Him just because He was the very opposite of the Christ that they wanted. They knew that He was a teacher sent from God, because no man could do the miracles that He did unless God were with him. Saul was a young man blinded by Jewish bigotry, and fully persuaded that Christianity was an imposture. Our Lord’s appearance on the road to Damascus convinced him of his mistake, but that was all; and, if the Lord had done nothing more for him than striking him down and telling him what he was doing, he would have returned to Jerusalem convinced that Jesus was the Christ, but still unconverted, a self-righteous Pharisee trusting to the righteousness of the law, in which he could boasted that he was blameless. He would have
ceased to be a persecutor; that would have been all.

But the Lord had not done with him after he had stricken him down; and, during the three days and three nights of solitude and darkness, God only knows the work that was going on in that busy brain between God and his soul: the horror of his sin, the havoc of his self-righteousness, and the illuminating power of the Holy Ghost, as scripture after scripture rose before him, till at length the full glory of the Gospel burst upon his astonished view, and he recognised in the cross of Christ the fulfilment of all the promises and prophecies of the Bible, and the only hope of his salvation. He was taught of God and born of the Spirit; so that when Ananias came in and bade him stand up and be baptised, he was really a Christian. The only effect produced upon Saul's mind by what happened on the road to Damascus, was an intellectual conviction of the divinity of Christ, and the truth of Christianity; the three days and three nights that followed, were the time of his conversion and of his being born again. We cannot say, therefore, that the case of Paul is at all analogous to that of those who may be arrested in their career of wickedness by the coming of the Lord to judgment.

It is surprising that these dear brethren, so evangelical and so spiritually minded as we know they are, can allow themselves to be misled by a mere prophetic theory into the acceptance of so great an error, an error so dreadfully common as that of supposing that the belief of a doctrine constitutes conversion.* The

* This very common error has arisen from the popular definition which is given of the Gospel. It is said to be “Good News,”
coming of Christ to judgment will certainly produce the one, but it cannot have the slightest effect in producing the other. If a man who does not believe Moses and the prophets would not be converted although one rose from the dead, neither will a man who can stand unmoved by the entreatings of a crucified Saviour be savingly converted when he is brought face to face with his judge.

In the second place, the disparagement of a preached Gospel is a disparagement not of man but of God. Millenarians speak of the preaching of the Gospel as if it were a merely human agency, and as if God's honour were not at all pledged to its success. This is a very mistaken view. The preaching of the Gospel is in every respect a Divine agency, man being merely the instrument through whom God works; and the reason why weak and sinful men are alone used as instru-

and that indeed is the meaning of the Saxon word Gospel. But the New Testament was not written in Saxon, but in Greek, and the Greek word Evangelion means, not Good News, but a Good Message, and there is a world of difference between the two. In regard to Good News, a historical belief is enough, and does not need to be obeyed. It is sent from nobody, it is sent by nobody, and it is sent to nobody, so that nobody has any responsibility connected with it. Anybody is at liberty to tell it or not to tell it, to believe it or not to believe it, as he feels inclined. There is no responsibility connected with it; and, when heard one or twice, it ceases to be news at all. A message, on the other hand, is sent from somebody to somebody by somebody, and has not only to be believed but "obeyed," and the more frequently the message is delivered, the more peremptory it becomes, and the more danger is there in neglecting and disobeying it. Angelos is a messenger; Angelia is a message; Evangelion is a message of peace; Evangelistes is a messenger of peace, bound to deliver his message, and insist on receiving an answer for Him that sent him.
ments, is that it may be the more evident that the power is Divine. The law at Sinai was given by the ministration of angels, but, with all its terror and grandeur, it had little or no power. It is not so with the Gospel; its ministration is committed exclusively to weak and sinful men saved by grace. When Cornelius was to be converted, an angel was sent, but it was not to preach the Gospel. He could have preached more eloquently than Peter could have done the Gospel of Jesus Christ, but he was not permitted to do so. All that he was permitted to say was, "Send for Peter." The employment of angels would have introduced the principle of outward grandeur and authority, and that would have hindered rather than helped the Spirit's work.

In a preached Gospel there are two elements, both of which are Divine. There is first, the Word of God, which is the subject-matter of the preaching; and there is the Spirit of God, that carries home the preaching to the hearts and consciences of men. That also is Divine. The word of God is called the Sword of the Spirit, because it is the Spirit that wields it, even when it is preached by men. Those who disparage the preaching of the Gospel, therefore, disparage not men, but God; because man is only the instrument that God uses. Taul may plant and Apollos may water, but it is God that giveth the increase. What then is the inference? "So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase." The preaching of the Gospel is not man's remedy for sin and death, but God's; and, being God's remedy, the honour of God is pledged to its success. "As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth
not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it
brink forth and bud, that it may give seed to the
sower, and bread to the eater: so shall MY WORD be that
goeth forth out of MY MOUTH. It shall not return unto
me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please,
and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it”
(Isa. lv. 10); and then the prophet speaks of the time
when peace and joy and singing will prevail over the
whole world: “Instead of the thorn will come up the
fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the
myrtle tree, and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for
an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.”

Our Lord illustrates the relations which subsist
between Himself and His people, by comparing them to
the vine and its branches. The branches could not
bear fruit of themselves without the vine, so neither
could the vine bear fruit without the branches. It is
by means of the branches, and the branches only, that
the vine brings forth its fruit. “As the Father hath
sent me,” said Christ, “so send I you ;” and when our
Lord left the earth to sit at the Father’s right hand,
He left His people to carry on the work that He had
begun, in evangelising the nations, and making God’s
will be done on earth as it is done in heaven. This
was the Father’s arrangement not man’s, not even the
Son’s, but the Father’s, who was the husbandman, and
who was glorified when it was successful. “Herein is
my Father glorified, that ye bring forth much fruit.”
How, then, can God be glorified by a failure of His own
plan, when, instead of the branches bringing forth
abundance of fruit, the vine becomes gradually stripped
of its branches until not one of them is left, and the
vine has to bring forth fruit without the branches.
But this is not all. Not only is the message Divine, the power that accompanies the preaching of it is Divine also; and, therefore, if it prove a failure, it is a failure of God and not man. When the hundred and twenty were commanded to remain in Jerusalem till they got the promise of the Father, it was because it was necessary that they should be "endued with power from on high" before going forth upon their mission. Without the baptism of the Holy Ghost, success was impossible; with the baptism of the Holy Ghost, failure was impossible. How else can we account for the marvellous success that attended their preaching during the first three centuries? The Word of God is the Sword of the Spirit, "quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow." With such an instrument wielded by Divine power, how can there be failure?

It is this Divine element that distinguishes the new dispensation from the old, and makes its failure impossible. "Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt (the Levitical covenant), because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days (the Pentecostal), saith the Lord: I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their heart: and I will be to them a God and they shall be to Me a people: and they shall not teach every man his neighbour and every man his brother saying, Know the Lord, for all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest."
Under the Levitical covenant, in the absence of the Spirit, God dealt with the Israelites by external teaching and visible exhibitions of might and power—drying up the Red Sea, the thunders of Sinai, and numberless manifestations of terrible and visible majesty, but they were entirely unavailing; they neither convicted them of sin nor won their hearts to love. But when this had been made manifest, then the new dispensation was introduced, a dispensation that had nothing of visible majesty, but only the love of God manifested in the cross of Christ, and the silent, but irresistible agency of the Spirit of God dealing with men's hearts and consciences, and all at once the most marvellous triumphs of Divine grace ensued, proving the truth of what God had foretold by Zechariah, iv. 6: "Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit saith the Lord of Hosts." Where shall we find in the Bible any indication that, after thus proving the superiority of the Gospel dispensation, God will find it necessary to have again recourse to the display of physical power and outward grandeur as a means of converting the world.

It was not for the sake of this world only that God gave up His Son to die. He had in view, besides, a higher purpose, which was to reveal to principalities and powers in heavenly places, by means of the Church, the grandeur of Divine love as the mightiest power in the universe, in that it was able to conquer where everything else had failed. In order to overcome the fearful malignity of the human heart, the mere operation of authority, and the infliction of punishment was of no avail. God might threaten or He might punish by casting into hell; but, instead of love, it would all be
met by resentment and hate. That was a glorious lesson to teach His creatures, and He taught it by the cross of Christ. Until they saw that, they never knew what a God they had, or how rich the universe was in having such a God. In magnifying love He magnified Himself, because God is love.

Paul takes up most decided ground upon this point, and maintains that the Gospel of Christ is characterised by the highest wisdom, and is possessed of the greatest power. The Greeks sought after wisdom, and believed that philosophy and civilisation were the true means of elevating and improving mankind. Paul tells them that the very foolishness of God is wiser than men, and that the Gospel of Jesus is the very perfection of wisdom, because it alone can recover poor humanity from the ruins of the fall. The Jew, on the other hand, demanded a sign from heaven before he would give credence to this doctrine of the cross. It was an old demand which our Lord himself refused. "Give us a sign from heaven," said they, "Our fathers in the desert got manna from heaven to eat.—Joshua commanded the sun and moon to stand still, and stones were showered down from heaven to discomfit their enemies.—Elijah brought down fire from heaven to consume the captains and their fifties. What sign showest Thou that we may see and believe Thee?" Nothing appeared to them to be more reasonable than that they should have some ocular demonstration from heaven of the reality of His mission; and yet, what does Christ say to them? "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonah; for, as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days
and three nights in the heart of the earth." What! instead of a sign from heaven, He gives them a sign from Hades. Instead of presenting them with a proof of His mission, by the exhibition of His Divine glory and majesty, by outward pomp and magnificence, He presents them with a proof of His mission, and, at the same time, an appeal to their devotion, in His own humiliation unto death. Christ refused them a sign from heaven, which He could easily have given them; and they rejected Him just because of the very sign that He did give them. They regarded the cross of Christ—which Paul looked on as the very brightest exhibition of the love, the wisdom and the power of God—as a stumbling-block in their path, and an offence, and therefore they rejected Him. Which of them was right? Do the Millenarians not see that they are answering the question by putting Christ in the wrong? The Jews had said, "Show us a sign from heaven, and we shall believe." Now we are told that that is the way in which the world is to be converted after all, and that as soon as Christ gives them a sign from heaven, the Jews will immediately believe. Not only so, but we are told that the glory of God requires that the preaching of the cross should fail; that the miserable committees aiding and abetting the preaching of the Gospel should be disappointed; and that the "sign" of the Son of Man in heaven is to be the grand instrument in God's hands of the world's conversion. What is that but acknowledging that the Jews were right and Christ wrong; and that, if He had done at first what He will have to do at last, the miseries of the last eighteen hundred years would have been avoided?

Our friends seem to boast over the anticipated failure of the preaching of the cross of Christ, and the sign of the
SUCCESS OF A PREACHED GOSPEL.

prophet Jonah; and to glory in the superior attractions, and the greater evangelistic power of outward splendour, and visible signs from heaven; as if Christ, being lifted up in humiliation would fail, but His coming in glory would draw all men to Him. In their opinion, this attitude of humiliation and entreaty is practically a mistake. "Before Christ's coming," says Mr. Haslam, "Christ besought men to accept His grace," and it was a failure. "When He comes, He will require and command them," and that will succeed. It is an entire mistake of those dear brethren. No display of outward grandeur and power can be compared to the cross of Christ for winning the hearts of men; and were it true that the preaching of the cross of Christ is to fail in winning back a lost world to its allegiance to God, and were the exhibition of physical power and splendour to succeed in accomplishing what the love of God in Christ had not accomplished, the loss to the universe would be unspeakable, and the glory of God's moral perfections tarnished.

When David went forth against the Philistine, he took neither sword nor spear; but only a sling and some pebbles he had selected from the brook; he got no command to do so; but, because he acted in faith and in reliance on the power of God, God was honoured in the result. But, let us suppose that, instead of David killing the giant, the giant had killed him, and that God immediately smote the giant with a thunderbolt; that would have proved that God was stronger than either David or the giant; but would that have rebounded more to the glory of God? Certainly not. And so, supposing that, in the conflict between Christ's little flock and the principalities and powers of darkness, the little flock were vanquished by their more
powerful adversary; and then, when Antichrist was in the flush of victory, Christ should descend and destroy him with the brightness of His coming, would not that prove that Christ was stronger than either His little flock or the adversary that had conquered it? Of course it would, but is there any need of such proof, or would God be glorified by it?

Or, take another illustration. When Gideon was commanded to dismiss the whole of his army except the three hundred men armed with trumpets, lamps and pitchers only, God's purpose was to prove that He alone gave them the victory. But, supposing, that instead of the Midianites being defeated, Gideon and his three hundred men had been put to the sword, overwhelmed by superior numbers, the shame of his defeat would have rested not upon Gideon, but upon God. Therefore it was impossible. The very weakness and inadequacy of the force that was under his command was the most certain pledge of victory.

Let us apply the lesson to the matter in hand. Christ gave the commission to His disciples to go forth and conquer the world on His behalf; they were commanded to bring the nations under obedience to His law; but, do we not see in that commission a far greater disproportion between the Church and the world than between Gideon's three hundred and the hosts of Midian? Eleven poor, unlettered men were Christ's chosen champions in this most unequal warfare. On the day of Pentecost a hundred and twenty feeble men and women were pitched against a world in arms. They had no learning, no revenues, no political influence, nothing of what the men of the world would consider absolutely necessary for success. "Behold I send you forth as sheep among wolves," said He, and...
them absolutely penniless to carry on the work, saying to them, "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom;" "Go make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you;" and "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world;" as much as to say, "Go, worm Jacob, and thresh the mountains." But Millenarians tell us that, instead of Jacob threshing the mountains, the mountains are to thresh Jacob, and it will be necessary for Christ to come down to save Jacob from his triumphant enemies.

Why, then, did Christ ever send them on such an enterprise, to fight against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places; and, above all, why, after sending them out, did He tell them in the Apocalypse that God's glory required that they should be defeated? That was putting them to a still greater disadvantage; for nothing demoralises the soldier so much as the suspicion that his general does not wish him to conquer, and that he and his companions are sure to be defeated.

But there is another question that arises, still more affecting the honour of Christ, and upon which Millenarians ought to meditate: Why did Christ prohibit His followers from employing physical force and material grandeur and magnificence in the promotion of His kingdom, if He finds it necessary at last to use them Himself. He had told them that His kingdom was not of this world, and His soldiers were not to fight. He had told them that "God had chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things
of the world to confound the things that are mighty; and base things of the world, and things that are despised hath God chosen, yea, and things that are not to bring to nought things that are.” But, if it be true what Millenarians tell us, that God will be glorified by the Church’s defeat, and by Christ coming and doing what the Church failed to do, it would be only fair that He should put the same restrictions upon Himself that He put upon them; it would only be fair that when they fail, and He comes to do it for them, He should use no physical force and no outward grandeur and glory; but if, when He comes, He has to use the very means that He prohibited to them, it is ungenerous in our friends to make comparisons, and boast of His success. He had sent them out with no outward grandeur, no physical force, no body-destroying instruments; and, when they fail for want of these, He comes Himself with the outward grandeur, and the physical force, and the body-destroying instruments; and, as might be expected, He succeeds. Where, then, would be all the boasting about the weak things, and the despised things, if outward grandeur and physical force are required to be employed after all? If that be a true representation of what is to happen, can there be any doubt that it would be more honourable for the Church to fail in such a contest than for Christ to succeed, and would there not be an indelible stain cast upon Christ for sending them forth on such a hopeless enterprise? The thing is impossible, it is inconceivable.
BEFORE proceeding further, it may be as well to dispose of the one passage of Scripture upon which alone Millenarians depend for proof that Christ's enemies shall not be made His footstool before He comes the second time without sin unto salvation. That passage is 2 Thess. ii. 8, in which Paul says, "Then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming."

It is a remarkable circumstance that, while our friends find no difficulty in producing a whole host of passages to prove that Christ's coming will take place before the Milennium—a doctrine which is in no wise dishonouring to God—there is but one passage, or rather only one verse, or rather one clause in a verse, which they can discover in the whole Bible to prove that, instead of God's performing His promise to His Son, to make His enemies His footstool before He rises from the Father's right hand, the chief of them will be still in the field in the full plenitude of his conquering power, so that it will be necessary for the Son to rise from His throne and come down and destroy him Himself. But it is still more remarkable that this clause upon which so much depends is a gross mistranslation, and that it is the grossness of the mistranslation that gives it the only force which it possesses.

We will proceed to show that the literal translation is as follows:—
“Whom the Lord shall slay with the Spirit of His mouth, and bring to nought with the manifestation of His presence.”

The meaning of which is, as we will show, that the Antichrist is to be slain by the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God; and that those who will not be brought to submission by the Word, will be won by the loving, gentle, and holy walk and conversation of His people, in whom Christ's presence is manifested.

The reasons why we regard this as the true meaning of the verse are the following:—

First.—The Lawless One is not a Man that is to be put to Death, but an Apostacy that is to be brought to an End. It is this Apostacy which forms the subject of the Apostle's discourse in the second chapter, and is introduced to us at the beginning of the chapter as the Apostacy, receiving as one of its names the "Mystery of Lawlessness." Although, therefore, it is also called the Man of Sin and the Lawless One, that only identifies it the more unmistakably with Popery, because, as a system, it is not only personified, but actually wielded by the Pope. It is emphatically both a system and a person as here represented. As a man, he is said to be slain, or consumed by the Spirit of the Lord's mouth, which is equivalent to the Sword of the Spirit; and, as a system, it is said to be brought to nought by the manifestation of His presence.

The idea that it is a person is due to the mistake (so characteristic of the Millenarian school) of giving a literal instead of a figurative interpretation to prophecy; and because they do so, finding that the prediction regarding the Man of Sin, when interpreted literally, cannot be applied to the Romish apostacy, they, or at
least some of them, have come to the astounding conclusion that he is to be either the Emperor Nero restored to life, or some of the Bonaparte family restored to power, or some other man raised up to be the scourge of the whole earth. After extirpating Christianity, he is to lay siege to Jerusalem in order to destroy it, and then, “Suddenly, and it may be with thunder, accompanied with earthquake, the darkened heavens will rend asunder, and a light above the brightness of the sun will flash forth. The clouds, which once closed to hide the Saviour from human view, will now unclose and reveal the Son of Man coming with power and great glory. When He thus appears, the saints of God will appear with Him. The brightness of this advent will be like lightning,” and Antichrist shall be consumed with the Spirit of His mouth, and destroyed with the brightness of His coming. “The Jews as a nation will be converted in one day” (Isa. lxvi. 8; Zech. iii. 9), and reconciled to Christ, even as Joseph’s brethren were reconciled to him in the land of Egypt. Like Joseph, the Lord will say to His people, “Be not grieved nor angry with yourselves that ye sold Me hither; for God did send Me before you to preserve life” (Gen. xlv. 5). The Jews will be converted suddenly, as Saul of Tarsus was, by seeing the Lord of Glory. Jerusalem is then to be rebuilt on the top of a high mountain, higher than Moriah, and fifty times as broad; and the Temple, which is to be nine miles square, is to be erected according to the plan of Ezekiel’s Temple, and the services conducted according to his directions.*

We have great respect for the Futurist Section of the

Millenarian School, to which Mr. Haslam belongs; but when they hold that the Apostacy described in this chapter is not the Papacy, but a Man who is yet to rise to universal power and persecute the Church, we regard their theory as simply incredible. Here are we, as they say, at the close of the dispensation, and able to look back upon nearly two thousand years of the Church's history, and what is the object that bulks most largely there? Is it not the great Apostacy that for nearly 1260 years persecuted the saints of God, and shed rivers of their blood. If there was a prophet in Apostolic times at all worthy of the name, who professed to tell us things to come, is it conceivable that he would not see the Papacy, nor even suspect its existence, that God would send no word of comfort to His bleeding Church, and give no indication that He had any knowledge of it, or would bring them out of it, and that the prophetic eye would shoot over the heads of both Gregory and Luther together, and fix his telescopic gaze upon a minute object, however terrible, in the far distance, when prophecy will be no longer needed?

We have a still greater respect for the Historical or Preterite Section of the Millenarian School, of which the Drs. Bonar may be regarded as the representatives, for our sympathies are almost entirely with them; but we lay at their door, notwithstanding the sobriety of their views and the general orthodoxy of their theology, the blame of the extravagances and unscriptural doctrines of those who have followed them. Their determined adherence to literality in the interpretation of prophecy, and the length to which they themselves have carried it, have had the effect of so increasing their relish, and enlarging their capacity for the marvellous, that they
believe almost anything, provided it lie logically in their line. But they have also laid down principles of interpretation, which, when adopted by their followers, have carried them far beyond their own views. Accepting their theory, the Futurists, of whom Mr. Haslam is an example, have discovered, that interpreted literally, prophecy cannot be made to correspond with anything which has yet happened to the Church, and consequently they hold that these prophecies must apply to events which are yet in the future. As might be expected, the old school is startled with such an interpretation, and refuses to follow them; but they acknowledge at the same time, that it is difficult to answer their arguments.*

Second.—The Passage in question does not refer to the Second Coming at all, and has no connection with it. The whole chapter is taken up with the great Apostacy which was to precede the Second Coming, and which is also called the Mystery of Lawlessness, the Lawless One, and the Man of Sin. The Apostle wished the Thessalonians to know that this Apostacy was already in existence, but that there was a barrier that for a time prevented its development. He wished them also to know the extraordinary character which it would assume after it had been fully developed, and what sort of persons would be entangled

* "I feel very strongly the difficulties connected with a fulfilled Apocalypse. I am by no means satisfied with any of those schemes that have been of late propounded. Nay, some of the most recent and most applauded will, I am persuaded, be found wanting. I stand still in doubt, waiting earnestly for further light. The scheme of an unfulfilled Apocalypse has many plausibilities, but many difficulties."
in its snares. There is not in the whole chapter a single reference to the Second Coming, except in the opening verses, telling them that the Second Coming was to be preceded by the Apostacy; but, after merely naming it in this connection, the Apostle never after even alludes to it. It is quite a mistake, therefore, to say that the whole chapter being upon the Second Coming, the 8th verse can refer to nothing else. If they have any doubt about this, let them examine the chapter, and they will find that it is as we say. The whole chapter is taken up with nothing else but the coming Apostacy.

Before proceeding to the examination of the words in detail, it is necessary to state how the argument stands.

We have shown that in the 110th Psalm, the Father made a promise to the Son that He, the Father, would make Christ's enemies His footstool before He left His seat at the Father's right hand. We showed that this promise was regarded by the Apostles as the key and key-note of the Second Coming, that Christ could not return until His enemies were made subject to Him, and that He is at present in an attitude of expectation, waiting till that be done.

We also showed that the parables of the Mustard Seed and the Sower, as well as Ezekiel's vision of the River that flowed from the sanctuary, are not susceptible of any other meaning than that Christianity from the very smallest beginning will gradually spread, until it takes possession of the whole world.

Proceeding further, we showed that instead of the honour of Christ requiring that the Gospel should be a failure, it is the very reverse; and that, were outward grandeur and physical force to be proved to be superior
in power to Love, the result would be a moral calamity.

Having thus proved the doctrine, it is evident that if any passage is brought forward to disprove it, the burden of proof must lie upon our opponents, and they must show that no other interpretation is possible than that which they put upon it. But if, on the contrary, we can show that it is susceptible of a meaning consistent with the doctrine which we have proved, it must be preferred. How much more, then, must it be preferred when we show that it is the only interpretation possible.

As the force of the passage lies in the last clause of the verse, "the brightness of His coming"—epiphaneia tēs parousias, we shall examine it first.

_Epiphaneia—Brightness._

The meaning of _epiphaneia_ is "appearance" or "manifestation;" it comes from the verb _epiphainō_, to "show forth," to "display." Our English word "epiphany" is the Greek word with an English termination, and is applied to the Christian festival celebrating the day on which Christ was shown to the wise men.

In the New Testament, _epiphaneia_ is applied first to Christ's second coming in 1 Tim. vi. 14, when He will "appear" in the clouds of heaven; and it is also applied to His first coming (2 Tim. i. 10), when He was "manifested" in the flesh, and seen of angels, not only on the mount of transfiguration, but in the manger in Bethlehem, and on the cross between the two thieves. The word "brightness" is a gross mistransla-
tion, and therefore the revisers of the New Testament have expunged it, and substituted the word “manifestation,” which is its true meaning. And yet, we are sorry to say, Millenarians take advantage of the mistranslation, and cling to it as an argument; they even paraphrase the error, so as to turn the straw into a plank to save their theory. “The advent of Christ which shall refugently strike the eye, and whose majesty and glorious splendour no one shall be able to deny.” How much the Millenarian view has profited by this gross mistranslation, it is impossible to tell.

Parousia—Coming.

This also is a wrong translation, because the word ought to have been rendered “presence.” Nobody disputes the fact that the literal and normal meaning of parousia is “presence,” and that only its secondary meaning is “to come,” or “to arrive.” It is derived from the verb pareimi, “to be present,” as apousia, absence, comes from apeimi, “to be absent.” Thus Paul says (Phil. ii. 12), “Ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence (parousia) only; but now much more in my absence” (apousia). We at once admit that it has the secondary meaning “coming,” and that Paul sometimes uses it with that meaning also, as in the first verse of the chapter, “We beseech you, brethren, by the coming (parousia) of our Lord.” But we hold that, unless there be some special reason, “presence” is to be preferred. The revisers of the New Testament admit this, for, although they were bound by their rule No. 3 to make no changes except where it was necessary, they have in a note made the reader aware that “presence” is the rendering of the Greek. Even Dr. Bonar acknowledges it, for, in regard
to this very passage, he says:—"The two words, 'epiphany' and 'presence' are frequently used separately to denote the literal advent."

But there is another and more important reason why we must prefer "presence." In the very next verse the word *parousia* is used in a sense in which it is impossible to mean "coming." The Apostle speaks of the *parousia* of Antichrist, as well as the *parousia* of Christ, in almost the same sentence, thus:—

"Whom He shall bring to nought by the manifestation of His *parousia*. Whose *parousia* (that is the *parousia* of the Lawless One) is after the working of Satan."

We are thus called on, as it were, to examine this *parousia* of Antichrist, in order that it may help us in determining the meaning of the *parousia* of Christ, because, whatever be the sense in which the one is spoken of, that must be presumed to be the sense of the other.

In the first place, no one contends that the *parousia* of Antichrist is a personal "coming." This is conceded by the Millenarians themselves, because they all hold that Antichrist is not to come personally. Even those who insist on regarding Antichrist, the Man of Sin, as a person, have no expectation that he is to come as Christ is to come. They expect that he will be born into the world as an infant, and that he will rise to eminence gradually, not as an infant but as a man. All that they contend for is that the meaning of the one *parousia* is not to determine the meaning of the other.

We think the argument conclusive, but as Dr. Bonar has given an answer to Dr. Brown, who uses the same
argument, it is only fair that we should allow him to speak for himself.

"Our objector (Dr. Brown) seems to forget that he believes in a literal advent of Christ as well as we; . . . whereas his reasoning proceeds on the supposition that the advent of Christ is no more a literal advent than that of Antichrist. His syllogism halts grievously. It should run thus:—"The word coming, when applied to Antichrist, cannot be literal, because there is no literal advent of Antichrist; therefore, the same word, when applied to Christ, cannot be literal, because there is no literal advent of Christ." Though Antichrist's 'coming' may not be personal, and therefore we may be at liberty to spiritualise the word, is that any reason for saying that we are at liberty to spiritualise the word (or rather, a far stronger one) as applied to Christ?" *

The fallacy here lies in Dr. Bonar misapprehending the point to be proved, and therefore mistaking the syllogism. The point to be proved is not that parousia cannot mean a literal "coming." If that were Dr. Brown's meaning, his logic would indeed halt grievously. But Dr. Brown does not say so. The point to be proved is that parousia does sometimes mean presence without a personal coming, and may, therefore, have that meaning here. The syllogism, therefore, stands thus:—"Parousia, in this passage, is applied to the 'presence' of Antichrist, not to his personal 'coming;’ therefore, parousia does not necessarily mean a personal coming, and may mean a presence." Surely there is no halting logic here.

Dr. Brown believes, as we do, that Christ's coming will be personal, and all that we contend for is that this

* Bonar's "Prophetic Landmarks," p. 130.
passage does not necessarily refer to Christ's personal coming. We rather think that it is not Dr. Brown's but Dr. Bonar's logic that is defective, and if it must take a syllogistic form, his syllogism would be: "In some passages, *parousia* refers to Christ's personal coming—this passage is some passage—therefore *parousia* in this passage refers to Christ's personal coming."

It is scarcely fair to charge Dr. Brown with "spiritualising" the word, since he himself acknowledges that "presence" is its literal meaning. *

We do not deny that in some passages *parousia* is rightly translated "coming," and therefore we admit that in this passage it *might* be translated "coming." We also admit that in some passages *parousia* is rightly applied to Christ's Second Coming, and therefore might apply to Christ's Second Coming here. But we claim that, inasmuch as the literal meaning of *parousia* is "presence," and more especially as in the very same sentence the *parousia* of Antichrist means his presence and not his coming, the presumption is that Christ's *parousia* is His "presence" also.

But the *parousia* of Antichrist throws more light on the subject than at first sight appears. It will be observed that the *parousia* of Antichrist is spoken of, not as a future event, but a thing going on at the time when the Apostle was writing. "Whose *parousia* is after the working of Satan," not *will be*. And the Greek word for "working" (*kat' energeian*) is a very peculiar and a very significant one. It comes from the verb *energeō*, to work *in* or *through* a person, to energise,

* Mr. Pember, too, admits that "presence" is not only its literal but its proper rendering in this passage.—Pember's "Great Prophecies," p. 364.
as when it is said, "the spirit that now worketh (energeō) in the children of disobedience" (Eph. ii. 2); or "It is God that worketh (energeō) in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. ii. 13).

But that is not all; the literal meaning of kata is "according to," so that kat' energeian means "according to the energising" of Satan in them that perish. So that, by simply giving the most literal translation possible to the passage, we throw a flood of light upon its meaning. "The presence of Antichrist is according to the energising of Satan in them that perish, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness." The contrast is beautiful between the parousia of Christ, and the parousia of Antichrist. The presence of Antichrist is manifested by his followers being energised by Satan. But Antichrist is to be brought to nought by the manifestation of Christ's presence, dwelling in and energising His people, working in them to will and to do of His good pleasure.

A very remarkable mistake has been made by a respected brother, who thinks he sees in the combination of epiphaneia and parousia in the same passage, a double certainty that it refers to the Second Coming. He says, "The two words 'epiphany' and 'presence' are frequently used separately to denote the literal advent; and surely, when they both occur together, we are warranted in considering the expression as one of the strongest that could have been used to denote the literal coming. This double term is certainly the strongest which occurs in these Epistles, and seems used of purpose by the Apostle, to prevent the possibility of being explained away." * A little consideration might

have suggested that, although either of the words singly might have expressed the idea of the Second Coming; when the two are combined it is impossible. The Apostle could not mean to say that Antichrist is to be brought to nought by the Second Coming of the Second Coming. When both words come together, the one governing the other, one of them may mean the Second Coming; but, in that case, the other must be a modification of it, so that instead of strengthening the expression, it weakens it. The manifestation of Christ's presence cannot be a stronger expression than the manifestation of Christ Himself. We must take the words as Paul uses them, in their natural sense: epiphaneia means a manifestation, nothing more and nothing less. It may be a manifestation of a person, or it may be a manifestation of a thing. In the present instance, it is the manifestation of a thing—the manifestation of the parousia of Christ—not the manifestation of Christ Himself; and we all know that the presence of Christ may be manifested in many ways, without Christ appearing in person.

Katargeō—Destroy.

We last of all object to the word “destroy” as the translation of the Greek katargeō, the proper meaning of which is not to destroy, but to bring to nought, or to abolish. It comes from kata-a-ergon, to stop working, which is a very different thing from destroying. As the question is of importance, instead of appealing to authorities, we give all the other passages in which the word is found, to show how impossible it is to translate the word as “destroy.”
Luke xiii. 7: Why cumbereth (katargeō) it the ground?

Rom. iii. 3: Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect (katargeō).

Rom. iii. 31: Do we then make void (katargeō) the law?

Rom. iv. 14: For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect (katargeō).

Rom. vi. 6: Knowing this that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed (katargeō).

Rom. vii. 2: If the husband be dead, she is loosed from (katargeō) the law of her husband.

Rom. vii. 6: But now we are delivered (katargeō) from the law.

1 Cor. i. 28: God hath chosen the things that are not to bring to nought (katargeō) the things that are.

1 Cor. ii. 6: Yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought (katargeō).

1 Cor. vi. 13: Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats; but God shall destroy (katargeō) both it and them.

1 Cor. xiii. 8: Whether there be prophecies [propheteiai prophesyings], they shall fail (katargeō) whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away (katargeō).

1 Cor. xiii. 10: When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away (katargeō).

1 Cor. xiii. 11: When I became a man, I put away (katargeō) childish things.
1 Cor. xv. 24: When He shall have put down (katargeo) all rule, and all authority, and power.

1 Cor. xv. 26: The last enemy that shall be destroyed (katargeo) is death.

2 Cor. iii. 7: The children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses, for the glory of his countenance, which glory was to be done away (katargeo). See also ver. 11.

2 Cor. iii. 14: Which vail is done away (katargeo) in Christ.

Gal. iii. 17: The law cannot disannul it, that it should make the promise of none effect (katargeo).

Gal. v. 4: Christ has become of none effect (katargeo) unto you.

Gal. v. 11: Then is the offence of the Cross ceased (katargeo).

Eph. ii. 15: Having abolished (katargeo) in His flesh the enmity.

2 Tim. i. 10: Christ who hath abolished (katargeo) death.

Heb. ii. 14: That through death He might destroy (katargeo) him that had the power of death.

It will be observed that in three of these passages the Authorised Version gives the word destroy as the translation of katargeo, but in the Revised Version, in every one of them it is rejected, and “do away,” “bring to nought,” and “abolish” are adopted in its stead. The best definition we have seen is that suggested by Dr. Doddridge (1 Cor. xv. 24): “katargeo means to divest a thing of some power which it formerly had, and reducing to an incapacity of exerting that energy any more.” The excellence of this definition is proved by the way in which it fits in to every one of the
passages and throws new light upon their meaning; and when we apply it to the passage now under consideration, we find that it cannot be applied to a person. It brings out as the meaning that the Romish Apostacy is to be divested of the power which it had usurped, and reduced to an incapacity of exerting that power any more.

We have thought it necessary to give a thorough and exhaustive exegesis of this sentence, because it is the only passage brought forward to prove that Christ's enemies will not be made His footstool before He rises from His throne at the Father's right hand. So far as the argument is concerned, we might leave the subject, but, as the whole passage taken together throws important light on the means by which not only Popery, but all other systems of error are to done away, we will now proceed to examine the first clause.

The Spirit of His Mouth.

The passage which we are considering is really an isolated parenthesis inserted in the middle of a sentence commencing, "Then shall that wicked be revealed." Here comes in the parenthesis; and the continuation of the sentence is taken up in the following verse, "whose coming is after the working of Satan."

The parenthesis must be regarded as verbally inspired, and probably Paul himself did not understand fully its meaning (1 Pet. i. 2). Like the prophecies of Isaiah, it has the form of Hebrew poetry, with strophe and anti-strophe as in the Revised Version—

"Whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of His mouth
And bring to nought by the manifestation of His coming" (Gr. presence).
We have a few exegetical remarks to make on the first clause. The revisers are doubtless right in preferring the reading anelei “slay,” to analoœi “consume,” but they are not warranted in translating pneuma “breath,” instead of “spirit.”

It is quite true that in classic Greek, wind or breath is more frequently the meaning of pneuma than spirit; but it is not so with sacred Greek, and it is a safe rule never to introduce a classic meaning except when there is a doubt or difficulty in the sacred Greek. But there is neither doubt nor difficulty here. Paul uses the word pneuma more than 150 times, and always in the sense of “spirit,” never either “breath” or “wind.” We hold, therefore, that the revisers had no right to make this an exception.

No doubt they thought that “the breath of Christ’s mouth” is a better expression than “the spirit of His mouth,” and an expositor would be quite justified in saying that he thought that Paul might really mean “breath.” But the revisers were not employed as expositors, but translators, and they had no right to alter the Authorised Version, which, by every canon of criticism, cannot be said to be wrong. The use that the Holy Ghost makes of a word is its real meaning, and, therefore, we appeal to the Concordance.

We believe that the revisers thought themselves justified in changing the meaning, because in the Old Testament the breath of God’s mouth is spoken of as an instrument of destruction.

“By the blast of God they (the wicked) perish, and by the breath (ruach) of His nostrils they are consumed” (Job iv. 9).
"He (the Messiah) shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath (ruach) of His lips shall He slay the wicked" (Isa. xi. 4).

"Therefore I have hewed them by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of my mouth; and thy judgments are the light that goeth forth. For I desired mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings" (Hosea vi. 5, 6).

In these passages, we have considerable light thrown upon the verse under consideration; because, in the first two we find that the breath of God's mouth represents His almighty power put forth without effort, and producing great results. But, in the last, it is a moral influence that is produced; burning, and breaking, and hewing, and slaying are not in anger but in mercy, and it is the Words of God that are represented, not His breath. It is also important to observe that in no case can the words bear a literal interpretation. The breath of God's mouth is never represented as inflicting personal injury, and if Scripture be the best interpreter of Scripture, the slaying of the Lawless One and the Mystery of Lawlessness must be a metaphorical expression.

The last of these passages in the Old Testament prepares us for the still more advanced and spiritual application of the Word in the New Testament. The mouth is the organ of speech, and, in the New Testament at least, Christ's mouth is always spoken of as an instrument of power, not by its wind or breath, but by its speech—never by the blast that comes from it, but by the sword that proceeds out of it.

The sword that proceeds out of Christ's mouth is frequently spoken of in the New Testament thus:
Rev. i. 16: Out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword.

Rev. ii. 12: These things saith He which hath the sharp sword with two edges.

Rev. ii. 16: I will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.

Rev. xix. 15: Out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword that with it He might smite the nations.

Rev. xix. 21: The remnant were slain with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of His mouth.

And the same idea is presented in Heb. iv. 12: "For the Word of God is quick (living) and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword;" and in Eph. vi. 17: "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit which is the Word of God." *

The phraseology of the New Testament, therefore, is different from that of the Old, for, when Christ's mouth is spoken of, it is represented as exercising its power not as breath, but as words, words which cut, not as breath that blows. Out of His mouth goes a sharp two-edged sword, the Sword of the Spirit which depends for its power on being wielded by the Spirit, and as this sword is represented as slaying, the analogy of Scripture requires that we should read the sentence thus: "Whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the Spirit of His mouth" (not the breath of His mouth). The revisers are too careful of Paul's literary reputation when they think they help him by reading pnoē, breath,

* Mr. Guinness, although he is a Millenarian, acknowledges that "the Spirit of his mouth" in this passage means "the truth of Scripture."—"Light for the Last Days," p. 329.
instead of *pneuma*, Spirit. The "*Spirit of His mouth*" means simply the "*Sword of the Spirit,*" which is the *Word* of God, and, in predicting the conquering power of the Bible and a preached Gospel, there was no reason why he should exclude the work of the Spirit as part of the agency that is to smite the Papacy and bring it to nought.

It does not affect our argument whether the Apostacy which he speaks of as having commenced in the time of the Apostles, was the Romish Apostacy or not, although we cannot conceive why it should not. We must observe the twofold character in which it is represented. Whether the *Lawless One* be the Pope or not, he must be identified with the *Mystery of Lawlessness*; and the Man of Sin must be identified with the great Apostacy. To slay the Lawless One without putting an end to the Mystery of Lawlessness, or the Man of Sin without rooting out the Apostacy, would be of no use; and, if that be the case, the "slaying" of the Lawless One means nothing more than the "bringing to nought" the Mystery of Lawlessness. The physical emblem is employed to give emphasis to the spiritual truth, as, when in Ps. xlv. 5, in speaking of this very thing, the Psalmist says: "Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies, whereby the people fall under thee;" it is a moral victory.

We are aware that Futurists interpret these as events that are to take place hereafter at the close of the age. We hold, however, in common with all other interpreters, including Millenarians generally, that the two Witnesses are the Christians, or Churches that rejected the pretensions of Rome, and bore witness to evangelical
Christianity. If so, the fire that came out from their mouths and killed their enemies, was nothing more than their testimony, and the spirit and the power with which they spake. The killing of their enemies, therefore, could not mean actually putting them to death, but putting them out of existence as enemies and opponents by their conversion. The death of the Witnesses does not mean their martyrdom, but their suppression and extinction as a sect; for there were thousands who were not put to death. Their resurrection does not mean the coming to life of those who had been slain, but the revival of the testimony which took place three and a-half years, to a day, from the boasted proclamation that heresy was extinct, to Luther's nailing of his Thesis to the church door of Wittenberg.

We do not say that this is the only meaning of prophetic slaying, because there are several meanings, but this is undoubtedly one meaning; and, applying it to the slaying of the Lawless One, and the Mystery of Lawlessness, nothing could be more appropriate than that the sword which is to slay it should proceed out of the mouth of Christ.

It is for that reason that we see no advantage in changing the meaning of *pneuma* to breath, instead of its ordinary meaning, spirit; so that the Lawless One should be slain by the Spirit of Christ's mouth. The mouth is the organ of speech, and, if the Sword of the Spirit be the Word of God, there can be no reason why we should exclude the work of the Spirit from the agency by which Popery is to be slain.

*The Manifestation of Christ's Presence.*

We have reserved to the last the consideration of the
great truth, which is by far the most important, that the Lawless One is to be brought to nought by the manifestation of Christ's presence.

The "manifestation of Christ's presence" is a far more personal thing than the "Spirit of His mouth," which is elsewhere called the "Sword of the Spirit," and the Word of God. It is true that the free circulation of the Bible, and the free preaching of the Gospel are as sure to kill Popery as the rising of the sun is sure to dispel darkness; and that the only hope of the great Apostacy's survival has been, is, and ever will be, physical repression; but it is a terrible mistake to suppose that God will have at last to resort to the same low and carnal instrumentality for its overthrow. Hitherto the triumphs of the Cross have been achieved by Spiritual and not by carnal forces; and it is a remarkable fact that, whenever and wherever carnal instruments have been employed to advance the cause of Christ (otherwise than by merely protecting it), the result has been uniformly a failure; and in this prediction of the final overthrow of the Man of Sin, there is no reason why we should resort to mistranslation or carnal interpretations of spiritual truths in order to prove that the triumphs of Christianity, which have hitherto been carried on for eighteen centuries in the Spirit, are now to be made perfect in the flesh: "Have we suffered so many things in vain if it be yet in vain?" (Gal. iii. 3). It is the spiritual presence and moral beauty of the lovely Jesus, as exhibited in the persons of His followers, and not the physical forces or outward splendour of His person that is to be the conquering power which is to undermine and bring to nought the great Apostacy.
THE SLAYING OF ANTICHRIST.

The physical overthrow of Christ's enemies is, no doubt, a very proper and a very necessary vindication of God's sovereignty; but when? Not before, but after the moral victory has been gained, and sin and lies have been proved to be powerless in the open field when confronted with truth and love, that alone can conquer the hearts of men. An angel could destroy the hosts of Antichrist every whit as perfectly as Christ Himself, and do no great thing after all. Indeed, if we rightly understand Scripture, it is to be the angels that are to be the executioners of the sentence of the Judge, and not the Judge Himself. The glory of Christ is a moral glory, and His victory is to be a moral victory, as is also that of His followers, who "overcome by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, when they loved not their lives unto the death" (Rev. xii. 11). Could any physical victory be equal to that? or could it be any addition to the glory of Christ to be both judge and executioner, both Solomon and Benaiah at the same time?

It has been the misfortune of the Church in all ages to trust too exclusively to the preaching of the Gospel as the means of evangelising the world, and too little to the holy and Christ-like walk and conversation of His followers as an evangelistic power. The good that is done in the pulpit is often undone in the pews, sometimes also in the pulpit itself; and the strongest argument against Christianity is the inconsistent lives of its professors. But the happy day is coming when, besides the havoc made in the ranks of the enemy by the Sword of the Spirit, or, as it is called in the text, the Spirit of His mouth, there will be added the more effective agency and outgoing of the Spirit's power in
the manifestation of Christ's presence, in the holy and loving walk and conversation of His people; and then the hosts of Antichrist shall melt away like snow in summer under the melting power of holiness and love.

Christianity is a system not only of doctrines to be believed, but of dispositions to be cultivated, and actions to be done; a system not merely of saying "Lord, Lord," but of doing the things which He commands. More especially does it consist in imitating the Master, who, when He was reviled, reviled not again, and when He suffered, threatened not. He went about continually doing good, living for others and not for Himself, and leaving us an example that we should follow His steps. Even when He left the world, the last echo of His voice was caught and preserved by Paul in the saying, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." That is the very end and essence of Christianity—Christ in and shining through His people; and, without that, mere doctrinal orthodoxy is not worthy of the name.

The evangelistic power of this "manifestation of Christ's presence" in His people, is evidenced by Peter, who, in addressing Christian wives, urges upon them the duty of subjection to their husbands; so that they may be won, without the Word, by the influence of their wives' chaste conversation coupled with fear. This is the very counterpart of a preached Gospel, because Christ's presence in the Christian is the most powerful of all sermons; it is Christ's Epistle, known and read of all men, even when they will not listen to the Word, and it is the adorning of the doctrine of Christ that gives it all its attractiveness.

It was this that made Christianity irresistible in Apostolic times, and enabled it to spread over the
whole Roman Empire, in the face of all opposition. But when persecution ceased, and Christianity rose into power, the Church began to fraternise with the world, and made a league with the inhabitants of the land, putting them to tribute. In the name and on behalf of the Master, they insisted on receiving instead of giving, and being ministered unto instead of ministering. From that time the triumphs of the Gospel were in a great measure arrested, and, while the "Spirit of Christ's mouth" continued to slay its thousands, the "manifestation of His presence" no longer slew its tens of thousands.

It is a glorious fact that Christ really and truly dwells in every believer, for, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ dwelling in him, he is none of His. In no other way can we account for the miraculous change which takes place at conversion, changing the character of men even the most abandoned; and it is only in so far as the presence of Christ is manifested in the believer that he shines. The holy walk of the Christian has really an evangelistic power. But, oh! how little of Christ is seen in His people in the present day. Yet, the glorious time is coming, when Jerusalem will put on her beautiful garments, and will shine fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.

What we mean to say is, that any prediction foreseeing the overthrow of the great Apostacy, and the making Christ's enemies His footstool, would be miserably defective which omitted any of the three things—the Bible, the Spirit's power, and the holy walk and conversation of the people of God as an evangelistic power. In this passage we find all the three. Millenarians would exclude the whole of them.
CHAPTER IX.

Taking out from the Gentiles a People for His Name.

As there is only one passage which our brethren the Millenarians ever produce in favour of the doctrine that the heavens will not retain Christ until the Father has fulfilled His promise to make His enemies His footstool, so there is only one passage which they produce in favour of the other dogma, that God never meant the world to be converted by the preaching of the Gospel. That one passage is Acts xv. 14, in which James, professing to repeat what had been previously spoken by Peter, says: "Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name."

We find no fault with our brethren for resting contented with one passage of Scripture to prove so important a doctrine; although that doctrine is opposed to the almost universal opinion of the Church in all ages. One passage of Scripture would be quite sufficient for the purpose, provided that the doctrine in question be a fair and legitimate inference from its statements, and that these statements can have no other meaning. But, so far from that being the case in the present instance, we shall find on examination, not only that James' words are incapable of bearing the meaning which they attach to them, but that they had no reference to the doctrine of election at all.

The point in dispute at that Council in Jerusalem
was, whether Gentile converts were to be received into the Christian Church without being circumcised. The Pharisee party maintained that it was necessary, Peter and Paul maintained that it was not.

Hitherto the Christian Church consisted exclusively of Jews and proselytes, every one of whom had been circumcised. Since the time of Abraham, the Gentiles had been excluded from the visible Church; for, although the heathen had at all times been welcomed into the sacred enclosure, they could not be admitted without being circumcised and undertaking to observe the Mosaic law in all its particulars. In other words, they must become Jews in order to be admitted.

Up to that time every convert to Christianity had not only been circumcised himself, but had had all his male children circumcised also. Now it was proposed that the Gentile converts should be admitted into the Church without circumcision, and without their being required to keep the ceremonial law.

Had it been proposed to abolish circumcision and the Mosaic law altogether, so that both Jews and Gentiles should be free from its yoke, there would not have been the same difficulty, because all would have been alike. But that was not what was proposed. The Jewish Christians were still to circumcise their children, and they and their children were still to keep the ceremonial law. It was only the Gentile Christians that were to be free.

Should this proposal be agreed to, the Christian Church would be divided into two parts, and yet be united in one body in Christ, so that outwardly they were to be distinct, and yet they were not to be separate; distinct in their habits, and even in their worship,
so far as it was Jewish, and yet they were to be all one in Christ Jesus. In Him there was to be neither Jew nor Gentile, neither bond nor free.

The Jews were still the holy nation, and the peculiar people upon whom God's name had been called; and the Jewish Christians still worshipped in the Temple, kept the Passover, and offered sacrifices as their fathers had done, and as their unbelieving brethren were still doing. The question, therefore, was, Were the Gentiles to be admitted to the Christian Church without conforming to these rites, as for ten years they had been doing, and were they thus to form another people distinct from the Jews, upon whom God's Name was also to be called?

That James' words cannot bear the meaning which our friends have put upon them, we will prove by showing first, that they refer to a past event, not to the future; second, that the people spoken of cannot mean the elect; third, that if James meant what Millenarians suppose he meant, he misrepresented Peter's statement, which he professed to quote; fourth, that the passage in Amos which James quotes in corroboration of Peter's statement, is a complete contradiction of what they say James meant; and fifth, that the doctrine itself is inconsistent with other scriptures, and is in itself incredible.

In the first place, we remark that James' words do not refer to the preaching of the Gospel generally, as Millenarians suppose, but to a past event, which Peter said had taken place a good while ago, and which James said had taken place at first, meaning by that, when the Gentiles were for the first time admitted. If we examine the words, we will find that they cannot refer to anything else.
The event to which they both refer was God's choosing Peter to preach to the Gentiles; and, inasmuch as the Gentiles believed and received the gift of the Holy Ghost without being circumcised, they inferred that God sanctioned the admission of Gentiles into the Christian Church without being circumcised.

That it was a past event that they referred to is proved by all the verbs being in the past tense (aorist), although this is not expressed in our English translation, in consequence of the English past tense having no infinitive as the Greek has. Not only are all the verbs in Peter's statement in the past tense, as they might be expected to be, but both the verbs in James' statement are also in the past, "God at the first did visit (past) the Gentiles, to take out (past) of them a people for His name." Although, therefore, our English translation is capable of bearing the meaning which Millenarians suppose, "God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them (in the future) a people for His name," the Greek is incapable of bearing that meaning. All that Peter and James referred to took place "at the first," "a good while ago."

In the second place, the people spoken of by James as having been taken out from the Gentiles cannot mean the elect.

One fundamental error which we find running through the whole teaching of the Millenarian School is the idea that the present Christian Church is a Gentile Church, and that when the Jews are converted they will form a Church by themselves, with a temple in Jerusalem, and with priests and sacrifices very similar to the Levitical worship of the Old Testament. It does not startle them, therefore, to find James
speaking of God taking a people out of the Gentiles for His name; and, understanding that to mean the present Christian Church, and those who shall be converted before the Millennium—because they suppose that the Jews, as a body, are not to be converted until after Christ has come—they distinguish between the Church, the body of Christ, which He is at present building up, as distinct from those who are to be converted during the Millennium. These last, they say, will form no part of the Church, but will belong to another class. Some Millenarians even go the length of saying that the Old Testament saints will form no part of the Church of God. Even Abraham himself, although he will be admitted to the marriage supper, must take a lower seat, as only one of the "friends" of the Bride.

This people, therefore, who are to be taken out from the Gentiles, are, according to the Millenarian doctrine, the Church, before the Jews are converted. But, if there are to be millions converted after Christ comes, these millions must have been elected, and, as they are not included among the people spoken of, the people spoken of cannot be the elect.

Our friends have allowed themselves to be misled by the words, "to take out of them a people," as if that implied the selection of a certain number, and the rejection of all the rest. But, why so? James did not expect that when the Gospel was preached to the Gentiles the whole world would be converted at once. He knew that it would be, and must be, a gradual process, this "taking out" man by man, and woman by woman, out of the mass; and if he had spoken in any other way, he would have spoken unreasonably.
If, then, "the people" spoken of were not the elect, James' words would no more imply that the whole world is not to be converted before the Millennium, as they would imply that the whole world is never to be converted at all. He does not speak of the time before the Millennium. He speaks of no particular time. Why, then, should our friends limit the application of his words only to the time which their own argument requires? If James had spoken of the elect, we could have understood the reference, or even if he had spoken of the Church, their argument would still have been intelligible, but when, upon their own showing, James is only speaking about a particular class of converts at no particular time, the logic of their argument has disappeared. It proves all that James says, but it does not prove anything more.

In the third place, if James really meant what Millenarians say he meant, he grossly misrepresented Peter's words.

"Simeon hath declared so and so." Now, it is surely a fair question to ask: Is it true that Simeon really did say so? or, is it true that what he said was susceptible of that meaning? If so, we cannot find it. What Peter said was, "Brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles, by my mouth, should hear the word of the Gospel, and believe." That is what Peter said, and, we ask, with some astonishment, is there anything in that statement from which we can legitimately infer that the world will not be converted before the second coming? This is really worse than the well-known fable. First, Simeon says, "Ye know that God made choice among us, that the Gentiles, by my mouth,
should hear the word of the Gospel, and believe.” Then, James says, that “Simeon said, that God did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His Name;” and last of all, the Millenarian says, that James said, that Simeon said, that the world is not to be converted by the preaching of the Gospel till after Christ has come. “Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth.”

In the fourth place, the passage in Amos, which James quotes in confirmation of what Peter had said, is a complete contradiction of the doctrine which they wish to prove.

And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, “After this I will return and will build again the tabernacle of David that is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up, that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom My Name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.” Such is the continuation of James’ speech after quoting what Peter had said, and, when we turn to the passage in the Old Testament, we find that it is even so, although evidently quoted from memory, and the words which immediately follow, are these, “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt.”

If James really meant what it is said he meant, it is certainly very strange that such a passage as this should have occurred to his mind as a corroboration, because no passage could be found that would give it so full and emphatic a contradiction. Instead of representing
God's purpose towards the Gentiles as limited, it is absolute and unlimited.

The error of Millenarians lies in what is supposed to be an admission on the part of James, that when God takes out a people for His Name, He intended to leave the residue to perish in their sins. They insist upon taking a negative as well as a positive meaning out of His words, and it is upon that negative that they found their doctrine, that God never intended the world to be converted by the preaching of the Gospel. They acknowledge that God will take out a certain portion of the Gentiles, but not all the Gentiles, and God's Name will be called upon that portion only; but this "taking out" implies that there will be a *residue left* of those who are not taken, and God's Name will not be called upon them. Now, this is the very point that Amos takes up; and it is this very "residue" that is the subject of the prophecy. The tabernacle of David was to be built again and set up, that the *residue* of men might seek after the Lord, and, instead of God's Name being called upon only a *part* of the Gentiles, it was to be called on "*all*" the Gentiles. He then goes on to speak of a state of spiritual prosperity and Gospel success, when the plower should overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed. Surely that is not what we expect the Church to be when it is to be losing ground. The mountains dropping sweet wine, and the hills melting, is surely an inappropriate description of spiritual declension and Gospel failure. It would almost appear as if the Holy Ghost, foreseeing the use that would be made of James’ words, provided the antidote in the setting in which it is placed.

If it be said in reply that the words in the second
clause "upon whom My Name is called" is not a statement that God's Name is to be called upon all the Gentiles, but that it is a limitation of the number of those who would seek the Lord, as if it had been said, "And all those Gentiles (and those only) upon whom My Name is called"; leaving a residue of those Gentiles on whom His Name is not called; we answer that that cannot be, for two reasons.—First, The clause immediately preceding is inconsistent with that interpretation. "That the residue of men may seek the Lord," implies that the tabernacle of David was to be so rebuilt that, besides the Jews, the whole world might seek after the Lord. The residue of men can mean nothing less. But, Second, When it is said that God's Name is called on any people or country, it never means that they have chosen God, but that He has chosen them, and claims them as His own, as when a man writes his name upon a book. When, therefore, it is said that God's Name is called upon all the Gentiles, it means that He was to call His Name upon the Gentiles in the same way that He had first called His Name upon the chosen people of Israel. The days had come when He chose all the Gentiles, and claimed them as His own; which is no more than what He had promised to His Son, "I will give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession." All the heathen.

Lastly, the doctrine itself is inconsistent with other scriptures, and is in its very nature incredible.

This supposed limitation of God's intention in the preaching of the Gospel, is not only without the slightest foundation in Scripture, but is violently opposed to God's express declaration on the subject. What can be
more absolute, or more inconsistent with the Millenarian doctrine, than our Lord's declaration in John iii. 16, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The World—Does that mean the elect only? He so loved it, that He gave His only-begotten Son to die for it. If anyone perishes, therefore, it cannot be for want of God's love, or for want of sacrifice on God's part; but only because they refuse to accept Him. Yet, the Millenarian would lay the blame practically at God's door, by saying that God never even intended or wished that they should be saved, and made all His arrangements in providence so as to exclude them. It is impossible for the Millenarians to formulate their doctrine, without either directly contradicting what God has said, or indirectly charging Him with insincerity, which is a great deal worse.

Hear again what Paul says in 1 Tim. ii. 4, "God wishes (thelei) all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." That is what the Millenarian distinctly denies.

Hear also what God Himself says in Ezek. xxxiii. 11, "Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live: Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways, for why will ye die, O house of Israel." So anxious is God that we should believe in the sincerity of His gracious desires and longings for the salvation of all men, and that nothing would be wanting on His part for the purpose, that He condescends to take an oath upon the subject, and swear that it is true.
We cannot allow our respected friends to take refuge in the doctrine of Election. That we hold as firmly as they do. But we must not confound the decrees of God with His administration as the God of grace. There is no connection between the two, and they have no resemblance to each other. The one took place from all eternity, or rather we should say, in eternity, because in God's eternity there is no past; the other takes place in time, and is a consecutive administration; it is going on now. In order to understand their relations to each other, let us look first at the decrees of God.

**Election and the Decrees of God.**

We were lately admitted to see the weaving of a tapestry carpet, and there beheld as we had never beheld before, a Parable and an illustration of the Decrees of God. The pattern was a magnificent design; but only one half was completed. The workman was busy plying the shuttle, and every thread of worsted that was shot, was bringing out the pattern all along the line, with bright patches of colour here, and dark masses of shadow there. As we were gazing on the growing picture, the last few threads had just completed a lovely rose-bud, and beside it, a lily that was fast growing into shape. We then observed a new object begin to appear, but what it was we could not imagine. Instead of becoming plainer, every new thread that was added was only increasing the mystery, and we were obliged to ask the workman who was weaving it, what it was, but, to our surprise, he could not tell. The colours had been dyed into the worsted in such a way, that not until it was woven would the pattern appear. "Is there not some mistake here?" we said,
pointing to the blot. "Mistake!" said he. "There can be no mistake here. The man that designed this never makes mistakes, but if you will only wait until it has gone a little further on, you will find that all will come right in the end."

"We are making history," was lately the boast of a band of assassins, whose deeds of blood were a disgrace to civilisation; and, although they did not succeed as they expected in changing the destinies of their country, what they said was nevertheless true, they were making history; but the history that they were making was nothing but "what the hand and counsel of God determined before to be done." Like the slow weaving of the tapestry design, God is gradually developing the history of the world to the admiring gaze of the universe; a design beautiful, symmetrical, and grand, every day adding a new thread all along the line, completing one episode here and commencing a new episode there.

In forming that great scheme of future history, God's eye contemplated every event that has taken place since the world began, not only in all time, but in all places in its minutest details, from the fall of a sparrow to the overthrow of an empire. There were to be found creation and the fall, the bondage in Egypt, and the captivity in Babylon. There was to be seen the crucifixion of Christ, with the driving of the nails, and the piercing of the side to the most minute particular. There were Pharoah and Moses, there were David and Absalom, there were Peter and Judas, not as isolated figures, but associated with, and surrounded by the crowded incidents of the times, and the places in which they lived. All were arranged, not by caprice, but in infinite wisdom, and all according to law.
Nor was it merely foreknowledge, it was foreordination; God was not the passive spectator of each future event, as if besides God's providence there had also been inevitable fate. He was the designer too, because the most minute particular in that history came from His prearranging hand; whatever wisdom, whatever grandeur, whatever magnificence of conception, or beneficence of design was conspicuous in history was His. Even though this had not been revealed in Scripture, it is inseparable from the very idea of a God.

But we must not mix up God's impersonal and eternal decrees with His personal dealings with mankind as the Author of salvation, because these very dealings are the subject-matter of the decrees. He decrees in eternity that which He does in time. In His personal dealings with mankind, He appears, not as the Author of the drama, which, no doubt, He is; but as an actor in its scenes, the same as any of ourselves. In that acting, He is guided and influenced by justice and love, as well as the highest wisdom, but not in the slightest degree by a consideration of His decrees, for that would imply that when He made the decrees He had not decreed His own actions.

But that is just the confusion into which our friends the Millenarians have allowed their minds to run. It is a chase of words in a circle, and means nothing. Their idea presupposes that the elect existed in God's mind before He drew out His scheme of providence, and made His arrangements as to where, when, and how the Gospel was to be preached; and it also supposes that He drew out His scheme in such a way as that they and no other should be saved, forgetting that these men and women had no existence in the mind of God.
except in this very scheme of history, and in the fore-
knowledge of God; the question, therefore, whether
they should be saved, or whether they should be lost,
could never arise. There was Pharaoh, and there was
Moses in the mind of God in unborn history, but what
else could they be? Was it partiality on God's part
to make Moses Moses instead of Pharaoh; and was it
unkind in God to make Pharaoh Pharaoh instead of
Moses, as if they could be anything else, or as if they
had a personality different from themselves, and an
existence previous to the formation of God's plans. It
is as if God might have made somebody else Pharaoh,
and somebody else Moses, as if God had ever so many
persons whom He was to dispose of some way or other;
some to be saved and some to be lost according to His
good pleasure. The idea of God's electing persons who
had no existence till after God elected them, or of His
making arrangements so as to secure the salvation of
certain men and women who had no possible existence
except in these very arrangements, is a mere play upon
words and a contradiction in terms.

What then is election? It is the fact of the man
being what he is, and that fact was determined from all
eternity, so that, when it is said that it is God that
makes him to differ, it does not mean that He might
have made him somebody else, but it means that it is
by the grace of God that he is what he is. That
is Calvinism, and Calvinism is common sense, and
inseparable from the idea of God as the eternal
creator and ruler of the universe. But Calvinism has
been brought into ridicule and contempt by the Ultra-
Calvinism of those who make God a respecter of persons,
by confounding two administrations which Scripture
never confounds—God's *impersonal* administration as the sovereign ruler of the universe acting *in eternity*; and His *personal* administration as the God of grace acting *in time*. These ought never to be confounded. In the one, "His hand and His counsel determines beforehand whatsoever is done," in the other, "He wishes all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth."

This is not a mere question of technical theology, it runs into the very vitals of Christianity, and affects even our very conception of God. If the God of the Bible be not love, He is nothing; and anything that would dim or eclipse the lustre of that love would be a loss to the universe. Why is it that God is so anxious that men should believe in the sincerity of His desire that all men should be saved, if it be not that He knows that it is faith in His love that is the light and warmth of His moral universe? We deplore, therefore, the effect which these Millenarian views must necessarily have in lowering the spiritual temperature, and clouding the sunshine of the Church, wherever they are allowed to have an influence. Like the chill that comes over nature during a total eclipse of the sun, the cold cloud which these views cast over God's love for a perishing world must produce, however unconsciously, a corresponding chill and heartlessness in those who listen to such teaching, and who are thus trained to regard with complacency the loss of millions of souls as a part of God's plan, and to give their assent to their eternal perdition. Instead of being stimulated to self-sacrifice by a consideration of the love of God in giving His only Son, that *whosoever* believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life, they are taught to believe that God never intended, and never
even wished the whole world to be saved. Why, then, should they be expected to be more compassionate than God Himself, and why should they have larger hearts than He? These friends are Calvinists of course, but they are more than Calvinists, they are Ultra-Calvinists, and take ground which is altogether indefensible. That there are passages in Scripture which seem to countenance these views no one can deny; but to say that they are not susceptible of a meaning consistent with such passages as John iii. 16, or Tim. ii. 4, as describing God’s mind and purpose regarding the Gospel, is to misrepresent God.

The danger that arises from the spread of these views lies in their tendency to produce the very evils which they predict. There can be no love where there is no wish to save; and even though a man believed that he himself is one of the elect, the suspicion that those around him are purposely left to perish must produce a very chilling effect upon his mind in regard to the love of God. Its effect upon the preacher must also be equally unhappy; it is difficult to understand how he can present the Gospel with any heartiness to those whom he addresses, unless he believes that God really loves them and mourns over their infatuation in rejecting His mercy. When there are no conversions attending his ministry, if he believes that the only purpose for which the Gospel is to be preached among all nations is only to gather in the elect, and to be a witness against all others, is he not in danger of feeling that a very perfunctory performance of his duties would be sufficient for the purpose? If he believes that Christ is to come only when there is to be no faith found on the earth, is it possible to avoid the consciousness that the sooner that that takes place the better?
IMEON hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out from them a people for His name" (Acts xv. 14). In connection with this verse, which has been so much misunderstood by Millenarians, it is necessary that we should now show that the Christian Church is the true and only continuation of the Jewish Commonwealth; so that when believers are admitted into the Christian Church, they are admitted, not as uncircumcised Gentiles, but as circumcised Jews. Having been circumcised by the circumcision of Christ, they do not need to be circumcised a second time. They are already Jews (Rom. ii. 28).

We must keep in mind that when we speak of the Church, we speak of the covenanted children of Abraham, the father of all them that believe, under whatever name they may have been called. At the first they were called the seed of Abraham, then they were called the children of Israel; after that they were called Jews, now they are called the Church of Christ; but from the time of Abraham until now, there never has been but one holy nation, one peculiar people, who are the true heirs of the Abrahamic Covenant. Their present name Ec-clesia, "Called out," is simply the recognition of the distinguishing feature of that Covenant—separation from the world.

Many of the errors into which Millenarians have fallen, have arisen from their supposing that Israel was only a type of the Church of Christ, and not the Church
itself; and therefore, they apply the promises of God to Israel, not to the Church to which alone they rightly belong, but to the unbelieving Jews, forgetting that they were cut off from the Commonwealth of Israel, because of their unbelief.

If the Scriptures are true, the people that are now called Jews are no more entitled to be called the heirs of the promises than were the Ishmaelites or the Idumeans, who could also trace their descent from Abraham, but who, like the unbelieving Jews, were excluded from the Covenant.

Christ himself was a Jew, and a minister of the circumcision, sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; and, when the middle wall of partition was broken down, and the Gentiles were admitted to be fellow-citizens with the saints, it was not by the Jews being brought down to the level of the Gentiles, but by the Gentiles being raised up to the level of the Jews.

It is true that Christianity was a new dispensation; but it was not the less a Jewish dispensation on that account. The Levitical dispensation was a new dispensation, but it was not a whit more Jewish than Christianity. When Moses was sent, he made a change in the law, and instituted new ordinances; but the covenanted people remained the same: they did not become Gentiles by the change. Not only did Moses say that Christ was to be raised up to the Jews, from among the Jews, but he informed them that those who would not receive Him, were to be destroyed from among the people. Not that they were to put to death, but that they were to be excommunicated; cut off from the Covenant, and reckoned as Gentiles. Only those who received Him, therefore, were to be regarded as Jews. When
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Christ came, He came like unto Moses, a prophet of the circumcision, with legislative powers, and was sent from God to His brethren, and to them only. But it was not a new religion that He brought. He came not to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfil them; and the Jews were as much bound to receive and follow Him, as they were bound to receive Moses or any of the other prophets.

In order to show how impossible it was to be otherwise, we shall first suppose that the Jews, instead of rejecting Jesus as the Messiah, had unanimously received Him, as they received Moses, and that they had all become Christians, which is quite a supposable case. We put the question, Would they have ceased to be Jews when they became Christians? Of course not. They would have continued to circumcise their children, and keep the law, the same as they had done before; and they would also be baptised into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. If the Jews, then, as a nation, had become Christians, the Jewish Commonwealth would have become neither more nor less than the Church of Christ. In obedience to His command, they would have gone forth and preached the Gospel to every creature. Those who believed these Jewish proselytisers, would first have been circumcised, and then baptised, promising not only to keep the Levitical law, but also all things which this new prophet commanded. In other words, they would have become Jewish Christians, for in no other way could Abraham have become a father of many nations, or in Him could all the families of the earth be blessed.

In point of fact, for more than ten years, and until the baptism of Cornelius, there were no Gentiles ad-
mitted into the Christian Church without being circumcised, and thus becoming Jews; so that, for ten years at least, the Christian Church was a Jewish Church in every sense of the word.

But we shall next suppose that the Jews, instead of unanimously receiving Him, had been equally divided; one section acknowledging Him as the Messiah, and the other section rejecting Him as an impostor; we ask, which of the two would have been the Israel of God? the section that accepted Him, or the section that rejected Him? Moses has given the answer; they that would not hear that prophet were to be destroyed from among the people; and, if destroyed, they could be no longer Jews, whatever they might call themselves. If Moses' testimony were not sufficient to decide the question, our Lord Himself has confirmed the sentence, for He says, that in calling themselves Jews "they do lie" (Rev. iii. 9). "I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan." To this, also, agree the words of Paul, "He is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh" (Rom. ii. 28). "They are not all Israel which are of Israel. Neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children: but in Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God" (Rom. ix. 6-8). Paul compares the Jewish Commonwealth to a good olive tree, the root of which was the Abrahamic Covenant, and the natural branches of which were the Jews. Some of these, he says, were broken off for unbelief, and consequently they no longer enjoyed the advantages of the connection. He also compares the Gentile believers
to the branches of a wild olive tree, which have been broken off and grafted into the good olive tree among the natural branches that remained. Here we have another inspired answer to the question. The branches that were broken off ceased to be any part of the tree, while those that remained constituted the tree. The Jewish tree consisted of the branches that remained, not of those that were broken off, no matter what the comparative numbers might be. There were a hundred and twenty Jews and Jewesses in the upper room on the day of Pentecost; the first fruits of myriads: but, supposing that not another Jew had been added to the number, they would have been the tree, and the whole of the rest of the nations would have been cut off. When the children of Israel made a golden calf in the wilderness, it was very nearly a case in which one man would have supplanted the whole nation. "Let me alone," said Jehovah, "that My wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them; and I will make of thee a great nation" (Exod. xxxii. 10). Had Moses consented to the proposal, he and his children would have been the Israel of God, and the only inheritors of the Abrahamic Covenant.

Before the Gospel was preached to others, the Jews, who were God's own people, had a right to have the Gospel preached to them first, that they might preach it to others. They were the children of the Covenant which God made with their fathers, and they held a much higher place than the Gentiles around them. They had received their standing in the Covenant from their parents, who had never been cut off; and that standing was recognised by our Lord and His Apostles as entitling them to have the Gospel preached
first to them, before it was preached to those who were without. But, after the Gospel was preached to them, those who rejected it were cut off from the good olive tree; they forfeited their privileges and pre-eminence, and were no longer Jews. They sank to the level of the Gentiles, and were thenceforth to have the Gospel preached to them along with the Gentiles. The command was obeyed, because the Gospel was preached to them first. But, when they finally rejected it, the Apostles were freed from the obligation, and turned to the Gentiles.

The idea that the Christian Church is a Gentile Church has arisen from the circumstance that the Jewish element has disappeared from view, and that the only Jews with whom we are acquainted, in the present day, are unbelievers; because those who are now called Jews refuse to acknowledge Christ, it is supposed the number of believing Jews was originally very small, and became gradually less until they altogether disappeared, leaving the Christian Church composed entirely of Gentiles. Nothing could be more erroneous; first, because the number of believing Jews was far greater than is generally supposed; second, because, after the destruction of Jerusalem, when the Levitical worship became impossible, the Christian Jews no longer circumcised their children, and thus ceased to be called Jews. But they did not cease to be Jews on that account, nor were they less the children of Abraham according to the flesh, and natural branches of the good olive tree. Even in regard to carnal descent, in consequence of inter-marriages with Gentile Christians, the Christians of the present day are, to a large extent, the seed of Abraham, according to the flesh.
In the first place, the number of believing Jews in the Apostolic Church was much greater than is generally supposed. The most casual reader of the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, must have observed that, up to the death of Stephen, it was the rulers only—the Scribes and the Pharisees—who are said to be opposed either to Christ or His Apostles.

During the whole of our Lord’s public ministry, His only enemies were the men in power, whose traditions He rejected, and whose hypocrisy He unmasked. As for the common people (with the exception of His townsmen, on one occasion only), we fail to detect the slightest appearance of hostility to either His person or His teaching. The only thing with which He charged them was their carnality and unbelief. They followed Him in multitudes wherever He went, seeing His miracles and listening to His teaching, and not one hand nor one voice was ever lifted up against Him. On one occasion they would even have taken Him by force and made Him a king; and so great was His popularity, that, when the rulers sought to lay hands on Him, they feared the multitude, because they took Him for a prophet. This was acknowledged by the Pharisees themselves, for they said, “Have any of the rulers believed on Him? But this people, that knoweth not the law, are accursed.” It was this very popularity that was the cause of His death; because, after the raising of Lazarus, the Pharisees gathered a council and said, “If we let Him thus alone, all men will believe on Him.” Then, from that day forth, they took counsel together to put Him to death. When our Lord made His public entry into Jerusalem, He was received by the whole population with extraordinary enthusiasm.
A very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strewed them in the way; and the multitude that went before and that followed cried, saying, Hosannah to the Son of David, blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord, Hosannah in the highest. And when He was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this? and the multitude said, This is Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee. When the rulers at last resolved to put Him to death, they said, "Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people." In covenanting with Judas, their object was to secure Him "in the absence of the multitude," who would certainly have made an uproar had it been done in open day (Luke xxii. 6). They apprehended Him at midnight, outside of Jerusalem, and had Him tried and condemned by the High Priest and Sanhedrim during the night. The trial before Pilate took place in the early morning, and the execution was over, and the cross guarded by a quaterion of soldiers before ten o'clock on the following morning, and before any attempt to rescue Him could have been organised. It has been sometimes said as an illustration of the fickleness of popular favour that the same multitude that cried "Hosannah to the Son of David," a few days afterwards cried, "Crucify Him, crucify Him," and when He was hanging on the cross, mocked Him in His agony. That, however, is quite a mistake; they were not the same multitude at all. Our Lord was apprehended at midnight by a multitude of hired ruffians, acting under the direction of the chief priests, elders, and scribes, and it was the same multitude that accompanied Him to the palace of the High Priest, and
then to Pilate's judgment-hall, and cried, "Crucify Him, crucify Him." It was they who, still in the early morning, were present at His execution and mocked Him, in company with the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders. As for the people of Jerusalem generally, they knew nothing of the tragedy that had been enacted during the night; and, when in the forenoon, they were startled by the rumour that the prophet of Nazareth had actually been crucified, "all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts and returned" (Luke xxiv. 48).

We must not be misled by the reference which Peter made to the crime, when he addressed the Jews on the day of Pentecost, saying, "Him ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." He did not, and could not mean that those whom he addressed must have been the murderers; what he meant was that the Jewish nation, as a nation, was responsible for what had been done by their rulers. Moreover, there might have been some of those present who were guilty, and to them, also, he offered a pardon.

During the first ten years at least, the Gospel was preached to the Jews only, and, during that time, no uncircumcised Gentile was admitted to the Christian Church. During that time, also, the spread of the Gospel among the Jews was so astonishing that it seemed as if the whole nation would have been swept into the Kingdom. Upon this point the testimony of Scripture is most decided, so that, instead of a few thousands, it seems more likely that, out of the five or six millions of the Jews throughout the world, nearly one million must have been won over to the faith.
The fragrant memories of the man approved of God, by miracles, and wonders, and signs which God did by Him, were still fresh in the recollections of the thousands of Israel who had listened to His wonderful teaching, and been healed of their diseases; and from all that followed, it is evident that the foundation had been broadly and solidly laid in the Jewish heart; the soil had been so richly prepared that the harvest was instantaneous; in the words of the prophet, "The plowman overtook the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that sowed the seed" (Amos ix. 13).

From the day of Pentecost till the destruction of Jerusalem we may observe three distinct periods in the history of the Church, the character of each of which was very different. The first of these extended from the day of Pentecost to the death of Stephen; the second was from the death of Stephen to the admission of the Gentiles, and the baptism of Cornelius; and the third was from the baptism of Cornelius to the destruction of Jerusalem.

During the first of these periods conversions took place, not by hundreds only, but by thousands, like the stream that flowed from the threshold of the temple in Ezekiel's vision, and that deepened at every thousand cubits. The first outgush was only ankle deep, with three thousand souls, that is, both men and women, and of these a large proportion were foreign Jews who had come up to Jerusalem to the feast, and would immediately return to their respective countries to preach the Gospel there. Soon after that there were five thousand men (Andres) besides the women, and after that, "believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women; insomuch that they brought
forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them; there came also a multitude out of the cities round about Jerusalem and they were healed every one" (Acts v. 14-16).

No doubt the chief priests and the rulers were opposed, they were more than opposed, they were alarmed, because the Apostles "had filled Jerusalem with their teaching" (Acts v. 28), and had so gained the favour of the people that they were suspected of having a design to call the rulers to account for the murder of the prophet—"Ye intend to bring this man's blood upon us." That it was only the ruling classes that were opposed to the new faith is evident from the fact that they dared not use any violence to the Apostles, "for they feared the people lest they should have been stoned" (Acts v. 26).

The appointment of the seven Deacons appears to have given a further impulse to the spread of Christianity, as it is said that the Word of God increased, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly, and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith (Acts vi. 7), so that, at this time, it seemed as if the whole nation would have become Christians.

It was the admission of the Gentiles to equal privileges with the Jews, and the disparagement of the Levitical system that first roused the hostility of the Jewish people; and that was not even hinted at, until Stephen began to tread on that dangerous ground; but, by that time, there were myriads of Jews converted to the faith. We do not know what it was that Stephen really said, but we know what he was accused of saying, and we may guess from that what he really did say.
"We have heard him say," said the false witnesses, "that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and change the customs which Moses delivered us." This one sentence contains the whole secret of the Jews' hostility to Christianity, and up till this time this particular aspect of the Christian system had not even been mentioned. It will be remembered that it was this that excited the rage of the Nazarenes at the very commencement of our Lord's ministry. The idea that a Sidonian woman, and a Syrian general should be preferred by God to the holy people was intolerable; and, but for His miraculous escape, our Lord should have paid the penalty of His speech with His life.

It would appear, therefore, that, but for the admission of the Gentiles to an equal standing with the Jews, Christianity would, in a very short time, have been accepted by the whole Jewish nation; and, so long as that topic was kept in abeyance, Christianity spread among the Jews with astonishing rapidity.

It is a remarkable circumstance that, although the admission of the Gentiles was never mooted or even imagined by the Church at the time of Stephen's martyrdom, a change came over the Jewish mind in regard to the new faith, after the controversy of the Libertines with Stephen. It was not that the Christians were not zealous of the law, for they were very zealous, but there was something in their teaching which made the Jews suspicious, and which, if followed out to its legitimate conclusion, they felt would be subversive of the Levitical system. In consequence of this feeling, a coolness took place; and the rulers were no longer in fear of being stoned if they persecuted them. When Judaism was in danger, the people would not interfere
on their behalf, and Saul had the less difficulty in carrying on his persecution. This controversy, and the martyrdom of Stephen, therefore, forms an important era in the history of the Church, and closes the first period of its existence, which was a period of glorious and uninterrupted success among the Jews.

The second period, which extended from the martyrdom of Stephen to the admission of the Gentiles, was a time of transition, during which the preaching of the Gospel was still confined to the Jews, but without the same general acceptance as before; still there were large accessions. Up to that time Jerusalem might be said to have been the place where the work was chiefly carried on, but the persecution that arose at the death of Stephen had the effect of scattering the disciples throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, and away as far as Phenice, Cyprus, and Antioch, spreading the Gospel wherever they went, but as yet only among the Jews, although, even then, such was the enthusiasm that prevailed, that some of the foreign Jews, on arriving at Antioch, preached to the Gentiles also. In this way the Gospel began to spread among the Jews far beyond Jerusalem, and great success attended their preaching. Philip went down to Samaria, which was also beyond the pale, and the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, and there was great joy in that city. This was not so great an innovation as baptising the Gentiles, because the Samaritans were all circumcised. That Christianity was widely spread among the Jews during this second period appears from Acts ix. 31, "Then had the Churches rest throughout all Judea, and Samaria, and Galilee, and were multiplied." Peter, for example, went down to
Lydda, and "all that dwelt in Lydda and Saron turned to the Lord," verse 35; he then went to Joppa and raised Dorcas, "and many believed on the Lord" (Act ix. 42). Still, however, none of the converts were Gentiles.

When we keep in mind that this continuous and uninterrupted series of triumphs took place within ten years of the first preaching of the Gospel, and that every attempt to arrest its progress only tended to accelerate its advance, we may form some idea of the vast number of Jews that became Christians. It must be remembered also, that as yet no prejudice had been shocked by any intimation of the admission of the Gentiles, or the temporary character of the Levitical dispensation. The disciples had not yet become a sect, although they formed a select society among the Jews. They were not yet known by the name of Christians, but were mingling peacefully with their brother Jews. There was no secession, no disruption, and therefore no opposition. None were more regular in their attendance on the daily services of the Temple, and none more strict in their observance of the law, offering sacrifices, and keeping the Passover. The Christians, although they had their own meetings on the first day of the week for the breaking of bread, were never absent from their places in the Temple, or their duties in the synagogue, and as their number increased, there would scarcely be a synagogue in Jerusalem that was not flooded with them. They occupied very much the same position as that of the Methodists of our own time, before they became a sect and left the Church; only they were far more numerous. They were not more a sect than were the Pharisees or the Sadducees,
and they were much more in favour among the people. It was the admission of the Gentiles at a later period that first gave a shock to the prejudices of the Jews, who were never so favourable afterwards. But, long before that, the Christian Church had been firmly planted upon a Jewish foundation, with a constituency of many myriads, if not a million, of Jews throughout the world.

We have an important confirmation of the great extent to which Christianity had spread among the Jews before the destruction of Jerusalem, in the remarks made by the elders to Paul when he last visited Jerusalem. "Thou seest, brother," said they, "how many myriads of Jews there are which believe, and they are all zealous of the law. And they are informed of thee that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles, to forsake Moses, saying, that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs. What is it, therefore? the multitude must needs come together, for they will hear that thou art come." Then follows the advice to be at charges with the other four men who were under a vow "that all may know that those things whereof they were informed concerning thee are nothing" (Acts xxi. 24.) This proves that in Jerusalem itself there were several myriads of believing Jews worshipping and sacrificing in the Temple. It is interesting to notice how anxious commentators are to escape the natural meaning of this passage, as if it were impossible that there could be myriads of believing Jews in Jerusalem at that time; and therefore they say that these myriads were not in Jerusalem, but throughout the world. Even the translators of the Bible, both the
Authorised and the Revised, attempt to escape the difficulty by translating *myriades* "thousands," instead of "myriads," thus reducing their number to *one tenth* of what they really were. If, then, there were myriads of Christian Jews in Jerusalem alone, how many myriads must there have been scattered among the Gentiles.* At the same time, we cannot but observe that since the martyrdom of Stephen, and the gradual development of the spiritual character of the Christian system, a reaction had commenced in the Jewish mind; and, when Herod stretched forth his hand, and slew James with the sword, he was surprised to find that it rather pleased the Jews than otherwise, and he proceeded to take Peter also. This could not have happened at an earlier period when the disciples were in favour with all the people.

The third period extended from the baptism of Cornelius to the destruction of the Temple in Jerusa-

* Commentators, to escape the supposed difficulty, say that the elders referred not to the believing Jews in Jerusalem only, but to the believing Jews throughout the world. This is impossible for many reasons. *First*, Because it was not by going to Jerusalem that he would "see" how many myriads there were. *Second*, the Christian Jews among the Gentiles would not need to be informed as to what Paul taught them. They would know it best themselves; and if they knew, they could not be *misinformed*; although, very likely, the Jews in Jerusalem were. *Third*, supposing that such a misapprehension existed among the Jews throughout the world, Paul was more likely to know it than these elders; but if the misapprehensions existed only among the Jews in Jerusalem, they were the proper parties to tell him. And *Fourth*, Paul's going up to the Temple with four men under a vow, might convince the Jews in Jerusalem as to his teaching; but it could not convince the Jews throughout the world, "That all may know that those things whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing."
lem. The baptism of Cornelius was preliminary to the breaking up of the whole Jewish system, which was completed at the destruction of Jerusalem; because then the keeping of the law was no longer possible. But it was done gradually, and this baptism of Cornelius without his being circumcised, was the thin end of the wedge.

Christianity was strictly a Jewish dispensation, and when Christ bade His disciples go and preach the Gospel to every creature, they certainly understood Him to mean that the whole world were to be circumcised and become Jews. Up till the baptism of Cornelius, there never had been one baptism of an uncircumcised person, and from the exclamation of the disciples, "Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life," it is evident that up till that time none but Jews and proselytes had been baptised. They had the confident expectation that the whole world were to become Jews. And so they will be; because "he is not a Jew which is one outwardly, but he is a Jew that is one inwardly; and if we be Christ's, then we are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

Up to the baptism of Cornelius, then, the Christian Church was a Jewish Church in every sense of the word; and every one of its myriads of members was a Jew. The Ark of the Covenant had been brought into the Christian camp, and the nation was being gradually drafted into it. We must also observe that, as a nation, the Jews had not yet rejected the Gospel. It was preached to them only, and they were still flocking in crowds into the faith. But the baptism of Cornelius, and the admission of the Gentiles to equal privileges
with the Jews, without being circumcised, produced a sudden change, a change so great as to introduce an altogether new era in the history of the Church. From that time, Christianity began to partake more of a cosmopolitan and less of a tribal character, and its first effect was to excite the hostility of the unbelieving Jews; and even the believing Jews themselves received a shock by the transition.

We may learn much from the tenderness with which God educated His people for the change. He knew the character of the elder son, and how little he was disposed to welcome his prodigal brother. Men would have managed it very differently; but the heart of the Father is as much revealed in His tender dealing with the elder son, as in the reception of the younger. For about ten years there was no change in the membership of the Church, because they were not yet able to bear it. Even the first breath of the new regime, when it was only whispered by Stephen, was at once caught up and interpreted by Jewish bigotry. An immediate explosion ensued, and Stephen paid the penalty of his whisper with his life.

The real time when the Levitical Covenant, as distinguished from the Abrahamic, was fulfilled and came to an end was at the death of Christ, when He nailed it to His cross, and thus broke down the middle wall of partition that excluded the Gentiles. But, although it was de jure abolished, it was not de facto discontinued. It was "ready to vanish away," but it did not actually disappear till the destruction of Jerusalem, when it became no longer possible to keep it. Bondage though it was, the Jews gloried in it; and, as there was no necessity to hurry it, they were allowed to continue to
observe it for more than thirty years. In this way the
two dispensations overlapped each other, the Christian
dispensation commencing upwards of thirty-five years
before the Levitical dispensation finally disappeared.

Although the admission of the Gentiles had the
effect of alienating the Jews from Christianity, it did
not altogether put a stop to their conversion; and,
although we do not read of multitudes being brought
into the Church, the Gospel did not the less continue to
spread, even among the Jews (Acts xii. 24; xiv. 1; 
 xvii. 4).

And yet, a little consideration would show us that,
although the admission of the Gentiles tended to hinder
conversions among the Jews, it must have had the effect
of increasing the number of circumcised Christians, by
the intermarriage of the Christian Jews with the Christ-
ian Gentiles, because all their children would, for many
reasons, be circumcised, and reckoned among the Jewish
Christians. It was a high honour, then, and would not
be lightly prized, notwithstanding the heavy duties it
involved. Previous to the baptism of Cornelius, in con-
sequence of the Jews intermarrying only among them-
selves, the seed of Abraham according to the flesh did
not spread, and the number of Jews was never more
than five or six millions. So long as that continued,
therefore, there was no likelihood of Abraham becoming
the father of many nations, or his seed being like the
sand of the sea-shore in multitude, or that he should
thus be “the heir of the world” (Rom. iv. 13). According
to the Levitical law, if a Jew or a Jewess married a
Gentile, their children were not Jews, but Gentiles; the
Gentile husband polluted the Jewish wife, and the
Gentile wife polluted the Jewish husband, so that their
children were unclean. But, under the Christian dispensation, that law was reversed (and Jesus had not less legislative authority than Moses), and thenceforth, the unbelieving husband was sanctified by the believing wife; and the unbelieving wife was sanctified by the believing husband; so that their children were included in the Covenant of Abraham, and were fellow-citizens with the saints.

This was exemplified in the case of Timothy. He was the son of a Jewess, but his father was a Greek. Under the Mosaic law he was a Gentile, and could not be circumcised when he was an infant. He might become a proselyte when he became of age, but he was born a Gentile, and was not bound to keep the ceremonial law. Under the new law, however, the Gentile father was sanctified by the Jewish wife, and Timothy became entitled to be circumcised, not as a proselyte, but as a born Jew. Paul, therefore, before taking him to be a fellow-worker in the Gospel, circumcised Timothy; that it might not be said that he forbade the Jews to circumcise their children, and, from that time, Timothy became bound to keep the ceremonial law, equally with Paul himself. Had both his parents been Greeks, as Titus' were, Paul would not for a moment have allowed it.

But, observe the effect which the change of law would have upon the Church, even before the destruction of Jerusalem. Intermarriages between Christian Jews and Greeks would take place much more frequently; and, as the Jews were proud of their descent, and zealous of the law, they would claim for their children the circumcision to which they were entitled, as Timothy was, and the consequence would be a vast increase of circum-
circised Christian Jews, who, like Paul, could boast of their descent from Abraham. But, after the destruction of Jerusalem, when the Jewish Christians no longer circumcised their children, intermarriages would become so common that the whole Christian Church would be impregnated with Jewish blood. If this be denied, we ask, Where are the descendants of the many myriads of Christian Jews, of whom the Christian Church was composed before the destruction of Jerusalem? Circumspice. It would be almost a miracle if there be a single Christian man or woman in Europe, not to speak of Asia, in whose veins Jewish blood does not flow, derived not from one, but from many ancestors. To deny this would be to sponge out these myriads of Jewish Christians, and to say that not only their claims but that their race is extinct.

That the Jews will be converted before the Second Coming of Christ there can be no doubt; because, if His enemies are to be made His footstool before He leaves His Father's throne, the apostate Jews, who are the bitterest and the most persistent of them all, can be no exception. Moreover, it is said of them that, although as regards the Gospel, for the Church's sake they are enemies, in the decrees of God they are beloved for the Father's sake; and that, when the fulness of the Gentiles has been brought in, the veil that at present covers their heart will be removed. They will then be grafted into the good olive tree from which their fathers were cut off. Grafted in! How different from their forefathers, who were the natural branches, and needed not to be grafted in. At present they hold the same position that the Gentiles occupied in Apostolic times, when they were still the branches of the wild olive tree, aliens from the
Commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the Covenant of promise.

But that is not the Millenarian view. The unbelieving Jews are still the natural branches, and, in virtue of their carnal descent, they are still entitled to all the privileges and primacy which their fathers enjoyed before they were cut off. They regard the present Christian Church as a Gentile Church, having no right to the promises made to the children of Abraham. The only Jews whom they recognise as being in existence, and having a right to the covenanted promises, are the descendants of the men who rejected Him. As for the myriads of Jews who accepted Christ as the Messiah, and constituted the Christian Church, they regard them as having lost their title to the inheritance by mingling with the Gentiles, and not continuing to circumcise their children.

They also maintain that when the Jews are converted they will not be grafted in among the other branches of the good olive tree, from which their fathers were cut off, but will form a tree of themselves, leaving the Gentile Church (as they call it) in possession of the Abrahamic tree as their own. When Christ comes, they say the only Jews whom He will recognise as Jews, will be the descendents of those who rejected Him, while the descendents of those who accepted Him will be disowned.

According to Scripture, then, the Christian Church is simply the continuation of the Jewish Commonwealth, quite as much as the Israelites under Moses were a continuation of the Israelites under Joseph. It was merely a change of dispensation. Under Joseph, they were under the Abrahamic dispensation; under Moses,
they were under the Levitical dispensation, but the people were the same. So, under Christ, they are under the Christian dispensation, and, "if we be Christ's, then we are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise."

There are indeed predictions regarding the Jews as a carnal people, as there are predictions regarding other uncovenanted nations. "Carnal Israel is beloved for the Father's sake, as Ishmael was blessed for Abraham's sake" (Gen. xxi. 13), but to confound these predictions with the Abrahamic Covenant of promise and God's promises to Israel, is a great mistake. To us the Jew ought to be an object of solemn interest and kindly regard, more especially as we have succeeded to the inheritance which he has forfeited; but, ecclesiastically, he stands upon a level with the heathen, if not lower, because his standing is that of an unrepenting backslider. His having fallen from the heaven of privilege, like the people of Capernaum, makes his descent all the lower when he fell.

Let us next examine what the Scriptures say about the admission to the Abrahamic Covenant. It was the fundamental principle of that Covenant, that the covenanted people should be separated from the world, and the sign and seal of that separation was circumcision. Every Israelitish infant was a member of the Israelitish Church for seven days after he was born; but, on the eighth day, he must be circumcised to seal the privilege. If he were not circumcised the eighth day, the privilege lapsed, and the infant was a Gentile. It is as impossible, therefore, to be admitted into the Abrahamic Covenant without being circumcised, as it is to be admitted to the Christ-
ian Church without baptism. Circumcision was not only the sign but the seal of the Covenant, and without that seal, every child of Israel was cut off from among the people.

The question, therefore, arises: How was it possible that a Gentile could be admitted to the Covenant without being circumcised, and not only circumcised, but, by being circumcised, becoming bound to observe the ceremonial law? It was this that staggered the Apostolic Church when it first heard of the Gentiles being admitted without circumcision; and it was this that was the chief cause why the Jews rejected Christianity. They would have had no objections to the Gentiles becoming Jews in order to become Christians; in fact, they compassed sea and land to make proselytes of the Gentiles; but, that the Gentiles should be put upon a level with the Jews, without being circumcised or keeping the Mosaic law, they could not tolerate. It was that also which gave such influence, and lent such enthusiasm to the Judaising teachers, who insisted on the Gentile converts being circumcised.

Paul solves the difficulty by showing that when we are united to Christ by faith, we are complete in Him in all things, and that He is a perfect Saviour. He was circumcised the eighth day. He was baptised by John in Jordan, and thus fulfilled all righteousness. He kept the whole ceremonial law as no man ever kept it before. * He satisfied Divine justice in His cruci-

* A remarkable example of our Lord's strict observance of the Levitical law was given at His crucifixion. It was the custom to give the person to be crucified wine mingled with myrrh (Mark xv. 23). This was offered to our Lord on His arrival at Calvary, but He refused to drink it. It is usual to say that His reason was that
fixion for our offences, and He rose again for our justifica-
tion; and, inasmuch as the circumcision of Christ is
more perfect and Divine than that of any other Jew,
and that circumcision being ours, we are more perfect
Jews and heirs of the Covenant than those who have
been circumcised in the flesh. "He is not a Jew that
is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is
outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one
inwardly" (Rom. ii. 28, 29).

As it was with the believing Jew, so is it also with
the believing Gentile; he is not only crucified with
Christ in His crucifixion, but is also circumcised in
Christ's circumcision. The Gentiles' standing in the
Abrahamic Covenant, therefore, is complete in Christ,
as complete as that of any Jew; and that standing
cannot be challenged without challenging the standing
of Christ Himself. We are complete in Him.

Millenarian writers protest against spiritualising the
promises addressed to Israel in Scripture, and so do
we; when Israel is spoken of in Scripture it means
Israel and nothing else, but for that very reason they
belong to the Christian Church, which is the true
"Israel of God," and not to the present Jews; "If ye
be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs
according to the promise" (Gal. iii. 29). How can the
unbelieving Jews, who were cut off from the good olive

"myrrh has a stupefying effect," and that our Lord "was unwilling
to blunt the pains of dying." So far from myrrh having a stupefy-
ing effect, it is used in medicine as a tonic and stimulant, as any
medical man can testify. It was the wine not the myrrh that our
Lord refused. Wine was prohibited to the Jews during the Passover,
and to this day no Jew will even allow it to be in his house at that
season. Thus He fulfilled all righteousness.
tree, be heirs? * Well might Paul say, "If they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void" (Rom. iv. 14).

James, the brother of our Lord, who was especially an Apostle of the circumcision (Gal. ii. 9), and had his official residence in Jerusalem, is the very last whom we would suspect of doing injustice to, or casting a slight upon his brethren according to the flesh; yet he addresses his Epistle to the twelve tribes scattered abroad, that is, not living in Palestine, and he addresses them as brethren in Christ Jesus. They belonged to his flock, and, as he was not able to hold personal communion with them, he sent them this letter instead. We have been so long accustomed to regard the unbelieving Jews as the only Jews spoken of in Scripture, that we are naturally startled by this remarkable address, which represents the twelve tribes as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. We are so much accustomed to think that the Jews, as a nation, rejected Christ, that we are at a loss to understand what the writer means; and yet, if we take ourselves back to the time at which the Epistle was written, although it shocks our modern prejudices, we might see that nothing could be more natural, or more accordant with the sentiments which universally prevailed in the Apostolic Church, than the words which he uses. In the first place, we must keep in mind that we have egregiously

* Dr Bonar, in his "Prophetic Landmarks," has a whole chapter on Israel, 70 pages long, founded on one mistake. He takes it for granted that the descendants of the Jews who rejected Christ are the only Israel of God; and that the descendants of those who accepted and believed on him were cut off and disinherited when they ceased to circumcise their children.
under-estimated the number of the Jews that constituted the Christian Church in the Apostolic age; and have also lost sight of the fact that, up till the destruction of Jerusalem, a large proportion of the Christian Church belonged to the circumcision; and, if it appears strange to us that the Apostle should address the twelve tribes as believers and brethren in Christ Jesus, it can only be because we overlook the fact so constantly and persistently insisted on in the New Testament, that those who were cut off from the Abrahamic tree because of their unbelief were no longer considered branches. Even James himself purposely ignores them.

But there is another view which may be taken of James addressing himself to the twelve tribes of Israel scattered over the world, and we are rather disposed to regard it as the true one, and that is, that he is addressing himself to the whole Church of Christ under that name. There is certainly nothing in the Epistle itself that is inconsistent with that view; and if Paul, who was the Apostle of the Gentiles, had no hesitation in calling the whole Church the "Israel of God," why should not James call it "the twelve tribes"? We must not forget that, at the time when James wrote his Epistle, by far the greater part of the Christian Church were Jews, members of the twelve tribes; and if all the rest were cut off, it was most natural for him to speak of the Church as the twelve tribes. When we remember the peculiar character of James' office as an Apostle of the circumcision, and the strong Jewish element with which he was surrounded (Gal. ii. 12), it was natural that, like Paul, he should magnify his office; and, as every believer was a Jew, either by birth or by adoption, and seeing that the adopted Jew was no longer a
stranger or a foreigner, but a fellow-citizen with the saints, and of the household of God, James considered himself entitled to cast the skirts of the Jewish garment over the whole Church, and to designate it in name as well as in reality the twelve tribes of Israel.

CHAPTER XI.

Watching for Christ's Coming.

We have proved, by what appears to us an overwhelming amount of evidence, that until all opposition to the Gospel has been put down, the Second Coming of Christ is a moral impossibility. Heaven and earth may pass away, but Christ must sit at the right hand of the Majesty on high, until the Father has fulfilled His promise, and has put all His enemies under His feet.

But our friends the Millenarians say: What then do we make of the "great tribulations of the latter days"? How can there be tribulations if the knowledge of God is to cover the earth as the waters cover the channels of the sea? and what purpose would be served by what is called the "rapture of the saints," if there are no judgments going on below during the time that they are up in the air?

It would be sufficient answer to say that we do not profess to be interpreters of prophecy; and, therefore, cannot be called on to reconcile their theories with the promises of God and the plain statements of the Bible.
If they cannot be reconciled, it is very evident that the theory must be abandoned.

But, although we are not bound to answer, we may say this, that these tribulations that are spoken of in Scripture refer, in our opinion, to the judgments that fell on the unbelieving Jews at the destruction of Jerusalem; and it is only because our friends refuse to acknowledge that the "Coming of the Son of Man" can mean anything except Christ's personal Coming to Judgment, that they find themselves in conflict with the truth and faithfulness of God.

We are quite aware that the opening of the seven seals in the Apocalypse, and the blowing of the seven trumpets are to be succeeded by the pouring out of the seven vials of the wrath of God; so that the pouring out of these vials will correspond with the closing scenes of the present dispensation. But the very name that is given to them indicates that they are to be poured out, not on the saints, but on the enemies of the Church. Instead of tribulation, there will be triumph and rejoicing, not at the destruction of the ungodly, but at their conversion. The sword of Christ's mouth will slay its thousands, because it is a spiritual and not a carnal victory that we long for. When it is said that the carnage will be such that the blood will reach to the horses' bridles, to the extent of sixteen hundred furlongs, we cannot suppose that it means literal bloodshed, for the blood of all the people in the world would not furnish the hundredth part of the quantity. We rather understand it to be a metaphorical representation of the complete and final overthrow of Popery, Mohammedanism, Paganism, and Infidelity, before the conquering power of the Gospel of Love. That may not correspond
with Millenarian anticipations; but it is in entire accordance with the symbolism of the Scriptures, and it is also in accordance with the promises of God. "Thine arrows are sharp in the hearts of the king's enemies, whereby the people fall under Thee." As for what is called the "rapture of the saints," and their lengthened sojourn in the air while the judgments are going on down below, all that we have to say is, that it is entirely an invention of their own, without the slightest foundation in Scripture. In 1 Thess. iv. 16, Paul tells us that "the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we, which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air."

Nothing can be plainer than that the time spoken of here is when the Lord is descending from heaven with a shout, and, while He is descending, we are to be caught up to meet Him in the air. Our friends find it necessary to suppress in this connection the shout, and the voice of the Archangel, and the trump of God; and to make it appear that there is to be no noise whatever to intimate to men His Coming. It is to be so stealthy that nobody but the saints are to know anything about it; and it is to be only when they feel themselves caught up that even they are to know that He is come. Everything is to go on as usual; only there will be some surprise caused by the mysterious disappearance of those who have been caught up, but as there will only be a few of them, it will very soon be forgotten. Such is the Millenarian view.

Now, we appeal to our brethren themselves, and we
ask them to forget their theory for a moment, and to read the passage as if they read it for the first time, and to say whether they think it possible that Christ should descend from heaven with a shout, and with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God, without anybody hearing them or knowing anything about it.

Then, with regard to their being caught up to meet the Lord in the air, where is there the slightest intimation that when they are caught up they are not to come down again till the tribulation is overpast? According to Millenarian views, they are to be kept floating in the air among the clouds for years, doing nothing, and seeing nothing but the feet of those above them, and the heads of those below.

The idea of going to meet a person on his way, and stopping at the place where they happened to meet, is unparalleled in Scripture. The ten virgins went out "to meet" the Bridegroom, and when they met Him they did not stop on the road, but formed part of the escort that accompanied Him to the bridal feast. When Joseph went "to meet" his father, Jacob, on his journey to Egypt, or when the brethren of Rome went to Appii-forum "to meet" Paul, they never thought of taking up their abode at the place where they met: it was only to accompany him during the remainder of the way that they went to meet him. And so, when Christ comes in the glory of His Father, attended by all His holy angels, with the voice of the Archangel, and the trump of God, the whole of His redeemed and now glorified saints will mount into the air "to meet" Him, and form part of His triumphal escort when He comes.

Observe, that in all this we do not deny Christ's pre-
millennial Coming. It may take place before, or it may take place after the Millennium. But, at whatever time it takes place, the truth of God is pledged to the promise, that all His enemies shall have been subdued, and that there will be a willing people in the day of His power. It is therefore scarcely possible that there should be any great tribulation immediately before His Coming, except to His enemies, so that there will be no need for the saints to escape up into the clouds until it is overpast.

It may be necessary here to notice an argument that is used against those who say that the Second Coming is not to take place till after the Millennium, and which is as applicable to the Scripture doctrine that it cannot take place till after Christ's enemies have been made His footstool. It is this: our Lord bids us watch because we know neither the day nor the hour when the Son of Man cometh. If it has been revealed, they say, that Christ will not come till after the Millennium, there can be no need for watching till the Millennium is passed. The objection lies equally against the promise in the 110th Psalm, because, if Christ is not to come till His enemies are made His footstool, it is needless to watch until after the world has been converted.

We at once admit that if the only "Coming" of Christ spoken of in Scripture is the "Second Coming," it would be impossible to reconcile the promise in the 110th Psalm with our Lord's command to watch.

But, how can it be proved that the only Coming of Christ is His Second Coming? and even though it could, it would only prove a difficulty, it would not solve it. The alternatives would be—(1.) Will God break His promise? (2.) Did Christ give an unneces-
sary command? And (3.) Is not the Coming against which we are commanded to watch something different from the Second Coming? Any of these three alternatives would solve the difficulty, and we cannot conceive of a fourth; which then shall we choose? The first is impossible; God cannot lie. As for the second, Christ could not give an unnecessary command; and so we have no choice but to accept the third. In other words, it is proved by the process of exhaustion that when Christ bids His people watch against His Coming, He does not refer to His Second Coming.

We wonder that any one should have any doubt that when the Coming of Christ is spoken of in Scripture it does not always refer to the Second Coming. Christ speaks of His Coming in so many ways that we must be careful how we limit them. In John xiv. 23, He speaks of coming to the believer and making His abode with him. In addressing the Church in Ephesus, He says (Rev. ii. 5), Repent, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and remove thy candlestick out of his place. In addressing the Church in Pergamos, He says (Rev. ii. 16), "Repent, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and I will fight against thee;" and in addressing the Church in Sardis, He says (Rev. iii. 3), "If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief." From these last passages we are made to understand that all judgment having been committed to the Son, any extraordinary act of God's providence, whether of judgment or mercy, might be called a "Coming of Christ." We cannot understand these passages in any other way.

But there was one particular act of judgment, next in importance to the judgment of the great day, the
destruction of Jerusalem, which is spoken of emphatically as the Coming of Christ. The occasion was when our Lord, speaking of the buildings of the Temple, said that the days would come when there should not be one stone of them left upon another. Sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples asked Him, "When shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of Thy Coming, and of the end of the age?" The Coming which the disciples spoke of then was the time when the Temple should be destroyed; and it is evident from their words that they were aware that the destruction of the Temple would also be the end of the age, that is, the end of the Levitical dispensation, which it really was. In examining Christ's answer, therefore, we must keep in mind what the disciples meant by the question; and from Luke's Gospel we find that their question referred to only two things—First, when these things were to be; and second, what sign there would be before they came to pass, that they might know that they were coming. It is evident, therefore, that the disciples regarded the destruction of Jerusalem as the end of the Levitical dispensation, and they wanted to know when it should take place. They did not regard the end of the age (aiōn) as the end of the world (kosmos); and there can be no doubt that what they meant by Christ's "Coming" was His coming to reign as a temporal prince, and to restore the kingdom to Israel; that is to say, to begin a new dispensation.

The form in which the question was put enabled our Lord to give an answer, more to their and our edification than they intended; and, as it was conveyed in a prophetic style, that is to say, a highly figurative and poetic form, it was, like prophecy in general,
capable of more than one application. We need not be surprised, therefore, to find three different Comings alluded to, all of them Comings of the Son of Man to Judgment—First, Christ's coming at the destruction of Jerusalem; Second, Christ's coming to judge the world at the last day; and Third, and most important of all, Christ's coming at death; and these are so blended together that it is neither very easy nor very important to separate them.

It cannot be objected to this, that there is a mingling of subjects which are widely different in the same prophecy, because that is characteristic of prophecy in general. Christ's coming to Judgment is the subject of the prophecy, and He refers to three of them. If Millenarians refuse to admit this, and insist on the prophecy having only one application, they destroy their own argument, because, in that case, the "Coming" referred to must be the destruction of the Temple and the end of the Dispensation, not His Second Coming to judge the world. If Christ did not answer that question, He answered none at all, because that was the only question that was put to Him. But, although it is evident that much of the prophecy referred to the destruction of the Temple, and, therefore, was a fair answer to their question, it would be impossible to apply the whole prophecy, either to the destruction of the Temple, and the close of the Levitical dispensation, or to the Second Coming.

For example, the compassing of Jerusalem with armies, and its being trodden down of the Gentiles, cannot apply to the Second Advent, but only to the destruction of the Temple. Neither would Christ say to His disciples, that those who were in Judea were to
flee to the mountains at Christ's Second Coming. To pray that Christ's Second Coming should not be in the winter is out of the question, seeing that we are to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. These and other things prove that our Lord, in His answer to the disciples, spoke of the destruction of Jerusalem, and that He also gave them signs to know when it was about to take place.

At the same time there are parts of the prophecy which cannot be applied to the destruction of Jerusalem, such as the sun being darkened, the moon not giving her light, and particularly, the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

But what we wish especially to call attention to, is the exhortation to watchfulness which our Lord gives at the end of the chapter, and the illustrations of the danger of not being prepared. These cannot refer to the destruction of Jerusalem, neither can they refer to the Second Coming. The only possible reference is to the coming of Christ at death. "Watch, therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. Therefore be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh. Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, that he shall make him ruler over all his goods. But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, my lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour when he is not
aware of; and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (verse 48-51).

This parable cannot possibly refer to the destruction of Jerusalem, because preparedness for it did not consist in being a good servant, but in readiness to run away. He that was in the field was not to turn back to take his clothes. In regard to the destruction of Jerusalem, watchfulness was not required. A great number of things were to happen before it took place. There were to be wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes, and so on; and, more especially, Jerusalem was to be compassed about with armies, and the abomination of desolation was to be standing where it ought not. Until these things came to pass there was no need of watching, nor were they even to be troubled in their minds in regard to it (Matt. xxiv. 6). Our Lord’s command to watch, therefore, cannot refer to the destruction of Jerusalem.

Neither can it refer to the Second Coming of Christ, for obvious reasons. We have in the parable an exhortation to all, both good and bad, to watch for Christ’s Coming, enforced by two illustrations, one that of a faithful servant whom his lord when he came found in the discharge of his duty; the other, that of an evil servant, who, presuming upon his lord’s absence, abused the trust reposed in him, and was caught red-handed in his wickedness. What we wish particularly to notice is, that in both cases the master comes when he is not expected, and in the case of the evil servant, arrests him in his wicked career, and punishes him at the same time.

We ask, When is it that the Master comes to each
of these servants; and, in order to induce our Millenarian friends to help us in clearing up the difficulty, we will show them that they are in the same position with ourselves, because upon their own grounds there was no need of watching for the Second Coming of Christ, at that moment when our Lord was speaking. We must, therefore, look for a Coming, against which, not only we, but the very people who were listening to our Lord at the time, are commanded to watch. "What I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch" (Mark xiii. 37).

In the first place we must not confuse the question by confounding the suddenness of the event with the need of watching against it. It may be sudden, and yet there may be no need for watching, until the time comes when it is possible. Our Lord's Second Coming will be sudden whether it happen now or after the Millennium. The suddenness of the Coming need not be a difficulty. We may, therefore, set aside for the present, all the passages which speak of the suddenness of the Coming as irrelevant to this question, and confine ourselves alone to those which inculcate watching.

In the second place, we lay down as a principle, that this Coming of the Son of Man must be something that may happen at any moment to any one of those to whom the command was or is addressed. It cannot be an event which cannot happen immediately, and more especially it cannot be an event which must be preceded by other notable events, which must take place before it. It must be something that might happen the next day, or even the next hour, to those who heard Him. Can there be any doubt then that what our Lord referred to was Death? It is the one and only event
which may take place at any moment to all; and it is the one for which it is of most importance to be prepared.

It is said, "Blessed is that servant whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing," that is to say, engaged in his lord's work, giving to the household their meat in due season. Surely that must be at death, because if it be not at death, but only at the resurrection, instead of finding the faithful servant engaged in his Master's work, he will find him in his grave, where he has been resting from his labours perhaps for centuries. How, then, can it be said that He found him watching?

In opposition to this view it is said, that at death Christ does not "come" to the saint, but the saint goes to Christ. We answer that that cannot be, for Christ comes for the saint, the saint does not go to Christ at death. There is no passage of Scripture that says that the saint goes to Christ at death. The thing is impossible. Christ says that He is the Way, but what is the use of a way that does not come to us? If we have to find our road to the Way at death, it would imply a want in Christ in regard to that for which we stand most in need of Him. No! Christ must come for us, else we should never find the way to heaven where He is. He has said that no man can come to the Father but by Him, but if He is not the Way to the Father, it would be as difficult to go to Christ, as to go to the Father. How helpless should we be at death if Christ did not come for us. "Let not your hearts be troubled," said Christ, "neither let them be afraid. If I go away, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am there ye may be also."
Millenarians say that this passage does not refer to death, but to the Second Coming. But Paul says the very opposite, for he says that when the saint departs from the body he is present with Christ, and thenceforth is ever with the Lord. Either Paul or the Millenarians must be wrong, for how could the saint be with Christ at death, if Christ be not present. How could Christ tell His disciples there and then not to let their hearts be troubled if it was to be eighteen hundred years before He fulfilled His promise. If they have been present with Christ for eighteen hundred years, there would be no need for His coming for them. They are with Him already.

We next turn to the evil servant, and we ask, When was it that his lord came? Was it at his death, or is it still in the future? It surely cannot be at Christ's Second Coming, because it was to happen at a time when the servant was not aware, and while he was beating his fellow-servants and saying, "My lord delayeth his coming." The only time at which he could be arrested in his wickedness was at his death, else he is not arrested yet. But there is another difficulty which our friends have constructed for themselves. If the evil servant is not caught flagrante delicto at his death, it cannot be at Christ's Second Coming, because it is only the dead in Christ that rise then. The rest of the dead, including the evil servant, continue in their graves until the thousand years are finished. His Lord, therefore, must needs further delay His Coming till after the Millennium.

We conclude, therefore, that the time when Christ comes and finds men prepared or unprepared is Death, and as death may come at any time, even to the most
secure, the duty of continual watchfulness is of the very greatest importance. Compared with that, the duty of watchfulness for the Second Coming sinks into insignificance; because preparedness for the one is preparedness for the other. If our Lord really meant to urge His hearers on that occasion, to be continually watching for His Second Advent, and warned them of the dreadful consequences of their not doing so, then we take leave to say, that there was not one of them the worse for neglecting that exhortation and that warning, because our Lord's Second Coming did not take place during their lifetimes. We would even go further, and say that (as what our Lord said to them He said to all both then and thereafter), there has not been one of the hundreds of millions who have read or heard His warning, that has been anything the worse for neglecting it. But if, on the other hand, our Lord, when He spoke of the coming of the Son of Man as an event that might take place on any day or at any hour, meant the solemn hour of death, He uttered a warning, which all men acknowledge to be important; and we may confidently affirm that among the many millions who continued to neglect that solemn exhortation and warning, there is not one this day who does not lament his having done so, with weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. Can we suppose that any man, far less our Lord, would thus strain out so microscopic a gnat and swallow so gigantic a camel?

We cannot leave this subject without expressing an opinion (without founding an argument upon it) that our Lord's words to Peter at the Sea of Galilee, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" refers neither to death nor to the Second Coming, but
to the destruction of Jerusalem, as in Matt. xxiv. 3, for the following reason:—

Our Lord had just addressed some very solemn words to Peter, signifying by what death He should glorify God; and Peter, with that imprudent forwardness which was so characteristic of him, put a question to Christ in reference to John, evidently wishing to know whether he too was to die a martyr’s death or not, saying, “Lord, and what shall this man do?” Our Lord understanding perfectly what he meant, replied, “If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou Me.”

No one will dispute that our Lord meant Peter and the other apostles to understand that John was not to die “till He came,” whatever that might mean; and that it did not concern Peter whether John was to suffer martyrdom or not. It is certain, at all events, that they did so understand Him; but they fell into the error of supposing that our Lord meant His Second Coming, and forthwith the saying went abroad among the brethren that that disciple should not die. But John corrects this mistake by saying that that was not our Lord’s meaning, without telling what that meaning was. It is not improbable that John did not know himself; but he marked the words and repeated them.

We have shown that our Lord was in the habit of using the expression with a variety of references; but that there were three especially. There is the Coming of the Lord at death, the Coming of the Lord at the destruction of Jerusalem, and there was the Coming of the Lord personally the second time. In the present case it cannot mean the Coming of the Lord at death, because our Lord’s words would then mean that “John should not die, till he died.” Neither could it mean
Christ's Second Coming, as the Apostles supposed that it did, because John has died, and the Lord has not yet come. And here, we may remark in passing, that the Apostolic Church do not appear to have been so much mistaken as to the nearness of Christ's Coming, as is commonly supposed. The only other meaning, therefore, which our Lord's words could have, would be the destruction of Jerusalem: and, if so, the actual fact exactly corresponded, because, not only did John not die before the destruction of Jerusalem, but he was the only one of the Apostles that did not.

With regard to what our Lord says about the days of Noe, and the days of Lot, we see no difficulty; even though it had reference to all the Comings of Christ. There can be little doubt, however, that it had reference, chiefly to the coming of the Son of Man, at the destruction of Jerusalem; although there is no reason why it should not also apply to the Second Coming, which may also be sudden and unexpected. But it does not follow that because, an event, when it does take place, may be sudden and unexpected; therefore, it may take place before its predicted time. In regard to death, there may be no warning given, and it may take place at any time; but in regard to the destruction of Jerusalem, and the Lord's Second Coming, there were certain events that were to happen before they took place. Before the destruction of Jerusalem, there were to be wars, and famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, and the Gospel was to be preached over all the world. In like manner, before Christ's Second Coming, all His enemies must be made His footstool, so that until these events take place there is no need of watching. But after they have taken place, the Coming may be both sudden and
unexpected. The idea of only a few escaping, or of none escaping, is not involved; it is the suddenness and unexpectedness of the event only, and not the number saved, that is presented in the illustration.

CHAPTER XII.

When the Son of Man cometh shall He find Faith on the Earth?

We have said that, from the parable of the Leaven hid in three measures of meal, Millenarians understand that, instead of Christianity spreading over the world, the reverse is to take place; and that, before Christ's Second Coming, the whole world will be in a state of corruption and apostacy. In corroboration of this view, they point to our Lord's words in summing up the parable of the Importunate Widow, "Nevertheless when the Son of Man cometh shall He find faith on the earth?" understanding by that, that when Christ comes the second time, He will not find faith on the earth, or, in other words, that Christianity will have become extinct.

There can be no doubt that when these words are detached from the context, it is possible to give them that meaning; but when viewed in connection with the parable of which it is the summing up, and more especially with the words which immediately precede, and with which it is linked by the word "nevertheless," it is of all interpretations the most unnatural and impossible.

Commentators are by no means agreed in regard to the meaning of the sentence, nor is it to be wondered
at when we consider how many elements of uncertainty it contains.

In the first place, we have shown that the Coming of the Son of Man may refer, either to Christ's Second Coming, or to the destruction of Jerusalem, or it may mean death, or it may mean coming to try His people's faith.

In the second place, faith may either mean the things believed, that is, Christianity, or the grace of believing it, or faith in God's faithfulness to answer prayer.

In the third place, the Greek word ἐδωκά here translated earth, may mean either the whole world, or simply a land, i.e., the land of Judea.

And in the fourth place, the asking of the question, "Shall He find faith on the earth?" may either express an uncertainty as to the fact, or it may mean that He will not find faith on the earth when He comes, or it may be simply an expression of surprise at the want of faith in God's readiness to answer prayer.

Now it would be sufficient answer to say that a passage, admitting of so many different interpretations, and upon which so many first-class expositors are so hopelessly disagreed, cannot be admitted as a proof of any doctrine whatever, far less a doctrine against which there is such an overwhelming amount of evidence as we have already adduced.

The difficulty in interpreting the passage does not consist in finding a meaning, but in selecting one. It is susceptible of so many meanings, that commentators are disagreed only in their selection. They do not deny that others are perfectly legitimate, so far as the words are concerned, but they do not think the others so appropriate as their own.
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Now, we are quite willing to concede to our Millenarian friends that, looking only at the words themselves, their interpretation is perfectly legitimate, as legitimate as any of the other ten or twenty with which it has been put in competition. But we have two objections to it, either of which is fatal: one is that it is opposed to the plain statements of the Word of God, and implies that God will be unfaithful to His promise; and the other is, that it is altogether inconsistent with the context, and most inappropriate to the subject of which it forms a part.

We have said that the word Faith may mean either the thing believed, that is Christianity, or the grace of believing it. The word is used in both senses in Scripture; but the word "nevertheless" determines its meaning here. Our Lord spake the parable to this end, that men ought always to pray and not to faint; and, after telling the story, He applies the parable by asking two questions: one in regard to God, and the other in regard to man. The first question was, "Shall not God avenge His own elect that cry day and night unto Him?" and the second question was, "Shall the Son of Man find faith on the earth?" In regard to God's faithfulness as the hearer of prayer, He answers His own question by saying, "I tell you that He will avenge them speedily." But in regard to man's faith in God's faithfulness, He gives no answer, but leaves it to be answered by God's elect in all ages. There was no doubt about God, but He had great doubts about man; as if He said, "Oh ye of little faith, how is it possible for you to doubt?" "Seeing that God has given such assurance that He will answer prayer, fear nothing, continue to pray, never faint."
The word "nevertheless" (πλέν) implies a contrast; and the contrast here is between God's faithfulness, and man's want of faith, and, therefore, faith here must mean the grace of believing. If on the contrary it means not the grace of believing, but the thing believed, and if Christ meant them to understand that Christianity will disappear from the earth, so that when the Son of Man comes He will not be able to find it; in that case, the meaning of "nevertheless" would be very terrible. The contrast would be, not between the faithfulness of God and the want of faith among His people, but it would be a contrast between the promises of God and His performance of them. The "nevertheless" would be a limitation and a drawback upon all that had gone before. "God will avenge His own elect—true; nevertheless, the actual result will be disaster and defeat. Pray, or not pray, that is what it is sure to come to. I have bidden you say, "Thy kingdom come;" nevertheless, I may as well tell you that it will not come—on the contrary, God's kingdom will be overthrown, and Satan's kingdom will be erected in its stead. I have bidden you pray, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," it is quite right that you should do so; nevertheless, remember that that prayer will not be answered.

If that be the meaning of "nevertheless" it would have been better if it had been left out altogether.

As the meaning of the word "faith" is determined by the word "nevertheless," so the meaning of the words, "When the Son of Man cometh," is determined by the word "find" (εὑρίσκω). It implies a previous seeking and looking for, as when the shepherd exclaimed,
"I have found my sheep which was lost" (eureka). Christ was deeply interested in His people's faith, and it was for the purpose of strengthening that faith that He spake this parable; that they might always "pray and not faint." Christ was thus digging about His fig-tree, and dunging it, that it might bring forth more fruit, and the question is, "Shall He find it?" "My Beloved is gone down into His garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies." "Let My Beloved come into His garden and eat His pleasant fruits." The Beloved often comes into His garden to gather lilies and eat His pleasant fruits long before He comes to judgment; and the flowers and the fruits that He gathers and delights in, are the flowers and the fruits of faith.

We sometimes search for recondite meanings and miss them simply because they are lying upon the surface. The moment that we determine that the faith which Christ speaks of is not Christianity, but the faith of His people, we need have no difficulty in regard to what is meant by the Son of Man coming; it is simply the Beloved coming into His garden seeking His pleasant fruits and gathering His lilies; and the question that He puts is, "Shall He find them?" He leaves it to the spouse to answer the question. The Millenarian idea that when Christ comes He will look for His Church and will not be able to find it, is out of all keeping with the purpose of the parable, as well as with the rest of Scripture.

In dealing with this passage, interpreters are in danger of being misled by the form in which our Lord speaks of the answer to prayer, "And shall not God avenge His own elect which cry day and night unto
Him,” as if He referred to the persecution to which His people would be exposed by their adversaries. The word “avenge” seems to suggest that His purpose was to encourage them to pray for deliverance and even retribution to their enemies, by the assurance that it would be granted.

We must observe, however, that our Lord’s words are merely the application of the parable in the words of the parable. The widow’s prayer was, “Avenge me of my adversary.” The judge’s resolution was, “I will avenge her;” and when our Lord says, “And shall not God avenge His own elect,” He is merely transferring the language of the judge to its application in regard to God’s answer to the prayers of His people. But it would be a great mistake to suppose that vengeance, or even deliverance from persecution, ought to be the chief subject of prayer, or that our Lord intended that His people should continue to cry for vengeance on their adversaries until they got it. That is not the lesson that our Lord intended to teach, nor is it the duty regarding which His people require especially to be stimulated.

Nowhere is it promised that God’s children will be delivered from oppression or persecution or temporal afflictions in answer to prayer. But their prayers will be not the less answered, in so far as their own spiritual welfare and God’s glory may require. If we wish to know what prayers will assuredly be answered in the form in which they are presented, we have only to look at the things which Christ bade His disciples pray for, and in the Lord’s Prayer we have a summary of the things that are agreeable to God’s will, and which God is pledged to grant. When ye pray, say, “Our Father
which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name." That is sure to be granted. "Thy kingdom come." That is sure to be granted. "Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven." That is sure to be granted. "Give us this day our daily bread." That is sure to be granted. "Forbear us our debts as we forgive our debtors." That is sure to be granted. "Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil." That also is sure to be granted; and here end the petitions of the Lord's Prayer, without any cry for vengeance on our oppressors. It is indeed a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble us; but nowhere does He exhort us to pray for it. Although, therefore, we may ask anything in prayer agreeable to God's will, it is only when we seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness that our prayers are sure to be answered in the form in which they are put, because these are the things which God is above all things willing to bestow. We must, therefore, understand the Parable of the Importunate Widow as a promise, and an additional security that, in answer to the believing prayer of His people, all Christ's adversaries shall be put under the soles of His feet, that His kingdom shall come, and that His will shall be done on earth as it is done in heaven.

Seeing, then, that the advancement of Christ's kingdom and the spread of righteousness over the world are the great objects for which we are to beseech God in prayer, and seeing that this parable was spoken to induce and encourage us to pray for them, it is scarcely conceivable that our Lord, after assuring us that our prayers will be heard and answered, should immediately in substance add, "Nevertheless, you need not expect it.
The kingdom of God and His righteousness will go down before the kingdom of Satan, and will at length disappear, so that when the Son of Man cometh, He will not be able to find faith on the earth.”

CHAPTER XIII.

What is the Church?

MILLENIARIES say that the redeemed in heaven will be divided into two great classes—viz., those who are converted before the Millennium, and those who will be converted during the Millennium; and that only those who are converted before the Millennium are so united to Christ as to be members of His body, and constitute His Church. Being in a peculiar manner the sons of God, they will form, as it were, the Royal Family of heaven. Those, on the other hand, who will be converted during the Millennium, and who will form the great body of the redeemed, they say, will belong to a lower grade of saints. They will be subjects, not sons, and will form no part of the Church, the body of Christ; and, although some of that class will be admitted to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, it will be only as friends and attendants of the Bride, but not as the Bride herself.

In regard to details, there is great variety of views, according to the schools into which Millenarians are divided. The most recent and most explicit which we have seen, is that represented by Mr. Haslam, who explains that there are two Gospels, as well as two kinds or degrees of salvation. The one is called “the Gospel
of grace,” and is that which is preached under the New Testament dispensation; the other is called the “Gospel of the kingdom,” and is that which was formerly preached under the Old Testament dispensation, and will again be preached during the Millennium. Those who are converted under the former—the Gospel of grace, are the Church, the body of Christ; those who are converted under the latter—the Gospel of the kingdom, will belong to an inferior class.

“If it be asked,” says Mr. Haslam, “What is the difference between the Gospel of grace and the Gospel of the kingdom, I answer, the one calls us to salvation and oneness with Christ, the other calls men to salvation only; the one calls us to be children of God in the family of God, the other calls men to be subjects of His kingdom; the one commands us to believe in the finished work of Christ, and to rely upon the risen Christ to keep us to the end, the other tells men to show their faith in God by their works, and to endure to the end in order to be saved; the one offers us the robe of righteousness which needs no washing, the other requires men to wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb. We look for a Christ to come and take us to Himself; they look for a Christ to come in manifest glory to deliver them in a time of extremity and trouble. We are invited to come ‘for all things are now ready,’ and a loving welcome is prepared for us; they are told to ‘flee from the wrath to come.’ Those who have been, or will yet be, converted under the Gospel of the kingdom, will be saved, but “they will not belong to the family of God, or be admitted into oneness with Christ.’”

Another school of Millenarians, represented by Mr.
Pember, says that not all believers will be caught up at Christ's Coming, some will be left behind to endure the tribulation—"only those who have progressed in holiness." "The Lord has no thought of translating worldly-minded believers."

A third school maintains that during the Millennium men will be in an Adamic state, or something similar to it, so that they will not have to endure either the temptations of the corrupt nature, or the assaults of the devil.

A fourth school, represented by Dr. Bonar, repudiates this idea of men being in an Adamic state; on the contrary, they say that the saints during the Millennium will be the same personally as the saints now. The only distinction recognised by this school between believers during the Millennium and believers now, is that the former will encounter no opposition, no persecution, and no temptation from Satan; but they will form no part of the Church of God, and will occupy a lower place in the kingdom in glory. The lowest of the one will be higher than the highest of the other.

We take leave to say not only that their views are inconsistent with all that has been revealed to us in Scripture regarding God's way of salvation, but that they would involve a moral impossibility. In the first place, we deny that there are, or can be two Gospels. We cannot even conceive of any gospel that is not a "Gospel of grace," and in regard to the "Gospel of the kingdom," the very name is a contradiction of what Millenarians say it is. The "kingdom" that is spoken of in Scripture is the New Testament dispensation, and any gospel that is preached in that dispensation must be the Gospel of the kingdom; but, according to Mil-
lenarians' teaching, that is the very thing that it is not.

But let us come to the reality, and ask, What is the difference between the Gospel of grace and the Gospel of the kingdom? Mr. Haslam professes to tell us, but he does not. He tells us what is the difference between the consequences of believing the one and believing the other, but he does not tell us the difference between the Gospels themselves. The Gospel that our Lord preached to Nicodemus, was, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him might not perish but have everlasting life." But, as that was preached before Pentecost, it must have been the Gospel of the kingdom. Now, wherein did it differ from the Gospel of grace preached by Paul, when he said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved"? We can see no difference; the object of faith is the same, "the Lord Jesus Christ;" the act is the same, "believing;" and the consequences are the same, "salvation."

Mr. Haslam tells us that those who are converted under the Gospel of grace receive salvation as a gift, that they are entitled to rely on the risen Christ to keep them to the end, and that they are clothed in Christ's righteousness which needs no washing. We are quite willing to accept all that as a correct statement of the consequences of believing the Gospel of grace. But the question is not the difference of the consequences, but the difference of the Gospels themselves. The same Gospel that was preached to Nicodemus is preached to men now; and the same Gospel that Paul preached to the Philippian jailor will be preached to sinners during the Millennium (Gal. i. 8).
But let us look at the consequences, and see if there be any real difference. Does Mr. Haslam mean to say that those who are to be saved during the Millennium will have no warrant for relying upon Christ to keep them to the end? It would appear that he does, for he says that, during the Millennium, believers are to show their faith by their works, and they shall have to endure unto the end in order to be saved. This seems to imply that believers now do not need to show their faith by their works, and need not endure unto the end in order to be saved. At present, we are told, that believers receive a robe of righteousness that needs no washing, whereas, during the Millennium, they will have to wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb; and finally, at present, under the Gospel of grace, believers get their oil for nothing, but during the Millennium, they will have to buy it for themselves. From all which we can understand that the Gospel to be preached during the Millennium would not be a Gospel of grace, but a Gospel half of grace and half of works.

But, what we wish especially to notice is the doctrine that during the Millennium, as well as in Old Testament times, men are to be saved without being united to Christ, without being God's children, without belonging to His family, and without being members of His Church. This we regard as not only unscriptural, but a moral impossibility. The only possible way in which a sinner can be saved is by being united to God's crucified Son, and that union must be so perfect, that justice cannot separate or distinguish them. The sinner must be a member of Christ's body, of His flesh, and of His bones, else he has not been crucified in Christ, and he must reckon with justice on his own account, which
would be destruction. It is as when Noah entered into the ark, they became one, and were treated as one. We deny, therefore, that there is, or that there can be, any degrees in the relation in which believers stand to Christ: they must either be united to Him so that He is in them and they in Him, or they are not united to Him at all.

But that is not the view that Millenarians take. "There may be," says Mr. Bickersteth, "and doubtless are, a thousand stages and varieties of union with Christ, distinguishable from the glory of the First-born." He might as well have said that there are a thousand stages and varieties of union between the branch and the vine, so as to bring forth fruit; or a thousand varieties of ways in which Noah might have been in the ark, so as to prevent him from being drowned.

The world often wonders why there should be no intermediate state between heaven and hell; between a state of endless happiness, and a state of endless misery. Considering the almost infinite variety of human character, descending by delicate gradations from the most virtuous of mankind, to the most vicious and abandoned of our race, they cannot understand how it is that God can draw the line, at which all above it should go to heaven, and all below it should go to hell. They imagine that the difference between the worst of those who go to heaven, and the best of those who go to hell, must be almost imperceptible; and, therefore, they feel a difficulty in reconciling this with the idea of God's infinite justice. People imagine that men are at present in a state of probation, and that it depends on their conduct and character, whether they shall be rewarded in heaven, or punished in hell. If it were so, God's
dealings with mankind would indeed be unintelligible.
But that is a very erroneous view of the position in
which we stand. As sons of Adam we are born heirs of
wrath, and, had there been no Saviour, we never could
have gone to heaven. It was in these circumstances
that God provided a Saviour, and when He by His
obedience unto death, wrought out a complete righte-
ousness, He is offered to us in the Gospel. The alternative
is, accept or reject, believe or disbelieve; and the con-
sequence is, life or death, heaven or hell; there is
nothing between. Those who go to heaven, go clothed
in Christ's righteousness, members of Christ's body,
sons of God. Those who go to hell, go in their own
merits, because they have no part in Christ.
When a man is clothed in Christ's righteousness, it
is a perfect righteousness, and has no degrees. Every
sin has been blotted out, and the man is actually whiter
than snow. There is no condemnation to them that are
in Christ Jesus; and, therefore, there can be no degrees.
But, although his sins are blotted out, his good works
are not blotted out, and he will be judged according to
them; and, although even these will be accepted only
for Christ's sake, the rewards will not be the less sub-
stantial, and they will not be the less graduated in
amount. According as they have improved their talents,
or turned many to righteousness, or given a cup of cold
water to a disciple for Christ's sake, they will be made
rulers over ten, or over five, or over two cities. Some
will be made rulers over none. Everything will be
taken into account: those to whom much was given,
of them also will the more be required; those who over-
came, with little temptation, and opposition, and per-
secution, and suffering, will not be deprived of their
crown, or cast out from being sons; and yet, those who have triumphed over great opposition, great persecution, and great temptation, will receive from the Judge's hands, a corresponding greatness of reward. God will not be unrighteous to forget their work and labour of love.

The Duke of Manchester says, "The gifts necessary for forming the Christ mystical, were not conferred until after the ascension of Jesus. . . . We could not, therefore, say with propriety, that the Church under the former dispensation was 'Christ' the Bride in the New Jerusalem." The Old Testament saints, therefore, although they will be present at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb will be there only as friends and attendants of the Bride, but not as part of the Bride herself. Those who shall be converted during the Millennium, however useful and however devoted they may have been, are also excluded from the Church of the First-born; whereas, all who are converted during the present dispensation, no matter how unfaithful they may have been, will take rank as the Bride of Christ at the Marriage Supper, even though they have been saved so as by fire, while all the work of their lives has perished. If God is to judge the world in righteousness, and to give every man according to his works, we cannot see how these last should take rank above Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven, not to speak of Enoch, Daniel and Elijah, and those other saints mentioned in Heb. xi., of whom the world was not worthy.

Some have supposed that, when our Lord said that the least in the kingdom of heaven would be greater than John the Baptist, who was the greatest of the Old Testament prophets, He meant that the lowest and most unworthy of the members of the Christian Church
would occupy a place in heaven higher than any of the Old Testament saints. That, however, is a mistake, our Lord was speaking only of the *prophets* of the two dispensations, and what He meant was, that the least of the New Testament prophets was greater than the greatest of the Old, which is strictly true, because they stood upon a higher level than either Moses or John the Baptist; but it was only as prophets that they would be greater, as saints some of them might be far inferior. It was upon the same principle that the disciples were to do greater works than Christ did, not that they would occupy a higher place in heaven, but that they would be endued with Pentecostal power. The conversion of three thousand souls was a greater work than walking on the sea.

Dr. Bonar suggests an explanation, and he says that during the Millennium the saints will encounter no opposition, no persecution, and no temptation: therefore, it may "seem good to a sovereign God to make a difference between them and those that lived not in Millennial days." This scarcely affords an explanation, for obvious reasons, for, although it may be true of the average experience of Millennial Christians, that they will have less of these than the average Christians of our own days, it is very far from being true of all the individuals. Let us suppose that, at Christ's coming, one or two hundred millions are destroyed, and that the remaining thousand millions will be instantaneously converted, like Saul of Tarsus, by the visible display of Christ's power and glory, we rather think that these Millennial converts, without Bibles to instruct, and without pastors to guide them, would have far greater difficulties to contend with from the power of old habits
of wickedness, than children brought up in virtuous and
godly families, where they would have no opposition,
no persecution, and no temptations. Take the case
also of children dying in infancy, or even those con-
verted on a death-bed. We knew a woman who died
rejoicing in Christ within an hour after her conversion.
What superior merit have they over the Millennial
saints, and especially over the noblest and the best of
those whose whole lives will be consecrated to the glory
of God and the happiness of their fellow-men? And
why should the noblest and best of these Millennial
saints be degraded to a level lower than that occupied
by the least worthy in the Christian dispensation?

But the most emphatic contradiction of this Millen-
arian error is to be found in our Lord's intercessory
prayer, where, if anywhere, the division of the redeemed
into two classes would be found, if there were such a
thing; but there is none. He does not speak of His
Church by that name, but He speaks of "those whom
the Father had given Him," and these consisted not of
the eleven disciples only, but of all "that should believe
upon Him through their word." If there be any name
that would include all the redeemed, it must surely be
believers; whether they lived before or during the
Millennium. But, instead of speaking of them as
divided into two distinct classes, He speaks of them all
as united to Him, "He in them and they in Him." He
speaks of them as all of them destined to be with Him,
and to see His glory. But, most of all, He prays that they
may be one, that they may be perfect in one, and that
they may be one, even as the Father and the Son are one.
Five times in that short prayer He prays that they may
be one. How, then, can it be said that they will be two?
CHAPTER XIV.

The Literal Interpretation of Prophecy.

Our review of Millenarian errors would scarcely be complete were we not to take some notice of that which is really the root and origin of the others—viz., the idea that the prophecies regarding the Second Coming of Christ are to be interpreted literally.

It is said that, inasmuch as the prophecies regarding the First Coming of our Lord were fulfilled literally, so also will the prophecies of His Second Coming; and that the reason why the Jews did not recognise the Messiah when He came, was that they did not study the prophecies concerning Him.

There are two misapprehensions here; the one is in regard to the matter of fact, the other is a misunderstanding of the nature and purpose of prophecy. As to the matter of fact, it is scarcely correct to say that the prophecies regarding the First Coming of Christ were fulfilled literally. That there are a number of sentences in the Old Testament that correspond in a very remarkable manner with some of the incidents of our Lord's history we readily admit; but they can scarcely be called the prophecies regarding our Lord's First Coming. His being born of a virgin, in the town of Bethlehem, His sojourn in Egypt, the slaughter of the innocents, His riding into Jerusalem on an ass, His being sold for thirty pieces of silver, His hands and His feet being pierced, the parting of His garments, and casting lots on His vesture, His making His grave with
the wicked and with the rich in His death, and His soul not being left in hell, nor His flesh seeing corruption,—these, we believe, are the chief incidents in our Lord's life which were literally predicted, although, no doubt, ingenuity and research might add a number more. But these could not be the prophecies to which our Lord referred when He bade the Jews search the Scriptures because they testified of Him. They did not know that His mother was a virgin, they did not know that He was born in Bethlehem, they did not know that He had been in Egypt; but, what is more remarkable, neither our Lord nor His disciples thought it necessary to give them the information. When they said, "Is not this Joseph's Son?" our Lord did not think it necessary to correct their mistake; and when the rulers said, "Shall Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the Scriptures said that Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem?" neither He nor His disciples put them right on the subject. If these were the testimonies to which Christ referred, it would have been cruel not to let them know that He was of the seed of David, that He was born in Bethlehem, not in Galilee, and that He was by both Joseph and Mary descended from David. It is evident, therefore, that these were not the things that He referred to when He said, "These are they that testify of Me."

Our Lord did not mean that at that time they had sufficient proof of His mission in the testimony of Scripture. On the contrary, He told them that it would be "when they had lifted up the Son of Man" that they would know that He was the Messiah (John viii. 28), and, therefore, the testimony that He referred to was the prophecies and types of His mediatorial work.
That was the grand subject of Old Testament prophecy, and no one will dispute that, from the promise in Eden to John's Testimony, "Behold the Lamb of God," it was uniformly presented in a typical and figurative, not in a literal form. It was the types and figures, therefore, that our Lord referred to when He bade the Jews search the Scriptures because they testified of Him. We say advisedly that they were never presented in a literal form, because the words, "They pierced My hands and My feet," which seem an exception, although a literal prediction, had nothing sacrificial involved in it, and did not even imply death. It was only an incident connected with the sacrifice. But, even supposing that it had been a prediction of His sacrificial death, that is only one instance against a thousand. It is the peculiarity of all these literal predictions that they refer to some minute incident in our Lord's history; and, although they serve a most important purpose, to which we shall immediately allude, they form no part of the testimony which the Old Testament Scriptures gave to Christ, and which left them without excuse in rejecting Him.

It was the typical testimony that Christ always presented to the Jews—never a literal prediction. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up;" that was figurative. When they asked for a sign, He gave them the sign of the prophet Jonah; that was figurative. On another occasion, He said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will build it up;" that was figurative: and, moreover, it introduced at the same time a whole series of types, because it implied that the temple was a type of His body, and thus the whole Levitical system was appropriated as types of His Messiahship.
We see, too, in this the superior advantage of the figurative over the literal. In His discourse to Nicodemus, if our Lord had quoted the text, "They pierced My hands and My feet," the thought presented would have ended where it began; but, when the brazen serpent is presented by our Lord as a figure of His death, a whole galaxy of doctrines shone out from it for the meditation and instruction of the Jewish ruler, besides giving him a key to typology in general.

The whole of the Old Testament may be said to be a portraiture of the coming Messiah; but it was an evangelical, not a historical Messiah, and the purpose of it was not to predict the incidents of His life—which would have been worse than useless—but to saturate the minds of the Jews with God's thoughts about sin, righteousness, and judgment, and how the Messiah was to be identified with each of them. The Old Testament was written for sinners seeking salvation, not for soothsayers seeking to pry into futurity; and, for that reason, we will seek in vain in the Old Testament Scriptures for a biography of Christ, or anything from which a biography could be constructed. What we see there is what Christ is to be to us, or, in other words, the Gospel in all its fulness and in all its parts, pictured in type upon type, and figure upon figure. In fact, there is not a doctrine of Christianity that is not typified and illustrated not in one only, but in many forms.

What, then, was the purpose of those striking incidents in our Lord's history that might be called literal predictions? We answer that they were written that they might help the faith of believers, not before, but after they came to pass; and they were so written that they could not be recognised before they were fulfilled. It
is easy for us now to pick them out from among hundreds of others that had no reference to the Messiah, because we are startled by the coincidence. Even the disciples themselves never expected any of the incidents before they took place. It was only when they took place that they remembered that so it was written of Him; and that, of course, strengthened their faith, because it proved that when the prophecy was penned, the prophet foresaw the future. If the unbelieving Jews, therefore, were to blame in not recognising these literal predictions, they were no worse than the disciples.

We have a very good illustration of the purpose of these literal predictions in the expedient to which Huyghens resorted when he first discovered the Rings of Saturn, but had not yet sufficiently certified them. Fearing that some other astronomer might anticipate him, he published his discovery in the anagram of a Latin sentence, giving the letters of which it was composed, but not in their order, thus: \textit{aaaaaaa. d eeeee}, and so on, so that nobody could read it until he was ready with his proof. But, when he did let it be known, and when every letter was used up without one being left out, it became evident that when he published the anagram the discovery had been made.

These literal predictions fulfilled the same purpose. With the exception of the birth at Bethlehem, which, no doubt, was predicted for a particular purpose, there is not any of these predictions that would have enabled the Jews to anticipate the events, and far less to pick them out from the \textit{mare magnum} of Scripture so as to construct a biography of Jesus. The only purpose which it was possible for them to serve, is similar to
that of Huyghen's anagram, they prove that at the time when they were written, the events to which they refer were foreknown to Him who inspired them.

Let us look now at the Millenarian theory of the literal interpretation of prophecy. We find that the prophecies of the Old Testament regarding the First Coming of Christ were of two kinds, and for two very different purposes. The figurative and typical were for the purpose of preparing for the coming of Christ, and to educate Israel regarding the purpose of that coming; the literal, which form a mere fraction of the whole, were recorded that, when they came to pass, the Church's faith might be strengthened by seeing that all of them were foreknown.

To us it seems written as with a sunbeam, that the lesson which we learn from Old Testament prophecy is the very opposite of what these dear brethren contend for; and that when they attempt by means of a literal interpretation of prophecy to construct a history of things to come, they misunderstand not only the nature, but the very purpose of prophecy. It is the figurative that is to instruct us before the coming; it is the literal that is to surprise us afterwards; and, if the prophecies of the Second Coming be at all analogous to the prophecies of the First, the great body of the prophecies are figurative, and a mere fraction of them literal.
CHAPTER XV.

The Conclusion.

SEEING, then, that the Second Coming of Christ cannot take place until the whole world has been brought under His sway, the question presents itself, with tenfold force, to every Christian who wearies for His coming: What is it that hinders, and what was it that gave the Apostolic Church its victories under far more unfavourable circumstances than ours? We answer,

I. THE WHOLE CHURCH MUST BE CALLED OUT INTO THE FIELD.

In the Apostolic Church, every Christian had to be a soldier, whether he would or no; he had no choice. It was only when persecution ceased, and when the Church made a league with the world that its conquests also ceased. What we have to do is again to call the whole Church to arms.

The Church is the Body of Christ, and if it required a whole Christ to regenerate the Church, surely nothing less than a whole Church is required to regenerate the world; and if the Son of God did not think it unworthy of the sacrifice to give His very life for this great cause, shall those whom He has purchased with His blood think it beneath them to be fellow-workers with Him in bringing back a lost world to God? The commission which our Lord gave to His disciples, He gives to all
THE CONCLUSION.

believers. “As the Father hath sent Me, so send I you; go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.” Our Lord will allow no compromise. The idea that business must be attended to first, that our comforts must be looked after, and our position in society secured, before we do anything for the cause of Christ has no warrant in the Word of God. If a man be not willing to give up everything—father, mother, wife and children, houses and lands, yea and his own life also, for Christ’s sake and the Gospel’s, he is not worthy of Him.

If it be asked who is to go out into the foreign field, we answer that the first to go ought to be those who are independent of business and have money of their own. The first men whom the Holy Ghost sent out as foreign missionaries were the richest men in the Church, Paul and Barnabas, men who had fortunes of their own, and had their time at their own disposal. If the rich won’t go, then let the poor go, and let them labour with their hands for their own support, as the great Apostle did when he lost his all while he was labouring in Philippi, and who, when he left the hospitable roof of Lydia, took to tent-making when he arrived at Thessalonica. God’s work must be done, though everything else should stand still. The command is imperative: “Take no thought saying what shall we eat or what shall we drink? . . . but seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.” That is the one great purpose of the Christian’s life while he is down here, and that must take precedence of everything else. As long as there is a heathen who has not had the Gospel preached to him, and as long as there is a disciple to preach it, it is the duty of that disciple to “go.”
Is this a hardship to be thus called on to live, not for ourselves, but for God? It is the most glorious privilege to which a Christian can aspire. His time on earth, while he is here, is less than a moment compared with the eternity which is his life hereafter; but that little moment is worth thousands of worlds to him; because, according as he spends that little moment, so will his standing throughout eternity be. The Christian has but one short life to live on earth, and his three-score years and ten are the only golden opportunity that he will ever have of adding jewels to the Saviour's crown. When poor Peter wanted to know what good he would get from giving up his all to follow Jesus, our Lord did not rebuke him as we might have expected, but answered, "Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." Every motive of prudence and self-interest, therefore, not to speak of gratitude and loyalty, or even mercy and humanity, plead for entire and absolute consecration to the cause of Christ. It is natural and reasonable that the men of the world, who look only to the things of a present life, should devote themselves entirely to its interests; but for those who really believe that they are immortal beings, and that what the Bible says is true, no words can describe the inconsistency, the folly, the madness, of which they are guilty who make the things of this world their chief concern. It is a thousand times more foolish than if an emigrant were to spend all his capital
in gilding and decorating the cabin in which he sails, and to land at his future home a beggar.

Not that the Christian is to give up business to evangelise—that is not necessary; for if any man will not work, neither should he eat. Although his whole time is God's, it is his leisure hours especially that are claimed for evangelism; but not the less must the conversion of the world be the great purpose for which he is to live: his business or his estate, if he have an estate, must be regarded only as his sustentation while he is so employed, his heart should be set upon it so that evangelism would be not only his recreation but his luxury. Even in his business he has numberless opportunities of advancing the Master's interests, because he can utilise his influence and carry an infection wherever he goes. It is in this way especially that society is to be leavened. The education of any people comes more from their companions than from their teachers, and it is thus that their habits and opinions are perpetuated from generation to generation. We must, therefore, send forth our converts on fire (and that is impossible unless we be on fire ourselves) into society, like Samson's foxes among the enemy's corn.

It is not so much professional evangelists that we need, as living, loving, and enthusiastic private Christians in our work-shops, and in our drawing-rooms; in every stratum of society, men and women who cannot rest while those around them are dishonouring Christ, and going down to a lost eternity. Like the Israelites of old, they will be speaking of Him "when they are sitting in the house, and while they are walking by the way." They must do it, because the love of Christ constrains them.
II. We require the Pastors to train and oversee the People in their Work.

The world is perishing, not for want of sermons, but for want of workers. Ministers spend far too much time in writing sermons, and far too little in training their people to work. The reason is not so much that their people do not want to learn, as that they do not know how to teach. All our ecclesiastical machinery and arrangements were constructed some centuries ago, when the Christian Church was moulded on the Temple and its priesthood, instead of the Synagogue and its elders. This was the tap-root of the papacy, and, instead of being rooted out at the Reformation, it was imported as a principle into all the national churches, so that the reformed ministry was only a cross between the priest and the evangelist. As an evangelist, he preached the Gospel, and as a priest he would allow nobody else to preach it.

During the present century a great change has come over the churches, the priestly element is dying out, and the pastors of our congregations, instead of forbidding their people to work, cannot get them to work enough; and as for lay-preaching, which was once a crime, not a voice is ever lifted up against it. But, although our principles are changed, our ecclesiastical machinery and arrangements have not been altered to correspond. We issue “licences” to preach the Gospel.

In the Jewish Synagogue, every adult Jew who made a profession of religion was trained to speak and pray in public, he had to take part in the prayers and in the reading of the Scriptures in public; and when he sat down, he was encouraged and expected to give his
"Midrash" or his "Derash," his comment or his exhortation. It was an open meeting as were the Christian assemblies in Apostolic times. But as the Reformers regarded the Temple as the model of the Christian Church, and as none but priests were allowed to officiate, the laity were trained to silence. We have now thousands of Christians who are able both to pray and to speak in public, but where did they learn? Not from their pastors; and the consequence is that ninetenths of the Christian people never try. We require congregational classes, where young Christians will be trained to speak and pray before their fellows if they are ever to engage in Christian work, and we require our congregations to be organised in sections for Christian fellowship and study of the Scriptures. Besides this, we require buildings for the congregations to work in, with all the necessary appliances, where the pastor can train, and organise, and "oversee" them in their work. Recognising Paul's simile of the congregation being an organic body, every member having his own peculiar function, he will show his sagacity by finding what each is capable of doing, and yoking him or her to the work. It is thus alone that the whole body, being "fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

Paul tells us that it is the private Christians that are to "shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life," and that the duty of the pastor is to feed, to train, and see them do it. If he succeeds, he has his reward; but if he fails, and if those over whom the Holy Ghost has made him overseer do not shine as
lights in the world, holding forth the word of life, he has run in vain and laboured in vain (Phil. ii. 16). The pastorate is the hope of the Church's revival, and Satan's policy has always been either to corrupt or to abolish it.

III. The whole Church must receive the Baptism of the Holy Ghost to endue it with Evangelistic Power.

The baptism of the Holy Ghost, which is the peculiar and distinguishing feature of the New Testament dispensation, is that which gives it propagative power. The Old Testament saints were men whose faith, holiness, and close walk with God have never been surpassed, but they were not endued with evangelistic power. Noah, who was a "just man, perfect in his generation, and walked with God," preached for a hundred and twenty years, and it does not appear that he made a single convert; and so with the others. If the disciples, therefore, had not remained in Jerusalem till they received the promise of the Father, but had gone out on their mission without the baptism, Christianity would have been still-born. They would have been as barren as any of the preachers of the present day; but, when they received the baptism of the Holy Ghost, that moment they became transformed men, endued with power, and three thousand souls were at once swept into the kingdom. The spread of the Gospel during the first three centuries would have been altogether impossible without this enduement with power.

The difference between the Spirit of Christ received
at the new birth and the Holy Ghost received as a baptism lies chiefly in this, that its influence is not only subjective but objective; it not only affects the person who is baptised, but the persons to whom he speaks; so that there goes forth a power from the speaker to the hearer, convincing him of sin, righteousness, and judgment, although the same words from any other man might have had no such effect. This gift of the Father was possessed, not only by the hundred and twenty who first received it, but by the three thousand present, and the thousands who afterwards believed during the Apostolic Age (Acts ii. 38). It was the common property of the whole Church. Not that it was necessary for salvation, but it was necessary for the spread of Christianity; and, although every one may not have received it, and some who got it lost it, the possession of it was the rule, the want of it was the exception (Acts xix. 2).

But, when the great Apostacy arose, and the Church fraternised with the world, the Spirit was grieved, and to a large extent quenched. "I will go and return to my place till they acknowledge their offence and seek my face." It is a law of the kingdom, that a gift that is not used is withdrawn; and yet the Spirit was never altogether withdrawn, because our Lord promised that, when He came, He would abide with the Church for ever; but He came only in solitary instances, and at distant intervals, when such men as Wesley and Whitfield, Edwards and Finney, shone out as bright peculiar stars, showing what the baptism of the Holy Ghost could do in bringing into the kingdom thousands of souls, while the rest of the Church was barren and unfruitful. Not that these men were holier than all
others, but they had received the baptism without exactly knowing what it was, because the doctrine had been allowed to drop out from the creed, not only of Rome, but of Wittenberg and Geneva. Like the twelve disciples in Ephesus, they did not know that there was such a thing to be had; even the tradition had been lost.

It is the baptism of the Holy Ghost that makes such a difference between those who have it and those who have it not. Those who have it seem to carry a revival with them wherever they go, and souls are gathered in at all their meetings, sometimes in multitudes. Whereas others, perhaps holier and more gifted men, often toil for years without a single conversion. Not that there is any difference in the addresses, because, the very same address which has been blessed to the conversion of many souls, if delivered by one who has not the baptism or has lost it, might be as fruitless as any other. It is not the words, it is the man.

It must not be supposed that this baptism of the Holy Ghost is intended only for ministers and evangelists, it is as much promised to the private members of the Church as to public speakers. Among the hundred and twenty in the upper room there were women as well as men; and, although the only public speaker on that occasion was Peter, they were all filled with the Holy Ghost; they all spake with tongues, and they all told the wonderful works of God to those around them. So, in the present day, this enduement with power is as much needed by the private members of the Church, as by ministers and evangelists. Under any circumstances, the public speakers must be few, the private members are many; and, if the kingdom of
heaven is like leaven, it is necessary that every leavened particle should be endued with the power of leavening all the particles around it.*

During the second half of the present century the Holy Ghost has been returning with renewed power, not in solitary cases only, but in the experience of multitudes in every rank of society, bringing forth fruit, some twenty, some a hundred, and some a thousand fold. We have thus, even now, an earnest and foretaste of that which will soon be universal, because that which has been done once may be done again, that which is now in the possession of comparatively few, may, as in the Apostolic Church, become the heritage of all; and if the blessing is so great even now, what will it be when the whole Church throughout the world has received it?

IV. We need more Faith and more Loyalty to Christ.

The commission which our Lord gave to His disciples was in these words, "All authority hath been given unto Me in heaven and on earth. Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations; baptising them

* See the subject treated at length in the Author's work, "The Evangelistic Baptism indispensable to the Church for the Conversion of the World," in which the baptism of the Holy Ghost is explained—its nature as the indwelling of the Spirit of the Father, proceeding from the Father, and performing the function of the Father, as distinguished from the indwelling of Christ, begotten of the Father at conversion; its purpose as the spirit of evangelism outwards, and the spirit of organisation within the Church; the gifts of the Spirit distinguished from the gift of the Father; an anointing and a sealing (Gall & Inglis, London and Edinburgh).
into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of
the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things
whatsoever I commanded you; and, lo, I am with you
alway, even unto the end of the age” (aiōn), Matt.
xxviii. 18-20.

Observe, first, what they had to do. It was not
merely to preach the Gospel; that, of course, was
included, for they could not make disciples without
preaching the Gospel. But, if that had been all, they
might have preached the Gospel to every creature
without a single creature being saved; Paul might
plant and Apollos might water, but God only could
give the increase. What they were bidden do was, to
make disciples of all the nations, and to baptise them,
and not only to baptise them, but to make them loyal
subjects to Christ.

Observe next, the reason why they were to do it.
“All authority hath been given to Me in heaven and
on earth, therefore go and bring all the nations to My
feet.” Because the Father hath given Him the king-
dom, He calls upon His Church to put Him in posses-
sion. It is not compassion for souls that He appeals
to, but loyalty to Himself. We have been too long
appealing to compassion for souls. It will never
succeed. As a moving power it dwells only in the
heart of God, and would never make a martyr. Our
battle-cry must be, not “the Gospel for the world,” but
“the world for Christ,” and that will set the Church
on fire; for who would not die for Him who laid down
His life for us? We should never rest until the crown
of the whole world has been placed upon the brow of
our King Jesus.

Observe, also, how and when it has to be done. “Lo,
I am with you alway, even unto the end of the age." He does not send us forth alone; but as Captain of the Lord's host, He goes into the field along with us, until the close of the dispensation, when the conquest will be complete.

Let us think for a moment what the command implies, and we shall see the importance, and even the necessity, of the promise. It implies not only that our own country should be evangelised and brought into complete subjection to Christ, but that Popery should be exterminated, that Mohammedanism should be swept from the earth, and that heathenism in all its forms should be utterly abolished.

Had He merely bidden us go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature, although it might have taxed our energies, still, it might be done without any miraculous agency; but, when it is said that we are not only to preach the Gospel to all the nations, but to make disciples of them, and baptise them, that implies that we are to overthrow gigantic superstitions, pull down Satan’s mightiest strongholds, and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ, not only of one nation, but of all the nations in the world. He might as well have bidden us say to this mountain, “Be thou removed, and be thou planted in the sea.”

And yet He commands us to do it, and tells us at the same time, that if we had faith as a grain of mustard seed, it would be done; and why? Because God never gives a command without at the same time giving power to obey. When Christ bade the man stretch forth his withered hand, he believed, and it was done. When God bids us be holy as He is holy, He does not bid us try to be holy, but to be holy: so, when Christ
bids us disciple the nations, He does not mean us to try; He means us to do it. There are no “try’s” in the Bible. When God gives a command, all things are possible to him that believeth.

The only question is, Has God given the command? If He has, then faith can do all the rest. Peter did not venture on the sea till his Master said “Come,” but when that word was uttered, he stepped forth upon the water, and it was firm as a rock beneath his feet. A brother once said, “If God bade me leap through that wall, I would do it. I would not wait till God opened the way; I would leap, and while I was leaping, God would open the way.” That is the kind of faith that Christ delights in.

Since Christ then has commanded us to make disciples of all the nations and baptise them, the question arises, Why has it not been done? There can be but one answer. It is not because of the wickedness of the world, or the opposition of the devil. These are but cobwebs opposed to the march of God’s armies. It is purely and solely the unbelief of the Church. Oh, that God would open the eyes of these dear Millenarian brethren, and show them the sin of which they have unconsciously been guilty, in undermining the faith of God’s people, by trying to persuade them that it cannot be done. It is the Sin of the Spies; and never can the Israel of God enter into their promised inheritance, until that sin has been purged, and the last of the doubters buried in the plains of Moab. Oh, for another Caleb and Joshua!

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