

# PROPHECY AND ITS INTERPRETATION (1844)

by Halsey Jf

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*Halsey's theological work on biblical prophecy and proper methods of prophetic interpretation, addressing how prophecy should be understood and applied within Christian theology. Written during the period of heightened prophetic interest in the 1840s.*

2 Chapters

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## 1 Prophecy and its Interpretation

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Prophecy and its Interpretation.

We have received the following very friendly letter from the Rev. J. F. Halsey, of Perth Amboy, N. J.; and in order to bring the subject fairly up for discussion we communicate Mr. Halsey's ideas in his own words to our readers. In the mean time we thank him heartily for the kind expressions which he bestows upon our labours, and for his promptness to encourage the new translation of the Scriptures which our fellow labourer of the Voice of Jacob has in contemplation, who we doubt not will profit by the suggestions of our honoured correspondent. Mr. Halsey is another evidence of the spread of more kindly feeling between Jews and gentiles; and it shall not be our fault if it is not farther extended, since we mean, even whilst discussing the points of difference between us, and whilst calling to mind what we have suffered for religion's sake, constantly to admonish our readers to exercise charity and good-will towards all men, of whatever country and persuasion. We profess a religion of peace; and may all the world be happy, so there be but "peace upon Israel."-Ed. Oc.

Mr. Editor:

I have read with no ordinary interest the numbers of the Occident from the first. Enclosed is my subscription. I wish to continue it for the ensuing year. I have admired the frank and manly spirit you have pursued, and especially that gentlemanly courtesy you have ever exhibited even towards those correspondents from whom you differ in religious opinion. Allow me, dear Sir, to express my high pleasure in the noble avowal, "that we shall receive with gratitude any suggestions offered in a kindly spirit." At a time when the religious press is all but absolutely muzzled, and free inquiry proscribed, your readers of other denominations must have admired the comity and independence of the Occident. I am free to avow my love and regard for your nation, my deep sympathy in all your trials and persecutions. My purse, my pen, and my prayers will ever be ready to aid, as far as I am able, the seed of Abraham, God's friend, and "to whom were committed the oracles of God." Accordingly I wish to subscribe for five copies of the "Book of the Testimony of God." This work is a desideratum, and I have no doubt will meet a ready sale in this country. Mr. Editor, permit me through you, to make one suggestion relative to the forthcoming work, which will add exceedingly to its value to an English reader, viz., marginal readings containing the exact meaning or translation of Hebrew names of persons, places, &c., and a uniform rendering of the titles and appellatives of God. There is a treasury of divine wisdom and knowledge locked up in the Hebrew names of the Bible, which none but a Hebrew student can begin to estimate. Such marginal readings, &c., would exceedingly enhance its value in this country.

Mr. Editor, permit me to allude to the editorial note <<http://www.jewish-history.com/Occident/volume1/Mark1844/dias6.html>> appended to Dias's sixth letter. I agree with you that, "that letter is the most important of the series thus far," so much so, that I view it as perfectly unanswerable by any man in any of the Christian sects, save the few individuals who hold to a literal interpretation of the divine word. You very justly add "the prophets

speak of a Messiah who is to accomplish all that has been predicted of him. Now precisely such a one and no other can be received as the fulfiller of scriptural prediction, but if he omit any of these, he is not the one whom we expect. His mission is the redemption of Israel and the world; and unless this have been, or be accomplished, the personage under question cannot be the King of the Jews." In all this I fully agree with you. Such is the Messiah of the prophets; such is the Messiah of the gentile and the Jew; such is only the Messiah in whom I believe. In your preface you forcibly observe, "this much we know, Israel needs defenders, and among these we wish to be numbered." Mr. Editor, I would humbly crave to be enrolled as one, too. I would defend Israel from the falsehood and unmercifulness of those who no less ignorantly than fearlessly teach, that God has for ever cast off the natural seed of Abraham, "his friend;" that he will no more appear to build and beautify Jerusalem, and restore the twelve tribes as of old, and settle them after their former estates, &c. I do in my soul believe, and therefore pray with Daniel, "Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake. O my God incline thine ear and hear, open thine eyes and behold our desolations, and the city whereupon thy name is called; for we do not cause to fall our supplications before Thee for our righteousness, but for thy great mercies. O Lord, hear, O Lord forgive, O Lord hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God, for thy city and thy people are called by thy name." So far from believing that Israel shall be no more an established nation and church, I believe with the prophet Ezekiel, that "God will multiply men upon the mountains of Israel, all the house of Israel, all of it; and the cities shall be inhabited, and the wastes shall be builded. And I will multiply upon you man and beast, and they shall increase and bring fruit; and I will settle you after your old estates, and will do better than at your beginnings. Yea, I will cause men to walk upon you, my people Israel. And they shall possess, and thou shalt be their inheritance, and thou shalt no more henceforth bereave them of men," &c. (Ezekiel 36:8-12.) Yes, I solemnly believe that your nation shall be re-established in their own land-have a larger and more glorious temple than Solomon's rebuilt, and the Levitical priesthood and sacrifices re-instituted with some specified and significant modifications, to show that many of the magnificent prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Zechariah, &c., have not yet been fulfilled-are yet future. That in that day when these predictions shall be literally fulfilled, (as have been all past prophecies,) I believe the exact requisitions you name in your remarks (Vol. I. page 610.) <<http://www.jewish-history.com/Occident/volume1/Mark1844/dias6.html>> will precisely meet in Messiah, who shall then come, and "whose feet shall then stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which shall cleave in the midst thereof, toward the east and toward the west, a very great valley, as Zechariah informs us. A most convincing proof that his prophecy is future. But He shall not come alone, "and the Lord my God shall come, all the saints with Thee. And the Lord shall be King over all the earth, in that day there shall be one Lord, and his name shall be One. All the land shall be turned as a plain from Geba to Rimmon, south of Jerusalem, and it shall be lifted up and inhabited in her place, from Benjamin's gate until the place of the first gate, and the tower of Hananeel unto the king's wine-presses; and they shall dwell in it; and there shall be no more utter destruction, but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited." (Zechariah 14:1-21.) But I would affectionately, yet earnestly, beseech you to notice one circumstance connected with Messiah's coming, when "He will make the governors of Judah like a hearth of fire among wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf, and they shall devour all the people round about, on the right and left, and Jerusalem shall be inhabited, in her own place, in Jerusalem; when the Lord shall defend the

inhabitants of Jerusalem, he that is abject among them at that day shall be as David, and the house of David as God, as the angel of the Lord before them. In that day when it shall come to pass, when I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem, that I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and supplication, and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced." This is the circumstance. Does not this look like the "man of sorrows" described by Isaiah 53:1-12.? Like the Messiah of Daniel "who was to be cut off, but not for himself?" Like the crucified Messiah whom the gentiles worship? He whom some believe is soon to come the second time, and then "sit on the throne of his father David ?" Does it not necessarily imply a prior coming, when HE was pierced? Does not this look as though the prophets taught two advents of Messiah? one as a Lamb, that He might "make his soul an offering for sin," and "bear the sin of many:" the other, as son of David, and King of the Jews? The first, to be "pierced," "smitten," "stricken," "wounded:" the second, "to smite through his enemies" as predicted in the 110th Psalm? In the first He comes as the "offspring of David;" in the second, as "the root of David." In the first, "the son of a virgin;" in the second, "the wonderful, counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace." The last sentence in Dias' Letter needs a remark. "Now, if Christians will prove that Jesus fulfilled the prophecies, they will then convert the Jews, for they require nothing else." I reply, that no Christian can prove the same; for this simple reason, the prophecies Dias has quoted are still future, and, of course, Jesus has not yet fulfilled them; but I believe that he will fulfil them, word for word, at his second advent. Now just on this point, I do not wonder that Christian writers have utterly failed in their controversies with the Jews; as they undertook to prove what could not be proved, and therefore should not have been attempted. They undertook to convert unfulfilled into fulfilled prophecy, and thus confounded, instead of discriminating between those predictions which relate to the first coming of the Messiah to be "pierced," "wounded," "cut off," and those which predict his second coming in triumph to reign on earth King of the Jews, Prince of Peace. Thus they converted numerous substantial and glorious predictions into figures, i.e., they did violence to the divine word. And no marvel that they utterly failed to convince and convert the Jew. And then because confused, weak, and fallacious arguments failed upon the Jew, his opponents lost their temper, and aimed to effect by persecution of tongue, and pen, and statute, what ignorance and unkindness ought not, could not, and cannot effect; forgetting the proverbs "The sweetness of the lips increaseth learning, pleasant words are as an honeycomb to the soul, and health to the bones. He that handleth a matter wisely shall find good, and whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy is he."

I am, dear Sir,

Yours truly,

J. F. Halsey.

Perth Amboy, N. J., March 11, 1844.

NOTE by the Editor.-We need not tell the intelligent reader, that Mr. Halsey appears to be one of those who believe in the literal fulfilment of Scripture, to be accomplished at the second advent of the Messiah, whoever he may be. It may be observed, that with the increase of knowledge of the Word of God, free from the authoritative comments which received interpretation formerly gave to it, men of all persuasions have come to the conclusion, that the history of the gospels is no fulfilment of the predictions of Israel's seers; but that if the founder of Christianity be indeed the

Christ,\* it is absolutely necessary for him to appear again on earth, in order to bring to pass that which has as yet not seen its fulfilment. The Messiah therefore according to this view has a duplex character, his first, a divine incarnation, if such a state can be, the second, a divinity without the adjunct of a human frame. In either sense, whether Christians believe in a spiritual, that is to say, one coming of Christ, or in a literal, that is to say, a second coming, superadded to the first, they demand an acknowledgment of him as a part of the Deity, who came to reconcile by his death an offended God with the seed of man; since all Christians profess to believe that without this mediatorial intervention, every Adamite, through the sin of Adam, would be doomed to condemnation, because there could be no atonement which any Adamite could offer, of sufficient potency and holiness, to remove the weight of original iniquity. With Adam all had sinned, as we understand their doctrines, and it required a second Adam, who, uniting the most perfect human form with the divinity, which he was himself, should become a sacrifice for his brothers in the flesh, unto the offended God, whose essence dwelt in him, and of whom he was a part. We think that we have stated the idea fairly and clearly, and if not, we are willing to be corrected by any of the learned Christian divines who honour us with their support.

\* The "anointed," Greek χριστός Christos, from χρίω chrio, to anoint, just as Messiah is the Hebrew מָשִׁיחַ pronounced, Mahshiach, from מָשַׁח Mahshach, to anoint. This will also explain our meaning, otherwise somewhat obscure in our note to vol. 1. p. 609. <<http://www.jewish-history.com/Occident/volume1/Mark1844/dias6.html>> But as Jews we deny the premises, that is, the necessity for a mediator; we do not believe that it ever was in the contemplation of the Most High to cast off man from favour, although he should sin, and that an atonement was provided from the beginning in his mercy through obedience before transgression and through repentance after the soul be defiled with sin. At another time, we may enter into the discussion more fully; at present however we must take it for granted that the evident words of Scripture, constantly calling upon us to "reform the heart," must imply that man has salvation placed within his own reach. We know moreover of no traces in history, not even the Bible, whence it could be proved that the Israelites or Jews (we use the terms indiscriminately, although Christians love to understand them as of different significations) ever believed or were taught to believe that they were to look upon the law as insufficient for salvation, or that they ever had the least idea of a mediatorial atonement. We know well enough that Christians have understood several passages in various parts of the Bible, as conveying the idea of a mediator; but surely there is not a single passage which can bear this construction solely, nor one which lays it down in so many words. We contend therefore that mediation is no biblical doctrine, not one without which salvation is impossible, as our gentile neighbours teach. It is therefore merely under the presumption that there is a mediator, that the idea of a suffering saviour can be at all entertained, or that we are to look for a second advent of him, whom God will send as the redeemer (not saviour in the sense it is used by Christians) of mankind. According to our ideas, the redeemer, the endowed, the prophet, the anointed, the Messiah or Christ, the Son of David, otherwise called the prince, the king, or even "my servant David," is to establish his mission, not by sufferings, but by triumphing over all the elements of opposition, which now are opposed to the reign of God, "as the Lord one," on earth. The present is a state of warfare against the truth; for let us believe as we may, whether we be Jews, Christians, Mahomedans, heathens or unbelievers, we cannot say otherwise, than that which each of us calls truth, is not acquiesced in by the majority of mankind; but the future is to be a state of peace, of acquiescence, when the truth will be reigning triumphant,

conquering all prejudice, subduing all hearts; and this triumph, even if natural wars, assaults, and sufferings will bring it about, we believe to be the work proper for Messiah to accomplish; not because he is very god, not because he and the father are one, not because all things are given unto him in heaven and earth, not because he is the judge of the world, the lord of David, the salvation of Abraham-he is to be nothing of all this;-but because his and our father in heaven, the sole God, the Holy One, the pure Essence has decreed salvation, and will send his messenger to effect in his name the glad tidings which He has announced from the beginning, that "He will be magnified and sanctified before the eyes of many nations, that they shall know that He is the Lord."

All this being admitted clearly proves, that the passages cited by Christians, to foreshadow a suffering saviour, cannot be so construed, if the Bible is to be consistent with itself. We therefore say, that neither the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah nor the twelfth of Zechariah, mean what Christians say they do. As for the fifty-third of Isaiah, it is almost universally admitted, we think even by late Christian writers, to speak of the restoration of Israel, who will then be spoken of by the gentiles as "the servant of God," who suffered so many fearful persecutions because of the uniform adherence to the covenant which had been given from Horeb.\*-The twelfth of Zechariah, on the other hand, speaks of things to happen, none of which can as yet have occurred; the Lord is himself introduced (v. 7, 8,) as raising the house of David, the city of Jerusalem and the land of Judah, from their fallen state; and the house of David, mind the house, not one alone, consequently the Messiah and his family, of whom also Ezekiel speaks, shall be as the angel of the Lord before the people. The context therefore forbids the idea that the tenth verse should introduce a pierced deity as one for whom the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem are to mourn; especially as the Messiah is represented as distinct, which, according to our belief, he actually is, from the Lord, through whose assistance all these things are to be accomplished. But to the Jewish exposition of the text, the difficulty vanishes. From the chapter in question, it appears, as also from chapter 38 and 39 of Ezekiel, and other passages, that the time of the advent will also be a time of tribulation and warfare, and that especially the few remnants of Israel in Palestine will be the objects of a fierce attack from many nations. It is well known that the Lord works through natural means; consequently in the wars, which will thus be displayed as a means of effecting of great things, some men of Israel will also fall slain, or pierced by the sword; and in this manner, it is the opinion of certain Rabbis, that the Jewish war-leader, whom they designate as Messiah, son of Joseph, the precursor for the son of David, will be slain. Any how, there will be warfare and victims of the sword; and therefore says the prophet (v. 9, 10): "And it will come to pass on that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour out over the house of David and over the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and supplication, and they shall look up to me, when they (the enemies) have pierced but one, and they shall mourn over him as one mourneth for an only son, and be in bitterness for him as one is in bitterness for a first-born." That is to say, that before the final redemption which is predicted in the fourteenth chapter can be accomplished, all the tribulations contained in the twelfth and thirteenth, must have been experienced; which trials however are only to purify and not to destroy the sacred seed of the righteousness to whom the land will be given. We have only to add, that were the piercing to refer to the speaker, the construction ought to be thus: "They shall look upon me, whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for me," (not him) &c., inasmuch as the word him must refer to a person different from the speaker, who, in consequence, cannot be the one

who was pierced. We acknowledge that there is some difficulty in the passage under question; but all Jewish commentators have understood as we have given it, and the latest German translation which we have seen, that of Mr. Arnheim, is: "Und sie schauen zu mir auf (bei Jeglichem) den sie durchbohrt haben," which is precisely as we have rendered it above. At all events, this construction is in perfect accordance with the context, and is therefore more consonant with a sound criticism than the ordinary Christian acceptance of this passage. But we must stop; our note is already larger than its text, and we must leave the farther consideration of the subject to a future number. We constantly feel that it is much easier to start objections than reply to them; we therefore trust that both Mr. Halsey and our other readers will pardon us if this reply is not all they could have wished it to be.

\* We shall speak more at length on this subject, probably before long.

## 2 Prophecy and its Interpretation

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Prophecy And Its Interpretation.

Mr. Editor,-

There is a charm in kindness and liberality that can not fail to make its way to the heart. Permit me to tender you my most cordial thanks for the frankness and fairness my letter has received at your hands. I cannot but love and admire the man who treats my pen not less than my person with courtesy or patience, which is an integral element of true politeness. Such is the intenseness of my love for every word of the Sacred Scriptures, that while I bless the "God of Abraham" for revealing them, I shall never, while life lasts, cease to love his seed for their faithful guardianship of the Holy Oracles. The Jew shall ever find a welcome under my roof, and your nation a prominent place in my best wishes and prayers, until "those days come that ten men shall take hold, out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you." And it gives me pleasure to assure you that the same kind feelings you have attributed to your correspondent, are warmly entertained towards your nation by an increasing number of my most valued friends. Indeed, dear sir, there is coming over the mind and heart of the nations an impression that we are nearing some mighty crisis in this world's history, in which the Jew is destined to act a most conspicuous part: and the more assiduously Moses and the prophets are studied the more deep and practical a sympathy will be generated in favour of the Jew, and his true relation to God be more distinctly known, and his present and future fortunes perceived. Men are ever as their creeds. If their creeds are based in ignorance or prejudice, selfishness and partiality will mark their conduct. Hence a criminal ignorance has been the prolific cause of the unkindness and hatred your nation has too long experienced from those who bear, but disgrace the Christian name. While men entertain the notions, unmerciful as unchristian and unscriptural, that the Jew has been for ever abandoned of his God-his nationality lost-his sacred seal and rites of no further import and use, there has been fostered much of that prejudice of which the Jew so justly complains.

You rightly observe, that your correspondent "appears to be one of those who believe in the literal fulfillment of Scripture." Permit me briefly to inform you why I so believe. For years I have diligently confined my studies to the Holy Scriptures alone, only solicitous to know what God has there revealed. In my successive readings of the Holy Oracles, I have penned down every instance where I met the expressions, "And it shall come to pass," and "It came to pass." The prophecy I put in one column, the fulfillment in another, and then with both before me, I have carefully compared each recorded prophecy with its corresponding and recorded fulfillment, and out of some hundreds I have not been able to find one that has not been literally fulfilled, word for word: nay more, in many instances (if I may be allowed the expression) more than literally fulfilled. I mean, there is such an amplitude in the fulfillment, as covers not only every word in the prophecy, but, to leave no doubt, or room for guess-work about the truth of God's word, when the fulfillment takes place, it embraces other things not mentioned in the prediction; which often reminds me of

the words of one of your noblest generals and lawgivers: "And behold, I am going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you, all are come to pass unto you, not one thing hath failed thereof." I may add one specimen-

Prophecy, Numbers 17:5. " And it shall come to pass, the man's rod whom I shall choose shall blossom," &c.

Fulfillment, Numbers 17:8. " And it came to pass that on the morrow, Moses went into the tabernacle of witness, and behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi, was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds."

Here, while the prophecy was literally fulfilled, "the budding buds and yielding almonds," not predicted, are found amplifying the fulfillment and rendering it more striking and satisfactory. From an attentive and frequent comparison of the Lord's words with his works, I find throughout the Scriptures, the latter such literal exponents of the former, that I as firmly believe that He will literally fulfill and thus make good every word He has spoken, as I believe in the divine existence of "the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob." Such was the firm conviction of the author of the hundred and thirty-eighth Psalm, that he even anticipates the holy Isaiah, who says, "He will magnify the law and make it honourable," by saying, "Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name." The Psalmist speaks of the fulfillment, the prophet spoke of the prophecy. But when the last good word of the Lord shall have been fulfilled (and this He will do, or deny himself) the Jewish and gentile world shall be forced to say, He is a God of Truth-He has magnified his word-He has done all things well. Yes, in the sublime language of a book I would that my Jewish friends would but candidly and carefully examine and compare with their own Scriptures, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily, I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." Matthew 5:17-18. I feel that the recorded fulfillment of God's word is a Divine commentary upon the Sacred Oracles, not only designed to teach us how God would have us understand fulfilled prophecy, but how to interpret unfulfilled predictions-presenting us Divine illustrations of what He will do, from what He has done. Has He in all past time fulfilled his word literally? So He will in all time to come, word for word. Here, my dear brother, (pardon the word, but it comes from my very heart,) is the error of tens of thousands of Christendom in regard to what God has spoken in the Scriptures of the houses of Judah and Israel. They believe and teach that He will fulfill these prophecies of future blessings differently from those He has fulfilled, those, e. g., which contained threatenings. Hence some say they have been-others, that they are to be fulfilled figuratively, which to my mind is no fulfillment at all: and hence the little sympathy for your nation. I hold that they are all to be fulfilled to the letter, the blessings not less than have been the threatenings, the temporal equally with the spiritual. Here, just here, is, as I conceive, the sole heart and life-blood of your nation's hopes and consolations. Will God fulfill his remaining words, as He has in all time past? Let go a literal fulfillment of the Divine word, and I have nothing to cheer me when I think of the Jew, nothing to pray for when I bow before God. But blessed be his name, when I open his word, every recorded fulfillment fills my soul with light, life and hope. There I see how He has done: and here I may know how He will do-act like himself: literally fulfill his every word of truth. Thus as by the light of the sun we see the sun, so "in thy light we see light." With me, the Bible is its own, and only expositor, "comparing spiritual things with spiritual." "To the

law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, because no morning is in them." Isaiah 8:20. On page 44, vol. 2, you very significantly and truly remark, "That if the founder of Christianity be indeed the Christ, it is absolutely necessary for him to appear again on earth, in order to bring to pass that which has as yet not seen its fulfillment." This I firmly believe, though I regret to add, it is rejected by very many who profess his name. But this, my dear sir, I trust ought to be no reason why we should believe any truth, because the majority receive or reject it. It was not on such grounds your noble-minded heroes Joshua, (Joshua 24:15,) Hananiah, Mishael, Azariah and Daniel, believed and acted. It is enough for me, that I have a "Thus saith the Lord," for any position I hold, though all the world and church beside reject it. "To my master I stand or fall." I am far more anxious to be on the side of truth, than to have truth on my side." Who is on the Lord's side?" said your own blessed Lawgiver, when the whole nation were bowing down before Aaron's calf.

I believe it is absolutely necessary that the founder of Christianity, the Messiah, should appear again on earth, from the following words of God, as well as to make good scores of other wonderful predictions. "Afterwards he brought me to the gate, the gate that looketh towards the east, and behold the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east, and his voice like a noise of many waters, and the earth shined with his glory. And He said unto me, Son of man, the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever. Then He brought me back the way of the gate which looketh toward the east (the same gate) and it was shut." Now mark the reason. "Then the Lord said unto me, This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter in by it; because the Lord, the God of Israel hath entered in by it, therefore it shall be shut. (Ezekiel 43:7; Ezekiel 44:21.) This glorious prophecy every Jew and gentile knows has never yet been fulfilled, and to be fulfilled necessarily implies a personage who can occupy a place-a throne-possess form-has feet-and can enter a gate, who else but the incarnate Messiah, coming the second time, as the Lord God of Israel. The same of whom Zechariah prophesies, when "the Lord my God shall come and all the saints with Thee. Then shall the Lord go forth and fight against those nations (who shall then be besieging Jerusalem) as when He fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east, and toward the west, a very great valley, and half the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south." (Zechariah 14:1-21.) Now every traveller, Jew or gentile, who visits Jerusalem, has ocular and tangible demonstration that this too is an unfulfilled prophecy, as Mount Olivet still lifts its undivided summit to the skies, as it did in the day when your own immortal poet and monarch David, with covered head and barefoot, went up its hallowed ascent, weeping as he went at the rebellion of his beloved yet undutiful son Absalom. Now I must believe the God of Abraham to be a God of truth, and I cannot but believe He will fulfill these brilliant and glorious prophecies of your own Ezekiel and Zechariah literally, word for word,-prophecies, brilliant in the sublime wonders they reveal, and glorious in their final results to my poor, despised, down-trodden Hebrew brethren, wherever sojourning in their homeless wanderings. I cannot but pray the God of Israel speedily to fulfill them: yes, and fulfilled speedily and literally, I verily believe they will be, when Messiah the Jew personally visits our earth the second time, to sit on "the throne of his father David. And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever: and of his kingdom there shall be no end." Identified with their literal fulfillment, is my own hope of salvation, for says another Jewish writer: "To them that look for him shall he

appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

Permit me to make a passing remark on your rendering of Zechariah 12:10. It seems to me ingenious rather than satisfactory. From the context it would appear that the piercing, as well as the mourning is not by "enemies," but by Jews of "the house of David," "the house of his friends:" for it is added, "And the land shall mourn, families, families apart, the family of David apart, and their wives apart," &c. (12). "And shall say unto him (doubtless the pierced one), what are these wounds in thine hands? Then shall he answer, With which I was wounded in the house of my friends," (13. 6.) when and where he was also pierced. Apply this to the Messiah's first coming as "a lamb," a "servant," the "offspring of David," the "son of the virgin," whom your fathers, ignorant of his twofold character he was to sustain, corresponding with his two comings, rejected, and all difficulties vanish. Had they but known him to be their king they would not have rejected him. "I wot that through ignorance ye did it." But when he comes the second time, true to his office as redeemer of his people, and unmindful of all past unkindness, he shall save your nation and be acknowledged your Messiah and king. Here then we have ample reason and motive for this most remarkable mourning: a national and yet a family mourning of wives and husbands apart, to know at last that he whom their fathers had ignorantly wounded unto death, was, and is indeed none other than their own Messiah.

Permit me to say in conclusion, that there is much, very much of choicest consolation thickly scattered through all the prophets, to console your people under all their temporal trials and persecutions: your King is coming. Would not publishing in the Occident from month to month a growing catalogue of the various blessings God, "the God who cannot lie," has promised your people, greatly tend to cheer and comfort their hearts when smarting under the prejudices, uncharitableness, and persecutions of those who ought to know, feel and act more in accordance with I will not say religion, but with the principles of our common humanity, and the dictates of true politeness?

Yours truly,

J. F. Halsey.

Perth Amboy, April 8, 1844.

Note by the Editor.-To say that Mr. Halsey's remarks delight us, would be merely to assert a sentiment which all the attentive readers of the Occident must share with us. But it is not expected from us to compliment our correspondents however their articles may be a source of gratification to us personally, or those for whom we labour. We however thank Mr. Halsey for his communication, and only regret that though we agree in so many points, we have yet to differ in several others. We will merely remark, that it is almost impossible for persons, who have been so differently educated as Mr. H. and the humble writer of these remarks, should be able to look upon Scripture and its interpretation in the same light, and that it is unavoidable that they should attach very different meanings at times to the same words, however simple they may appear at first sight. The Christian has been early taught to mistrust himself, because he cannot do any meritorious act without divine aid. The Jew however is directed to the law where action is demanded of him, and he is told that he must earn the divine aid to bring his deeds to the perfection of godliness by first making the beginning. The Christian is taught to look for mercy through the intervention of a

mediator's favour; the Jew however has it impressed upon his mind from the moment he begins to think that there is no one standing between him and punishment, save the undeserved mercy of the Lord alone. No wonder then that when Jew and Christian first meet they may honestly differ about the very words they make use of to express their ideas. For instance, when we speak of "the Lord God of Israel," we, the Jews, think of no other than the incorporeal One; Christians associate with Him a visible incarnation. So if we even do not differ about the use of words, we differ about their meaning. How are we then to settle differences? By what standard are we to judge each other? By the context of the Bible which, Mr. Halsey himself very justly contends, must be its own interpreter. Before therefore there is any occasion for us to debate the character of the divine incarnation which Trinitarian Christians assume as the basis of their faith, it is requisite to inquire whether the Bible speaks in any one instance with sufficient distinctness of such a characteristic, before we can at all admit its existence. But Jews deny that a single word concerning incarnation is discoverable in the Bible, or as Christians call it, the Old Testament; the Lord is represented to us as "one;" as not imaginable "under any likeness;" as "not being human in feeling or character," as inconceivable by human intellect, as the sole Creator, the only Saviour, the only Ruler of the universe. We know full well, that honest Christian interpreters have discovered allusions as they conceive them to be, which they think quite sufficient for their purpose. But we repeat what we have said elsewhere, that in a matter of such vital importance, hints would not have been employed in Scripture where a few brief phrases would have removed all dispute. We believe that Jews would be open to conviction, could the subject be made manifest to them; but the thing has not as yet been attempted, and we honestly think that it is impossible to be done upon any rational grounds.

Now we agree with Mr. Halsey, that the Bible must be literally fulfilled; still we cannot let this militate against the well-known figurative application of epithets to the Deity which must not be interpreted as though they were applicable to Him in the usual sense of the words. So when God says in Leviticus 26:11-12 : "And I will place my dwelling in the midst of you, and my soul shall not loath you; and I will walk in the midst of you, and I will be your God, and you shall be my people," no one is thereby authorized to refer this to an incarnation who would dwell visibly in a house in Palestine, and who would walk visibly in the midst of the people. We know, perhaps better than words can express, what is meant by the above prophecy; God promises, for the sake of showing his approbation of the obedience of Israel, that He would send peace and prosperity in their land, and that spiritual grace should abound likewise, inasmuch as He would, so to say, be more immediately than in other countries present in the land, and be more directly the God of Israelites who adore Him than the God of other nations who are foreign to his worship. The holiest place in all the country, which no human foot dared to approach, the place which was closed to all save once a year to the anointed priest, was considered the more immediate residence of the glory of God, where He announced himself as dwelling between the wings of the cherubim. Does this say, that there alone God dwelled? That his omnipresence was limited to this small spot? Surely not; and we understand it to say, that it was the will of our Instructor to hallow this precinct above all others, and that He willed that from it should go forth light and blessings, whilst the people by their conduct deserved a greater share of his mercy, than they could do under a state of sin and transgression. And the facts precisely tally with this view; as soon as transgression became general, the glory, to use a human phrase, quitted the temple, the blessing was withdrawn, the protection was no longer bestowed, and temple and nation became ruins under the assaults of

ungodly heathens. If now Ezekiel in his forty-third and forty-fourth chapters speaks of future things, which we also admit as not having yet come to pass, and introduces the terms "the glory of the God of Israel," he means not a Messiah or a deputy of the Deity, but the One Eternal himself. No exception must be taken to the expression, "that the east gate shall be shut, and no man shall enter in by it, for the Lord God of Israel hath entered in by it, it shall remain shut;: because it is almost parallel with the passage quoted from Leviticus 26:1-46.; and we think that we are within bounds when we say, that the Messiah is nowhere alluded to except as a man, a son of Jesse or David, as God's servant David, but never by the appellation which designates solely and alone the invisible Creator who spoke at Horeb from amidst the fire. We are somewhat surprised at the daring (we beg our reverend friend to excuse us for employing this word,) with which Christians dignify the Messiah by the terms applied only to the Creator, especially as they must know that, when directly spoken of, the words "redeemer," "servant," "shepherd," and the like are used, to denote a derived authority, a legation, but not an independent authority, nor an existence co-extensive in duration and power with the Father of all. There is just as much reason to say that the words "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," mean that the Messiah was this Creator; or that "I am the Lord thy God," refers to the same. What sort of criticism would this be which could so pervert and change the meaning of any text? To be sure, to a Christian who believes in a Trinity, such an exposition might be palatable enough; but we, who say and uphold, "the Lord is One," not two, three, or any other plurality, cannot admit such a construction, and must reject it as anti-scriptural and unreasonable.

If the text of Ezekiel, quoted by our reverend friend, only alludes to the Deity and not the Messiah, the one from the fourteenth of Zechariah alludes to the Creator likewise, and in truth it emphatically concludes with the declaration, that at that time the Lord's name shall be one not three.\* Thus, "and the Lord my God will come-all the saints with Thee," again embraces the Eternal only, not the Messiah nor any subordinate to the Deity; understand well our meaning, the Messiah is to be a deputy, not an independent power, for a messenger only from God do we expect, and of him only the prophets speak.

\* See the sermon in this number on "The Divine Kingdom <<http://www.jewish-history.com/Occident/volume2/june1844/kingdom.html>>," commencing on page 115.

We again insist that the exposition we gave above in page 47 of the tenth verse of Zechariah 12:1-14 is not alone ingenious, as Mr. Halsey says, but perfectly rational and agreeable to the text. We would leave it to any one who had never been informed of the doctrine of a suffering redeemer to read the words in Hebrew "וַיִּשְׁמְרוּ אֶת־פְּנֵיהֶם אֶל־יְהוָה וְיִשְׁמְרוּ אֶת־פְּנֵיהֶם אֶל־יְהוָה" "and they shall look up to me for the one (or if you will-whom) they have pierced and mourn over him," &c., to reconcile in the received version the first and the second parts of the verse. Here is not the transition common enough from the third to the second person, or the like, so peculiar to the Hebrew, which change is however perfectly reconcilable by fixed rules of criticism, but a complete substitution of a different person; in other words, the person looked to is not the person pierced; or else the construction must have proceeded "וְיִשְׁמְרוּ אֶת־פְּנֵיהֶם" "and they shall mourn for me;" but this is not being said, we must insist upon it that the mourners are to look unto the speaker, who announces himself through the mouth of the prophet, for aid and comfort on account of some one, whoever he may be, who has been pierced, or wounded by those who have thereby done an injury to those who consider this

suffering sufficient cause for a universal mourning. A mourning in families for any great national calamity was something not unknown to Jews;-see the mourning of the people described in Numbers 11:10. Having now but imperfect knowledge of Eastern manners, we are unable to state the reason of this custom, but that it existed, admits of no doubt; and Zechariah therefore refers to the same state of society, when he introduces a mourning by all the remaining families of Israel. As regards the support for his position which Mr. Halsey draws from the thirteenth chapter of Zechariah to illustrate the twelfth, we leave it to himself to say whether they can be at all connected. He speaks in 13. 4 of the false prophets who had misled the people by their visions, and the wounds which they had struck themselves in order to deceive; but that at the time of the advent they will claim their wounds as received in the houses of their friends, and not inflicted for the sake of appearing as endowed persons. It may appear strange that such should have been the practices of false prophets, to wound themselves in order to obtain their fancied gifts. But a turning to the sacrifice of Elijah on Carmel (1 Kings 18:28) will convince any one that such fooleries were committed by the followers of vain idols. The prophet, after stating this giving up of their wickedness by the false prophets, announces that but a small remnant shall escape, who, being true and faithful, shall call on the name of God; "And," says the text, "I will answer him; I say, He is my people, and he will say, The Lord is my God."-Can this refer to the Messiah? We think not. The whole context refutes the idea that the anointed shall be termed by the name given only to the Most High; and if this construction be right, which we confidently claim, the deductions of our friend must be erroneous. The passages quoted no doubt refer to the time of the Messiah, but we cannot admit that the joining of different passages, for the sake of making this high personage more than man, is a fair mode of interpretation. But we must conclude for the present.-We thank Mr. Halsey for his friendly suggestions, and hope to be able to profit by them during the progress of our work. We cannot help adding that Mr. H. shall always be a welcome correspondent, and he shall find in us a candid though a sincere opponent to his ideas of the divinity of Messiah, whom we believe to be merely a delegate sent to work great things through the power of his God and the Creator of all things.

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