WRITINGS OF DAVID BARON

by David Baron

A collection of theological writings, sermons, and essays by David Baron, compiled for study and devotional reading.

125 Chapters

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Chapter 1

1.00. Rays of Messiah’s Glory

Rays of Messiah’s

Glory By David Baron

Chapter 2

1.000. Copyrigt Notice

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1.00000. Preface

PREFACE

Much need not be said by way of preface to a work of this kind. The title and contents alone sufficiently indicate its character and scope. Neither will I enter into an argument, or even statement, on the importance of a more close and systematic study of the Old Testament Scriptures—that “scroll of the Book” wherein it is written of Jesus.

What is needed with regard to this is, not argument or persuasion, but relish and appetite—the symptoms of a vigorous spiritual health which, alas! as far as the majority of professing Christians are concerned, is sadly wanting. It is only a shallow and sentimental piety that will pick and choose from the Word of God and declare itself satisfied with certain portions of it only, to the neglect and depreciation of the rest; and if Christians will thus insist on abstaining from partaking of the variety of food which God has graciously, in His infinite wisdom, provided for the sustenance of their spiritual life, of course they have only themselves to blame for their loss of spiritual vigour and the setting in of moral decrepitude, which in time makes not only service, but even the partaking of the “fat things” which are provided for them in the Word of God, at best a wearisome duty instead of a privilege and pleasure.

I have tried in the following chapters to concentrate some of the “Rays of Messiah’s Glory” which stream from the pages of the Old Testament Hebrew Scriptures, with which I have been familiar from my childhood, but the meaning of which was hidden from me until some nine years ago, when suddenly a new light from Calvary’s cross shone into my heart, and at the same time illumined the pages of that sacred volume, so that I could for the first time see that from its beginning to its end, it is written of Him—Jesus Christ, the Light of the Gentiles and the Glory of Israel—the Son of David and the Son of God. The first chapter, which formed no part of my original plan of this work, but which I have written at the suggestion of one for whose judgment I have the greatest deference, and whose name is well known to the Christian Church, and also the chapter on Isaiah 53:1-12 and the many critical footnotes, together with the Appendix—in all which I have more particularly kept the Jewish controversy in view—will, I trust, form not the least acceptable portion of this volume. But, on the whole, the following pages were not written with any controversial aim in view, but entirely for Christians, to whom—especially to the British Christians—I dedicate it as a token of gratitude for having on their shores first heard of Him, faith in Whom has ever since filled me with “joy unspeakable and full of glory;” and also as a token of appreciation of their endeavours to bring those to a knowledge of Christ, through whom in the first place their salvation came (John 4:22), and “whose are the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises, whose also are the fathers, and of whom is Christ, as concerning the flesh, Who is over all, God blessed for ever.” The greatest difficulty in writing a work of this kind is to make it what is expressively called it “popular,” or generally interesting; but I have endeavoured to make it so, and how far I have succeeded I must leave to the judgment of the reader.

I am conscious of many imperfections both in the plan and composition, but such as I have I give, and beg the reader's indulgence on two grounds: first, on account of my imperfect acquaintance with the language, and secondly, on account of its being the work of spare moments, done mostly when away from home on itinerant missions.1 Were it not for the faithful and industrious pen of my dear wife, who has transcribed it all from hasty and almost unintelligible pencil-scribbling, it would be very long before the following pages would see the light in print.

1 In connection with the Mildmay Mission to the Jews.

One more remark I have to make here by way of explanation, which is this, that what follows, with the exception of the first chapter and the chapter on Isaiah 53:1-12, was written before the Revised Version of the Old Testament came out, as is well known to two or three of my honoured friends, to whose criticism these pages have been submitted; so that the corrected renderings, where they agree with that version, are not adopted from it, but are made from the original Hebrew.

It is my prayer that, at least in some little way, these pages may conduce to the glory of the God of Israel and His Messiah.

DAVID BARON

January, 1886

Chapter 5

1.01. In the Scroll of the Book, or Predicted and Fulfilled

CHAPTER I.

“IN THE SCROLL OF THE BOOK IT IS WRITTEN OF ME,” OR PREDICTED AND FULFILLED. The most wonderful thing about Christianity, which makes it absolutely unique among the religions of the earth, is, that it has what one may call a reflex history—a history before its actual history commenced—a life before its birth. Its history is composed of two separate periods, each of which is written in a separate volume, but not only do the two make one complete whole, but they stand in such relation to each other that the truth of the one is attested and demonstrated by the testimony of the other. Without the first, the second would be without foundation and unintelligible; without the second, the first would have no corner-stone to keep its sides together, and no headstone, which it absolutely needs to give it a finished and perfect appearance, and so seal it as the workmanship of Him Who is perfect in all His ways.

I have said that Christianity had a life before its birth. That life which it had did not cease, but still pervades its present existence. The child of promise is still nourished from the breasts of the mother of hope, who in turn is revived and quickened with the new life which she receives back from her own offspring. The Christ of history is merely the fruit of the tree of prophecy, and Christianity is only the realisation of a plan the first outlines of which were sketched more than a thousand years before. Now if the tree be good, the fruit, if it really be the produce of that tree, must be good also; and if once the plan be acknowledged to be drawn by the Divine Architect, all that we have to do, in order to ascertain whether the building raised by Jesus of Nazareth be of God, is to compare and see if it corresponds in every particular with that plan. Of course there are some who deny the Divinity of the Old Testament prophecies, but we may be allowed to tell them that a mere denial is not sufficient, and that their judgment can scarcely be received before they have accounted, not only for Christianity and its Founder as facts, but for the origin of the ideas and hopes which were in existence long before the facts, and with which they are so intimately connected. The historical bulwark of Christian defence has two sides, and I venture to think that the most impregnable side of that bulwark, which the enemy too often ignores, from a consciousness, perhaps, that it is too strong for attack, is that which commences in the garden of Eden, where, shortly after the creation of man, one of the corner-stones of its foundation was laid (Genesis 3:151), and which extends to the time of Christ’s advent.

1See Appendix, Note 1. That side of the bulwark on which is engraven as with a pen of iron, first, and most prominently, the records of the life, death, and resurrection of Him Who was and is “Wonderful;” the early spread of the faith He has founded, triumphing as it did in spite of principalities and powers and the opposition, not only of men collectively, but of man individually (for it had to contend not only with artificial institutions, but natural propensities, and thus had to conquer enemies in every bosom as well as in every state2); the continuance of the Christian religion unaltered in its essentials by the changes of realm and the chances of time; and the incalculable benefits it has bestowed on the human race,—this side is marvellous and firm as a

rock; but the other side, on which was clearly and unmistakably inscribed hundreds and thousands of years before the events happened that so it should be, is even more marvellous and firm still—it is as firm as the Word of the living God which cannot be broken, though heaven and earth may pass away.

2 “Christianity, while it coalesced with all that is pure in humanity, had to struggle as decidedly with all that is ungodly in man’s nature, and with whatever issued from it and was connected with it. It announced itself as a power aiming at the renovation of the world; but the world sought to maintain its old ungodly ways. Though Christ came not to destroy, but to fulfil, yet He came not to bring peace upon earth, but a sword. Hence a collision with the prevailing modes of thinking and manners was inevitable.”—NEANDER.

I am aware also that in recent times many intelligent Jews, backed by rationalistic, so-called Christians, who, in this respect, are even less conscientious and consistent than their Israelitish champions, deny that there is the hope of a Messiah in the Old Testament Scriptures, and assert that the prophecies on which Christians ground such a belief contain only “vague anticipations and general hopes, but no definite predictions of a personal Messiah,” and that consequently the alleged agreement of the gospel history with prophecy is imaginary.3 But on this I may be permitted to ask, first of all, How is it that it is only within very recent years, since special efforts were beginning to be made on the part of Christians to show that in Jesus of Nazareth the predictions have received their fulfilment, that attempts are made on the part of some representatives of the synagogue to eliminate the Messianic meaning from those predictions? Does it not appear very much as if this new mode of interpretation was adverted to as a convenience and for argument’s sake rather than from a desire to arrive at the truth or from a sincere belief that it is more in accordance with facts?

3 The first trace of veiled scepticism on the subject is to be found in the mystic saying of Hillel the first, who lived in the first century of the Christian era. He said, “There is no Messiah for Israel, for they have already enjoyed Him in the days of Hezekiah” (Sanhedrin 98. col. 2). The famous Joseph Albo, of the fifteenth century, author of the “Hikrim,” quotes Hillel as an authority when he reproves Maimonides for laying down the belief in a Messiah as a fundamental doctrine of Judaism, and goes on to say, “And there is neither in the law or in the prophets any prediction that must necessarily indicate the appearance of a Messiah” (“Sepher Ikarim Oratio 4” c. 42). A rather bold assertion this! and as for Hillel, had Maimonides lived he might have replied that his (Hillel’s) view was an isolated one in the Talmud. Since Albo there have been such isolated cases as Slavador and others of the rationalistic school who have held the same views, but their numbers have increased at the present day to legion, and in many cases they have been driven to it out of a feeling of despair and of hope deferred. The latest attempt to eliminate the doctrine of a personal Messiah from the Old Testament Scriptures is made by Professor Marks in a volume to which my attention has been drawn since writing these pages, and which I have noticed in the Appendix. See Appendix, Note 5. That it is a novel mode of dealing with Messianic predictions is easily seen from Jewish sentiment on the subject as depicted in the New Testament, which, I suppose, our enemies even would agree, is at least valuable, inasmuch as it pictures to us the Jewish life and thought of the period; and from the Talmud, which declares that “all the prophets have only prophesied concerning the days of the Messiah” (Sanhedrin 34. col. 2).

We hear much in these days of the “Jewish interpretation;” and to so-called Christians, who are as unacquainted with Jewish literature as they are ignorant of the spirit of Scripture, it too often serves as the thirty pieces of silver for which they betray their Lord. But what do they mean by the “Jewish interpretation”? Do they mean Talmudic interpretation? Its resumé of the subject is given in one sentence which I have just quoted. Do they mean the Targums? As a matter of fact, they are intensely Messianic, and many a passage is, in their versions, applied to the Messiah in which even Christians fail to see the reference.4 Even Maimonides, the great antagonist of Christianity, composed that article of the Jewish creed which unto the present day is repeated daily by every true Jew: “I believe with a perfect faith that the Messiah will come, and although His coming be delayed, I will await His daily appearance.”

4 There are no less than seventy-two passages in the Old Testament in the translation of which the Targumim have distinctly mentioned the Messiah by name.

Aben Ezra,5 Rashi,6 Kirrichi,7 Abarbanel,8 and almost every other respectable and authoritative Jewish commentator, although not recognising Jesus as the Messiah, are yet unanimous that a personal Messiah is taught in the Old Testament Scriptures. And, as for the Judaism of this latter end of the nineteenth century, let those who would resort to it as an authority for Scripture interpretation be careful how they embark on a vessel which, having once broken from its ancient mooring, is now tossed about on a troubled sea, and driven by contrary winds, and from whose topmast we can already descry the gigantic rock of infidelity on which, except the breath of Jesus calm the storm, it is destined to wreck, to the destruction of many. But only an insignificant minority of the Jews even have ventured as yet on this storm-tossed boat, and with joy we behold the nation, as such, still clinging to the anchor which has been the mainstay of their national existence for so many ages—the hope of a personal Messiah, which is the essence of the Old Testament Scriptures.

5 Aben Ezra, Abraham B. Meier, also called by the Jews Rabe, from the initials of Rabbi Abraham ben Ezra, one of the greatest of Jewish commentators and grammarians, born in Toledo 1088-89 and died in 1176. For a characteristic description of this extraordinary and rather eccentric man, see article by Dr. Ginsburg in later editions of Kitto’s Cyclopædia.

6 Rashi, Rabbi Solomon Izaaki, born in Troyes, in Champagna, 1040, died July 13th, 1105. He is generally considered as the originator of the modern school of Jewish interpretation.

7 Kimchi, commonly called by the Jews Redak, from the initial letters of Rabbi David Kimchi, born in Narbonne in 1160 and died about 1235. So great was his fame that the Jews applied to him, by a play of words, a Talmudic saying (Aboth 3. 17), adapted to mean, “No Kimchi, no understanding of the Scriptures.”

8 Abarbanel (Abravanel), Rabbi Don Isaac Ben Jehudah, a celebrated Jewish statesman, philosopher, theologian, and commentator, born in Lisbon 1437, died 1508, after being minister of state in Portugal, Spain, Naples, and Venice respectively. In his treatise on Exodus 22:20, wherein he discusses the most important articles of faith, he says (I am translating from a small Warsaw edition, printed 1881, p. 8)—“It is incumbent to believe that the Messiah will come, . . . and if He delay, still to wait for Him (Hab. 2.). . . . And we ought to remember the redemption and love of God, and to pray to Him in accordance with what was announced by every prophet from Moses

(peace be upon him!) to Malachi (peace be upon him!). Whoever doubts that (i.e., that Messiah will come) makes the law to lie. . . . and denies God and the words of His prophets."

Now we will open the sacred volume itself, and compare the circumstances of the life of Christ as described in the Gospels and Epistles with the prophecies it contains, the very latest of which, according even to the admission of all intelligent opposers of Christianity, were delivered hundreds of years before His advent; and if they agree, it surely follows, that not only are these predictions the revelations of the Eternal, Who alone knows the end from the beginning, but that Jesus of Nazareth, Who fulfilled them, must be the Messiah.

Now, without laying special emphasis on the more vague and general prophecies, such, for instance, as that promise that the Seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent (Genesis 3:15), and that in Abraham's seed all the families of the earth should be blessed, which, however, become definite and particular enough when compared with more subsequent and clearer revelations on the subject, we are met at the outset, in the very first book of the Old Testament Scriptures, with a very clear and definite prophecy by dying Jacob concerning the "last days," which term in the Old Testament Scriptures refers invariably to the Messiah's time,9 embracing the whole period from His first advent to suffer and die to His second advent to sit on the throne of His father David (Isaiah 2:2; Micah 4:1; Hosea 3:5, Heb.). The prophecy is to this effect: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come, and unto Him shall be the gathering of the peoples," or, more literally, "unto Him shall be the submission or homage of the peoples." Now I cannot, for obvious reasons, enter here on critical disquisitions, which, however, will be found elsewhere;10 but I may be allowed to digress so far as to say, that, were it not from controversial reasons and from a consciousness that, if once this prophecy be admitted, the claims of Jesus are, to a large extent, established, no Jew would be found advancing a theory so grossly in defiance of the grammatical construction of the passage and of the obvious sense of the context, namely, that Shiloh does not denote a person, but a place, for the existence of which, in the days of Jacob, there is not even the slightest evidence—a theory, moreover, which is based on a rendering which, even if adopted, will be found contrary to fact, and contradict the argument which they intend to build upon it.

9 So even Kimchi admits, for in his comments on Isaiah 2:2, he says, "Wherever it is said ■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■■■ 'in the last days,' it means the days of the Messiah" (Kimchi in loc.).

10 See Appendix, Note 2.

We may well hesitate to follow a system which, for its justification, is obliged to depart from the plain and obvious sense of the passage and resort to imagination rather than to translation. The passage taken literally contains a prediction to the following effect; namely, that the tribal staff,11 signifying authority and tribal independence, should not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver,12 or magistrate, until One came Who is, as His name signifies, Peace, or the One to Whom everything belongs; and that to Him the peoples,13—the Gentiles,—should come with reverence, or in the act of paying homage. Nearly seventeen centuries have rolled by since the delivery of that prophecy, during which time the twelve families, the heads of which Jacob was addressing, developed into twelve tribes, which together formed first one, and subsequently two, independent nations. One of the nations, consisting of ten out of the twelve tribes, after a history of two hundred and fifty years,

during the whole of which time, instead of attracting the nations around it, it was too often attracted by them and fell away to the worship of idols, was finally, and for ever, swept away as a nation, and even lost its identity as a people. Scarcely one hundred and forty years passed, when the other nation, consisting of two and a half tribes, amongst them Judah to whom the promise was given, after a history not much brighter than that of Israel, also passed into captivity, with the same prospect as far as human knowledge could go of passing into oblivion like the ten tribes. The sceptic of that day, who of course would not believe in the prophecies relating to the restoration from Babylon, which might have told him that Judah's tribal independence was not abolished, but merely suspended for a given time, might well have grown more defiant of the authority of Scripture, and held the prophecies up to ridicule as mere human inventions, for "where," he might have said, "is that Shiloh, or Peace-giver, of the tribe of Judah, to Whom the nations were to gather, and Who was to come before the sceptre departed from Judah or a lawgiver from his feet? Tell me not that Judah will yet return and have an independent history. Have the ten tribes returned?"

11 This is how ■■■■■■ may be more accurately rendered. See Appendix, Note 2,

12 Isaiah 33:22 is explanatory of this passage: "The Lord is our judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King," where Gesenius translates ■■■■■■■■■■■, "our Law-giver," by "our Commander."

13 The word ■■■■■■■, "peoples," is in the plural, and is generally applied to the Gentiles in contradistinction to ■■■■, "the people"—Israel. See Appendix, Note 2. But the Word of God standeth sure, though the infidel may not live to see its fulfilment. The foretold seventy years of exile passed, and Judah, with its tribal traditions and genealogies intact, returned, and after its restoration was privileged with three prophets, one of whom shortly after delivered a prediction concerning One in Whom we can without difficulty trace the identity with Jacob's Shiloh, for he speaks of Him as the "Desire of all nations," Whose glory should be even greater than the Shechinah which dwelt between the cherubim of the first temple, and through Whom should come peace (Haggai 2:7-9). For the coming of that One Whom he styled the "Desire of all nations," or of Whom Jacob prophesied some thirteen centuries before that "to Him shall be the homage of the peoples," he fixes a more definite period still. It was to be not only before the tribal independence of Judah passed away, but in the very temple they were then building, the identity of which, to prevent the mistake of referring it to another temple, he emphasises with the words "the house, this one" (Haggai 2:9, Heb.). This declaration of Haggai was endorsed by Malachi, after whom the voice of prophecy was to be silent for centuries, who announced that the Divine Lord (Heb.) for Whom they were seeking and the Messenger of the covenant for Whom they were longing (Heb.) was "suddenly to come to His Temple.

But, again, four hundred years rolled by even after this latest prophecy of Malachi, and in the interval Judah's tribal independence and the safety of the Temple, for the preservation of which the truthfulness of Haggai's prophecy was now at stake, were several times threatened, and only preserved by extraordinary providences, until finally Judea was turned into a Roman province, and Judah, instead of commanding the homage of the nations, had himself to pay homage to Cæsar. But just then a spirit of intense expectation came over Israel, and to some extent over the Gentile world, and suddenly, two years before the death of Herod—the last king that ever reigned over

Palestine, and very shortly before the destruction of the second Temple, while yet genealogies were extant, and Judah as a tribe exercising tribal functions, and governed by magistrates of its own—One, Who is in the New Testament styled “the Lion of the tribe of Judah,” appeared, and since then millions have testified that “this Man is their Shiloh, their Peace” (Micah 5:5), and to Him, although at first He had as His followers only twelve illiterate persons, who, like Himself, were Jews, the “peoples,” the Gentiles, by hundreds of millions, are rendering homage, so that there is scarcely a place under heaven where the mention of His Name does not produce a throb of affectionate and reverential adoration in at least the breasts of some. Now mark, since His advent, and unto the present day, there is no more such a thing as a tribe of Judah, for genealogies are all extinct now, and no Jew can say for certain to which tribe he belongs, so that there can be no talk of a yet future fulfilment of this prophecy; for suppose Messiah came to-day, how could His claims be tested by the touchstone of genealogies, or how could He come to the second Temple, of which there has not been one stone left upon another for nearly nineteen centuries?

But, as far as the time of Messiah’s first advent is concerned, we have one of the plainest prophecies on record, and the fact that it was fulfilled by Jesus of Nazareth can be proved to demonstration. The prophet Daniel not only foretold that from the decree issued by Artaxerxes in the twentieth year of his reign for the rebuilding of the city and walls of Jerusalem “unto Messiah the Prince” should be seventy sevens (of years), within which time, as a matter of history, Jesus appeared, but he gave us even, if possible, a more unmistakable landmark than figures by indicating certain events which were to follow close upon Messiah’s advent. “After threescore and two weeks,” he says, “shall Messiah be cut off, but not for Himself, and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.” Let Jerusalem, which lies on its heaps of ruins, and the sanctuary or Temple which is burned with fire and laid waste, proclaim aloud, if the voices of men be silent, that Jesus of Nazareth, Who came just before the destruction of the city and sanctuary, and was “cut off, but not for Himself”—“for He had done no violence, neither was deceit found in His mouth”—is the true Messiah, and that Daniel was a prophet inspired by the Spirit of God.

Thus far we have dealt only with certain definite and remarkable prophecies relating to the time of Messiah’s advent, concerning which there can be no shadow of doubt that they were fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth; but we will now examine another class of predictions which proclaim even more loudly and clearly a personal Messiah, and are still more important as touchstones by which to test the Messiahship of Jesus, for they identify not merely the circumstances, but the Person. We have seen how the first rather vague and general promise that “the Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent’s head” was centralised in “the seed of Abraham, in whom all the families of the earth were to be blessed.” Now, if this promise stood alone, there might have been some reason for the assertion of those so-called Christians, who of necessity cannot have much in common with New Testament Christianity, and their Jewish allies, who have as little in common with the Judaism of the Old Testament, or the belief of their nation—that the Old Testament Scriptures contain only “general hopes of a redemption” which is to be brought about by the active or passive instrumentality of the Jewish nation, and nothing more; although we may well ask, “Where is the realisation of those hopes? What are the blessings which the families of the earth have received through the Jewish nation which have not been handed to them by the pierced hand of the crucified Nazarene?” Yea, and if Jesus be not the promised Redeemer, but an impostor, and His

followers build their eternal prospects not on the words of the Son of God, but on cunningly devised fables of men, then the Jewish nation has been, instead of a blessing, the greatest curse to all the families of the earth, for it is with them that the imposture originated; one of their nation it was who perpetrated it, and thousands of their people were in the first instance its active propagators.14

14 Neither judging from the present is Israel, apart from their Messiah, likely to prove a blessing to all the families of the earth at any future time, for at the present day the Jews do absolutely nothing to advance the cause of religion among the families of the earth, but a great deal, both directly and indirectly, to hinder it. Many, indeed, are the vaunts and boasts of certain apostles of nineteenth century Judaism that before long the tenets which they represent will eclipse Christianity and become universal, but we may be pardoned for asking what these tenets be that will thus command the acceptance of the whole civilised world. A mere negative creed will certainly not do, and Judaism has absolutely nothing of a positive nature to offer. The Christian could receive all these boasts with a good-humoured and confident smile if it was not for a feeling of sadness for the boasters who are as prone as ever to lend an ear to the voice of false prophets, who cry “Peace! peace!” when in reality there is no peace. But in truth Scripture warrants no such assertion that the Jewish nation, independently of the Messiah, is to be a blessing to the world. The promised Seed of the woman was indeed particularised into the Seed of Abraham in Whom all the families of the earth were to be blessed, but this still general promise was to run through a narrower channel yet, and become more specifically marked as it rolled on.

After Abraham the Seed of promise was successively defined as the Seed of Isaac and the Seed of Jacob. Then out of the twelve tribes descended from Jacob only one—Judah—was to be the tribe from whom peace for the nations was to proceed.15 But still the circle contracted, and out of the particular tribe only one particular family was chosen, and finally every promise and prediction revolved for centuries round one Individual of that favoured family, Whose identity we can, without difficulty, trace in the various announcements of all the different prophets, and Whose career and character is described with such minuteness of detail that willful blindness alone can deny that a personal Messiah is loudly and unequivocally proclaimed in the Old Testament Scriptures. Thus the prophets, who lived at different periods of time, foretold that the promised Deliverer should be a Son of David; and that the original promise to Abraham that in him and in his seed should all the families of the earth be blessed shall be fulfilled in Him. The first plain declarations to this effect were made by the son of Jesse, “the sweet singer of Israel,” who was himself one of the most beautiful types of his great Son and Lord. It was he who spoke in the first instance of a certain covenant which God made with him, “ordered in all things and sure,” that One of “his seed should endure for ever, and His name flourish as long as the sun continue, and that in Him should men be blessed, and all nations call Him blessed; in Whose days the righteous shall flourish, and abundance of peace till the moon be no more;” before Whom “all kings shall fall down and all nations serve” (2 Samuel 23:5; Psalms 89:36; Psalms 72:1-20).

15 “The prophecy (Genesis 49:10, in the sense in which all understood it until in the last century it was in the interest of unbelief not to see it) “fixed at the new era of the people the promise to Abraham. The promise ‘In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed’ was expanded in both its parts. Judah was to be the line in which the Seed should come; the blessing was that He should be ‘Peace;’ that blessing was to reach the Gentiles through obedience to Him. The name

Shiloh was enlarged in later prophecies of the Prince of Peace."—PUSEY, "Lectures on Daniel," p. 250. See Appendix, Note 2. The promise of eternal duration, and the ascription to Him of Divine titles, such, for instance, as are found in the forty-fifth Psalm, where He, Who is called "fairer than the children of men, Whom God hath blessed for ever," the One Whom God "anoints" to be "King," is thus solemnly addressed: "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; the sceptre of Thy kingdom is a right sceptre," and in Psalms 110:1-7, where He, concerning Whom God hath sworn, saying, "Thou art a Priest for ever according to the order of Melchizedek," is addressed as ■■■■■■■■ (Adonai, which is a Divine title, compare Psalms 110:1 with Psalms 110:5), "Who sitteth at the right hand of Jehovah," puts an end to any plea that may be made that the Psalmist described, not one individual, but a line of kings who should descend from David, for the description is not only definite, but incommunicable.

Three hundred years later, Isaiah, the son of Amoz, still proclaims that One of the family of David "shall stand as an ensign to the peoples,16 and to Him the Gentiles will seek" (Isaiah 11:10); and he goes on to describe Him in such a manner that, without any effort, we at once recognise the very Individual Whom the Psalmist proclaimed as the coming Deliverer. Thus, in the ninth chapter of his prophecy (Isaiah 9:6-7), where he announces His birth, showing that only one Individual is meant, he says: "And the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and upon His kingdom, to rule it and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever." Here we can distinctly identify the family from which He was to spring; the throne on which He is to reign; the extent of His government and the peace thereof, which are to have "no end;" its duration, which is to be "for ever;" and, lastly, His twofold nature and Divine titles, which make the description so specific as to make it absolutely impossible of an application to anyone else. Micah, Isaiah's contemporary, expresses a hope quite as definite, and gives an exactly similar description of the coming Redeemer: "And thou, Bethlehem Ephratah," he says, "out of thee shall One come forth unto Me that is to be Ruler in Israel; Whose goings forth have been from of old, even from the days of eternity. . . . And He shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the Name of Jehovah His God, . . . for now shall He be great unto the ends of the earth" (Micah 5:2-4). Here we again have One Who is to be born in a certain particular place, but Who, at the same time, was from all eternity, and Whose rule, which is to be in the majesty of Jehovah, was to extend, not only over Israel, but unto the ends of the earth, showing that the prophet had the same Individual in mind, for it would be nothing less than blasphemy for such a description to be applied to any mere man.

16 Here again the word is plural, and used in contradistinction to "the people" (Israel).

Nearly two hundred years later Jeremiah still proclaimed that the King who is to reign and prosper and execute judgment and justice in the earth shall be a Branch of David, and that His name, descriptive of His character, shall be "Jehovah our Righteousness" (Jeremiah 23:5-6; Jeremiah 30:9; Jeremiah 33:15-17). And the same was announced by the prophet Hosea (Hosea 3:5); Ezekiel (Ezekiel 34:23; Ezekiel 37:25); and, nearly three hundred years later still, by Zechariah (Zechariah 12:8). It is quite true, therefore, that "David, Micah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Zechariah, not now to mention others, all looked for salvation in one particular family, identify the Redeemer by incommunicable attributes, so as to prove beyond all controversy that their hope of

redemption was not a mere vague and undefined imagination natural to all in distress, but an idea well defined and fully developed as to the family, character, and dignity of Him by Whom it was to be effected."17 17 McCaul's "Lectures on the Messiahship of Jesus." But the identity becomes even more striking and unmistakable by a seeming contradiction which runs through all the prophecies which set forth the coming Messiah; for while, on the one hand, He is represented as most exalted and commanding the homage of all nations, they, on the other hand, speak of Him as a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, Whose face should be more marred than that of any other man, and from Whom men should "hide their faces" as with disgust and abhorrence, and that He should be cut off by a violent death.

Thus in the twenty-second Psalm it is He Who says of Himself, "I am a worm and no man, a reproach of men and despised of the people. . . . My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and My tongue cleaveth to my jaws, and Thou hast brought me into the dust of death the assembly of the wicked have enclosed Me; they pierced My hands and My feet" (Psalms 22:6, Psalms 22:15-16)18—Whose righteousness should be declared unto a people that should be born, and Whom "a seed should serve!" And in Psalms 118:22. it is "the Stone which the builders rejected that is to become the headstone of the corner," and even in Psalms 110:1, where He is called by a Divine title and represented as sitting at the right hand of Jehovah, He is spoken of as having enemies and as being reduced to such an humble state that He is obliged to "drink of the brook by the way" to refresh Himself. Isaiah announces that the Servant of Jehovah, Whom God formed from the womb "to restore the preserved of Israel, and raise up the tribes of Jacob," and also to be "a light to the Gentiles and the salvation of God unto the end of the earth;" Whom kings shall see and arise, and princes also shall worship—shall be One Whom man "despiseth" and Whom the nations abhorreth (Isaiah 49:5-7). And in that prophecy of his (Isaiah 52:13-15, Isaiah 53:1-12), which, in the light of the Gospels, reads more like history than prophecy, but for which even enemies of Christianity dare not fix a later date than B.C. about 550,19 and for the application of which to the Messiah we have the authority, not only of the Talmud, but of the Jewish liturgy used at the present day,—he announces that the Servant of the Lord, Who is exalted, and extolled, and very high, on which the Rabbins say, "more exalted than Abraham, and extolled above Moses, and higher than the angels,"20 shall be "despised and rejected," "wounded," "bruised," "led as a lamb to the slaughter," and "cut off from the land of the living." Daniel says that the Prince Messiah, the Anointed of God, "shall be cut off;" and Zechariah speaks of the King Who should bring salvation to Zion as poor and riding upon an ass (Zechariah 9:9); of the Shepherd of the flock as sold for thirty pieces of silver (Zechariah 11:13); of the One Who will pour out the spirit of grace and supplication upon the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem as "pierced"21 (Zechariah 12:10); and of Him Who is the Fellow of Jehovah as "smitten" with the sword of justice (Zechariah 13:7)—so that we can trace His identity in all the predictions of the various prophets with regard to His humiliation and death as well as in those which speak of His exaltation and glory, proving the definiteness and identity of the prophet's expectations, and that they all speak of one and the same Individual.

18 See Appendix, Note 3.

19 That is, assuming for one moment the theory, which has been manufactured to the order of unbelief, of "The Great Unknown's" authorship of the later prophecies of Isaiah (40. - 66.), which, however, as has been satisfactorily proved by Hengstenberg ("Christology") and Havernich

(“Einleitung ins Alte Testament”), is entirely without foundation. The real date of the delivery of this remarkable prediction is about B.C. 713.

20 Abarbanel quotes this from Midrash Tanchuma, and says, “The Rabbis do not, in saying this, intend to refer to Israel, but, as their manner is, to expound the verse in which the words in question occur of the King Messiah.”

21 See footnote 25. But if the prediction be real and definite, the fulfilment is no less real and evident. The Messiah was to be of the seed of Abraham and the family of David. The first verse of the New Testament runs thus, “The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the son of Abraham,” and even in the Talmud it is admitted that Jesus of Nazareth was of the family of David.22

22 In “Sanhedrin,” folio 43, Jesus is spoken of as One “that is akin to the kingdom” (■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■■) That He was of the family of David was never questioned at the time of His appearing—a very important fact, for could His opponents, who were never slow to avail themselves of any weapon to use against Him, bring forward this objection to His Messiahship, that would have put an end to His claims once and for ever. That information on this point was within their reach there is no doubt, seeing genealogies were yet extant. On the other hand, He was at the time universally acknowledged and known by the multitudes as the Son of David, who in their distress continually addressed Him in the words, “Son of David, have mercy on us!” If any additional evidence is required, we can point to an historical fact, that the relations of Mary were the persons brought before Domitian when, afraid of a great king to arise from the family of David, he sought for all the members of it to destroy them. The modern plea, therefore, of some Jews that Jesus is not of the family of David is groundless.

Micah foretold that in Bethlehem Ephratah Messiah would be born, and there, according to the second chapter of Luke, which records the whole circumstances, Jesus was born.

Isaiah proclaimed that “a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and His name shall be Immanuel.” The New Testament tells us how the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee named Nazareth to a virgin named Mary, with the news, “Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb and bring forth a Son, and shalt call His name Jesus.23 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest, and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David.”

23 An objection has been raised why Jesus, if Isaiah 7:14 was really a prophecy of Him, was not called Immanuel. But the truth is Immanuel was to be no more the actual name of Messiah than Wonderful, Prince of peace, Desire of all nations, Shiloh, or Jehovah Tsidkenu. All Messiah’s titles were intended only as descriptions of His character, but His real name was, in the providence of God, concealed till His advent to prevent imposture on the part of pretenders, who would easily have taken advantage of it. An instance of this we have in the case of Bar Cochab, who assumed that name in justification of his claims to be the Cochab (■■■■■■, Star) Who should come forth out of Jacob (Numbers 24:17). But Jesus is really the best commentary on Immanuel, Immanuel—“God with us;” Jesus—“Saviour.” But how could God come near us except as Saviour? and how could Jesus be Saviour except as Immanuel, in Whom dwelt the fulness of the Godhead bodily? The prophets foretold that Messiah should be brought up in humiliation and poverty, and be persecuted and rejected by His own people. The Gospels describe Jesus as being

so poor that He had not a place where to lay His head; and how, when He manifested Himself to His own, His own received Him not, but the priests, Pharisees, and scribes, the leaders of the Jewish nation, went about to kill Him.

Zechariah foretold that Messiah should be betrayed for thirty pieces of silver, and that the money should be cast unto the potter, and, in Matthew 26:1-75, we read that one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, and said unto them, “What will ye give me, and I will deliver Him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver,” which afterwards, in despair and anguish, he cast down in the Temple, and with which the priests bought “the potter’s field to bury strangers in.”

Isaiah introduces Him as saying, “I gave My back to the smiters and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not My face from shame and spitting.” And in the New Testament we read how Pilate caused Jesus to be scourged, and how the Jews did spit in His face and buffet Him and smote Him with the palms of their hands. Not only did the prophets announce that Messiah should be cut off from the land of the living, but David predicted the very manner of His death, which was to be non-Jewish. He was not to be stoned, which was the Jewish way of inflicting death, but to have His hands and feet pierced.24 In the providence of God, and in fulfilment of this prediction, which was delivered hundreds of years before Rome existed, at the time of Christ the power to administer death was taken out of the Jewish hands by the Roman governors, and Jesus was crucified.

24 See Appendix, Note 3.

Zechariah prophesied of a time when Israel will “look upon Him Whom they have pierced, and will mourn.25 An eye-witness of Christ’s agony on the cross tells us how “one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.”

25 This passage is taken from Alshech, “ ‘I will do yet a third thing, and that is that’ they shall look unto Me, ‘for they shall lift up their eyes unto Me in perfect repentance when they see Him Whom they have pierced, that is Messiah the Son of Joseph;’ for our rabbis of blessed memory have said that He will take upon Himself all the guilt of Israel, and shall then be slain in the war to make an atonement, in such a manner, that it shall be accounted as if Israel had pierced Him, for on account of their sin He has died, and therefore, in order that it may be reckoned to them as a perfect atonement, they will repent, and look to the blessed One, saying that there is none beside Him to forgive those that mourn on account of Him Who died for their sin; this is the meaning of ‘They shall look upon Me.’ ” That this passage (Zechariah 12:10) refers to Messiah is admitted by Aben Ezra and Abarbanel, and also by Rashi in his commentary on the Talmud “Succah,” fol. 52, Col. I.), although, strange to say, he denies it in his commentary on the Bible. Of course they apply it to their invention Messiah ben Joseph, but on this see footnote 27.

Isaiah foretold that He should be numbered with transgressors. Jesus was crucified in the midst of two malefactors. In the Old Testament Messiah is represented as saying, “All they that see Me laugh Me to scorn; they shoot out the lip; they shake the head, saying, He trusted in the Lord that He would deliver Him: let Him deliver Him, seeing He delighted in Him.” In the New Testament we read, “And they that passed by reviled Him, wagging their heads and saying, Thou that destroyest the Temple and buildest it in three days, save Thyself. If Thou be the Son of God, come down from

the cross. Likewise the chief priests, mocking, with the scribes and elders, said, . . . He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him, for He said, I am the Son of God." The Psalmist introduces Him as saying, "They gave Me gall for My meat, and in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink." In the Gospels we are told how the Jews filled a sponge with vinegar and put it to the mouth of Jesus when He hung on the cross.

Again, in Psalms 22:1-31 we read a prophecy that Messiah's garments should be parted, and lots cast for His vesture. The apostles relate how the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments and parted them among themselves, but of the vesture, "which was without seam wrought from the top throughout, they said, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be."

Isaiah said that His grave should be appointed with the wicked, but that He should be with the rich after His death. Jesus, being crucified as a malefactor, was virtually appointed by the Jewish council to be buried in the usual place for felons, but after His death "there came a rich man of Arimathea named Joseph . . . and begged the body of Jesus of Pilate, who commanded it to be delivered to him, . . . and when he had taken it and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, he laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock." The prophets announced without any uncertainty that Messiah would rise from the dead; thus the Psalmist represents Him as saying, "Thou wilt not leave My soul in Sheol, neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption," and Isaiah says that after He will be made a trespass offering, which implies death, "He shall see His seed, and prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand" (Isaiah 53:10 26).

26 Even if we had no distinct prophecy of Messiah's resurrection, which we have, as, for instance, those quoted above, we could yet easily infer that this was the belief of the prophets from the fact that they speak of two advents of the same Messiah at two utterly distinct periods. Once He was to be born in Bethlehem Ephratah (Micah 5:2), and be manifested during the time of the second temple (Haggai 2:6-9; Malachi 3:1), when He should be "cut off, but not for Himself," after which dreadful judgments were to befall Israel as a nation, so that their city and temple should be destroyed (Daniel 9:26); but again He should appear in the clouds of heaven as the Son of man, not to die, but to reign for ever, after which not judgment, but blessing, should descend on Israel. Now if He is to die after His first advent, how could He come a second time in the clouds of heaven if He did not rise from the dead and ascend into heaven first? In the New Testament we are told by those who sealed their testimony with their lives that the Jesus Who died for our sins, and was buried, rose again on the third day, "according to the Scriptures," and the fact of Christ's resurrection from the dead is as certain—for it rests upon the same kind of evidence—as that Israel went out free from Egyptian bondage and crossed the Red Sea, or that a battle of Waterloo was ever fought.

According to the Old Testament, Messiah, after His resurrection, was to ascend on high, leading captivity captive, and taking with Him gifts for men, and should sit down at the right hand of God until His enemies be made His footstool (Psalms 68:18; Psalms 24:7-10; Psalms 110:1). In the New Testament we are told that on the Mount of Olivet, near Bethany, after Jesus had given His disciples the commission to be His witnesses in Judea and Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth, a cloud received Him out of their sight, which took Him up into heaven, where He is now exalted at the right hand of God, a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel and the

forgiveness of sin (Acts 1:9; Acts 2:32-33; Acts 5:31). The prophets teach two advents of the same Messiah—not two Messiahs, a theory in which the Rabbins have taken refuge from their perplexity in not being able to reconcile the prophecies which speak of Messiah's suffering and humiliation with those which speak of His kingdom and glory, and under the cloke of which we detect a partial acknowledgment of the claims of Jesus of Nazareth,27 but one Messiah, the first time born in Bethlehem Ephratah, to be brought up in humiliation, and finally to be led as a lamb to the slaughter for the sin of the world, and then the second time to come in power and glory in the clouds of heaven to reign in Mount Zion and over all the earth. Jesus, before He ascended into heaven, Himself solemnly announced that hereafter He would return to this earth in the clouds of heaven; and after His ascension two heavenly messengers were sent to the sorrowful and longing disciples with the joyous tidings that "the same Jesus, Who was received up into heaven, shall so come and in the like manner as they had seen Him go up into heaven" (Matthew 26:64; Acts 1:11).

27 It is well known that the doctrine of two Messiahs, of whom Ben Joseph, or Ephraim, is to suffer and die, and the other, Ben David, is to reign in glory and power, is held by Rabbinical Jews. Of this we find no trace whatever in the Old Testament or in the New, nor, again, in the dialogue between Justin Martyr and the Jew Trypho, which brings us down to the latter part of the second century. "The utmost antiquity that can be ascribed to this notion of a duplicate Messiah is the third or fourth century. But whom did the Rabbis mean by the epithet Messiah, Son of Joseph, or Ephraim? We do not hesitate to answer, None other person than Jesus, Whom, after their great disappointment in the revolution of Bar-Cochba, they tacitly acknowledged as the suffering Messiah, and denominated Him by the name that He was commonly called in Galilee, in order perhaps to screen themselves against the hatred and persecution of their own followers, or of their Roman masters. This idea has been hinted at by the Rev. M. Wolkenberg in his translation of 'The Pentateuch according to the Talmud,' p. 156, and broadly asserted by Dr. Biesenthal in his Hebrew commentary on St. Luke (Luke 23:48). This accounts for the remarkable fact that on the Feast of Trumpets, before the blowing of the ram's horn, God's mercy is besought through 'Jesus, the Prince of the presence of God, the Metatron,' or the One Who shares the throne of God. At this same service, verses, mostly from Psalm 119., are repeated whose first letters form the name of 'Christon,' but so ingeniously chosen, that they should at the same time read ■■■ ■■■, 'the Bruiser of Satan.' This name also is written on amulets, and in Jewish houses when a child is born, as well as the name of the Angel, ■■■■■■, which is mentioned in the said service, with alteration only of one accountable letter, and which stands for the King our Righteousness, 'the King our Righteousness, Jesus the Messiah.' To this Metatron is again applied in the Talmud ('Sanhed,' p. 256), the passage Exodus 23:20, and it is added that His name is the name of His Master. And in the liturgy of the Feast of Tabernacles reference is made to the glorious and dread Metatron, who was transformed from flesh to fire.

"Who cannot see in these mysterious hints a purposely covered belief in the Messiahship of Jesus, and that in a most orthodox manner?"—Jewish Intelligence, June, 1885.

All the prophets announce that Messiah shall not only be the glory of His own people Israel, but the light of the Gentiles and the salvation of God unto the ends of the earth.

More than forty false Messiahs appeared in the history of the Jewish nation, all of whom were followed by multitudes, and a few of them were in turn proclaimed to be the true Messiah by some

of the greatest Rabbis, the only recommendation of their claims being promises of revenge and flatteries which gratified the national vanity; but at the present day, except to a few students of history, the remembrance of their names has perished from off the earth, while Jesus of Nazareth, Who was despised by His own nation and crucified, is worshipped by hundreds of millions, some of whom have in the past, and would now, count it the greatest honour to endure the rack or the stake for His Name's sake; and the religion He has founded is admittedly the only one suited for all climes and classes, and is destined ere long to cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.28

28 It has been objected by Jews and infidels that the spread, prevalence, and permanence of Christianity have their parallel in the history of Mohammedanism, which notwithstanding all agree to be an imposture. To this we reply

(1) That we are here dealing with one aspect of Christianity to which Mohammedanism certainly presents no parallel, viz., as the subject and fulfilment of prophecy.

(2) To point to Mohammedanism as parallel to Christianity, and as an argument against it, is simply absurd, and shows on the part of those who bring it forward a deplorable ignorance of the origin, history, and future of both religions alike. As to the origin, beside the fact that Christianity is the fulfilment of predictions uttered hundreds and thousands of years before the advent of its Founder, let us look for a moment at the obstacles against which the two creeds had in the first instance to contend, which will bring out the distinctive characteristics of each.

Christianity had to contend, as has been already said, not only with men collectively, but with man individually, and had to fight not simply against the artificial institutions of every state, but also against the natural propensities of every human heart. "It was opposed," as Neander has well expressed it, "to the rudeness no less than the civilisation of the world," and proclaimed aloud to all men alike to "crucify the flesh, with its affections and lusts." But far different was it with Mohammedanism, which had no such obstacles in its path, promising as it did ample indulgences of the passions of the natural man.

Then we ought to take into consideration the intellectual character of the nations in which the two religions originated and at the present day prevail, and also the means taken in the first instance for the propagation of the two creeds. Mohammedanism spread and triumphs amid barbarism, and was forced upon its followers by the sword; Christianity always ruled in the centre of civilisation, and was received from conviction.

"With armies for its missionaries and parks of artillery for its apostles, an irrational and false creed may be imposed upon nations; but there is not so tangible a means of accounting for the success of a religion whose soldiers were humble unarmed preachers, and whose only weapons were arguments and persuasions."

Then as to the permanence of the two creeds. Mussulmans themselves confess that their faith is in a rapid process of decay, having never recovered from the corruption it engendered within and scarcely from the shocks it sustained from without; but, on the other hand, there is scarcely anything more remarkable in the history of Christianity than its recuperative energies; there were times when it became corrupt, but it contained the principles of renovation within itself, and it came forth from the struggle with new vigour and untarnished lustre. But the complete answer to the infidel and Jew is that Mohammedanism is really an imitation of Christianity, and that its history will

clearly prove that its success was due to the truths, and not to the falsehoods it contained, that its triumphs were obtained through the portion of the Christian system which it borrowed, and that, therefore, so far as the prevalence and permanence of Mohammedanism is concerned, it is, if anything, rather an argument in favour of the Gospel than against it. That Islamism was an imitation of Christianity was the boast of Mohammed, who declared that he only preached what had been originally revealed by God to the Old Testament prophets and what the Incarnate Word (Jesus Christ) had taught in Judea. In the Koran belief in Jesus as the Sent of God is taught as essential, and a curse is pronounced on those who will not believe on Him. See Sale's translation of the Koran, the "Chandos Classics" edition, p. 39.

(I have in this note made free use of the introduction to the excellent history of Mohammedanism by W. C. Taylor.)

It is not necessary indefinitely to multiply points of agreement, as those given suffice for the purpose of our inquiry.

We have sketched, not from dark enigmas or mysterious symbols, but from clear and unmistakable declarations of Moses and the prophets, taken in their plain and grammatical sense, and acknowledged to be of Messianic import by Jews themselves when not engaged in controversy, the history, character, and mission of the Messiah of the Old Testament; including not only the tribe, but the family from which He should spring; the time of His advent; the place of His birth; the political situation of His people and land at the time of His appearing; the manner of His reception by His own people; not only the fact of His death, but the very manner of it; His resurrection; ascension; exaltation to the right hand of the Majesty on high and return in power and glory. If any therefore insist on the assertion that the Old Testament Scriptures do not contain the hope of a personal Messiah, he does so either from ignorance of the contents of that sacred volume or from wilful blindness.

We have next seen how the picture we have drawn corresponds in every particular to Jesus of Nazareth, proving not only that He is verily the Messiah promised to the fathers, but also that the prophets, who hundreds of years before delivered predictions concerning Him which have been minutely fulfilled, spake not by the will of men, but were moved by the Holy Spirit. This introductory chapter has already been extended much beyond the limits originally intended, but this much I must add, first, that the agreement between prophecy and the history of Jesus is not a forced one, but so obvious that it lies on the very surface, and is perceivable even by the simplest; an that, if the exercise of any ingenuity be required, it is altogether on the part of those who try to conceal it.

Secondly, it need scarcely be pointed out, that the chief prophecies with regard to the Messiah being those which deal with His miraculous birth, death, and resurrection, they are such as no enthusiast could, and which no impostor would, fulfil. Only the Almighty, Who brought the universe into existence, could cause Jesus to be born of a virgin or raise Him from the dead. There have been many enthusiasts and impostors, and there may be many more, but none of them pretended to rest their claims on the ground of vicarious suffering, death, and resurrection, which could alone satisfy the unequivocal declarations of the prophets. If any of them did suffer a violent death, it only proved the falsity of their pretensions, and that death was not voluntary, neither was there any release from its bonds.

Finally, the number and minuteness of the predictions, and their fulfilment in Jesus of Nazareth, exclude the idea, which one or two leading infidels, who must have been possessed with extraordinarily large capacity of credulity, have suggested, that the agreement is only accidental. Never in the past or in the present, or until the end of the world, will accident either conjecture or minutely fulfil such a number of circumstances.

Oh! that men would heed the voice of fulfilled prophecy, which is the echo of the prescient God, Who knows the end from the beginning—more reliable than would be the voice of one risen from the dead. Oh! that they would learn, among others this lesson also, that since these prophecies which relate to Christ's first advent to suffer and die for the sin of the world were literally and minutely fulfilled, those also concerning His second coming as the world's King and Judge will be as literally fulfilled, for the Word of the living God cannot be broken, though heaven and earth may pass away.

1.02. Messiah as Priest and King

"And their Illustrious One"1 (their Glorions One) "shall be of themselves, and their Ruler shall proceed from the midst of them; and I will cause Him to draw near, and He shall approach unto Me: for Who is this that pledged" (literally mixed up) "His heart to approach unto Me? Saith Jehovah."—Jeremiah 30:21.

1 The word is ■■■■■■■■ (Adirow), which is third person singular of ■■■■ ('a■d■ar). From this comes doubtless αδρος in the Greek, which means great, rich, strong, and adorea in the Latin, which means glory, praise, renown, and probably also the English adore. There is a month in the Jewish calendar called ■■■■■■ ('ad■a■r), which was perhaps so called from the fact that since it answers to March in the warm eastern countries, the earth is at that time clothed with glory and beauty. This word is several times used in the Hebrew Scriptures to describe the "might" (1 Samuel 4:8), the "excellence" (Psalms 8:1, Psalms 8:9), and "glory", (Exodus 15:6; Exodus 15:11; Isaiah 33:21) of the God of Israel; and in Isaiah 42:21, this is the word (in Hiphil) which is used to describe the new glory which was to be thrown over the law on account of the Messiah's perfect obedience to it. "It pleased Jehovah for His righteousness' sake to magnify the law and make it honourable." (■■■■■■■■■■■■) The Targum renders ■■■■■ "kings," but it has no more reason for putting it in the plural than had the translators of the Authorised Version. The word ■■■ it renders "Messiah," showing that the ancient Jews viewed this passage as Messianic. Among Jewish commentators, even Kimchi interprets the passage of the "King Messiah."

CHAPTER II.

MESSIAH AS PRIEST AND KING In the chapter whence this passage is taken, the Messiah is already introduced (Jeremiah 30:9) under the title David. whose seed according to the flesh He was to be (Jeremiah 23:5-6); and already we get a glimpse of His Divine character, for He claims equal allegiance and service with Jehovah; but when Jeremiah comes to the end of the prophecy which he was Divinely appointed to write down in a book (Jeremiah 30:2), he recurs to the Person on Whose glory he, in common with all the prophets, loved to dwell, and shows how the rays of blessing which are here promised to Israel emanate from Him Who is the source and cause of them all, and stops to note several aspects of His character, each of which is pregnant with blessing and consolation to Israel and to all those whose eyes have been opened to see the King in His beauty. THE ILLUSTRIOUS ONE

Jesus Christ is the central figure in the history of the universe, and wherever, and at whatever period, we cast our glance, He is the most prominent object among all which present themselves to our view. Nineteen centuries before His advent, Abraham, gazing into the future through the telescope of faith, beheld Him as the brightest star, whose rays not only gladdened his own heart (John 8:56), but were to rejoice the hearts of all the families of the earth (Genesis 12:3).

Nearly two thousand years later the seer of Patmos, still gazing into the future, but from a more favourable point of observation, beheld this "bright and morning star" as the centre round Whom

the ages revolve, in Whose light the favoured of all times and nations walk and shine, even after this heaven and earth have passed away (Revelation 21:1). Then, looking the other way, in the depths of the fathomless past, Paul saw Him as the One by Whom God made the worlds (Hebrews 1:1-2); and Solomon, who directed his vision to the time before creation, beholds Him still as the central figure in the bosom of the everlasting Father and exclaims, “Jehovah possessed Him in the beginning of His way before His work of old. He was poured out” (or begotten) “from everlasting, from the beginning before the earth was. When there were no depths He was brought forth, when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills, was He brought forth, while yet He had not made the earth nor the plains nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When He prepared the heavens He was there, when He fixed a circle to the face of the deep. When He established the clouds above; when He strengthened the fountains of the deep; when He gave to the sea His decree that the waters should not pass His commandment; when He appointed the foundations of the earth. Then was He by Him as One brought up with Him; and He was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him!” A modern historian, not gifted with inspiration, who with his keen eye also pierces through the past, but the more immediate past compared with that to which Solomon directed his gaze, still does not fail to behold Jesus of Nazareth as the most glorious Person of all who come within the compass of his vision and exclaims, “The great and central event in all history is the death of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The centuries circle round the cross. Hundreds of stately figures—some in dazzling lustre, some in deepest gloom—crowd upon our gaze as the story of the world unrolls before us; but infinitely nobler than the grandest of those is the pale form of Jesus hanging on the rough and reddened wood at Calvary—dead, but victorious even in dying—stronger in that marble sleep than the mightiest of the world’s living actors, or than all the marshalled hosts of sin and death. Not the greatest sight only, but the strongest ever seen; for there, at the foot of the cross, lie Death, slain with his own dart, and Hell, vanquished at his very gate. All that have ever lived, all now living, all who shall come after us till time shall be no more, must feel the power of the cross!”2 Group Jesus with Moses, Buddhah, Confucius, Mohammed, and all the distinguished of all ages; and who is the brightest star in that constellation? Why, it is Jesus, from Whom proceed the brightest rays which diffuse love, light, life, peace, and joy in the midst of misery-stricken humanity. Nor does the lustre of His name fade with time, but is “as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day;” ever increasing, until that light, which only at first appeared as rays of starlight (Numbers 24:17), shall be transformed to the gaze of a regenerate and God-fearing world into the rays of a Sun—“the Sun of righteousness,” Who shall arise with healing in His wings (Malachi 4:2). “His name shall endure for ever; His name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in Him; all nations shall call Him blessed.”

2 W. F. Collier’s “Great Events of History.” THE RULER. This is the second title Jeremiah gives the Messiah in our text. This word ■■■■■■ (Mowshel), translated in the Authorised Version “Governor,” and which I have rendered “Ruler,” is frequently used to describe one into whose hands the reins of government have been entrusted by someone else, either as a token of special favour or from a conviction that the person thus honoured is best fitted to manage affairs. Thus Pharaoh made Joseph ■■■■■■ (Mowshel = ruler) of all his substance (Psalms 105:21; see also Genesis 45:8). That this is a title of the Messiah is clear also from another and undisputed Messianic prophecy in Micah, where the prophet applies this very name to Him Who was to be born in Bethlehem Ephratah and was to be appointed by Jehovah Ruler in Israel (Micah 5:2). Now

what does this title applied to the Messiah imply? Why, that God made Him “Lord over all His house and Ruler of all His possessions”—that He hath given to Him “the key of David, so that He can open and no man shut, and shut and no man open!” Especially is this the case with everything that concerns the salvation of our souls. Having mentioned Joseph as a type in this respect of the Messiah, I recollect that the bread, the means to keep the people from physical death, was more especially in his keeping; so the “bread of heaven,” the only means to prevent spiritual and eternal death, is in the sole keeping of the crucified Jesus—the greater than Joseph. There seems to have been some amount of prejudice against Joseph on the part of some of the Egyptians, for, when they were famished, instead of going direct to him in whose hands they knew the corn was, they went and “cried to Pharaoh for bread, but Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians, Go to Joseph, and what he saith unto you, do” (Genesis 41:55). So there are many now who when they feel the pangs of soul-hunger either ignore or deny that God hath exalted Jesus Christ to be the Prince and Saviour, to dispense repentance and the forgiveness of sins to Israel and unto all nations; and desire to approach God by any way whatever except by the only one which He has Himself appointed; but God says, “No one cometh unto Me but by Christ” (John 14:6); “He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life” (John 14:6); “I am only able to save unto the uttermost all those who come unto Me by Him” (Hebrews 7:25).

“Jesus is the Mowshel; into His hands I have committed all things; and surely you may learn this lesson, that, since I, the infinitely wise God, have entrusted all things to His hands, you cannot do better than entrust your affairs, especially the affairs of your soul, to Him.”

Now, I want to compare again our text with Micah 5:2, where the same title is applied to the Messiah; and His twofold nature—the human and the Divine—will be easily seen. In our text it says, “Their Ruler shall proceed from the midst of them,” but in Micah it says, “But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be Ruler in Israel; Whose goings forth are from of old, even from the days of eternity.” That these two passages speak of the same Person there is no doubt, and yet one says that He proceeds from the midst of Israel and Palestine, and the other says, “Yes; He is born in Bethlehem Ephratah, but His goings forth are from the days of eternity!” This is easy enough to understand if we remember and believe what the Scriptures teach us with regard to Messiah’s character—that He is Emmanuel, God in the fulness of time manifested in the flesh—the Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, Who spoke from the beginning, before the time that anything was, but Who, at the appointed time, was “sent” by “the Lord God and His Spirit” (Isaiah 48:16); but what explanation can Judaism or Unitarianism give of it? But now let us for a moment direct our gaze to another aspect of Messiah, and consider Him as the GREAT HIGH-PRIEST, Who for us drew near to God in the attitude of Representative and Intercessor; for this is how the Spirit of God represents Him to us in the latter part of the passage we are considering, the words used3 being exactly the same as those describing the attitude of the priests “drawing nigh” to God to minister on behalf of the people (Exodus 19:22; Leviticus 21:17, etc.).

3 ■■■■■ and ■■■■■ At first sight it may seem a difficulty to understand how the regal and priestly functions could be vested in the same person, for the Lord Messiah was, according to the flesh, to spring out of Judah, “of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood;” but it is clear if we remember that the Messiah was to be the second Adam to the human race—the great Patriarch Who was to resume the privileges enjoyed by the patriarchs before the introduction of

the law, and act for His own family, not only as Head and Leader, but also as Priest. In the person of Christ, especially in His official capacity as Priest, all tribal and national distinctions are lost. He is not only the Seed of David and King of Israel, but also the Son of man—Chief and Father of all His redeemed family. Anyhow it is distinctly prophesied of Him that “He shall be a Priest upon His throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both” (Zechariah 6:13); and again in Psalms 110:1-7, He that is to “rule in the midst of His enemies” (Psalms 110:2) is spoken of in this wise, “Jehovah hath c, and will not repent, Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek!” (Psalms 110:4) The fact that Messiah so unites different functions in His person does but prove His more than human character.

I do not wish to dwell long on this point here, as I have elsewhere spoken of Christ in His capacity of Priest; but I merely point out briefly the relation of sacrifice and priest and the special Order of Christ’s priesthood.

In the Levitical economy, priest and sacrifice were inseparable; without priest, sacrifice could not be offered, and without sacrifice priest had no place. Both systems were to go on side by side until they finally met and were perfected in one centre. For be it remembered, that not only were the sacrifices typical, pointing to Him Who was to be “led as a lamb to the slaughter” (Isaiah 53:7)—“the Lamb of God Which taketh away the sin of the world”—but the system of priesthood, too, was merely “serving unto the example and shadow of heavenly things,” pointing to Him Who was to come and be “a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.”

How unscriptural and inconsistent therefore are the ideas of those people who, while they admit that in this dispensation “there remaineth no more sacrifice” on account of the fulfilment all have received in Christ, still hold to a system of priesthood, as if it had not received a fulfilment in Christ too, so that there remaineth no more priest as well as no more sacrifice!

“Who is this,” asks the Almighty, “that engageth His heart to approach unto Me?” For mere man, except the children of Aaron, who ministered by Divine commission in the Temple at Jerusalem, it is sacrilege and presumption to set himself up as priest and approach God as mediator; but there is One Who is qualified to do so on account of being God—man—Divine as well as human; and being unique in this respect, He calls forth the admiration of Jehovah. Then, too, He can be called a Priest, because He had a sacrifice to offer—the body which God hath prepared Him (Psalms 40:6; Hebrews 10:5).4

4 There is, indeed, a priesthood in the New Testament, but the dignity is the common possession of all Christians. ‘An holy priesthood.’ For the worship and ceremonies of the Jewish Church were all shadows of Jesus Christ, and have their accomplishment in Him, not only after a singular manner in His own person, but in a derived way in His mystical body, His Church. The priesthood of the law represented Him as the great High-priest, Who ‘offered up Himself for our sins,’ and that is a priesthood altogether incommunicable; neither is there any peculiar office of priesthood for offering sacrifice in the Christian Church but His alone Who is Head of it. But this dignity that is here mentioned of a ‘spiritual priesthood’ offering up ‘spiritual sacrifices’ is common to all those who are in Christ. As they are living stones built on Him into a spiritual temple, so they are priests of that same temple made by Him (Revelation 1:6). As He was, in a transcendent manner, temple and Priest and sacrifice, so, in their kind, are Christians all these three through Him; and by His Spirit that is in them their offerings through Him are made acceptable. . . . “Whereas the dignity of

their priesthood" (the Levitical) "staid in a few persons, all those who believe are now this dignified to be priests unto God the Father. And this was signified by the rending of the veil of the Temple at His death, not only that those ceremonies and sacrifices were to cease, as being all fulfilled in Him, but that the people of God, who were before by that veil held out in the outer court, were to be admitted into the holy place as being all of them priests, and fitted to offer sacrifices. . . . There is here the service of this office, namely, 'to offer.' There is no priesthood without sacrifice, for these terms are correlative, and offering sacrifices was the chief employment of the legal priests. Now, because the priesthood here spoken of is altogether spiritual, therefore the sacrifices must be so too, as the apostle here expresses it."—ARCHBISHOP LEIGHTON'S note on 1 Peter 2:5.

Now as to the special order of Christ's priesthood.

His priesthood is not after the order of Aaron, but after the order of Melchizedek, the superiority of which over the former is seen in the fact that Melchizedek received tithes from, and blessed the Aaronic "in Abraham" (Hebrews 7:4, Hebrews 7:10); "and without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better." The main points of difference between the two systems, which differences, indeed, are the special characteristics of the two covenants to which they variously belong, as is shown in Hebrews 7:1 &c., are these:—

The Aaronic priesthood was merely shadowy and changeable, and, on that account, as Paul points out, it was not confirmed by an oath, but Messiah, "because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood," which was confirmed by an oath "by Him that said unto Him, The Lord sware, and will not repent, Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek."

The Aaronic priesthood was imperfect, both in itself, which is seen from the fact that the members of it "needed daily to offer up sacrifices first for their own sins," and in its efficacy, since it required an endless repetition of offerings which did not accomplish, but merely typify, the work of atonement, on the necessity of which they were founded; but Christ's priesthood is perfect, both in itself, because He is perfect, and in its efficacy, because the offering He brought for sin was of such infinite value, and its blood so precious, as to effect atonement and reconciliation once and for all.

The priesthood of Christ now does not therefore, like the Aaronic priesthood, consist in the offering of sacrifices for sins, there being no more necessity for it; but like Melchizedek, who received from Abraham, as God's representative, offerings of his services, so Christ receives from His people the offering of their services, which, together with their praises and prayers, He offers up mixed with His own merits and intercessions. It is true that to His own family He is now the Mediator, Who, in case of estrangement through sin, makes reconciliation, but He does so on the ground of the blood once shed on Calvary, and not by repetition of sacrifice.

Like Melchisedek, too (Genesis 14:18-19), our great High-priest comes out from time to time to meet us with bread and wine, by which He reminds us that not only was He the Lamb of sacrifice, by becoming which He satisfied the demands of a just God; but that He is also the Lamb of food, and that if we eat His flesh and drink His blood, we too shall be satisfied (John 7:48-58).

Now I would conclude the exposition of our text by remarking on the special manner in which it describes the Messiah as identified with His people in the presence of God. "Who is this that has mixed up His heart to approach unto Me, saith Jehovah?"5 We know that for anyone to mix

himself up in anything is to identify himself with it, and with whom but man could Messiah thus mix Himself up? Have not His delights always been with the children of men? Yes, He has—blessed be His name!—mixed Himself up with our nature and all its infirmities by becoming man; He has mixed Himself up with our sins by becoming Surety for us and answering for us the demands of Divine justice; He has mixed Himself up with all the trials and temptations incident to our pilgrimage through this moral wilderness on our way to the glory in His own presence, so that He may mercifully "be touched with a feeling of our infirmities," and be ready to grant us grace and help in every time of need. He has also mixed Himself up in our sorrows and afflictions, so that "in all our afflictions He is afflicted" and Himself "carries our sorrows" and bears our burdens; and now in the heavenly sanctuary, in the immediate presence of Jehovah, in a far more glorious sense than Aaron, in the earthly sanctuary, represented Israel, by bearing their names on his breast (Exodus 28:12, Exodus 28:29; Exodus 39:6-7), does our glorious great High-priest represent us. Our names are not on His heart, but in His heart, and the oneness of Christ with His people is not merely a legal oneness, as that between Aaron and Israel, but also a vital union. Oh thought full of Divine comfort! In every state in which as followers of His we can possibly be found—in life or death, in prosperity or adversity, in health or sickness, in joy or sorrow—even in circumstances in which the dearest and nearest of our earthly relations can be no partakers with us, Jesus, the blessed and exalted great High-priest, has for ever mixed up His heart with ours! And note, it is His heart that He has thus mixed up with us, thus implying that He did it willingly.

5 A similar exclamation of surprise and admiration with regard to the person of the Messiah is to be found in Isaiah 43:1. "Who is this?" exclaims the prophet, inspired by the Spirit of God, and there the answer comes that it is the Judge Who comes in vengeance "to tread His enemies in His anger and to trample them in His fury, so that their lifeblood shall sprinkle His garments and stain all His raiment." Who so fit to be our great High-priest as Jesus, Who is full of compassion and can be touched with a feeling of our infirmities? And again who has such a right, and is in every way adapted, to ascend the throne of judgment as He, Who has ascended the cross and to redeem this godless, ungrateful world did thereon shed His own blood? But let us remember that in our text it is more especially in relation to Israel that Messiah is thus represented as Priest; and not only will He exercise this function, together with His kingship on the throne of David, after He returns to build again the Tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; but even now, at the Father's right hand, He is exalted, "a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance to Israel and the forgiveness of sins;" and, for my part, I cannot bring myself to believe that the concern Christ manifested for His brethren according to the flesh when on earth and His intercession for them on the cross ceased with His ascension to glory. No; the same One Who "ever lives to make intercession for us" says also "that for Zion's sake He will not hold His peace, and for Jerusalem's sake will He not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth."

If I look at Christ as Priest in relation to Israel, I see Him now, as it were, within the veil, and Israel without, anxiously waiting, not knowing whether the work of atonement has been completed; but soon their great Day of Atonement will be ended, and Israel's great High-priest come forth again from within the veil, with lifted hands, to pronounce upon them again the benediction of Jehovah as a sign of acceptance and favour.6 Then indeed "shall all Israel be justified, and shall glory!"

6 On the Day of Atonement (see Leviticus 16:1-34.), Aaron first entered into the holy of holies with the blood of the bullock to make an atonement for himself and his house, then came forth again and re-entered with the blood of the goat, to make an atonement for Israel. In either case, his reappearing from within the veil was the assurance to the expectant throng without that the work of atonement had been accomplished. Now Christ has, as it were, accomplished atonement for the priestly house which represented the Christian Church as united with Him; but, as far as Israel is concerned, He is now re-entered within the veil, so that until He shows Himself to them again, they can have no assurance that their atonement is complete. In this connection it may be remarked that after His resurrection Christ only showed Himself to the household of faith.

1.03. The Branch, or Four Aspects of Messiah's Character

"In that day shall the Branch1 of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel."—Isaiah 4:2.

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I shall raise unto David a righteous Branch,1 and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In His days Judah shall be saved and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is His name whereby He shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness."—Jeremiah 23:5-6.

"Hear now, O Joshua the high-priest, thou and thy fellows that sit before thee; for they are men wondered at, for, behold, I will bring forth My Servant the Branch."1—Zechariah 3:8.

"Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Behold the Man Whose name is the Branch—1; and He shall grow up out of His place, and He shall build the Temple of the Lord; and He shall bear the glory, and He shall sit and rule upon His throne; and He shall be a Priest upon His throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both."—Zechariah 6:12-13.

1 These, with the exception of Jeremiah 33:15, which in a repetition of Jeremiah 23:5-6, are the only four instances in the Hebrew Scriptures where the Messiah is designated by the title ■■■■■■ (Branch), and in the connections which will be pointed out farther on. (See Appendix, Note 4.)

CHAPTER III. THE BRANCH, OR FOUR ASPECTS OF MESSIAH'S CHARACTER.

There are four different aspects in which the Messiah is introduced to us under the above title in the Old Testament Scriptures, answering to what are generally believed to be the four different aspects in which the Lord Jesus is presented to us in the four Gospels.2

2 "Just as a gifted painter, who wished to immortalise for a family the complete likeness of the father who had been its glory, would avoid any attempt at combining in a single portrait the insignia of all the various offices he had filled—at representing him in the same picture as general and as magistrate, as man of science and as father of a family—but would prefer to paint four distinct portraits, each of which should represent him in one of these characters, so has the Holy Spirit, in order to preserve for mankind the perfect likeness of Him Who was its chosen Representative, God in man, used means to impress upon the minds of the writers whom He has made His organs four different images—the King of Israel (Matthew); the Saviour of the world (Luke); the Son Who, as man, mounts the steps of the Divine throne (Mark); and the Son Who descends into humanity to sanctify the world (John)."—GODET'S "BIBLICAL STUDIES." In Jeremiah 23:5-6, He is called the Branch of David, answering to the description given of Him in the Gospel of Matthew, which was written for Jews, and where our blessed Lord is represented to them as the Son of David, the Messiah promised to the fathers. For this reason the genealogies in this Gospel are only traced to Abraham. In Zechariah 3:8, He is represented to us as the "Branch" Who is Jehovah's Servant, answering to the Gospel of Mark, wherein, in a particular manner, is sketched the career of Him

Who, although He was God, “made Himself of no reputation and took upon Him the form of a servant.” This Gospel is a record, not so much of the words of Jesus as of His acts; hence it follows more minutely than do the others the services of Jehovah’s righteous Servant, of Whom it was written in the volume of the book, “I come to do Thy will, O God” (Psalms 40:7-8). Mark gives no genealogies of Jesus because a servant needs not such recommendations, he being judged by his work alone. In the Gospel of Luke the most prominent feature of our Lord’s character is that of the “Son of man,” which in the Scriptures means the Man par excellence, the true Man, both the ideal and Representative of the race, the second Adam and the Saviour of men. The chief characteristic of this Gospel is its universality. It is a message which ignores all differences of race and class, and appeals to all the children of Adam, who are embraced in the one fallen family of man, to whom it proclaims a common Saviour Who should arise from their midst; and hence the Lord Jesus is presented here, not, as in Matthew, as the Son of David, the Messiah of Israel merely, but as the long-looked-for “Seed of the woman,” Who, by conquering Satan, should redeem from his power men of all nations, and become the “Light of the Gentiles” as well as “the glory of His people Israel” (Luke 2:32). This is the reason why the Evangelist took upon him the laborious task of tracing the genealogies of Jesus to Adam. In this Gospel “behold the Man Whose name is the Branch,” spoken of in Zechariah 6:12. But just as in Matthew the most prominent feature of our Lord is His descent from David and Messiahship, and in Mark that of “Jehovah’s righteous Servant,” and in Luke that of the Son of man, so, in the Gospel of John, the light that shines most transcendently throughout is His Divine Sonship, that glory which He had with the Father from all eternity; hence His genealogy is not, as in Matthew, taken back to Abraham, for He of Whom it speaks was before Abraham (John 8:58), nor yet, as in Luke, to Adam, because John deals not here with the Son of Adam, but with the Son of God in Whose image Adam was created. He therefore traces not His human, but Divine pedigree, and shows us that, although He “became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14), He that did thus tabernacle with the children of men was none other than “the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth;” and that, although “the Light” had only then just shone upon the darkness of this world, He that in grace and mercy had thus become the Light and Life of this dark and dead world was none other than He “Whose goings forth have been from of old, even from the days of eternity” (Micah 5:2), “Who in the very beginning was with God and Himself was God” (John 1:1). Here then is the “Branch of Jehovah,”3 Whose glory and beauty Isaiah sang (Isaiah 4:2), and Whose Divine fruit has since refreshed and satisfied many hungry and thirsty souls from John until now.

3 It is universally admitted that the word ■■■■■■ (branch) in Jeremiah 23:5 means “son” in its literal and natural sense; in fact, this is the verse most generally quoted by Jews as a proof that the Messiah is to be the Son of David. This interpretation is just, but, on the same ground, is there any reason why the word ■■■■■■ in Isaiah 4:2 should not be interpreted in the same way? And if we admit that ■■■■■■ ■■■■■■ means the Son of David, why not also admit that ■■■■■■ ■■■■■ means the Son of God? See my little book, “What think ye of Christ?” p. 24. But just as in each of the Gospels, though one feature of our Lord’s character is brought more prominently to the fore, His twofold nature is always steadily kept in view, so it is also in each of the four different prophecies to which we have referred. Jeremiah, in this passage, speaks of Him as the Son of David, thus dwelling more particularly on His human nature; but he also declares Him to be God, by applying to Him, the Divine title of Jehovah, “for this is His name whereby He shall be called, ■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■, the Lord our Righteousness;” and, though Isaiah, in this instance,

speaks of Him more particularly as the Son of God, he also by designating Him ■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■ (Fruit of the earth) declares Him to be an offspring of this earth—human. He is styled Servant in Zechariah 3:8, but it is the Branch Who is introduced as the Servant, and by this title we at once recognise, not only the Son of David, but the Son of God. Lastly, in Zechariah 6:12-13, we are told to "behold the Man," but it goes on to tell us that this Man shall not only rule and be Counsellor of peace, but that He shall be a "Priest upon His throne." He must, therefore, to say the least, be a most extraordinary man, yea something more even than mere priest or king, to have combined both these functions, which belonged not only to two different persons, but to two utterly distinct tribes, in Himself.4 Now we will turn back successively to each one of the four passages referred to; and, with our Bibles before us, let us see how sublimely appropriate to the context is that particular feature of our Lord's character which is emphasised variously in each case.

4 Perhaps in no other single book in the Old Testament Scriptures is Messiah's Divinity so clearly taught as in Zechariah. In the second chapter (Zechariah 2:8-11) the prophet calls Him Who is to come and dwell in the midst of the daughter of Zion, Whom the Jews always understood to be the Messiah, by the name Jehovah. This passage must be a very difficult one to Jew or Unitarian, for here the prophet represents two Persons, both of Whom he calls by the Divine title Jehovah, though One is sent by the Other to accomplish some mission on the earth. In the third chapter he speaks of the Jehovah-Angel, Who, as we shall see farther on (see footnote 20), is none other than the Messiah, as having power to forgive sin, and "who can forgive sin but God?" In Zechariah 12:10. he declares that He Who was pierced is none other than He Who will pour out His Spirit upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem—"Jehovah, Which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him." Again, in Zechariah 13:7 he proclaims that He against Whom the sword of justice was to awake in our stead is none other than the "Fellow of Jehovah of hosts." And finally in Zechariah 14:3-4 he says that it is Jehovah "Whose feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and Who shall go forth and fight against the nations" who shall gather against Jerusalem. THE BRANCH OF DAVID.

Let us look then first at Jeremiah 23:5-6.5 And why does the prophet here introduce Messiah as the Son of David? It is because he speaks of Him as the King Who shall reign in Mount Zion and before His ancients gloriously (Isaiah 24:23), in "Whose days Judah shall be saved and Israel dwell safely." And who else can sit and reign in Judah on the throne of David but a Son of David? for has not God made an everlasting covenant (2 Samuel 23:5) with David, "ordered in all things and sure," saying, "I will set up thy seed after thee which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish His kingdom . . . and . . . the throne of His kingdom for ever"? (2 Samuel 7:12-13; Psalms 132:11). Does anyone ask if I mean to imply that Jesus will literally reign in Zion over the Jewish nation? Yes, that is exactly what I do mean to say, and in doing this I only repeat the words of the angel Gabriel, who said that "the Lord God shall give unto Him 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"6 (Luke 1:32-33), and the words of my blessed Lord Himself, Who said, "Sing and rejoice, oh daughter of Zion, for lo I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord. . . . And the Lord shall inherit Judah His portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again" (Zechariah 2:10, Zechariah 2:12).

5 There is scarcely any contrary opinion among ancient and also modem Jews but that this is a Messianic prophecy. Even Kimchi says,—"By the righteous Branch is meant Messiah," and Jonathan has introduced Messiah by name in this passage.

6 "The title 'root and offspring of David' as well as that of 'Son of David' refers to the Kingdom of which Christ is Heir, as we learn from the words of the angel to Mary—'He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give Him the throne of His father David.' According to the commonly received view, there is indeed no importance in the title 'Son of David' as belonging to Christ, except perhaps as proving that He was descended from David and enabling us to trace His genealogy. But it is evident that the announcement of the angel attaches to it far greater importance than this, inasmuch as it asserts for Him as Son of David 'the throne of His father David.' And what throne is that? Not the throne of heaven, nor yet the throne of God's spiritual kingdom, for neither of these ever was or could have been occupied by David or could be inherited by Christ as 'Son of David.' The throne intended, then, must be the throne of the kingdom of Israel, and that it is so, the words of the angel testify; for having said, 'The Lord God shall give to Him the throne of His father David,' he adds, 'And He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever.'"—REV. W. BURGH. But have not these statements already been fulfilled? for does not the "throne of David" mean the throne on which Jesus now sits "exalted at the right hand of the Father," and the "daughter of Zion" the Church, in each particular member of which Jesus dwells? No, I do not so understand it. After careful and prayerful examination I can only find one throne of David, and that was in Jerusalem, not in heaven; and on this throne Jesus the Son of David never yet sat; and believing that the word of the living God cannot be broken, I verily believe that He will yet sit upon it.7 And as for Zion being the Church, I have, among others, this objection against it. I am told here that Jehovah shall again choose Jerusalem, which is here used interchangeably with "the daughter of Zion." Now, though we have no difficulty if we refer it to literal Israel, it cannot at all be applied to the Church; for the Church cannot be said ever to have lost God's presence and favour.

7 "The Jews object that many prophecies, and those such as especially concern themselves, have not been fulfilled by Jesus of Nazareth, and that therefore He cannot be the Messiah promised by the prophets. To this many Christian writers have replied, that such declarations are figurative, and that under earthly emblems, heavenly things are intended—that the Jews are never to be restored to their own land, nor the Messiah to have a kingdom over Israel; that the only blessings which they have to expect are adoption into the Christian family here and admission into the heavenly Canaan hereafter. But to this the Jew objects, that a mode of interpretation which is based upon two contradictory principles is necessarily false. 'You prove that Jesus is the Messiah,' he says, 'by the grammatical principle—you evade difficulties by the adoption of the figurative. Choose one of the two. Carry through the figurative exposition, and then there is no suffering Messiah; carry through the literal, and a large portion of the prophecies are not yet fulfilled.' The Jew's demand is reasonable, and his objection to this expository inconsistency valid; . . . to receive those prophecies which foretell Messiah's humiliation and atoning death in their plain and literal sense, and seek to allegorise those which deal with His glorious reign on the earth and over restored and blessed Israel, is to place an insurmountable stumbling-block before every Jew of common sense, and to hold up prophecy to the scorn of the infidel."3ed

I cannot find one single passage in the whole Scriptures from which I could even infer that the Lord Jesus is now in the possession of His throne8—that one which is peculiarly His by right, not only as the Son of David, but as the promised reward of His suffering and death; but, on the contrary, it would not be difficult to adduce many passages to prove that He is only now waiting to take possession of that throne.

8 The only passage in which it would on the surface appear that Jesus is now exalted on the throne of David is Acts 2:29-36, where Peter quotes a prophecy of David concerning two events, viz., that the Messiah should be raised from the dead and sit on his (David's) throne, and then goes on to show that "this Jesus hath God raised up" (Acts 2:32), and that He is ascended into heaven and exalted to the right hand of God, by which exaltation some have thought that Peter meant to prove that the second part of David's prophecy received its fulfilment, but, on a careful examination of the passage and a comparison of it with others, it is, I think, clear, that Peter does not mean to imply anything of the kind. He uses here the prophecy that the Messiah shall reign on the throne of David merely as an argument that He must rise from the dead after "He is cut off, but not for Himself." If Christ had not risen from the dead, He could neither immediately nor ultimately take possession of the throne of David. That He is now in possession of that throne is another thing, and Peter himself tells us that He is now at the right hand of God waiting for it "until His enemies be made His footstool" (Acts 2:35). That Christ's exaltation to the right hand of God is only temporary, until He takes possession of His throne, is proved further on.

Take, for instance, Revelation 3:21, and these are the words of the blessed Saviour Himself, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with My Father in His throne!" Now here we are told that the throne on which He now sits is not His, but the Father's, Who invited Him to share it with Him as a token of His perfect satisfaction with the finished work of His beloved Son; and that He only occupies this place until He takes possession of His own throne, on which He will grant the glorious privilege of sitting to all those who have been faithful to Him when all the world was in rebellion against Him, and who, although persecuted and tried, would still own no other king but Him. Then, in Hebrews 10:12-13, we have it stated, "But this Man, after 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 His footstool." Here again we are expressly told that the place Christ now occupies at the right hand of God is not a permanent one, but only until His expectation—that of His enemies becoming His footstool—be fulfilled, and then, as the apostle tells us in the last verse of the preceding chapter, "He will appear the second time without sin unto salvation" to, and for, those whom, in His condescending grace, He is pleased to call, not His servants, or even subjects, but friends, Whom He is going to honour by making them share His government. Then, if Christ's throne is now established, who are they over whom He rules? It cannot be the Church, for we are distinctly told that when Christ's throne is established the Church, instead of being reigned over, shall then reign; (2 Timothy 2:12; Revelation 5:10; Revelation 20:6, Revelation 22:5); and if, as is the opinion of some, before Christ's return all men, Israel included will be brought to acknowledge Him as Lord and Saviour, they, of course, all consequently become members of the Church, whether Jews or Gentiles; then who, I ask, will be those over whom the Church, together with Christ, will reign? Then again, it would be easy to prove from Scripture, that Christ's reign on the throne of David does not commence until after He leaves His Father's right hand, and until after the Church, whatever may be understood by that

term, is complete;9 how then can that reign on the throne of David mean His present exaltation “at the right hand of the Majesty on high” and His heavenly ministrations over the Church on earth?

9 See the 12th paragraph, post, beginning: “Now I turn to the New Testament Scriptures...,” and sentence beginning: “Nor is it final as to destination for it is limited by an ‘until.’ Until what?...(reading to the end of the paragraph, further on.)” In Christ’s parable of the nobleman who went into a far country “to receive for himself a kingdom and to return” (Luke 19:12-27), we have at once the reason of His present absence and a declaration that He only commences the actual administration of that kingdom after He returns to the earth. He tells us there that the object of His journey into the “far country,” His ascension into heaven, was in order to be invested with the Kingdom; and of this investiture we get a glimpse in Daniel 7:13, where the prophet finishes the picture which the few favoured disciples who witnessed the ascension commenced, and tells us how this Jesus, the glorified Son of man,10 after that He disappeared on a cloud from the longing gaze of those who watched Him in Bethany, continued His journey until, attended by hosts of heaven, He reached the Eternal One, the Ancient of days, Who invested Him with dominion and glory and a kingdom that all people, nations, and languages should serve Him. This glimpse of what was going on in heaven was a glorious sight to the prophet, but when he turned his gaze back to the earth the vision that he got there was quite different, and such that “grieved his spirit and troubled his head!” He beheld that while the King, Whom he had just seen invested with the Kingdom, tarried in heaven, usurpation was going on on the earth, and the subjects of the “Prince of princes” were prevailed against by the usurper, who was exceeding dreadful, “whose teeth were of iron, and his nails brass,” and who devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped with his feet the saints of the Most High. But the prophet looked on, and presently he saw Him Whom he had before seen in heaven come back to the earth, to take possession of that kingdom with which he saw Him before invested. We see then, from these and other passages, that, first, the object of Christ’s ascension into heaven was not to remain there, but merely to be invested with the Kingdom and to return. He tarries there, but it is not because, being occupied with the joys of heaven, He is insensible to the suffering of this groaning earth, but because He is longsuffering and willing to give the opportunity to as many as possible of those who rebelled against Him to make their peace with Him, ere yet He is obliged to assume the character of judge and destroy all those who would not be saved; but when the time of grace shall be accomplished, when even the longsuffering of God shall be exhausted, He will descend again “in flaming fire, taking vengeance on those who know not God and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thessalonians 1:8). Then world-power shall be at an end, and the government of the beast, which well describes the character of the rule of the various monarchies that have succeeded each other, will be superseded by the government of the Son of man, Whose reign will be in justice, righteousness, and “abundance of peace.”

10 “The title ‘Son of man’ is always associated with His coming again, because the Kingdom that then awaits Him is that which belongs to Him as the Saviour of man, the Restorer of the lost inheritance. ‘Son of man’ expresses His visible state, formerly in His humiliation, hereafter in His exaltation. He comes to the Ancient of days to be invested with the Kingdom (Psalms 110:2). This investiture was at His ascension ‘with the clouds of heaven’ (Acts 1:9), which is a pledge of His return ‘in like manner’ ‘in the clouds’ (Acts 1:11; Matthew 26:64) and ‘with the clouds’ (Revelation 1:7). The Kingdom then was given Him in title and invisible exercise; at His second coming it shall

be in visible administration."—A. R. FAUSSET.

Secondly—to turn back to our original starting-point, from which we have strayed somewhat in order to clear the way before us—when Christ will so return, He will, in a special and peculiar sense, bless Israel as a nation, and reign over them in Mount Zion, and through them over the whole earth, from the throne of His father David. The present state of the Jews is pictured by the prophet Hosea in the third chapter of his prophecy, where they are described principally as "abiding many days without a king and without a prince," but they will not continue so much longer, for "thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land; . . . and David My Servant shall be King over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in My statutes and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob My servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they and their children and their children's children, for ever, and My Servant David shall be their Prince for ever" (Ezekiel 37:21-25). It is exceedingly interesting to note the two different terms applied to the Messiah in this passage, answering exactly to the third of Hosea. He is not only the "King," but the "Prince."

Now the Hebrew word for Prince here is ■■■■■■■ (nossi), which is generally applied, more particularly, not to an hereditary prince, but to one who is exalted, or borne up,11 by the free choice of the people; and this leads our thoughts to the time when, on Christ's manifestation to Israel as a nation, He will not only be recognised as Him "Whose right it is to reign" (Ezekiel 21:27), as the hereditary Heir to the throne of David, but He will, of the free-will of the people, be elected their Chief. Instead of "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" "We will not have this Man to reign over us!" they will cry, "Hosanna! Blessed be He that cometh in the name of Jehovah!" (Psalms 118:26). "This is our God; we have waited for Him: we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation" (Isaiah 25:9). Thus the stone which some "builders refused" will by others be made the "chief stone of the corner." Even this shall be the Lord's doing, although "it is marvellous in our eyes."

11 The word also means to bear, to take away, and thus it is used in Psalms 32:1, where the verse may rather be rendered, "Blessed is he whose transgression is carried away, whose sin is covered." The reference is no doubt, to the figure in the Psalmist's mind of the scape-goat who was to bear, or carry away, upon him all the iniquities of the congregation of Israel (Leviticus 16:21-22).

Finally, we notice, in concluding these remarks, that Israel's King will be Israel's Shepherd too; and because "He will keep them as a shepherd keepeth his flock," Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and the promise of God to Israel will be fulfilled, "And He will set up one Shepherd over them, and He shall feed them, even My Servant David; He shall feed them, and He shall be their Shepherd, and I the Lord will be their God, and My Servant David a Prince among them; I the Lord have spoken it." Here again we observe the Divine character of Israel's Messiah as taught in the Old Testament Scriptures, for we are distinctly told that the Shepherd for Whom Israel is waiting, and Who will "save" them (compare Psalms 80:1-2, with Jeremiah 23:6, Heb.), is none other than He Who of old dwelt between the cherubim and spoke to Moses from off the mercy-seat (Psalms 80:1; Exodus 25:20-22). "Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel! be glad and rejoice with all thine heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! the King of Israel, even Jehovah, is in the

midst of thee; thou shalt not see evil any more." "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In His days Judah shall be saved and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is His name whereby He shall be called, Jehovah our Righteousness," (Jeremiah 23:5-6). THE BRANCH OF JEHOVAH.

We next come to Isaiah 4.12 And why does the prophet here particularly speak of Messiah as the Branch of Jehovah? It is because he speaks of the time when Israel shall not only be restored to Palestine, but when, after being "purged" and "washed" from their sin, which made them appear filthy13 in sight of Jehovah, Who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, so that He had to remove them from Him as an unclean woman (Ezekiel 36:17), they shall again be remarried14 to Jehovah, and shall have even greater favours lavished upon them than they had before; and to accomplish this He must be the Branch of Jehovah, for though the Son of David may be sufficient to reign in Mount Zion on the throne of David, the Son of God can alone forgive sin. Just now the Jews object to the doctrine of the Messiah's Divinity, but it is mostly because they have not yet learned the real object of the Messiah's mission on the earth. When once they are brought by the Spirit of God fully to learn and believe that Messiah's work on earth is nothing less than the deliverance of mankind from the bondage of sin and Satan they will be convinced that if He is to be the Redeemer at all, He must needs be Divine; for if He were mere man, He could not possibly turn away "ungodliness from Jacob" (Isaiah 59:20), or "redeem Israel from all his iniquities" (Psalms 130:8), seeing every man, even the righteous, appears sinful in the sight of God, so that He would Himself need redemption. Has not God Himself declared (Jeremiah 30:15), that, because of the multitude of his iniquity, and because his sins are increased, Israel's wound is absolutely "incurable" as far as any human means is concerned? (Jeremiah 2:22; Jeremiah 3:22-23; Isaiah 1:5-6; Isaiah 64:6-7; Isaiah 59:16-17). Must He not, therefore, Who was promised to Israel as He Who should bring health and cure (Jeremiah 33:6-8) by cleansing them from all iniquity and giving them abundance of peace and truth, be Divine?

12 The passage commences properly with Isaiah 4:2. Here again there is scarcely any controversy as to the Messianic application of this prophecy. Rashi, indeed, says that by the Branch of Jehovah is signified "the righteous" that are left in Israel, and the wise—the students of the law; but Kimchi says: "The explanation of the Branch of Jehovah" is Messiah ben David, as it is written, 'Behold, I will raise unto David a righteous Branch.' " Yonathan, in his Targum, has paraphrased the "Branch of Jehovah" into "the Messiah of God," and this also is the opinion of most Jews who believe in a personal Messiah.

13 The word ■■■■■ used here is the strongest in the Hebrew language to describe filth, and it suggests to us how horribly filthy sin is in God's sight.

14 This idea that Israel shall be remarried to Jehovah is beautifully brought out in this chapter, where, in the fifth verse (Isaiah 4:5), the prophet says ■■■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■ ■■■■, which, to translate literally, is, not, as rendered in the English version, "upon all the glory shall be a defence," but "upon all the glory," or "beyond all this glory," "shall be the marriage canopy." Under the ■■■■■■ (marriage canopy) every Jewish wedding is solemnised even at the present day. This leads our minds to Isaiah 62:5., where God is represented as remarrying Israel, "as a young man marrieth a virgin," and rejoicing over them "as the bridegroom rejoiceth over his bride." The

prophet Hosea declares that Israel has “fallen by his iniquity” (Hosea 14:1), and Jeremiah asks, “Having fallen, shall they not rise again?” (Jeremiah 8:4); but he leaves Isaiah to answer this question, and he says, Yes, the tribes of Jacob shall rise again, but not in their own strength, for they are diseased from the sole of the foot even unto the head—that there is no soundness left in them, so that they could not raise themselves even if they would, but the Messiah, Jehovah’s righteous Servant, He Who shall be the Light of the Gentiles and the Salvation of God unto the ends of the earth, He shall “raise up the tribes of Jacob and restore the preserved of Israel.” But surely if He is to raise those who have fallen (and all men have fallen, Proverbs 20:9; 2 Chronicles 6:36), He must Himself be something more than mere man. This, then, is the reason why Isaiah in this chapter speaks of Him as the Branch of Jehovah, because he introduces Him as He Who will purge and wash Israel from their sin, so that “they that remain in Jerusalem shall be called holy, even every one that is written to life” (Isaiah 4:3, Heb.)

Hitherto I have ventured upon ground that is undisputed, for most who receive the Scriptures as the inspired Word of the living God, believe that Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of David, is also the Son of God and David’s Lord; they believe also that “Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation,” and that “in Him shall all Israel be saved and shall glory” (Isaiah 45:17; Isaiah 45:25; Romans 11:26); but now we come to the question, When will the Son of God, this Divine Branch of Jehovah, thus manifest Himself for the national salvation of Israel? To this question a great many different answers are given. There are some Christian teachers who teach that Israel’s conversion to Christ will he effected gradually before His return to our earth, which event they postpone to the end of the world, and without any special manifestation of the Holy Spirit. Again, there are others who believe that at some period towards the end of the world God will pour out His Spirit in a special manner upon the house of Israel, and that then the conversion of the entire Jewish nation will be a simultaneous act. Even among those who believe in the personal and premillennial advent of our blessed Lord, there are some who believe that before they are restored to their own land, where the Messiah will appear to reign over them, they will be converted; while others proclaim their belief that their restoration will take place before their conversion, and that the latter event will only be accomplished when, with their bodily eyes, they look upon Him Whom they have pierced.

Now, without comparing and dwelling on any or all of these and many other notions on this subject held by different classes of Christians, I ask permission to produce a few passages of the Word of God, both in the Old and New Testaments, which, if taken in their obvious sense, will set us right on this subject if our hearts be open to receive the truth. The Holy Spirit, through the prophet Ezekiel, says (Ezekiel 36:24-28), “I will take you from among all the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and I will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh, and I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be My people, and I will be your God.” Now here the order of events in connection with Israel’s future is given to us, and that which is put first is their restoration: “I will take you from among the heathen and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land.” Then next in order we have judgment; that, no doubt, is what is meant by the

sprinkling of clean water in Ezekiel 36:25, it cannot mean sanctification, because it takes place prior to conversion, the bestowal of a new heart and of the Spirit, which surely occurs at conversion, being spoken of as taking place subsequent to the sprinkling of the water by which they are purged from all their “filthiness.” Besides, the prophet Isaiah tells us clearly that the washing of the daughter of Zion from her filth will be effected “by the Spirit of judgment and the Spirit of burning” (Isaiah 4:4).15

15 I know I shall be met with the objection that the judgment that awaits Israel is generally represented by the figure of fire. But in Isaiah 4:4 the purging judgment is certainly represented by the figure of water also, or else how could ■■■■■■ (rockhatz)—“washing”—be applied to it?

Whatever view, however, be taken of Ezekiel 36:25—and I would not dogmatically say that the application I have made of it is the right one, though I believe it is—there can be no doubt that the immediate prospect of Israel after their restoration to Palestine is a baptism of judgment, the like of which they have never yet experienced. Take, for instance, Jeremiah 30:3-7., which is quoted further on, and there, in the chronological order of events, that which is named after their restoration (Jeremiah 30:3) and before their conversion, when they shall serve the Lord God and David their King (Jeremiah 30:9), is the “time of Jacob’s trouble,” which will be “so great that none is like it,” the acuteness of which is described by the pains of a woman in travail (Jeremiah 30:5-7).

Yes, Israel has a baptism of suffering to undergo such as even they have never yet experienced in all the long catalogue of the inexpressible sufferings they have endured for ages, for hitherto the furnace in which they have been has been heated by the wrath of man, but what is this compared to the furnace, seven times heated by the wrath of the Almighty, which yet awaits them in Zion? Hear what Ezekiel says in another place (Ezekiel 22:18-22): “Thus saith the Lord God, Because ye are all become dross, behold therefore I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem. As they gather silver and brass and iron and lead and tin into the midst of the furnace to blow the fire upon it, to melt it, so will I gather you in Mine anger and in My fury, and I will leave you there and melt you. Yea, I will gather you and blow upon you in the fire of My wrath, and ye shall be melted in the midst thereof. As silver is melted in the midst of the furnace, so shall ye be melted in the midst thereof, and ye shall know that I the Lord have poured out My fury upon you.” With this agree also the words of Jeremiah (Jeremiah 30:3-7), who, after recording in a book by special command of God the fact that Jehovah will bring again the captivity of His people Israel and Judah and cause them to return to the land that He gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it, goes on to say, “And these are the words that the Lord spake concerning Israel and concerning Judah. For thus saith the Lord, We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. Ask ye now and see whether man doth travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob’s trouble; but he shall be saved out of it.” This is the immediate prospect after restoration to Palestine of the people who rebelled against the Most High and rejected His Son and always resisted the Holy Spirit—a furnace seven times heated and anguish as acute as are the pangs of a woman in travail. Alas! poor Israel who “desire the day of the Lord, to what end is it for you? Shall not the day of the Lord be darkness and not light, even very dark and no brightness in it?” (Amos 5:18-20). But, blessed be God, His anger will not endure for ever, and, “though He may endure for a night, joy will come in the morning,” and even when Israel sits in darkness, a deeper darkness than they have ever been in yet, “the Lord shall be a light unto them”

(Micah 7:8); and, although their tribulation and anguish shall be so great that there has been none like it (Jeremiah 30:7), in the midst of wrath God will remember mercy, and, according to His promise, He will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob (Amos 9:8). Suddenly, when the cloud will be thickest, and the anguish most acute: when even the small remnant that shall be left of Israel shall despair of hope, and Israel's enemies be most certain in their own minds of accomplishing their purpose of utterly exterminating that people whom they will think has been given over to them as a prey; when the proud spirit of the haughty Jew shall be broken, and humility and penitence take the place of stubbornness and pride; when the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, saying, "Spare Thy people, O Lord, and give not Thine heritage to reproach!" and the whole people, brought to such extremities that they will be willing to receive help from whatsoever quarter it may come, cry, "Oh that Thou wouldst rend the heavens, that Thou wouldst come down, that the mountains might flow down at Thy presence. . . . Be not wroth very sore, O Lord, neither remember iniquity for ever. Behold, see, we beseech Thee, we are all Thy people!" (Isaiah 64:1; Isaiah 64:9)—then, suddenly, with the speed of lightning, and attended by all His saints and hosts of angels, shall the same Jesus, Who ascended bodily and visibly on a cloud from the Mount of Olivet, so, and in like manner, be revealed again, but this time in a special and peculiar manner, as Israel's King and Deliverer. "And His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east;" and from thence He shall "go forth and fight against those nations" (Israel's enemies) "as in the day of battle" (Zechariah 14:3-4). "And the Lord shall utter His voice before His army," and He will go forth "with fire and with His chariots like a whirlwind to render His anger with fury and His rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and sword will the Lord plead with all flesh, and the slain of the Lord shall be many" (Joel 2:11; Isaiah 66:15-16). Just as that shepherd of Bethlehem, himself one of the most perfect and beautiful types of Him Who is his great Son as well as Lord, "slew both the lion and the bear," and saved from their jaws the lamb which was taken possession of by them as their prey, so will the Shepherd of Israel "save" the remnant of His people from the hands and jaws of those who are stronger than they and slay them who devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped with their feet His chosen with a fierceness exceeding even that of the bear and the lion. Now the tables will be turned: Jerusalem, so long trodden down of the Gentiles, shall become again a praise in the earth (Micah 4:8; Isaiah 62:6-7.); and the sons of Zion, whose name has been for ages a proverb and a by-word among all nations, shall "get praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame" (Zephaniah 3:19). But along with Israel's national deliverance comes also their eternal salvation; hence the next thing we read of in the chapter to which we have referred (Ezekiel 36:25-28) is, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and ye shall be My people, and I will be your God." Their national deliverance effected, Israel will gather round their Deliverer, and, saluting Him with "Hosannah! Blessed be He that cometh in the name of the Lord," will ask, "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in His apparel, bearing Himself majestically in the greatness of His strength?" (Isaiah 63:1). "And what are these wounds in Thine hands?" (Zechariah 13:6). Who can describe the scene which will take place when the Lord of glory, the greater than Joseph, will reveal Himself to His brethren? Think of the awful amount of hatred to the person of Jesus of Nazareth accumulated in the Jewish heart! Think of the wrongs they have inflicted upon Him when on earth

and on His Church ever since; think of their surprise when He Whom they thought was dead and done with suddenly appears alive, and as their Deliverer! “This is Jesus,” they will say, “Whom we pierced; and these are the same wounds with which He was wounded in the house of His friends,” and this discovery will break their stony hearts. “They shall look upon Him Whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him as one that is in bitterness for his first-born. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon, in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn every family apart: the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Shimei, apart, and their wives apart; all the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart.” But the great Comforter will be in their midst, and He will comfort them with all the consolation of the gospel of His love. “As one whom his mother comforteth,” so, He says, “will I comfort you, and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem” (Isaiah 66:13). He will say, “Jehovah My Father has sent Me to bind up your broken hearts, . . . ‘to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto you beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness’ (Isaiah 61:1-3). Weep not, nor let your hearts be troubled; God has turned ‘the curse into blessing.’ Because I have died once, you may now live for ever; because you reckoned Me among the transgressors, you may all now be reckoned among the righteous. Arise! shine! I want you to assist Me in My gracious purpose to this earth, and to spread abroad the knowledge of your Messiah’s Name among all nations, so that the residue of men may seek after the Lord.” “In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness” (Zechariah 13:1). “And out of them shall proceed confession16 and the voice of them that make merry” (Jeremiah 30:19). “O Lord!” they will say, “we will praise Thee: though Thou wast angry with us, Thine anger is turned away, and Thou comfortedst us. Behold, God is our salvation; we will trust and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovah is our strength and our song; He also is become our salvation” (Isaiah 12:1-2). “The stone which the builders have rejected has become the chief stone of the corner. This is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes” (Psalms 118:22-23). “Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgression, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned everyone to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:4-6). And these songs of praises and confessions will be heard far and wide, so that what has happened to Israel will at once become known in all the earth (Isaiah 12:5); and, as a consequence of this, “there shall come people and the inhabitants of many cities. And the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord and to seek the Lord of hosts: I will go also. Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem and to pray before the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, In those days it shall come to pass 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” (Zechariah 8:20-23). And for the fact that Israel will be so enthusiastic and loud in their praises of the Messiah Whom they have for so long despised and rejected, and also for the fact that Satan being chained, there will be nothing to hinder the heathen from believing their testimony; it will not be long before the knowledge and the glory of the Messiah will cover this

earth as the waters cover the sea (Revelation 20:1-3; Habakkuk 2:14).

16 The word ■■■■■■ in Jeremiah 30:19, translated “thanksgiving,” should more properly be rendered “confession.”

Now I turn to the New Testament Scriptures to see if we can confirm the principle which we have laid down on the authority of the Old. I go to that epistle first of all which is perhaps more than any other book a compendium of Christian doctrines—I refer to the Epistle to the Romans—and what do I find taught there concerning the time of Israel’s national salvation and the manner of its accomplishment? In the eleventh chapter, which was dictated by the Holy Spirit for the express purpose of enlightening Gentile Christians concerning God’s purpose in Israel’s past, present, and future, Paul says, “For I would not, brethren, have you ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part is happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. For this is My covenant unto them when I shall take away their sins” (Romans 11:25-27). Here we are told that Israel’s present state is that of blindness, and I need scarcely say that the most marked symptom of that blindness is that they see not Him Who is the “Light of the world.” We are further told that there is a limit to that blindness both as to its extent and duration. It is not total as to its extent, for there is “a remnant according to the election of grace” from Israel even now who are, by the free grace of God, made partakers of the blessings of the gospel of Christ, and who, together with the people “taken out for His Name” from among the Gentiles, are made one in the Church which is the fulness of Him Who filleth all in all (Ephesians 1:23). Nor is it final as to duration, for it is limited by an “until.” Until what? Well, there are two landmarks which I beg you to notice with all attention, because on the right understanding of them will depend the verdict which you are called upon to give as to whether this passage teaches that Israel’s national conversion will take place before or after the return of Christ. The two landmarks are these:—the “fulness of the Gentiles” and the Redeemer’s return unto Zion. Now as to the first, it is not so much a question as to what is meant by the term “fulness of the Gentiles,” although it is clear from the context that it cannot mean the conversion of the whole world, since it is completed before the blindness is removed from Israel, and the apostle tells us in Romans 11:15, that the conversion of the world will not be effected until after the receiving again of Israel. It must mean therefore the completion of that number who are now, by the mercy of God, called from among the Gentiles to fellowship with His dear Son, or, in the words of James, “the people taken out for His Name” who constitute the Gentile portion of the bride of Christ; but the point is, whatever is meant by that term, that we have it here stated on the authority of the Holy Spirit that Israel nationally will remain blind, and in their blindness reject the Son of God, until after the “fulness of the Gentiles be come in,” so that we have no warrant, to expect the Jews brought nationally to accept Christ through the efforts of the Christian Church. And I may add that since, as has been stated, the conversion of the world will only be effected after Israel is received again to favour with God, and only through their active instrumentality, as we know from other parts of Scripture (Zechariah 8:20-23; Isaiah 2:2-3), there is even less warrant to expect that the Gentile nations, as such, will be converted by the efforts of the Church. How can the world be converted as long as they who are to convert the world are themselves in blindness?

Then the second landmark is the Redeemer’s return unto Zion, “And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer; He shall turn away ungodliness from

Jacob; and this is My covenant unto them when I shall take away their sins." Now this is a parallel passage to Acts 15:14-18, where James says that after God's present visitation of the Gentiles "to take out of them a people for His name" is accomplished, Jesus will return, and only then build again the tabernacle of David, which until then will remain in its fallen condition. By the "tabernacle of David" is doubtless meant the throne of David and the restoration of Israel, which, as we have seen, takes place prior to their national conversion; for it is in Jerusalem that "they look upon Him Whom they have pierced." I might go on and indefinitely multiply passages both from the Old as well as the New Testament Scriptures in support of what has been stated, but I trust that enough has been said to convince any candid reader that Israel's national conversion will only take place simultaneously with the return of Jesus Christ, Who is the glorious and beautiful Branch of Jehovah, as well as the Fruit of the earth. THE SERVANT THE BRANCH.17

Now we are to consider Zechariah 3. and contemplate our adorable Lord in the character of Servant: "Behold, I will bring forth My Servant the Branch."

17 Kimchi and Rashi interpret, "My Servant the Branch," of Zerubbabel, but they themselves acknowledge that the older interpretation among the Jews was of the Messiah, and they give no good reason for departing from the received interpretation. Here again the Targum Yonathan introduces Messiah by name. To apply the title Branch to any other person but Messiah would contradict the analogy of the prophetic language, for in Isaiah 4:2 and Jeremiah 23:6, Kimchi himself acknowledges that "Branch" means the Messiah.

Moreover, the words do not agree with the character or circumstances of Zerubbabel. God says, "I will bring My Servant the Branch;" but Zerubbabel had come long before, and was already a prince among them, and, as Abarbanel says (see footnote 19), after this prophecy Zerubbabel attained to neither royalty, dominion, or other dignity more than he already possessed.

Here we have the picture of the high-priest Joshua, who represents Jerusalem (Zechariah 3:1-3), standing before the Lord, ministering before the altar, in filthy garments, typical of inward defilement by sin, and Satan (the Hebrew term meaning adversary in a law-court) standing at his right hand, the usual position of the prosecutor, to accuse him. We are not told what these accusations were, but I think we get a clue to them in Zechariah 3:3, "Joshua was clothed in filthy garments," and Satan may have said, "Lord, Thou art of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. How canst Thou suffer to approach, and to receive the service of, those who are so defiled by sin and who have rebelled against Thee? They are fit only as chaff for the flames." The adversary may also have whispered into the heart of the daughter of Jerusalem, saying, "How dare you take it upon yourself to approach the Holy One? Know ye not that even the heavens are not pure in His sight?" Thus was the evil one contending against Israel, seeking their destruction on account of their defilement, which he used as a pretence, for he is not the one really to hate evil, seeing he is the originator of it; but again, as when he contended for the literal body of Moses18 (Jude 1:9), this arch-enemy of the Church of the living God was rebuked and silenced. Not that his accusations were in themselves false, for even this father of lies dare not utter pure falsehood to the face of the God of truth and righteousness. "Jehovah rebuke thee, O Satan; even Jehovah, that hath chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee. Is not this a brand plucked from the burning?" was the reply of the great Advocate—the Jehovah-Angel, He of Whom it was said, "He shall make intercession for the transgressors." It is true that, in herself, the daughter of Jerusalem is defiled, filthy on account of

her manifold transgressions, having lost all her original beauty and comeliness, so that all that is left of her may fitly be described by the smouldering remains of a log of wood; but has not Jehovah set His love upon her and chosen her from all eternity? and have not I endured the scorching flames in the act of rescuing this smouldering brand from the burning? Thinkest thou that those for whom I have tasted the fiery ordeal of Divine justice shall yet be condemned? No, “they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of My hand. My Father, Which hath given them to Me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father’s hand” (John 10:28). Satan is silenced on the sole ground of God’s choice; and the daughter of Zion, through her representative, Joshua, may well have sung, “He is near that justifieth me: who shall contend with me? let us stand together. Who seeks judgment against me? let him come near to me” (Isaiah 50:8, Heb.). But to justify the really guilty would mean a partaking of his crime; how then could God be just in giving sentence in favour of Jerusalem, since by neither party was it denied that she was really filthy? Here is the reply: “Behold, I will bring forth My Servant the Branch.” This is how the righteous God can be both “the Just and the justifier” of all who are chosen of Him in Christ; His Servant the Branch solves the mystery. From the person of Messiah the justice, as well as the grace of Jehovah, shine forth in transcendent beauty, and blend in splendid harmony. Look at the spectacle of Gethsemane and Calvary, which was long before minutely described in Isaiah 53:1 &c., Psalms 22:1 &c., and Daniel 9:26, and behold His wrath poured out in all its fierceness upon His righteous Servant, Who was the delight of His soul, as soon as He came into contact with sin by taking it upon Himself, and who will dare lay to God’s charge any moral complicity with sin except to condemn it?

18 It is believed by some that the reference in Jude 1:9 is to this passage, “the body of Moses” being the Jewish Church, for which Satan was contending by reason of its sins, just as the body of Christ is the Christian Church. However, Jude 1:9 plainly speaks of the literal body of Moses, the resurrection of which, at the Transfiguration, Satan seems to have opposed, on the ground of Moses’ error at Meribah. “The Lord rebuke thee” checked Satan in contending for judgment against Moses’ body, as also it checked him when demanding judgment against the Jewish Church, to which Moses’ body corresponds.—See FAUSSET on Zechariah 3:1-10.

Then again, where can we go for a full manifestation of God’s tenderness, sympathy, and love? Come with me to Calvary again. Contemplate the scene amid the throng of invisible and astonished angels, weeping disciples, and the mocking multitudes, and remember that He Who thus suffers is none other than the Only-begotten and Well-beloved Son of God, and when you have failed in all attempts to measure the greatness of God’s love to us, in that He spared not even His Son, then you will exclaim, “Truly God is love! Herein is love, not that we loved Him, but that He loved us and gave Himself for us!” The Messiah must be Son of David, else He could not sit upon the throne of His father David; He must be the Son of God, else His death would not suffice for our atonement; but, for man’s justification, He must also be the Servant Who should for us pay a perfect obedience to the Father, else even His death would not benefit us, for we would morally still be left in a condition unfit for fellowship with God, for “can two walk together except they be agreed?” A notorious criminal might for some cause obtain his pardon, but he would be no fit object to associate with his judge who openly denounced him as being fit only for the gallows; and so the sinner may have obtained pardon in virtue of Christ’s death, but, being still a sinner, and not a saint, he would be no fit object to sit down and sup with the Holy One Who Himself

banished him from His presence (Genesis 3:24) as fit only to associate with the disobedient angels in the regions of darkness. It is clear, therefore, that, if the sinner is to be admitted to the banqueting table of the righteous God, it cannot be in his own righteousness, for, first, his moral condition is in such a helpless state that he is absolutely incapable of doing good so as to please God (Job 15:14-16; Job 9:20; Proverbs 20:9), and secondly, supposing, even now, after being pardoned for his past offences, man could and would do God's will, there would still be no merit in his services to God now to blot out his past disobedience, for the very idea of merit is utterly inconsistent with the idea of his relation to God as his Creator. Man, as creature, is bound by the very fact of his creation to love God with all his heart and soul and mind and strength, and to do all His will. Whatever, therefore, he might do now, he could not exceed his present duty, and this would in no wise alter his condition in the presence of God as regards the past. He would still, as criminal, although as pardoned criminal, be unfit to hold communion with God, still be a stranger to the fulness of joy which is in His presence and the pleasures which are at His right hand. Let this be clearly understood, for I fear that there are many Christians even who are confused on this point, and seem to think that, although they depend exclusively on Christ's finished work for pardon, yet it is their own good works which can fit them and merit for them the enjoyment of God's presence here and hereafter, forgetting the words of their blessed Master, Who said, "When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants" (δουλοι, slaves); "we have done that which it was our duty to do" (Luke 17:10). This surely does away with all merit. We are unprofitable, for it is no gain to Him that we make our way perfect (Job 22:3); and besides, we are slaves, and what slave speaks of wages to his master? Think ye a slave would be entitled to sit down at the table of his master and to intimate intercourse with him, even if he did ever such a good day's work? Yet this is what the believer in Christ is privileged to do. He is called to fellowship with God; to sit down at the table and partake of "the feast of fat things" which was not only provided by God, but at which He Himself presides; but we do not do so in our own names, nor is even the garment in which we appear our own. If we are bidden to sit among princes, it is only in virtue of our oneness with the Prince of princes, our fitness being, not in ourselves, but in Jehovah Tsidkenu, and the garment is the robe of His righteousness, with which He clothes us. In this connection how precious is that statement in Isaiah 53:11, "By His knowledge shall My righteous Servant make many righteous" (■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■). By His perfect obedience to the Father even unto death, Christ acquired so much righteousness that it is sufficient to make "many"—as many as will appropriate it by faith—righteous in the presence of God, just as the pouring out of His one soul unto death is sufficient for the propitiation of the sin of the whole world. I have said before that there is no possibility for man to lay any claim to merit, because, to speak of merit, he must be on equal terms with Him from Whom he claims it, for something which he conferred which the other had no right to expect, but the Messiah was on equal terms with God, for He Who becomes our Righteousness is none other than Jehovah, Who, instead of being a creature, is the Creator of all things (Zechariah 12:1-10; John 1:1-3). The law of God was for servants, not for His own Son, but the Son voluntarily took upon Himself the form of a servant and perfectly obeyed it. God's justice only denounced death on the sinner, but here is the Holy One, Who stoops to a death the most ignominious; He can therefore speak of merit, and, on account of His exalted character and the magnitude of the work accomplished by Him, can claim so much of it as is sufficient for all who are united to Him by faith.

Church of the firstborn, elect of God! to thee no less than to Israel does the Divine voice come. “Behold My Servant! Behold in Him thy fitness to approach God and to enjoy His blessed fellowship. Behold in His righteousness the wedding garment without which thou hast no right at the feast. Behold Him!” It was through faith in Him that Abraham was accounted righteous; a vision of the same righteous Servant of Jehovah made Isaiah to burst forth into song: “I will greatly rejoice in the Lord. My soul shall be joyful in my God, for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom maketh himself a priestly headdress and as a bride adorneth herself with ornaments. For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all nations” (Isaiah 61:10-11).

After beholding Him, Paul, too, could sing, “What things were gain to me, those I count loss for Christ: yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for Whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith” (Php 3:7-9).

Behold Him, then, even though as yet the vision may be “as through a glass dimly;” contemplate Him as He humbles Himself for thy sake and takes upon Him the form of a servant; direct thy gaze upwards and behold Him Who is thy Righteousness now exalted to the right hand of the Majesty on high as an assurance that Jehovah is well pleased with thee for His righteousness’ sake (Romans 4:25; Isaiah 42:21); and exclaim, “Blessed indeed am I, unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity” (2 Corinthians 5:19), “and in whose spirit He finds no guile!” THE MAN THE BRANCH.19

We finally come to consider the Messiah as He is represented to us in Zechariah 1:1-15, in the character of Man—“Behold the Man Whose name is the Branch!”

19 Here again Rashi, Aben Ezra, and Kimchi, assert that “the Man the Branch” is Zerubbabel, but again they have, for obvious controversial reasons, departed from the older received interpretation, as is seen from Targum Yonathan, where the passage (Zechariah 6:12) is paraphrased thus—“Behold the Man; Messiah is His Name. He will be revealed, and He will become great and build the Temple of God.” The Messianic interpretation is also defended with great force by the bigoted antagonist of Christianity Abarbanel, who thus decisively refutes the interpretation adopted by the great trio of Jewish commentators Rashi, Aben Ezra, and Kimchi. He says, “Rashi has written that the words, ‘Behold the Man Whose name is the Branch,’ have by some been interpreted of the Messiah. He here means Yonathan, whose interpretation he did not receive, for he adds that the building here spoken of refers altogether to the second Temple. But I wish that I could ask them, if this prophecy refers to the second Temple and Zerubbabel, why it is said, ‘The Man Whose name is the Branch,’ ‘And He shall grow up from beneath Him’? Surely we know that every man grows up to manhood, and even to old age and hoary hairs. Rashi, perceiving this objection, has interpreted this to mean that He shall be of the royal seed, but this is not correct, for the word ■■■■■■■■■■■ (from beneath Him) teaches nothing about the royal family. . . . But, at all events, I should like to ask them, if these words be spoken of Zerubbabel, why does the prophet add that ‘He shall build the Temple of the Lord; even He shall build the Temple of the Lord’? Why this repetition to express one single event? The commentators have got no answer but this, ‘It is to confirm the matter.’

“But, if this be the case, it would be better to repeat the words three or four times, for then the confirmation would have been greater still. I should farther ask them how they can interpret of Zerubbabel those words ‘He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne’? for he (Zerubbabel) never ruled in Jerusalem and never sat upon the throne of the kingdom, but only occupied himself in building the Temple and afterwards returned to Babylon.”—ABARBANEL, Comment. in loc.

Dr. Alexander McCaul says on this passage, “The prophecy promises these particulars: first, ‘He shall be a Priest upon His throne;’ secondly, ‘He shall build the Temple of the Lord;’ thirdly, ‘He shall bear the glory’ (■■■■, the majesty, Hengstenberg), ‘and shall sit and rule upon His throne, and they that are far off shall come and build the Temple of the Lord.’ It is not necessary to point out the well-known passages which prove that these four particulars are all features of Messiah’s character and in that of no one else. It is also easy to identify these features in the character of Jesus of Nazareth. He is represented in the New Testament as a High-priest, as a King; and it is certain that the Gentiles, who were then afar off, have acknowledged His dignity; and, as for building a temple, He did this also (see John 2:19; Ephesians 2:22).” That the Messiah was to be man I need not stay to prove. It is implied by His birth, which, though miraculous, was yet of a Jewish virgin20 (Isaiah 9:6). He Who should gather scattered Israel and keep them as a shepherd keepeth his flock was to be “a Man compassed by a woman” (Jeremiah 31:22). It is also implied by the nature of the work He should accomplish for us upon the earth, for though, for instance, His Divine nature could impart infinite value to the blood which He shed for us, it was only as man that He could shed it; and it was only as man, and One made under the law, that He could render to God a perfect obedience for us, and by His suffering and death redeem us from the curse of the law by “being made a curse for us.” Then the Messiah was to come to reveal to man the character of God and to teach them His law. Now, although as the Son of God alone could He know God perfectly—“for no man knoweth the Father save the Son” (Matthew 11:27)—yet only as the Son of man could He communicate that knowledge to the children of men. Thus we see that even in the patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations, before the Son of God became real man, in order to make God known to the sons of Adam, He again and again appeared in the form of man. “Art Thou the Man that speakest unto the woman?” was the question of Manoah (Judges 13:11). “And He said, I am.” And yet He Who thus appeared in the form of man was none other than the Jehovah-Angel (Judges 13:3),21 the Angel of His presence, “Who was the Saviour of Israel even in the days of old” (Isaiah 63:9), and the Divine Lord for Whose advent the Jews were waiting, and the Angel of His covenant Who was suddenly to appear in His Temple (Malachi 3:1).

20 “According to our Gospel narrations, Jesus was not born in the ordinary course of nature. Have we not here then at the very outset of our undertaking a rock upon which the thesis we have to maintain comes to shipwreck? If Jesus Christ is truly man, must He not have been born in the same manner as every other man? This objection, however, it is easy to see, proves too much, for it would oblige us to deny true humanity to the first man, upon the ground that he came into existence by a different process from that of ordinary human filiation. Now, would it not be a strange proceeding to deny real humanity to that being from whom all that bears the name of man has sprung? This instance proves that the quality of manhood does not depend upon the manner in which the individual being came into existence, but upon the possession of certain attributes which constitute humanity.”—GODET’S “New Testament Series, Biblical Studies.”

21 Genesis 18:2; Genesis 18:13; Joshua 5:14-15; Judges 6:11, Judges 6:12-22. A remarkable proof that the Angel of Jehovah (or Jehovah-Angel) that appeared in the Old Testament dispensation in the form of man is the same as He Who in fulness of time became real man, and tabernacled among us, is to be found in Judges 13:17-18, where we read thus, “And Manoah said unto the Angel of Jehovah, What is Thy Name, that when Thy words come to pass we may do Thee honour? And the Angel of Jehovah said unto him, Wherefore askest thou after My Name? It is ■■■■■■■” (Pele), Wonderful (not Secret, as in the Authorised Version). Now read Isaiah 9:6, which is indisputably Messianic, “Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His Name shall be called ■■■■■■ (Pele), Wonderful (the very word used in Judges 13:19), Counsellor, the Mighty God, Father of eternity, Prince of peace.” The Jehovah-Angel then is none other than the Messiah of the Old Testament. And who is the Jesus of the New Testament but the Messiah of the Old Testament?

Again, it was necessary for the Messiah to be man, else He could not, as our Advocate and Mediator, efficiently represent man’s case before God. “It behoved Him,” says the apostle, “in all things to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High-priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For we have not an High-priest which cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities, but” (One Who was) “in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 2:17; Hebrews 4:15). Then also both the Old and New Testament Scriptures represent the Messiah as the Head of mankind and of all creation; the Progenitor (Isaiah 53:10; Psalms 22:30) of all those who are born into the Kingdom of God; the second Man (1 Corinthians 15:47), Who should have all things put under His feet and resume the supremacy over all creation which Adam had lost by the fall, but, inasmuch as those who become His “children” are partakers of flesh and blood (Hebrews 2:13-14), and supremacy over creation was originally promised by God to man (Genesis 1:27, Genesis 1:31; Hebrews 1:6), it was necessary that He too should partake of flesh and blood and become real man. This, and the fact that the promise of God to Abraham was, that in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed (Genesis 12:3), is the reason why the Messiah took not on Him the nature of angels or of any other being, but He took on Him the seed of Abraham (Hebrews 2:16). But in the text before us (Zechariah 6:12-13) “the Man Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 2:5) is introduced in another connection from those I have already mentioned. “He,” we are told, “shall grow up out of His place” (or “shall branch up from under Him,” ■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■■■■). “And He shall build the Temple of Jehovah;” and, to emphasise what His work shall be, the prophet again repeats, “He shall build the Temple of Jehovah.” Originally God created man to be a temple to contain His perfection and fulness. Having formed his body from the dust of the earth, God “breathed into it the breath of life, and man became a living soul.” But soon Satan, through sin, defiled that temple and made it no longer possible for God to dwell therein, for “what communion can light have with darkness?” (2 Corinthians 6:14). But the heart of God yearned for man, and, though He could no longer dwell in them, He yet did dwell with them. He chose Israel, whom He suffered to approach to Him through the sprinkling of blood, which in His mind pointed to the blood of the everlasting covenant which the Messiah, Who was to be “led as a lamb to the slaughter,” was to shed as an atonement for sin; and to them His proclamation went forth, “Make Me a tabernacle that I may dwell among you!” The tabernacle was built, and then the Temple on Mount Moriah, but soon, alas! this temple too was defiled, and sin in its progress made such rapid strides that it penetrated even into the holy of holies, and God was obliged entirely to withdraw His manifest presence even

from His chosen dwelling-place. After the destruction of the first Temple by the Chaldeans under Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 25:1-30) the Jews built another one after their restoration from Babylon, but the manifest presence of Jehovah no more returned to it; for Rabbi Samuel Bar Juni in the Talmud (Yoma, fol. 21, c. 2), and Rabbis Solomon and Kimchi in their comments on Haggai 1:8, all agree that five things that were in the first Temple were wanting in the second—i.e., the ark, wherein were the tables of the covenant, and the cherubim that covered it; the fire that used to come down from heaven to devour the sacrifices; the Shekinah glory; the gift of prophecy, or the Holy Ghost; and the miraculous Urim and Thummim. But just then another Temple, not built by the hands of man, arose, and in it dwelt the fulness of the Godhead bodily (Colossians 2:9). One came, and in the sight of the magnificent structure which had then become more a “den of thieves” than a “house of prayer,” proclaimed, “Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up again,” and this He spake “of the Temple of His body.” Who was this Who spoke so but the promised Messiah, with Whose advent the presence of Jehovah should again return to His people, and in the anticipation of Whose appearance Isaiah exclaimed “[redacted]” (Immanuel), God with us?” “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men” once more, “and He doth dwell with them,” “for the God Who said, Light shall arise out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Corinthians 4:6). Secondly: But if anyone think that this is not the Temple which was predicted by Zechariah in our text, which “the Man Whose name is the Branch” was to build, I can tell him of another temple—a temple of which the Son of man is not only the foundation (Isaiah 28:16; 1 Corinthians 3:11) and the top stone of the corner (Psalms 118:22; Ephesians 2:20), but the Builder.

“Thou art Peter” were the words of Jesus on one occasion, “and upon this rock” (i.e., the confession, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God”) I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it,” and what is the Church but the Temple of the living God? (2 Corinthians 6:16; 1 Corinthians 3:16). “Now therefore,” says Paul (Ephesians 2:19; Ephesians 2:22), “ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God, and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone: in Whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord. In Whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” How glorious is this temple which the Branch is now building! He has created one temple which is now filling the minds of men with wonder and astonishment. I refer to the material temple of the universe. What a spectacle do the starry heavens present to us! The more we contemplate it the more we are lost in wonder at its immeasurable immensity, and the more our hearts go up in reverent adoration to the God Whose eternity, glory, power, and wisdom they ceaselessly declare in language intelligible to every heart, but oh! the Temple which He is now building, when complete, will astonish even the admiring angels, and will demonstrate even more than the material temple does to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places the manifold wisdom of God (Ephesians 3:10). But there are still two other temples to one or other of which some may think the words in our text may rather apply. One is that which Daniel predicts in the ninth chapter of his prophecy and the twenty-fourth verse (Daniel 9:24). Speaking of the time of Messiah’s advent, he states that one of the things that will accompany that event shall be the anointing of a most holy place.22 Now, I believe of this we have an explanation and fulfilment in the fourth chapter of John’s Gospel. There, in the recorded conversation of our Saviour with the woman of Samaria, a blessed announcement is made by Him, an announcement which marked

an epoch in the spiritual history of the world, and was a revolution in all previous ideas of the relation of man to his Maker. Before this the worship of God was always associated with some particular place: “Our fathers worshipped in this mountain, and ye say that Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.” But Jesus, though claming for Jerusalem precedence when compared with Mount Gerizim and declaring the Jews alone to be possessed of the true knowledge of God, and that they are the channel through whom the salvation of God must proceed, announced the time when neither Mount Gerizim nor yet Jerusalem shall be the only place to worship the Father: “But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.” Thus “the veil of the Temple was first rent at Jacob’s well,”23 and from within the veil of His Father’s house in Jerusalem came forth the Saviour of the world to consecrate all the earth as one vast Holy of Holies.

22 The expression “Kodesh Kodoshim” ■■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■ is exactly the same term always applied to the holy of holies in the tabernacle and Temple.

23 “The Life and Words of Christ,” by Cunningham Geikie, vol. 1., p. 529. The other is the Temple foretold and described by Ezekiel (Ezekiel 40:1-49, Ezekiel 41:1-26, Ezekiel 42:1-20, Ezekiel 43:1-27, Ezekiel 44:1-31), which I verily believe shall he built under Messiah’s superintendence on His second advent. But to whichever temple above mentioned our text refers, we see the sublime appropriateness that the Messiah, Who was to build it, should be introduced as the Son of man, for in each case the gates of the Temple stand open not only to one particular class, no more even exclusively to favoured Israel, but to all the children of men, Jew or Gentile without distinction. Is it Messiah’s person which is meant? The Seed of David is also “the Seed of the woman,” and He from Whom emanates “the glory of Israel” emanates also the Light of the Gentiles (Isaiah 49:6). Is it the Church? The live stones which are built upon the one foundation, Jesus Christ, and together with which it is “growing into an holy temple in the Lord,” are not hewn from the Jewish24 quarry alone, but they belong to all “nations and kindreds and peoples and tongues.” Is it the Temple described by Ezekiel? Over the gates thereof shall no more be found the inscription ■■ ■■■ ■■ ■■ ■■ (“No stranger shall enter into it”), as was written over the former Temple; but many nations shall say, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah and to the house of the God of Jacob, and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths, for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem.” And, finally, is it the consecration of the whole earth into an holy of holies, wherein was to dwell the presence and fulness of God? That work the Messiah could only accomplish as the Son of man, for as the Son of David He is more particularly connected with Palestine and with the literal Temple of Jerusalem. “Behold the Man Whose name is the Branch, and He shall grow up out of His place, and He shall build the Temple of the Lord; and He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne, and He shall be a Priest upon His throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both. . . . And they that are far off shall come and build in the Temple of the Lord, and ye shall know that the Lord of hosts hath sent Me unto you. And this shall come to pass if ye will diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God” (Zechariah 6:12-15).

24 There is no fear in these days of anyone thinking that the Church is exclusively Jewish in its composition; but there is danger lest it should be thought that it is entirely Gentile. The Gentiles have not been called to monopolise, but to partake (share) with the Jews the root and fatness of

the olive tree, and they were not grafted by the power of God into the vine to the exclusion of the Jews, but among them (Romans 11:17). Let not then the “wild olive branches” boast against the “natural branches,” but let them together enjoy the fat things which have been provided in abundance by the grace and mercy of God and be thankful. “For He is our peace, Who hath made both one and hath broken down the middle wall of partition, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby; and came and preached peace to you which were afar off and to them that were nigh. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone—in Whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in Whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit” (Ephesians 2:14-22).

Blessed be God, there has always been a Jewish element in the Church of Christ from its commencement hitherto; and I am thankful to believe that at the present day that element is stronger than ever it has been. “Even at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.”

1.04. The Branch and the Branches

"In that day shall the Branch of Jehovah be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel."—Isaiah 4:2. "I am the Vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing."—John 15:5.

CHAPTER IV. THE BRANCH AND THE BRANCHES; OR, A SYMBOL OF CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH.

Having in the preceding chapter spoken of the Messiah in four different aspects as the "Branch," I will here endeavour, briefly, to set forth a few reasons for the appropriateness of this title as applied to Messiah, and then, also briefly, to present Him to our view in an entirely different aspect of His character, which is more particularly given of Him in the New Testament, namely, as the Vine, I beg permission to present my thoughts in this short chapter in a somewhat parabolical, or rather illustrative manner, and trust that I shall not be misunderstood as advocating speculation on sacred things which belong only to the Lord our God. If my figure is not quite sound, I trust the lessons drawn from it are sound enough; and if the former is necessary to the mind's eye, I trust the latter only will be engraven on our hearts. But to commence.

Walking with a friend through a private park near Brighton not long ago, he directed my attention to what he called "one of the sights of this country." It seemed to me at first sight a group of trees, one large one in the midst being most prominent, but, to my surprise, my friend informed me that all the group which I saw was in reality only one tree, and went on to explain thus:—"The young trees which you see all around are all branches of the central tree, but, as the branches grew to a certain length and touched the ground, they took root, and grew semi-independently, and developed into trees, and then sent forth their branches to do likewise, and so here behold the phenomenon of a plurality in unity."1

1 The tree mentioned above was most probably a banyan tree, common in the East. "The vegetation of the banyan tree seldom begins on the ground. The seeds are deposited by birds in the crowns of palms, and send down roots, which embrace and eventually kill the palm. The wood of the banyan is light, porous, and of no value, but the bark is regarded by the Hindoo physicians as a powerful tonic, and is administered in dietetics. Its white, glutinous juice is used to relieve toothache, and also as an application to the soles of the feet when inflamed. The branches send shoots downwards, which, when they have rooted, become stems, the tree in this manner spreading over a great surface and enduring for many ages. One has been described as having no fewer than three hundred and fifty stems equal to large oaks and more than three thousand smaller ones, covering a space sufficient to contain seven thousand persons."—CHAMBERS'S "Cyclopædia." My mind at once recurred to the above passage in the Word of God (Isaiah 4:2), where Messiah is called the "Branch of Jehovah," and I was reminded of a still greater marvel, of which the one before me may serve as an imperfect illustration.

Out of the infinite, eternally self-existent God, the Tree of Life and Knowledge and Wisdom and Power and Love and Holiness, shot forth a Branch “Whose goings forth have been from of old, even from the days of eternity” (Micah 5:2), Which was the admiration of Heaven, upon Whose fruit angels fed with thanksgiving, and under Whose shade all the celestial beings sang their praises. This Branch, however, instead of rising upwards in the regions of light and blessedness, stooped downward until He reached our earth, where He took root, and thus united heaven and earth and restored the intercourse between the two regions by Himself becoming the bridge—a far more glorious and safe bridge than the one which existed before, and which man was himself able to break. Behold, my soul, Jacob’s wonderful dream literally fulfilled! (Genesis 28:12-13).

What was the object of this Divine Branch in stooping down until it reached the earth? In the case of the branch of the banyan tree, the first object it has in seeking contact with the earth is, no doubt, to accomplish its innate law of self-development and aggrandisement; and, if it be lawful to compare natural things with spiritual, I should say that this, too, was the first purpose of the Divine Branch in seeking contact with man, namely, “to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be made known through the Church the manifold wisdom of God” (Ephesians 3:10). So that He may be “glorified in His saints and admired in all them that believe” (2 Thessalonians 1:10)—in other words, it was to glorify Himself. We are treading on sacred ground, and are face to face with a fact which in its fulness is unutterable; but can it be that, in some mysterious sense, the human can minister to the Divine? Even so, it would seem. Anyhow, this much we know for certain, that in God’s dealings with men, His relative perfections are made manifest. Thus God, in order to show that He is Light, requires man upon whom He might shine, in order that he might reflect His light, and in order to show that He is Love, He requires man to love; for we can only think of love as existing relatively and in proportion as it is expressed, positively or negatively, for the salvation of others. In order also to make manifest that He is the Fountain of life, He takes hold of man, who is spiritually “dead in trespasses and sins,” and quickens him, and so demonstrates to all who will but see, that He lives, and that there is a spiritual and Divine.

Weak and trembling Christian, you who see no reason in yourself why the infinite and all-glorious God should have revealed Himself to and in you, in you God will be admired by all the universe. Are you very sinful? Then in you He can make His grace more apparent. Are you very weak? Then in you can the perfectness of His strength be more seen. In short, are you altogether empty? Then you can contain more of the “fulness of Him Who filleth all in all,” to the admiration of principalities and powers and all things that are. Be silent before Him, then, and hear Him with wonder and adoration saying, “It is more blessed to give than to receive”!

But, in the second place, natural scientists would tell us that in the case of the branch of the banyan tree stooping down to the earth, that part of earth which comes into vital contact with the branch is quickened by it, and is thereby transferred into a higher kingdom; for, by the process of assimilation which goes on, the branch makes the earth a part of itself. The accuracy of this statement, as far as the vegetable and mineral kingdoms are concerned, may be questioned, but there is certainly no question but that the first thing which the visitation of the Divine Branch has brought to us is life. “He” (the second Adam) “was a quickening Spirit” (1 Corinthians 15:45). “I came,” He said Himself, “to bring life;” and again, “Even so the Son quickeneth whom He will;” and again, “He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (John 10:10; John 5:21;

John 5:24; 1 John 5:12); “I am the Resurrection, and the Life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die” (John 11:25-26). And that He brought the only chance for man’s restoration into the higher state is equally clear. Since the fall there has been as impenetrable a gulf between the human and Divine as there is between the inorganic and organic. Two or three years before Strauss died, we are told, a gelatinous substance was dredged up from the sea depths, which certain English naturalists pronounced to be an organic plasm, from which life was being gradually developed. This vaunted discovery, of which infidelity failed not to make the most, freed Strauss from the belief in God which he had hitherto been constrained to avow, as otherwise he could not account for the origin of life. Since his death, however, the so-called organic plasm has been proved to be produced by a chemical blunder, and disavowed even by its discoverers; but poor Strauss did not live long enough to discover the fatal error he made and to find out that the bridge between the lifeless and the living is still wanting. There are many now who think that they have discovered something in the heart of man quite apart from the agency of the Spirit of God, which, when developed, will bridge over the gap between the human and Divine. All that I can say is, that I wish them at least to live long enough to find out their mistake, so that they may be brought to seek entrance into the kingdom of heaven by another door. With all improvements, and civilisation, and progress, it is impossible for man to progress beyond the boundary of the human. He may come up to the very edge of the boundary, but then he will only see the clearer the infinity of that gulf which separates him from the Divine. The mineral may as well try by its own powers to jump into the vegetable kingdom as man into the Divine. In both cases the door of progress into the higher kingdom is scaled by the awful seal of death, and in both cases that seal can only be broken by supernatural power. I might appeal to the experience of man, and it will also testify to the truth of this solemn fact. Has man ever by his own exertions come nearer to God? Has not, alas! man’s so-called progress been a progress of retrogression? There is a very touching Arabian story of a certain wicked city which was punished by God with continuous drought. At length the inhabitants of the place, pressed by famine, sent seventy of their number to the prophet of God that he might supplicate rain for them, but all the time the city and deputation remained impenitent in their hearts. At length they arrived in the place where the prophet lived, and begged him to consult God on their behalf. The prophet did so, when three clouds of different colours, white, red, and black, appeared above the horizon, and a voice pronounced, “Choose which ye will.” They chose the black cloud, which followed them on their homeward journey. When they approached their city the inhabitants came out to meet them, and, on beholding the dark cloud, they shouted and danced for joy, crying, “Rain and plenty!” But lo! as the cloud came just over the city, it burst into a raging pestilential wind, and, instead of rain and plenty, there was desolation and death! Let us not be too sanguine as to the influence of our so-called “progress” and “civilisation” as a means to bring man nearer to God. That which appears at first sight as a cloud of healthful showers may burst upon us as a whirlwind of destruction. Alas! has not the study of “science falsely so called” only confirmed man in his proud defiance of God? The world may become ever so polished, but its beauty will be an artificial and dead one. It needs quickening, not polishing. But let us go a step farther. The purpose which “the Branch of Jehovah” had in visiting man was not only to quicken him and thus to restore to him the life he had lost, but by stooping down and taking root, as it were, in human soil, He thereby united Himself for ever with man. Thus we are told in the New Testament that those who have come into vital contact with Him have actually become “members of His body.”

They have no more a separate existence, for “their life is hid with Christ in God.” They live, but it is no longer they who live, but “Christ Who liveth in them;” and it is this which distinguishes the Christian Church from every other religious body. Islamism, for instance, can exist without Mahomet, because it is Mohammedanism which makes a Mohammedan, and not Mahomet; but the Christian Church without Christ—never! for in this case the relation is not to a doctrine, but to a Person, “from Whom all the body, being supplied and knit together through the joints and bands, increaseth with the increase of God” (Colossians 2:19). But take away the fountain of nourishment, and it not only ceases to increase, but to exist. It withers; it dies. This glorious relationship between Christ and His people is beautifully described by Himself in the fifteenth of John, where He says, “I am the Vine, and ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in Him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for apart from Me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered.” Notice here, He is no longer the Branch, but the Vine. The Branch has already taken root in the earth, and as He did so He developed into a Tree with branches, “the fruit of which shall be for the healing of the nations.” It is true, that just as is the case with the branch of the banyan tree, which, even after it is developed into a tree, is still vitally united to the father stem, and rightly spoken of as a branch of the old tree, so Christ was one with the Father, and was never separated from Him; yet, in another sense, it is equally true, that He became a Tree, from Whose roots emanated innumerable fresh branches. In relation to God the Messiah is the Branch, because He is the Revealer of God, and it is by the fruit which the branch bears that we know the tree from which it grows. Here let me say, that, if the world knows not God, it is because it has not come and tasted of the fruit from off this Branch. Men, for the most part, stand afar off, and admire the glorious fruits of self-sacrificing love, gentleness, patience, longsuffering, graciousness, holiness, goodness, and truth, all hanging in resplendent beauty on this Branch; but oh! when will they learn that which the A B C of the science of botany teaches, viz., that the fruit is a revelation of the root, and, in a sense, identical with the seed, and take to heart, first, that the phenomenon of the more than human fruit which was on this Branch can only be explained by the fact that it developed from more than human roots, and, secondly, that this Divine, fruitful Branch must be “the effulgence of the glory and the very image of the substance” of the Divine Tree from Which it sprang? Let the world, then, heed the gracious words that “proceeded out of the mouth of Christ,” and learn that God is gracious; let it look upon Him Whom it must acknowledge to be the very embodiment of love and compassion, and learn that God, from Whom He proceeded, is love, and full of compassion; let it behold the moral light with which this Branch has illumined as many as have come under His shadow, and the new life with which He quickened them, and learn that God is light and life; but let it also learn from the spectacle of Gethsemane and Calvary that God is holy and of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and that, if He spared not Him, Whom the world must pronounce perfectly innocent, as soon as He came into contact with sin by voluntarily taking it all upon Himself as our Substitute, how dreadful and sharp will be the vials of His wrath which He will pour upon a guilty, godless, Christ-denying, Christ-rejecting world!

Again, Messiah is the Branch, because on Him is the fruit to satisfy the hunger and thirst prevalent in the heart of every man after the unseen and the perfect, or, more properly, after God. That there is such a hunger, or, in other words, that man has a soul—a capacity to know God—a capacity which remains empty and unsatisfied until it knows Him and is filled with Him, I need not stay to prove. We, indeed, hear sometimes of individuals who declare that they have never experienced such hunger and thirst; but their individual experience no more proves that it is the experience of

mankind, than would one scorched leaf on an oak in May prove that all the leaves on that oak are scorched and dead. Some catastrophe may have befallen that one leaf, but its deadness only the more forcibly proves the others to be alive. Such an assertion can only be made on two grounds, viz., experience and observation. As to the first, my experience must as much be taken into account as that of the one who declares the absence of this hunger. Now, as for me, I have quite a different tale to tell. In my heart there was, and is, a something which will not be satisfied with anything finite, because in some mysterious way it is an offspring of the Infinite—a void place which cried to be filled and yet would not be filled with anything of this world. And thus this chamber remained in emptiness and desolation until He came, even He, Who had fitted it up, and took up His abode there. Then it at once recognised its Owner and Maker, and at once the yearning ceased, and it is satisfied. Against the experience of the few moral sleepers I place my experience and the experience of the generality of mankind. Then as to observation. Come and let us use all the ages since man has been on the stage as an observatory, and what do we find? It matters not whither our glance is cast; the same answer comes to us, whether written upon an altar which has crumbled to dust with age, or mysteriously chanted by Druids in groves in the solemn stillness of the night, or whether even in shrieks of poor men and women as they cast themselves before the chariot of juggernaut. The words are the same, and they are these, “There is a God upon Whom we are dependent, and we want to know Him.”

“As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?” (Psalms 42:1-2). But where is the bread to satisfy this hunger? and where can we find the living water to quench this burning thirst? Not by the study of God in nature; for nature is only a revelation of His almighty power and wisdom, but not of His being. It is, as it were, His garment, but not Himself; and although we may infer by the glory of those skirts of His garments that are visible to us in creation that He must be glorious and full of majesty, yet Himself we see not, for the Creator and creation are not the same. The Messiah alone can give us such a soul-satisfying knowledge of God; for not only is He Himself as much a revelation of the very being of God as the branch is of the tree, but He came as the Sent One for the very purpose of satisfying this hunger and thirst in the heart of man. God sent forth His Branch, in Whom dwells the fulness of the Godhead as really as in the branch dwells the fulness of the tree, in order that those who seek Him may find Him there; for, in a sense, the Messiah and God are identical, the same as the branch of a tree may be said to be identical with the tree. Thus God answered the universal prayer of man, “Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us” (John 14:8), by saying, “The only-begotten Son, Which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him” (John 1:18).

Hither then gather all ye who hunger, and eat of the fruit from off this Branch, and let your souls be satisfied. Do you want to know God? Come and see His glory in the face of Jesus Christ, “Who is the image of the invisible God” (Colossians 1:15). But if, in relation to God, Christ is the Branch, it is equally true, that, in relation to the Church, He is the Vine. The Christian Church literally sprang forth from the side of Christ, and each individual member is a branch “begotten of God in Him.” Deny this, and the birth and growth of the Christian Church is inexplicable. Christ is, as it were, the germ from which the Church developed, and as truly as Christ was the revelation of God, so truly is the Church the revelation of Christ. This is a truth we would scarcely dare enunciate as we look around and behold the awful caricature of Christ which is presented by those who call themselves

by His Name; but we remember with gratitude that professed Christendom is not the Church, and that there is as sharp a line of distinction between the two as there is between the field and the tree that grows in it; in both cases the difference is that between life and death. With this figure before me, if I were to be asked, “What is it that constitutes a member of the Christian Church?” I should answer that the principal condition is being born again by the Spirit of God. Every branch of a tree is born, not made. As truly as the real Christ was begotten of God, so must the real Christian be begotten of Him, else he has not the life of God in him, nor is he at all one with Christ in the sense that the hand is one with the head, or the branch one with the tree, both of which relationships to Christ are assigned to the believer in the New Testament. “Verily, verily,” be it known to you on the authority of the Son of God Himself, that, “except a man be born again,2 he cannot see the Kingdom of God” (John 3:3). Let not men delude themselves in these days by thinking that they can make themselves Christians by some process of devotional exercise. Christians are not made: they are born. And let them not think that because they do what they are pleased to call “good works” they are Christians. The fruit which hangs on them is made, not grown, and although it may be beautiful to look upon, there is no taste of God in them, and they want the scent of heaven.

2 If any one ask, “How can I tell if I am born again?” I can easily answer him by another question: “Do you believe in and love the Lord Jesus Christ?” “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth Him that begat loveth Him also that is begotten of Him” (1 John 5:1).

Then if I were asked, What is it which characterises a Christian? I should answer, Fruitfulness. The proof that Christ was really the Branch of Jehovah was the fruit He bore; and this is exactly the test which the world will apply to us, and be it said that it is a fair test, for as sure as every good seed must bear fruit, so sure is it that everyone who has Christ in his heart, everyone who is a branch of the Vine, will bear fruit which will at once reveal whether the Divine life be in him or not. Fruitfulness, abundant fruitfulness, is the only thing which will demonstrate to the world that we are the disciples of Christ (John 15:8), but remember also that it is the only thing which will reveal Christ to the world; for just as sunlight is not seen except as it is reflected from some object, so the light of the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ is not visible to the outside world except as it is reflected by His Church.

Oh! the marvellous; condescending grace of our blessed Lord that He should have made Himself thus dependent upon His people! for as truly as the branches cannot do without the stem, so the stem cannot do without the branches. Without the branches the stem can bear no fruit, and without fruit the perfection of the stem is not attained. In this light how glorious does the position of every follower of Christ, however humble, appear! He contains within him that only light which can dispel the darkness of this world. Within his breast dwells the Infinite One, Whose fulness he shows forth, and in a sense he is the perfection of the Perfect One. It is by observing our good works that men will glorify our Father Who is in heaven. With this figure still before me, if were asked, What is Christian fruitfulness? I should answer that, firstly, it is a doing or being that which will not only be showing forth the perfection or glory of its Divine Stem, but which will be for the refreshment of the weary and hungry and the thirsty. Fruit is not for the branch, nor is it for the stem, but it is for food and refreshment for man; so Christian fruitfulness means giving of ourselves for the good of others, even as Christ gave Himself for us and to us. “The fruit of the Spirit” in the Christian “is

love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Galatians 5:22-23). Love to self? Verily, no! Selfishness is the fruitfulness of Satan. Love to God? Yes; but remember that "if a man say, I love God, and hate his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God Whom he hath not seen?" (1 John 4:20). Oh, Christian, refresh this hatred-stricken world with the love of God that is in thee! Love thy neighbour as thyself, and upon this is conditioned thy joy and thy peace. Let us examine every one of these Divinely beautiful clusters of fruit, and we shall find them all to possess healing or refreshing qualities for man. To whom, for instance, may we be "longsuffering"? To God? No; verily this would be blasphemous. It is man who, on account of weakness and sin, demands from us a long-suffering spirit. Then "gentleness:" the fact that we are gentle will show that we have the Gentle One in us, but gentleness we can only practise to our fellow-man.

Let us not confound fruitfulness with growth in grace. The two, though going hand in hand, and proportioned one to another, are yet quite distinct. As the tree bears fruit before it is yet fully grown, though of course it is not quite perfect as to quality, nor, compared with the full-grown tree, is it abundant as to quantity, but still it bears fruit while yet it grows, and no one can mistake what kind of fruit it is, so the Christian, although he is yet growing, must at the same time bear fruit. It is true that when he is full-grown, when the germ which is in him shall fully develop into Christ's own image, then—oh blessed thought!—his fruit shall be perfect and abundant, sweet not only to the taste of heavenly beings, but to God Himself, but still he must begin bearing fruit on earth and refresh man with those fruits, which, when they are perfect, will refresh God's own heart. But, secondly, in the spiritual world just the same as in the vegetable or animal world, fruitfulness means a producing of the like. Scientifically speaking, fruit is seed; and as seed produces fruit, so fruit produces seed, which in its turn again develops into fruit. "Be fruitful, and multiply" (Genesis 1:20-22), is a law which holds good in the spiritual world as well as in the natural, and in both cases the penalty of disobedience to this law is death. As soon as the plant leaves off to seed it commences to wither and die, and so it is with the animal. Even so is it with the Christian Church. Her own life and health is to some extent dependent upon her fruitfulness; and, as a practical illustration of this truth, I would point to the fact, that those periods of the Church's history which are characterised by missionary effort are also characterised by abundant spiritual life. Was it not so the first two or three centuries of her existence? And is it not so since the commencement of this century? Hitherto, blessed be God! the Church of Christ has fulfilled the command, "Be fruitful, and multiply," and many are the sons and daughters whom she has begotten and nursed, so many that they form such a "multitude, which no man can number;" but still there are many for whom she must travail in birth, many from Jews and Gentiles; and still the voice of her God reaches her with the command, "Be fruitful, and multiply." Do it quickly, for remember that when the days of thy child-bearing are accomplished, when there are no more to be born into the Kingdom of heaven by thee, then the days of thy sojourn on earth will be ended.

I conclude with one other thought, a scriptural truth, which, like the figure of the vine and the branch, also illustrates the mutual relationship and dependence of Christ and His Church.

We are told that Christ is the second Adam, the Progenitor of a new race, to whom He communicates His own Divine life and character (1 Corinthians 15:45-50). But for Adam, in order to accomplish God's purpose of fruitfulness, Eve was indispensable. Even so is it with the second Adam. The Church, which is His body, is also His bride: "Married to Him Who is raised from the

dead, that she should bring forth fruit," (Romans 7:4).

See then, Christian, how all-important it is that we should abide in Christ if we want to be fruitful. If we live near Him, through His mighty power which shall work in us, we shall be used to bring others into the Kingdom of God.

Again we come back to the parable of the vine and the branches and proclaim the Divine words of Christ, "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me. I am the Vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit."

1.05. Four Precious Titles of the Messiah

"Out of him" (Judah) "the Corner, out of him the Nail, out of him the Battle Bow, out of him shall come forth He that will rule all together" (the absolute Ruler1)—Zechariah 10:4.

1 On the rendering of the text see footnote 7 further on. Yonathan, in his Targum, has introduced Messiah by name in his paraphrase of this passage. He says, "Out of him his King, out of him his Messiah."

CHAPTER V.

FOUR PRECIOUS TITLES OF THE MESSIAH

Names in Scripture, especially those given by Divine authority, describe, as a rule, the character of the things or beings who bear them, and particularly is this the case with the names of God and the Messiah. Hence the Psalmist's exclamation, "They that know Thy Name shall put their trust in Thee" (Psalms 9:10). Hence also when Moses prayed, "Show me Thy way, that I may know Thee!" God put him in the cleft of a rock and proclaimed to him the Name of the Lord—"Jehovah, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty" (Exodus 33:16-19; Exodus 34:5; Exodus 34:7).

Why is He called ■■■■■■■ (Jehovah) but because He is "from everlasting to everlasting the same"—infinite, eternal unchangeable and faithful? Why is He called ■■■■■■■■■ (Elohim) but because He, the glorious Triune God, is alone to be worshipped and adored? He is called ■■■■■ (Shaddai), because He is the Almighty and Omnipotent One; ■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■ (Jehovah Jireh), because He hath Himself provided a ransom for the sin of the whole world; ■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■ (Jehovah Shalom), because He is the Peace-giver; and so in every one of His names there is contained for us some revelation of His relative perfections and attributes. And this is the case also with the Messiah. Why is He at all called by the title ■■■■■■■■■ (Messiah: Daniel 9:26; Psalms 2:2) but because that in a special manner the Spirit of God was to be upon Him, anointing Him to "preach good tidings unto the meek," and that He is the Sent One to accomplish a special, and a most glorious mission upon the earth, viz., "to bind up the broken-hearted; to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of Jehovah, and the day of vengeance of our God; . . . and to cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all nations"? (Isaiah 61:1-2; Isaiah 61:11).

Why, for instance, is He called ■■■■■■■ (Shiloh), but because He is the Prince of peace? or ■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■ (Immanuel) but because that with His advent God's manifest presence was once more to return to man? or ■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■ (Jehovah Tsidkenu) but because He was to become our Righteousness? Who does not know that the most precious name ■■■■■■■■ (Jesus) describes the Messiah as the Saviour from all sin? and that ■■■■■■■ (Wonderful) is a just title of Him Who is His miraculous birth, in the matchless purity of His character, in the Divine utterances that fell from His lips, in His wonderful life, death, and resurrection, and in the immense

influence of His Name and teaching unto the present day, is the wonder of all ages? or that He is called ■■■■■■ ■■■■ (Mighty God) because He is very God, in Whom (although He was man) dwelt the fulness of the Godhead bodily (Colossians 2:9), or ■■■■■■■■■ (The Father of Eternity) because, though He was a Child born in Bethlehem Ephratah, yet His goings forth have been from of old even from the days of eternity? (Micah 5:2, Heb.) But here in our text (Zechariah 10:4) we have a glorious constellation of four of the most precious titles of Christ, only one less in number than, but shining quite as brilliantly and as full of meaning and comfort as that other and largest in Isaiah 9:6. We shall take each one of them separately in order to a better understanding of them, and may He, Who is "the Bright and Morning Star," shine into our hearts and souls, so that "in His light we may see light"! THE CORNER That this is one of Messiah's titles there can, I think, be no doubt, for in Isaiah 28:16, which is acknowledged to be a Messianic passage even by Jews, we read, "Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste," and in the New Testament it is applied to Christ both by Himself (Matthew 21:42), and His apostles (Acts 4:11; 1 Peter 2:4-8); but the question is, What does this title signify?

Now, in the first instance, I believe that the Spirit of God, in presenting Christ to us as the Corner, wants us to understand that He is the "sure foundation" upon Whom rests the spiritual superstructure which is now in process of completion, and which is raised "for an habitation of God through the Spirit." For the stability and safety of a building everything depends on the foundation. The plan and materials of it may be ever so perfect in themselves, but if the foundation be "sand," the house will not abide the storm and flood; while, on the other hand, the plan and materials of a house may not be so good, but if its foundation be sound, the winds may blow and the tempests may beat upon it, it cannot fall, for it is founded on a rock. Even so the Divine Architect, in designing that glorious Temple for His own presence which in the ages to come is to make known to "the principalities and powers in heavenly places His manifold wisdom" (Ephesians 3:10), in order to ensure its safety against the attacks of the devil and his hosts, and to make it proof against storm and tempest and even time itself, laid as its foundation His own "Son, Who abideth ever" (John 8:35), and is as firm as a rock, against Whom even the gates of hell shall not prevail. Thus we are told that the living stones who are prepared by the Spirit of God to become parts in that Temple "are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets,2 Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone; in Whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth into an holy temple in the Lord" (Ephesians 2:20-21).

2 "When it is said, 'to be built upon the foundation of the prophets and apostles' (Ephesians 2:20), it only refers to their doctrine concerning Christ; and therefore it is added, that He, as being the subject of their doctrine, is the 'chief corner-stone.' The foundation then of the Church lies not in Rome, but in heaven, and therefore is out of the reach of all enemies, and above the power of the 'gates of hell.' Fear not then when you see the storms arise and winds blow against this spiritual building, for 'it shall stand;' 'it is built upon an invisible, immovable Rock;' and that great Babylon, Rome itself, which, under the false title and pretence of supporting this building, is working to overthrow it, 'shall be utterly overthrown and laid equal with the ground and never be built again.' "—ARCHBISHOP LEIGHTON on 1 Peter 2:4. This solves the problem of the continuance and immovableness of the Christian Church in spite of the many storms and tempests she has encountered from men and devils. Let the tempests rage, let infidelity assail, the foundation which

God laid in Zion will still remain unshaken, for it is a “sure foundation,” and, as long as the foundation is safe, the building on it, if it be only properly secured to its foundation, is also safe; therefore they “that believe shall not make haste to flee” in alarm, but will still abide safe in the “Rock of ages” and eternal refuge.

But, in the second place, the ■■■■■■ (corner-stone) is “that stone which unites the two walls of the corner,”3 and the Spirit of God, in presenting the Messiah to us by this figure, may have intended to foreshadow Him as the link between Jew and Gentile, who are both made one in Him: “For He is our peace, Who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us, having abolished the law of commandments contained in ordinances, for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace.”

3 Among the ancient Jews the foundation corner-stone of their sanctuary on Moriah was regarded as the emblem of moral and spiritual truths. It had two functions to perform: first, like the other foundation stones, it was a support for the masonry above, but it had also to face both ways, and was thus a bond of union between two walls.

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“The engineers, in order to ascertain the dimensions of this foundation stone, worked round it, and report that it is three feet eight inches high and fourteen feet in length. At the angle it is let down into the rock to a depth of fourteen inches; but, as the rock rises towards the north, the depth of four feet north of the angle is increased to thirty-two inches, while the northern end seems entirely embedded in the rock. The block is further described as squared and polished, with a finely dressed face. It does not appear to have any marginal draft at the bottom, and indeed, this was not necessary, as the lower part, being sunk in the rock, would always be hidden from view; but the absence of the lower draft indicates that the block was dressed in the quarry in a somewhat peculiar style, with a view to its being the foundation corner-stone. The draft on the upper margin of the stone is four inches wide. Fixed in its abiding position three thousand years ago, it still stands sure and steadfast, a fitting emblem of the ‘Rock of ages,’ that cannot be removed, but abideth fast for ever.”—“Recent Discoveries on the Temple Hill at Jerusalem,” by J. KING, M.A.

Indeed, this is, I believe, the connection in which Paul introduces the Lord Jesus by the figure of the “chief corner-stone” in this passage (Ephesians 2:20). He speaks in this chapter to the Gentiles, who were once “afar off,” aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, and tells them that now, “in Christ Jesus,” they “are made nigh,” and, together with the Jews, “have access by one Spirit unto the Father,” and then goes on to say, “Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone.” In spite of mutual prejudice and hatred and the otherwise impassable legal and ceremonial gulf that separated the Jew from the Gentile, Christ is the angle at which both meet and are united into one building, which is the habitation of God through the Spirit; for in Him “there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him, for whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

Then, thirdly, Christ is also styled ■■■■■■ ■■■■■ (“the Head of the corner,” Psalms 118:22; Matthew 21:42; κεφαλ■ν γων■ας, which is also the Septuagint translation of Psalms 118:22, an appellation which is distinguished from the “corner-stone,” ■κρογωνια■ος, in Isaiah 28:16, Ephesians 2:20, and 1 Peter 2:6), which implies, I believe, that just as He is the foundation of the spiritual Temple and the “projecting corner-stone” that unites in Himself the two walls or the two elements (Jewish and Gentile) of which it consists, so He is also the top stone or coping. The “head of the corner” was often also a costly or “precious” stone, placed, not at the top of the wall, but in the most important and conspicuous position, to give the building a finished and perfect look,—it was, as it were, the crown and glory of the building. Hence, as a secondary application, the word ■■■■■■ (corner) is used to designate a governor, or the most conspicuous person in a community (1 Samuel 14:38; Isaiah 19:13).

Now, all these are relationships in which Christ stands to His Church. He is her immovable foundation; her bond of union between all her members; and also her top stone, or cover, and the crown of her glory.

I have spoken of the Church corporately, but all I have said is true also of every individual Christian. It is because I rest on the “sure foundation” which God has laid in Zion that “I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus my Lord.” I am vitally united to Christ Jesus my foundation, and Christ is vitally united to God, and who can snatch me out of the hand of the Almighty? And besides, the stone which I take as my foundation is a “tried stone.” God tested Him before He finally made Him manifest as the only foundation for His people’s salvation and eternal happiness, and He has declared that in every respect He was “well pleased” with Him; and what better assurance can I have than the testimony of the living God, Who cannot mistake and cannot lie? Millions also who have accepted the testimony of God have put Him to the test, and they have not found Him wanting, but, in every respect, solid enough to bear the superstructure of their redemption.

Then again, Christ is my “head stone of the corner,” and He is a “precious corner-stone,” or, more literally, as in the Hebrew (Isaiah 28:16) and Greek (1 Peter 2:7), He is a “Corner of preciousness.” In me there is no spiritual beauty or comeliness, but my blessed Saviour is “altogether lovely,” and “fairer than the children of men,” and in God’s sight that which is most conspicuous is, not myself, as I am, but Christ, Who dwelleth in me. But the figure of the “corner-stone” teaches us, I believe, a special truth in connection with the past and future of Israel as a nation. It is supposed by many, and I think with sufficient reason, that the ode in Psalms 118:22-23., “The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes,” beside its emblematical meaning, commemorates a real transaction and literal occurrence at the building of Solomon’s temple, when a certain stone, designed for the “head corner-stone,” was rejected by the builders and cast away as useless, but, as no other stone could supply its place, either from necessity or Divine warning, the once despised stone was sought out and exalted to the position for which it had been destined by the Divine Architect, Who was Himself superintending the building of His house. This event, to which there are many allusions in the Scriptures, is used by the prophets and apostles as typifying the treatment of the Messiah by the Jews at His first and second advents. On His first appearance in humiliation, to be “wounded for

our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities," and then to be "led as a lamb to the slaughter" and to pour out His soul unto death, He was, in the eyes of the Jews, as "a root out of a dry ground," in whom "there was no form or comeliness," so they "despised and rejected Him" as fit for the cross rather than to sit on the throne of David or to enjoy the glory and pomp which they, in their imagination, associated with the Messiah's advent. But the time is not far distant when Israel, after vainly waiting long for another Messiah to appear, will again seek out the stone which they have once, in the blindness of their hearts, rejected, and when He reappears in the clouds of heaven (Matthew 26:64) will cry, "Hosannah! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord!" "Lo, this is our God, we have waited for Him, and He will save us. This is the Lord; we have waited for Him; we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation." Thus it will come to pass that "the stone which the builders rejected will become the head stone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes." This is the application which the Lord Jesus Himself made of this figure in Matthew 21:42-44, where, speaking to the Jews, He said, "Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the Head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? . . . And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on Whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder."

Eighteen hundred years ago "Christ crucified" became a stumbling-block to the Jewish nation, and the stone which God intended as a sure foundation became, on account of their disobedience, a "stone of stumbling and a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel" (Isaiah 8:14; Romans 9:33). They fell on it, and were "broken," and fragments of the dispersed nation are to be found to the present day in all parts of the world as a testimony to the justice and judgment of the righteous God. But the judgment which befell Israel will be as nothing compared with that which awaits professed Christendom. Israel fell on the stone when He was on the earth, in a state of humiliation and suffering, and they were broken, but there is hope in their end, for the broken fragments of the Jewish nation will, according to God's own promise, be gathered together from the four corners of the earth and be made whole again; but as to hypocritical, professed Christendom, the stone will fall on them in all the weight of eternal might, and "it will grind them to powder." When Jesus returns to the scene of His suffering and death, it will no longer be as the "meek and lowly," to speak gracious words (except to the Church and to Israel, as we have seen elsewhere), but in "flaming fire" and in "vengeance," and then there will be no more hope for those who spurn His love and reject His offers of salvation.

Oh that many more may now, while there is yet time, taste that the Lord is gracious, and in faith come to Christ "as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, that they also, as lively stones, may be built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ"!

Wherefore also it is contained in the Scriptures, "Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner-stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe He is precious: but unto them which are disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the Head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence" (1 Peter 2:3-9). But now we shall apply our telescope to the second star in this bright constellation and consider Christ as THE NAIL, and first I must explain that there is more implied in the word than we commonly understand by a nail. ■■■■■■ (yathed), rendered in the Septuagint π■σσαλος, is applied, first, to a tent pin which is driven into the earth, and to which the tent is tied (Exodus

27:19; Exodus 35:18; Judges 4:21-22), and, secondly, to a strong peg, or pin, built into the wall of the Eastern building (Ezekiel 15:3; Isaiah 22:22-23). In either case it denotes strength (see marginal reading of Ezra 9:8) and equal firmness with the building itself. That this is a Messianic title appears clear from Isaiah 22:21-25, which, though in the first instance addressed to Eliakim, doubtless refers in its fulness to none other than the Messiah, of Whom Isaiah uses the same language (Isaiah 9:6) as here in the former clause (Isaiah 22:23); and, in fact, the Lord Jesus actually applied it to Himself (compare Revelation 3:7 with Isaiah 22:22). Now in this passage we read, “And the key of the house of David will I lay upon His shoulder; so He shall open, and none shall shut; and He shall shut, and none shall open. And I will fasten Him as a nail” (■■■■■■) “in a sure place; and He shall be for a glorious throne to His Father’s house. And they shall hang upon Him all the glory of His Father’s house, the offspring and the issue, all the vessels of small quantity, from the vessels of cups, even to all the vessels of flagons.”

Here the figure is not that of a pin, or stake, to which the ropes of a tent are fastened, but of the strong peg which is built into the wall, and the same is, I believe, the meaning of this figure in our text. The peg or nail when thus fastened in a “sure place” served a double purpose: first, its use was to bear burdens4; and in this light we easily understand the signification and importance of this figure as a symbol of the Messiah. He is not only the foundation of the Christian Church, but, to those who are in it, He is the “Nail in a sure place,” upon Whom they can hang all their burdens and cares and anxieties. Ah! how many there are of God’s children who know Jesus as the foundation of their hopes for eternity, but little as their Burden-bearer, Who “bears their griefs and carries their sorrows”! “Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He will sustain thee.” Cast it upon Him, for you are not able to bear it yourself, but He is “the Nail in a sure place”—almighty, and that which is more than enough to overwhelm you, even though you may be one of the mightiest of the Lord’s host, is as nothing to Him Who “upholds all things by the word of His power.” Cast thy burden upon Him, and leave it with Him. Take it not unto thyself again.

4 This seems clear from Isaiah 22:25, where, speaking of the overthrow of Shebna, who was supposed to be as firmly fixed as “a nail in a sure place,” he says, “And the burden on it shall be cut off.”

What a blessed relationship of Christ to His people is this as represented by the figure before us! What should we do in the dark and cloudy day, when our hearts are overwhelmed on account of the trials and burdens of life, if we had not Christ near us as a present help in time of trouble? But let us remember, that if we would know Christ as our ■■■■■■ (Nail), we must first know Him as the foundation on Whom we build our hopes for eternity, for His first title, according to the ordering of the Spirit of God, is, ■■■■■■ (Corner-Stone). The nail or peg is only for the use of those who are inside the Eastern building, and so Christ is only known in this special relationship to those who are inside His fold and who trust Him and cast themselves upon Him with all their joys and sorrows. The second purpose for which the “nail is fastened in a sure place” is, that upon it may hang all the glory of the house, “all vessels of small quantity, from the vessels of goblets, to all the vessels and flagons” (Isaiah 22:24). A great portion of the wealth of the ancients, especially those of the East, consisted in gold and silver vessels and in changes of raiment. These, as well as the shields, swords, and suits of armour taken in battle, of which they were very proud, and their other finest ornaments, they used, with Eastern ostentation and parade, to hang on the peg which was generally built into the wall in the most conspicuous position for display, and to the admiration of

those who entered the building (1 Kings 10:10; 1 Kings 10:17; 1 Kings 10:21; Song of Solomon 4:4). Does not this teach us a precious lesson as to what we are to do with Jesus? God wants us to hang that in which consists our “glory” upon Christ—all our possessions; our talents; our affections and our love—all our best belong to our blessed Lord, Who has purchased us, and all we have, by His own precious blood, and must be consecrated to His service. Nor can any single Christian say that he has nothing to present to Christ. He may not have as much as others, but that he has nothing he cannot say, for has he not at least a loving heart and an adoring spirit to offer, which is most to be esteemed? There was a place on the nail for the “cup” as well as for the “flagon,” or large bottle, and perhaps in some cases “the vessel of small quantity” looked quite as beautiful when hung on the peg as “the vessel of large quantity.” And so what man calls it “small offerings” of either substance or service, from those who have little, is perhaps more acceptable to God, Who weighs, not the gift, but the motive, than what we call “large offerings” from those who have much. But whether it is the ten talents or the one talent, Christ is He to Whom it must be consecrated, and if it is applied to any other use, it is misspent, and when we shall be made manifest before His judgment throne we shall have to own it to our shame and confusion of face. Alas! how little are Christ’s claims recognised in this regard, even by His own redeemed people! And if this be a test, which I believe it to be, and a fair one, of our spiritual life and the extent of our consecration to God, we have much cause to humble ourselves in dust and ashes and earnestly to cry for mercy. Let us ask, for instance, as to what portion of their wealth Christians consecrate to their Lord, Who has given Himself for them.

“From what I have known of Christians during my extensive travels, my full conviction is,” says the veteran man of faith George Müller, “that if Christians were to enter into what is contained in that word” (giving), “at least twenty times more would be done by the Church of God for missions, for the circulation of the Holy Scriptures and tracts, for the spread of the truth throughout the world, for all kind of Christian work, and for the poor, than is now accomplished.”5 But this is not in accordance with the mind of God, Whose will is that we should glorify His Son by giving Him the first place in our hearts, and by consecrating to Him and His service our best. For this purpose God fastened Him “as a nail in a sure place,” that He may be for a glorious throne to His Father’s house, and that upon Him may hang “all the glory of His Father’s house, the offspring and the issue, all the vessels of small quantity, from the vessels of cups, to all the vessels of flagons.”

5 “England stands before all other countries in the extent of her missionary efforts. She gives more money (nearly a million sterling), she has a larger number of agents (some 1,400 or 1,500), and half the converts from heathenism are baptised by English missionaries. And yet, though thus at the top of the tree, England, alas! is inconceivably below the mark in missionary zeal and consecration. What are 1,500 men for the evangelisation of a thousand millions? And what is a million of money to a nation that spends £136,000,000 a year in the purchase of that body-and-soul-destroying luxury alcohol? For every pound that Christian England gives to missionary undertakings for the salvation of the heathen, she spends £136 for the degradation and ruin of her own sons and daughters! Where is boasting, then? It is excluded! Would to God we could reverse the figures, and so set the world a worthy example! We may be, and are, the best in the matter of missions, but, oh! how bad is the best!” Regions Beyond, July, 1884. THE BATTLE BOW This title doubtless describes the character of Christ as given in Isaiah 63:1 &c., Psalms 110:5-6, Revelation 19:21., etc., when, at His second coming, He will be as a sharp sword in the

hand of the Almighty, that with it He should smite the nations who have filled up to the brim the cup of their iniquity, and rule them with the rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. This is an aspect of the character of Jesus on which our minds do not like to dwell. Neither does He Himself delight in judgment and vengeance, but it is absolutely necessary to vindicate the justice and power of God, Who is the moral Governor of the universe as well as Father and Refuge to all who have put their trust in Him. Anyhow, let us never forget that Isaiah not only describes the Messiah as One "Who was not to cause His voice to be heard in the streets nor to break the bruised reed or quench the smoking flax," but also as One Who "treads the peoples in His anger and tramples them in His fury, and their blood shall be sprinkled upon His garments and stain all His raiment." The apostle John, who loves to represent his glorious Master by the harmless and inoffensive lamb, tells us that he saw "heaven opened, and, behold, a white horse, and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war; His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns, and He had a name written that no man knew but He Himself, and He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood, . . . and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." But perhaps under the figure of the battle bow we have described the ammunition, or weapons of war, rather than the agent; and, if so, we may look at this title in another light, which more directly concerns us as followers of Christ. We have many battles to fight with Satan, the world, and that dreadful enemy—self. What is the best and surest way to gain the victory? Only if we have the almighty Christ as our Battle Bow shall we come off "more than conquerors." "He will be as a sharp arrow in the hearts of our enemies, whereby they will be made to fall under us." To illustrate what I mean, I may be permitted to relate a piece of experience of one, who is now in the presence of his Divine Master, who when on earth was a faithful witness to the truth.6 I heard this servant of God relate that as he was walking along the streets of one of the northern towns one day, bemoaning in his heart his want of success in his struggles against sin and the devil, he suddenly came across a group of boys who were playing marbles, and while he was looking on for a few minutes, a quarrel ensued between two boys, one of whom was much bigger than the other. The bigger boy, sure of success, offered to fight; and, as a commencement, gave the smaller boy a blow. The little fellow hesitated for some moments and burst out crying, but at last he said, "You wait a little, and I will go and call my big brother, and he will show you," and off he ran in haste to fetch his brother.

6 Henry Moorhouse The bigger boy, who was quite ready to fight with one who he knew was not so strong as himself, was not quite willing to encounter one of equal or superior strength, and so he took to his heels and fled. "Ah!" said the depressed Christian, who witnessed all that took place, "this is just what I have to do. When Satan comes to fight with me, instead of fighting with him in my own strength, as hitherto, I will henceforth tell him to wait till I fetch Christ, my Elder Brother, and I know he will not wait, for he has been already vanquished, and he dare not meet his Conqueror, Who has for ever banished him from His presence." That day marked an epoch in his religious experience. Let us ever realise that Christ has already overcome the devil, and when he comes to us to tempt us, let us call on the Name of the Lord; that is the strongest resistance we can offer him, and he will flee from us. Christ has also overcome the world (John 16:33), and He can easily give us the victory over it too. And He will also give us the victory over our own selves if we only know Him as the "Battle Bow," if we only open our hearts wide to Him, that He may come in, "conquering and to conquer." THE ABSOLUTE RULER.7 In a preceding chapter we have spoken of Messiah as the Mowshel (■■■■■■), or as the One Who is, as it were, God's Viceroy

or deputy Ruler. Again, elsewhere, we have viewed Him as the ■■■■■■■ (King) on the throne of David, but here we advance a step further, for the special word ■■■■■■ (Nowgaish), by which He is here called, literally signifies “exactor” or “absolute ruler,”8 and describes Him as what He will be on His second advent—the most absolute and autocratic Monarch the world has yet seen.

7 The construction of the last clause of our text is rather peculiar in the original, and has led to conflicting translations and interpretations. In rendering it as I have done, I have been guided more by the context and obvious sense, than by strict principles of Hebrew grammar, and I admit that it is capable also of the following rendering: “Out of him” (Judah) “shall come forth every ruler together,” or “every ruler united.” But even if this be the most correct reading, it would still apply to the Messiah, inasmuch as He embraces in Himself a variety of different functions. Thus, for instance, He is represented by the prophets as being “a Priest upon His throne” (Zechariah 6:1-15); and not only as Israel’s King, but as the Prince (Ezekiel 37:24-25). The Messiah was to be like unto Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15), who in himself united the different offices of prophet, priest, and king, so that the plural term is quite applicable to Him on that account. Just as His atoning death can be spoken of in the plural (see Hebrew of Isaiah 53:9), on account of the various sacrifices receiving their fulfilment in His own body, which He offered once and for all, so, in a sense, He is many also in His reign, because all authority will meet in Him as the centre.

Aaron Pick, formerly Hebrew Professor at the University of Prague, in his “Literal Translation of the Twelve Minor Prophets,” renders our text thus, “From him the Corner, from him the Nail, from him the Battle Bow, yea from him shall come forth He that conquereth all together.” That ■■■■■■ is here used in a good sense, I have not only the authority of Parkhurst, Gesenius, Lowth, and others, but also that of the Targum, Rashi, and Kimchi.

8 This is the meaning of the kindred Ethiopic term, and is doubtless the sense in which it is used in Isaiah 3:12; Isaiah 14:2; Isaiah 60:17, and in our text. See Gesenius’ Hebrew Lexicon on this word. Being infinite in wisdom, He will require no senate or councillors to assist Him in the administration of His kingdom, and being infinite in goodness and love, there will be no danger in His possession of absolute power. Could He, Who is the Righteous and Holy One, exercise His prerogatives in any other way but righteousness and holiness? Christ will represent on earth the sovereignty of God. Do our minds shrink from the thought of the almighty power wielded by the Being Who holds us in His hands, and Who works His own will in heaven and on earth? Listen! “There is a truth we should never disconnect from the fact of the sovereignty of God, a truth which presents it in an aspect which attracts us; we should never separate from the thought of the sovereignty of God the character of the Being to Whom this sovereignty belongs. I want you to realise a truth which has done good to my own soul many a time, and has sent relief to my heart, as I have thought about the sovereignty of God. It is this: that the sovereignty of God is the sovereignty of good. There is one God, and He is good. The rule of God is the rule of goodness; it is not merely power and wisdom, but the rule of goodness itself, and the government of God is the government of love; for God is love; from everlasting to everlasting, God is love.”9 Anyhow this title is applicable to Christ, for the reason that when He comes to reign He will exact from the nations, with the rod of iron, homage and an acknowledgment of His claims which they now refuse. “Be wise now therefore, oh ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little.”

9 From an address at Mildmay Conference Hall by the Rev. H Grattan Guinness. But what lesson does this title of Christ teach Christians now? Does it not proclaim aloud that if we would know and follow Him, we must acknowledge Him, not only as Lord and Master in a general way, but as the One Who has all rule over us—as the autocratic Governor, Whose word is law in every detail of life? Bunyan tells us that when Prince Emmanuel came to take possession of the town of Mansoul, Diabolus called together a council of war, where it was resolved to send as special envoy to make terms with Emmanuel an old man, Mr. Loth-to-stoop by name, “a stiff man in his way and a great doer for Diabolus.” This man went, and on being granted an audience by Emmanuel he said, after a Diabolonian ceremony or two, “Great Sir, my master hath sent me to tell your Lordship that he is willing, rather than to go to war, to deliver up into your hands one half of the town of Mansoul. I am therefore, to know if your Mightiness will accept of this proposal.” Then Emmanuel answered, “The whole is mine by gift and purchase, wherefore I will never lose one half.” Then said Mr. Loth-to-stoop, “Sir, my master hath said that he will be content that you shall be the nominal and titular Lord of all if he may possess but a part.” But Emmanuel replied, “The whole is Mine really, not in name and word only, wherefore I will be the sole Lord and Possessor of all, or of none at all of Mansoul.” Again Mr. Loth-to-stoop ventured with a proposition. “Sir,” he said, “behold the condescension of my master! He says that he will be content if he may have but assigned to him some place in Mansoul as a place to live privately in, and you shall be Lord of all the rest.” But again Prince Emmanuel answered, “The Father hath given Me all, and I will lose nothing—not, not a hoof nor a hair. I will not therefore grant him, no, not the least corner in Mansoul to dwell in; I will have it all to Myself.”

No, there is no compromise between God and mammon, Christ and the devil.

Christ will have all rule in our hearts or none at all; and, as a test of our loyalty, He will have us put entirely under His control our will, our purses, and our time—yea, all that we are and have. And oh! the blessedness of thus entirely acquiescing in the will of Him Whose thoughts to us are thoughts of peace and not of evil! Only in proportion to the measure of rule that we allow Christ to exercise over us is the measure of the fulness of blessing and joy that we experience; and if He take absolute control over us, it is only in order to give us absolute rest unto our souls and to assure for us the greater amount of present and eternal good.

1.06. Moses and Christ: An Analogy and Contrast

"The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thy brethren, like unto me; unto Him ye shall hearken; according to all that thou desiredst of the Lord thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, neither let me see this great fire anymore, that I die not. And the Lord said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put My words in His mouth; and He shall speak unto them all that I shall command Him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto My words which He shall speak in My name, I will require it of him."—Deuteronomy 18:15-19.

CHAPTER VI.

MOSES AND CHRIST: AN ANALOGY AND CONTRAST The first question which naturally occurs to my mind, on reading the above passage, is, Who is this Prophet, like unto Moses, Whom God promised to raise up unto Israel? Some Jewish commentators assert that Joshua was meant, but surely that cannot be, for after Joshua's instalment into office as Moses' successor, it is still declared that "the Prophet like unto Moses had not yet come." "And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the Lord commanded Moses;" and then, lest any should think that he was the prophet whom God promised to raise up, there follows immediately after the declaration on the authority of the Spirit of God, "And there arose not yet a prophet in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face" (Deuteronomy 34:10, Heb.). Who, then, is that Prophet?1

1 "The Rabbis and Jewish commentators are divided in their application of this passage, which shows that they have no authoritative interpretation, but that each one utters only his own private opinion.

"Abarbanel suggests that Jeremiah was the prophet like unto Moses, and gives fourteen points of resemblance, which, however, are not at all distinctive. He says, for instance, 'Moses often reproved Israel for their sins, and so did Jeremiah.' Yes; and so did Isaiah, Ezekiel, and all the other prophets. Again, he says, 'Moses told Israel respecting their captivity and their deliverance therefrom, and so did Jeremiah;' but did not Isaiah, Ezekiel, Amos, and almost all the other prophets, do the same? The fact is, Abarbanel was very unfortunate in his choice of a prophet to whom to apply this passage. 'Moses was a deliverer, the beginner of Israel's national independence, the author of the song of triumph, and, under God, supreme governor. Jeremiah was involved in the calamities of his people, a witness of national ruin, the author of the Lamentations, and the helpless victim of oppression. He is, therefore, not the prophet 'like unto Moses.'

"Aben Ezra, and Bechai, and others, apply this passage to Joshua, but Joshua was not mediator, he was not the revealer of the will of God, neither had he any direct vision of the Almighty.

“Rashi, Kimchi, and Alshech say that the prophet like unto Moses implies a succession of prophets, one after the other. They acknowledge, therefore, that they could not find any individual to whom similarity to Moses could be ascribed. But against this interpretation we have, first, the fact that ■■■■■■■ (prophet) is singular—God says not prophets, but ‘a Prophet’—secondly, that this word ■■■■■■■ is never taken collectively, nor are the prophets elsewhere spoken of collectively; thirdly, that sacred history points out no such succession of one prophet; and fourthly, this and the preceding interpretations are all contrary to two plain passages of Scripture: Numbers 12:6-8 asserts distinctly that Moses was a prophet unlike the generality of prophets, and Deuteronomy 34:10-12, a passage inserted probably by Ezra, asserts that ‘there arose no prophet like unto Moses.’ ”—DR. ALEXANDER MCCAUL’S “Lectures on the Messiahship of Jesus,” Appendix of Interpretation.

More than eighteen centuries ago there appeared in Judea a wonderful Person, and the testimony of the multitudes who were attracted to Him, when they saw the miracles He did, was, “This is of a truth that Prophet that should come into the world” (John 6:14. See also John 3:18, John 3:22-23).

He to Whom the multitudes thus testified was none other than Jesus of Nazareth, of Whom it was not only written in that single passage, but in all the “scroll of the Book” (Psalms 40:7, Heb.), and to Whom not only Moses, but all the other prophets, from Samuel and those who follow after, “have borne record.” I am speaking here more particularly to those who, nominally at least, receive Jesus as the Prophet of the new covenant, “that Prophet that should come into the world,” so that all I have to do is to remind them, first, that whatever Moses was to Israel, that, and more than that, is the blessed Lord Jesus to us, and, secondly, that if we desire to be fully acquainted with Christ’s different relationships to us, we must be thoroughly acquainted with the different relationships in which Moses stood to the Jews. To obtain this knowledge we must bestow more study on the Old Testament Scriptures than is commonly done by most Christians.

Now it is not my purpose to enter here minutely into the life of Moses and to show in each detail a parallel in the history of Jesus, but I shall endeavour merely to give a brief outline of the most prominent features of the character of Moses in his different relations to Israel, especially those features in which he may fairly be taken as a type of Christ; and first, of course, we notice that Moses was a

PROPHET, and one superior in rank to any other (Numbers 12:1-8) who subsequently held that office in Judah or Israel,2 inasmuch as the revelation communicated by God through him is the immutable basis of all God’s revelation to man, not one jot or tittle of which shall remain unfulfilled (Matthew 5:18), and his description (Deuteronomy 13:1 &c.; Deuteronomy 18:22) the criterion which throughout all the future was to decide between the true prophet and the false.

2 “Jehovah distinctly maintains the supremacy of Moses, and traces that to His own sovereign appointment. It was true that the prophets among them spake as the Lord hath instructed them, but there were particularly three things in which the pre-eminence of Moses was conspicuous. That which was exceptional and ecstatic with them was ordinary and on the level of his common experience with him. The prophets needed a special preparation for the reception of God’s communications. They needed, as Kurtz has expressed it, ‘to pass out of the sphere of the senses, and that of intelligent consciousness, into a state of super-sensual perception.’ The Lord made Himself known to them in visions and dreams. But He spoke to Moses in his ordinary

every-day condition. The great lawgiver received the Divine communications, not when he was in a trance, or when he was asleep, but in his usual intelligent consciousness; and so it came to pass that the partial obscurity which was necessarily connected with the revelations that came through others was conspicuously absent in those which were made by Moses. Again, Moses saw the similitude of Jehovah; and although this cannot mean that he beheld the unveiled glory of the Lord, it must denote that there was before him some visible and objective reality, which symbolised for him the presence of Jehovah, and from which, as from the mouth of a confidential friend, he received, not in dark and mysterious utterances, but in plain and unmistakable terms, the messages which he was to convey to his fellow-men. There was thus a difference, if not in the kind of inspiration which he enjoyed, at least in the nature of the revelations which were made to him; for as the mind of a man takes clearly in that which is only as a wonder or a dream to a child, so Moses distinctly perceived that which to other prophets was little better than a vague and incoherent vision."—"Moses the Lawgiver," by W. M. TAYLOR. A prophet is one who is filled with the Spirit of God, and by Him commissioned for a special mission—he is, as it were, God's representative to the people to whom he is sent.

Under the term prophet are included three different functions, all of which were exercised by Moses. First, that of a teacher (Deuteronomy 4:5; Deuteronomy 31:22; 2 Kings 4:22-23), who was not only to communicate to the people the will of God, but to teach them how to bring their lives into harmony with His revealed will. Secondly, that of foretelling future events, for which in a special sense they had to be possessed with, and inspired by, the Spirit of God (Deuteronomy 18:15; Deuteronomy 28:1 &c; Deuteronomy 29:1 &c.; Deuteronomy 30:1 &c.). Thirdly, that of a judge, who, in the place of God, was arbitrator, particularly in points of dispute between man and his neighbour (Exodus 18:13; Judges 4:4-5).

Now, according to the Old Testament Scriptures, the Messiah too was to be a Teacher, Who, in an extraordinary manner, was to possess "the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of knowledge and counsel," and Who, with "the tongue of the learned," and "in parables," was to teach all nations the fear of God and His purpose in and through them (Isaiah 11:1-2; Isaiah 2:3, Isaiah 42:4; Psalms 78:2; Matthew 13:35); and how abundantly has this anticipation been realised in the person of Jesus of Nazareth! Has there ever been a man who spake as this Man? Have not even His enemies, those who are unwilling to submit their hearts to Him, at all times been constrained to submit their intellects to His teaching and exclaim, like the Pharisees and Herodians, "Master, we know that Thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest Thou for any man, for Thou regardest not the person of man"? And what a glorious Teacher is Jesus to those who have circumcised ears and hearts, His followers, who, like Mary, sit at their Master's feet, drinking in the gracious utterances that proceed out of His mouth! How incomparable and Divine are those wonderful words as they fall from His lips teaching us about our Father Who is in heaven, and how we may live to His glory and for the good of our fellow-men! How forcible and sublime are the lessons which He engraves on our hearts from the imagery of nature!—lessons of trust and confidence in the ever-living and ever-present God, Who, in whatsoever circumstances we are, knoweth the things we are in need of, and without Whose knowledge and consent nothing can happen to us (Matthew 6:25-34). Like a mighty river have the precious sayings and doctrines of the greater than Solomon been flowing on in this desert-world for more than eighteen centuries, and still the waters are full of life and refreshment to those who

come and drink of it. Still it has quickening virtue, as it had at the commencement to the son of the widow of Nain; and convicting power, as it had to the scribes and Pharisees when they brought to Him the woman taken in adultery; and comfort, as it had to the sad hearts at Bethany. Oh blessed Teacher, Whose words are spirit and life (John 6:63), evermore instruct and teach Thy Church in the way that she should go; guide her with Thine eye!

And, as to foretelling future events, I would merely like to point out the fact, that, for the most part, there is a striking similarity in this respect between the prophecies of Christ and the prophecies of Moses. Moses predicted Israel's dispersion and spiritual degradation, and spoke of the dreadful calamities that should come upon them during the time that they should be subservient to the Gentiles (Deuteronomy 28:1 &c.; Deuteronomy 29:1 &c.); and the song containing these predictions (Deuteronomy 31:19), which he composed for them, is cherished, even with superstitious reverence, by the Jews unto this day, proving both as a "witness against them" that they have wandered from their God and rebelled against His holy law, and also that God did indeed speak to Moses. But the present state of the Jews and their land, which proves the claims of Moses as a prophet of God, also testifies to the Divine commission of Jesus of Nazareth; for He too predicted Israel's scattering and oppression by the Gentiles, and the desolation of Jerusalem, and that not one stone should be left upon another of their magnificent national structure—the Temple (Matthew 21:28-45; Matthew 23:37-39; Matthew 24:2). The Jews say often, "Give us evidences from the five books of Moses to the Messiahship of Jesus, and we will believe in Him." Here is one point. According to Moses any one claiming to be a prophet was to be tested by this touchstone: "When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken; the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously" (Deuteronomy 18:22). But we naturally infer, that, if the thing he foretells do literally come to pass, that is a thing which the Lord hath spoken, and the prophet is a true one. Now the things which were prophesied by Jesus did come to pass; then, according to the test laid down by Moses, He is proved to be a true Prophet of God. Take, for instance, His prediction with regard to the utter destruction of the Temple. Has it not come to pass even as He foretold, that not one stone of it should be left upon another? Several times have the Jews made determined attempts to rebuild the Temple, but there its ruins stand, as a testimony to the foreknowledge of Jesus.3

3 "The Jews understood well the meaning of the above passage (Haggai 2:1-9), as also Malachi 3:1, where it is said that the Lord Messiah, for Whom they were looking, was to come 'to His Temple,' and acknowledging that it was a vain thing to look for the appearance of Messiah when there was no temple, they actually attempted several times to rebuild their temple in the reigns of Adrian, of Constantine, and especially in that of Julian, who, out of hatred to the Christians, himself offered to pay the expenses of it, and the heathen, for the same reason, with great zeal assisted them, but God Himself interposed and frustrated their purpose by terrible earthquakes, which threw up stones and globes of fire out of the very foundations of the Temple, destroying both the workmen and spectators and devouring the stones. This is recorded not only by heathen and Christian writers, but also by our own Rabbis" ("Shalsheteth Hakkaba," p. 102; "Tzemach David," p. 20)—Page 18 of my little book "What think ye of Christ?"

"This is recorded in 'Socrat. Hist. Eccle.,' L. iii. C. xx.; and in 'Sosom,' L. v. C. xxii., who appeals to several witnesses of it then living. Chrysostom (Orat. 2, contra Jud.) says, 'We are all witnesses of this thing.' But, beside these testimonies of Christians, this is likewise told by Ammianus

Marcellinus (L. xxiii. C. i.), who was not a Christian."—LESLIE'S "Short and Easy Method with the Jews."

Take another and perhaps more striking prophecy of His. "And I, if I be lifted up," He said, meaning His crucifixion, "will draw all men unto Me," and with the Christian Church before us and the rapid progress Christianity is making before our very eyes, has it not already received—and is it not still increasingly receiving—a wonderful fulfilment? But Moses not only foretold Israel's scattering and curse, but also their restoration to their land and to God's favour, and their future blessing (Deuteronomy 30:1 &c.); and so Christ: He, too, spoke of the time when the now withered fig tree shall again bud and flower (Matthew 24:32-33), the time when Jerusalem shall no more be trodden down of the Gentiles, and when all the Jewish nation shall cry, "Hosannah! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord!"4

4 "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the fulness of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke 21:24). That surely implies that when "the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled," Jerusalem will again have restored to her at least her former independence. Then with regard to Israel's national conversion the Lord Jesus said, "I say unto you, Ye shall not see Me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Matthew 23:39); and here again the time of Israel's blindness—when they cannot see Him—is limited by a "till," after which Jesus declares that they shall see Him and cry, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." Now in the Psalm to which Jesus refers (Psalms 118:26.) it is after their national restoration, and after "all the nations that will compass Jerusalem about" (Psalms 118:10) are "destroyed" (see also Zechariah 14:1 &c.), that the Messiah, "the stone which the builders once refused," when thus manifesting Himself as Israel's Deliverer in their time of greatest need, is represented as being greeted with the acclamations, "Hosannah! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord!" Israel's national restoration and glory is also implied in the answer the Lord Jesus gave to the apostles in the first chapter of Acts to the question, "Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" That the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem (Micah 4:8) is taken for granted, by Christ; and that it is only a matter of time as to when it will take place there can be no doubt after a careful study of that passage. And these prophecies, too, will be as literally fulfilled as were those predicting their scattering and desolation. Already a ray of light is visible on the horizon, which may be the precursor of the light of Jehovah which is to arise and once more shine on Israel in all its glory. Oh! that the Lord's remembrancers would keep no silence and give God no rest until He once more establish and make Jerusalem a praise in the earth!

Then, lastly, Christ is like unto Moses in that He too is a Judge: "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." This feature of our Lord's character will doubtless assume greater prominence at His second coming, when He will occupy the judgment seat on several most solemn occasions (1 Corinthians 3:11; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Matthew 25:1 &c.; Daniel 12:1 &c.; Revelation 22:15). But even now Christ is Judge in a sense; for just as the head is judge and arbitrator in everything concerning the body, so Christ, being in the same relationship to the Church, also exercises the same functions to her. Would that Christians realised more the fact, that He Who is always with them as their Saviour and Guide is He "Whose eyes are as a flame of fire," too pure and holy to behold iniquity, except to condemn it, as it would doubtless exercise a wholesome influence in heightening their moral tone!

But, secondly, the prophet Moses was commissioned by God to be Israel's

REDEEMER.

God, in His infinite wisdom, permitted the children of Israel to be enslaved by Pharaoh and the Egyptians, who "made them to serve with rigour, and made their lives bitter with hard bondage in mortar and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field." Hard was their bondage, and grinding the oppression of Egypt; but the living and compassionate God, Whose ears are open to the sighs of the downtrodden and oppressed, heard their groanings, and remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and sent them, according to His promise (Genesis 15:13, Genesis 15:16), a deliverer.

He called Moses, saying, "Come now, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt" (Exodus 3:10). "And this same Moses did God send to be ruler and deliverer unto the children of Israel. . . . And he brought them out, after he had showed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red Sea, and in the wilderness" (Acts 7:20-39). This achievement stands out most prominently in the life of Moses, and has immortalised him for ever as the Divinely appointed emancipator of Israel from Egyptian slavery. But there is another bondage and another redemption, of which Egypt and the redemption accomplished by Moses are but imperfect types. Man, at the fall, sold himself as captive to Satan, and has been a slave to sin ever since (Romans 6:16); and the tyranny of the devil over those who willingly sell themselves to him is infinitely more dreadful and crushing than even Pharaoh's tyranny over Israel; and the state of servitude of those whom he holds "bound as captives" (2 Timothy 2:26) is even far more appalling and degrading than that in which the Jews were in Egypt. But the same God Who promised redemption to the family of Abraham (Genesis 15:13-14) also promised redemption to the family of man (Genesis 3:15). And just as Israel's redemption from Egypt was accomplished by one "from the midst of them," who was in all things like themselves, except that he was not like them in a state of servitude, so He that should be the Redeemer of mankind was to be the "Seed of the woman" (Genesis 3:15), "like unto Moses" (Deuteronomy 18:18), real man, "in all things made like unto His brethren" (Hebrews 2:17), except that He was to be free from servitude to Satan, or, in other words, "without sin;" for He could not, if He were Himself a slave to sin, ransom others from the power of it. And, since the redemption He was to accomplish was to be effected, as we shall see farther on, by "giving His own life a ransom for many," He could only do so on the supposition that His life was not already forfeited through sin; for the decree of the Eternal is, "The soul that sinneth it shall die;" so that, supposing the Messiah were even more righteous than Abraham, Moses, or any of the prophets, and only committed one single sin in His life, His life would have been lost for that sin (Ezekiel 18:24), so that He could not even be His own Redeemer, and how much less the Redeemer of the world! This is no more than saying that the "Seed of the woman," Who was to come as the Emancipator of the whole human race from the power of sin and the devil, must be Divine, as well as human. As mere man He could not be exempt from sin, "for there is no man that sinneth not" and "there is not a righteous man upon the earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not" (Ecclesiastes 7:20, Heb.). How then could He be the Redeemer of the world? Oh! ye who tell us that Jesus is the Redeemer of mankind in the sense merely that He taught us by His example how to live perfectly in this world, do ye not blow to the winds even the one grain of truth contained in your assertion if you reject His Divinity? If He were mere man, He would Himself be imperfect, and how could the imperfect be the type of perfection? And, if ye

answer me, that Jesus was perfect though mere man, I challenge you to produce me one other instance in the whole history of the human race as an example. Until you do so, I shall not believe in the possibility of it; and will ever, as long as God gives me grace and strength, lift up my voice like a trumpet, and proclaim aloud your inconsistency in that you hold up Jesus as a type of perfection, and yet put Him down as mere man. No, it was “His own Son, made of a woman and under the law, Whom God sent forth, when the fulness of time was come, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons” (Galatians 4:4-5). Here then is one other point of analogy between Moses and Jesus. Moses was Israel’s redeemer, and so the Messiah was to be, according to the Old Testament Scriptures (Isaiah 59:20), a Redeemer; but in none of the other prophets is this characteristic found. This fact is in itself a sufficient argument against the idea still largely prevalent among the Jews that the Messiah’s mission on earth was merely to effect the national restoration of Israel to the land of their fathers; for the redemption Messiah was to accomplish was to benefit all nations alike, as is clear from many passages in the Old Testament Scriptures, and especially from Isaiah 49:6, where God Himself is represented speaking to the Messiah thus, “It is a light thing that Thou shouldst be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give Thee for a Light to the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be My salvation to the ends of the earth.”

If the salvation, or deliverance, ascribed as the Messiah’s mission to the world, was in its nature merely national restoration, that would not affect the Gentiles, for many of them do not need such a salvation at all. The deliverance associated with Messiah’s advent must be such as will alike meet the need of both Jew and Gentile, of man universally. It must therefore be spiritual in its character—a revelation of life and immortality through the knowledge of God. All men are not nationally dispersed and in bondage as the Jews have been, and in a sense still are, but all men are the servants of sin and Satan, and to redeem men from this state Messiah was to appear. The Son of man on His first advent came not to set up an earthly kingdom and to he ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many. And that this, namely, giving His life a ransom, was to be the means by which the Messiah was to effect the redemption of the world, was first typified for long ages by the Divinely appointed system of sacrifices. Look at yonder poor innocent lamb led along by the Jew to the altar, there to propitiate by its blood for the sin he had committed, and by its death to restore to him the life he had forfeited. Does it not graphically picture to you Him Who was to “be led as a lamb to the slaughter,” “the Lamb of God Which taketh away the sin of the world”? Then, secondly, the same truth was clearly proclaimed by the prophets. Thus Daniel (Daniel 9:26) says, “The Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself,” and Isaiah in his fifty-third chapter5 says, “He was wounded for our transgression, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement with a view to our peace was laid on Him; and with His stripes we are healed. . . . Jehovah made the iniquity of us all to meet on Him. . . . It pleased Jehovah to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief, when He was made a trespass offering” (■■■■■■) . . . “He hath poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”

5 See chapter on Isaiah 53:1-12.

According to this prophecy (Isaiah 53:1 &c.; see also Psalms 22:1 &c.), the Messiah, Who is perfectly innocent (Isaiah 53:9) in Himself, suffers for the guilty; the perfectly righteous is represented as having all our sins laid upon Him, and, as a natural consequence, the wrath of

God, that should fall upon us, falls upon Him, and Divine justice demands the penalty of the law, which is death, at His hands; and so, for us, He is cut off from the land of the living. Thus, “we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace.” And this redemption is not for the body merely, from a state of bondage or captivity, but eternal (Hebrews 9:12), for body and soul, from Satan, sin, and death (Hebrews 2:14-15; Titus 2:14); and it is not for one nation only, for listen to the chorus of those who from “among men” (Revelation 14:4) have been brought, by the grace of God, to partake of the benefits of Christ’s finished work. “Thou art worthy,” they cry, “to take the book and to open the seals thereof, for Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation!”

But, thirdly, Moses was the

MEDIATOR between Israel and God. We cannot, and dare not, approach God as we are in ourselves; for God is holy, and we are sinful: God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all, but we are altogether darkness (Romans 1:21; Ephesians 4:17-18; Acts 26:17-18); and just as darkness shrinks from light, so naturally do those shrink from God who do not recognise the existence of the One Mediator, of Whom Moses was a type. As an evidence of the necessity of a mediator between God and man, I might point to the universal consciousness of mankind as betrayed in the different religious systems; for there has never been a form of religion known even among the savages and heathen nations, without the idea of mediation forming a part of that religion. The sense of God’s incomparable holiness and supremacy, and the consciousness of both his own unworthiness and of having offended the Most High, has always prevailed with man (Joshua 24:19; Amos 3:3), which has made him long for a daysman (Job 9:33) who should be the medium of reconciliation between God and him, or for “a man who should make up the hedge and stand in the gap” (Ezekiel 22:30) between the ineffable and holy Jehovah and finite, sinful man. Behold yon solemn assembly round Mount Sinai. The people, after careful preparation and cleansing, seek to draw nigh to their God. Here they are, “brought forth by Moses out of the camp to meet with God,” and here, at the nether part of the mount, they await with fear and trembling an interview with the God Who had brought them out, by His almighty power, from the bondage of Egypt. God descended, but lo! it was in fire, and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, . . . and there were thunders and lightnings, and the noise of a tempest, and the mountain smoking, and when the people saw it they removed and stood afar off. And they said to Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear, but let not God speak with us, lest we die. Now, therefore, why should we die? for this great fire will consume us. . . . Go thou near and hear all that the Lord our God shall say, and speak thou unto us all that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee, and we will hear and do (Exodus 19:16; Exodus 19:18; Exodus 20:16-20; Deuteronomy 5:25, Deuteronomy 5:27). Here is an emphatic testimony proclaimed aloud by a whole nation, and endorsed by God Himself (Deuteronomy 5:28), that there is a necessity for a mediator between God and man. Who is there who, in the light of this truth, will dare take it upon himself to approach God by himself? I tell him that the flames of the Almighty will devour him, “for our God is a consuming fire.” In this respect, too, Jesus is the Prophet like unto Moses, inasmuch as He is the Mediator of the new and better covenant—the Only One Mediator between God and man (Hebrews 8:6; Hebrews 9:15; Hebrews 12:24; 1 Timothy 2:5). And just as all the knowledge the children of Israel had of God came to them through Moses, so those now only know God and His will concerning them to whom the Man

Christ Jesus reveals Him. “I am the Way and the Truth and the Life,” He says of Himself: “no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me” (John 14:6). “No one knoweth the Father, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him” (Luke 10:22). But let me next remind you that Moses was Israel’s

INTERCESSOR. In this connection please read Exodus 32:7-14; Exodus 32:32-33; Numbers 14:11-20. On the occasions mentioned in those passages, you will find, that God was specially displeased with Israel on account of their sins and the hardness of their hearts, and threatened to utterly destroy them; and, if not for the intercession of Moses, this might actually have taken place; but Moses laid hold on God’s promises, and pleaded on their behalf: “Remember,” he prayed, “Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Thy servants, to whom thou swarest by Thine own self.” “And now, I beseech Thee, let the power of the Lord be great, according as Thou hast spoken, saying, The Lord is long-suffering and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, though by no means clearing the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation. Pardon, I beseech Thee, the iniquity of this people, according unto the greatness of Thy mercy, and as Thou hast forgiven this people from Egypt until now.” And what was the result? “And the Lord repented of the evil which He thought to do unto His people.” And the Lord said, “I have pardoned according to thy word, but as truly as I live all the earth shall be filled with the glory of Jehovah.” Now the Messiah, too, was to be an Intercessor, Who was “to make intercession for the transgressors” (Isaiah 53:12); and of our blessed Lord it is written, “Wherefore He is able to save them to the uttermost” (ε■ς τ■ παντελ■ς) “that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Hebrews 7:25). Again, Paul says, “Who is he that shall condemn? Shall Jesus Christ, that died, yea rather, that was raised from the dead, Who is at the right hand of God, Who also makest intercession for us?” (Romans 8:34, R.V. marginal reading). And Jesus Himself, before His ascension, left us as a legacy the comforting assurance, that He is praying for us (John 17:9; John 17:20; Luke 22:31-32, etc.). Oh Christian! rejoice in this assurance, for what more can you wish than to have such an Advocate with the Father? And remember with gratitude, since God always heard the prayer of Moses, who was a servant in His household, how much more will He hear the prayer of Christ, Who is His only-begotten and well-beloved Son! And besides, through Christ, those who are united to Him by faith stand in a much nearer relationship to God than that in which Israel, for whom Moses was making intercession, ever stood. Then in confidence commit thyself and thy cause into the hand of thy loving and exalted Lord. If thy brother, thine own conscience, or God’s broken law condemn thee, with a broken and penitent heart and contrite spirit confess thy sin, and thy righteous Advocate will plead for thee by pointing to the precious blood He shed for thee and the perfect obedience He rendered to God’s holy law, and God, for Christ’s sake, will forgive thee, and once more thou wilt be able to sing, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that shall condemn?” How full of consolation to the Christian, as well as to the sinner, is that invitation in Isaiah 55:7, where it says, “And let him return to Jehovah, for He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.” The word ■■■■■■■■ translated “abundantly,” literally means “multiply,” and if read in the light of Matthew 18:21-22, is, very precious. In this passage in Matthew, we are told that Peter came to Jesus, asking, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin, and I forgive him? until seven times?” But the Lord gave Peter a lesson in multiplication, and told him to multiply the seven by seventy: “I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.” But think you, Christian, that He Who teaches thee to multiply pardon to thy brother if he offend thee does not Himself know how to multiply much more abundantly pardon, peace, and joy

to those whom He has redeemed by His own precious blood, and whom He loved when they were yet in their sin? Yea, He will multiply pardon by an infinitely higher figure than the seven of our finite calculations, and all this God will do because our glorious Christ “ever liveth to make intercession for us.” Return to Him, then, if you have wandered from Him in heart or deed, and be assured that He will receive you graciously, and love you freely, and will say unto you, “Go in peace, and sin no more.” “Seeing, then, we have such an High-priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an High-priest Which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” But what the children of Israel next wanted after their redemption from Egypt was a

LEADER, for before they could enter Canaan and take possession of their promised land, they had “a great and terrible wilderness” to traverse, and many foes to encounter; and, moreover, the way was altogether strange to them, neither had they the necessaries to sustain life during their wanderings; what would they have done without the leadership of Moses? But God anticipated even this need, and made him who redeemed them to be also their leader, for though it was “His own glorious arm” that led them, it was none the less “by the right hand of Moses” (Isaiah 63:12); thus again and again we hear God’s command to Moses, “Go, lead this people” (Exodus 32:34); and he himself, in one of his touching parting addresses to the children of Israel in the plains of Moab, reminded them that he “led them forty years in the wilderness.”

Now the Messiah, too, was to be the Leader of His people, for God said of Him, “Behold, I have given Him for a Witness to the people, a Leader and Commander to the people” (Isaiah 55:4); and in John 10:1-42 our blessed Lord Jesus represents Himself not only as the Good Shepherd who layeth down His life for the sheep (our Redeemer), but also as the Leader of the sheep. Thus He says, “He calleth His own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him: for they know His voice” (John 10:3-4). Moses is represented as carrying the children of Israel in his bosom as “a nursing father beareth the sucking child” (Numbers 11:12), but oh! what is even this tenderness to the tenderness of Him of Whom it is written, “He shall gather His flock like a shepherd: He shall gather the lambs with His arms, and carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those that are with young”? (Isaiah 40:11). And does the Church of Christ need a guide and leader less than Israel? Verily, no! She, too, is, like Israel of old, a wanderer on her way to the land which God has promised her, for “this is not her resting place” (Hebrews 4:1; Hebrews 4:6; Hebrews 4:9); and the way to that “city which hath foundation,” which she is seeking, is also through a wilderness, which, though moral in its nature, is perhaps as great and terrible as that through which Israel passed. She, too, has many dangers and deadly foes to encounter, and is utterly ignorant of the way; how then could she have made the progress she has and come off victorious from the many battlefields where she has had to contend, not only against the people, kings, and rulers of the earth, “who were united against God and His Messiah,” but also with the “principalities and powers of darkness” and all the forces of the prince of darkness himself, without the leadership of the Captain of her salvation, Who all the time has guided her with His eye (Psalms 32:8) and led her by His own hand? But what Christ is to His Church as a whole He is also to every one of its members individually. “Lo, I am with you alway,” has been a blessed realisation in the experience of each one true Christian, who has only

sought His presence and looked up to Him for direction. “With you alway.” Oh! glorious all-sufficient promise! “With you” when you pass through the waters of affliction, just as Moses was with Israel when they passed through the Red Sea; “with you” when you walk through the fires of persecution, just as He was with Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah in the burning fiery furnace (Daniel 3:25); and still “with you” even when the road through which you pass is “utterly dark,” without even the faint light of human counsel or sympathy to guide your trembling footsteps (Isaiah 50:10); yes, “with you alway, even unto the end.” We sometimes are apt to think that those forty years which Moses spent in tending the flocks of his father-in-law in the wilderness of Horeb, and in the solitude of Midian, were lost time, but no: the eternal and wise God had a purpose in it, which, beside the opportunities it afforded him of communing with God and his own heart (an indispensable preparation for the undertaking of such a stupendous task as lay before him), was to acquaint him with the district through which he was to lead Israel in their future wanderings.6 He was acquainted with the coasts of the Red Sea long before Israel had to cross it, and with the wilderness of Sinai ere yet Israel experienced its dreariness and desolation, so that, in every way, he was the most reliable and qualified leader Israel could have had.

6 “ ‘Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh and dwelt in the land of Midian.’ The subsequent incidents of this narrative show clearly the region then inhabited by Jethro, and called ‘the land of Midian.’ It was the peninsula of Sinai.

“In this sanctuary of the hills, awaiting the time when the advancing purposes of God had ripened Israel for the great movement of its deliverance, and meanwhile unconsciously preparing for the mighty task before him, Moses spent, as St. Stephen informs us, no fewer than forty years. His wanderings would make him acquainted with every valley, plain, gorge, hill, and mountain of the whole region; with its population, whether native or that of the Egyptian mines; with every spring and well, and with all the resources of every kind offered by any spot: an education of supreme importance towards fitting him to guide his race, when rescued from Egypt, to the safe shelter and holy sanctuaries of this predestined scene of their long encampment. Still more, in those calm years, every problem to be solved in the organisation of a people would rise successively in his mind and find its solution; and above all, his own soul must have been disciplined and purified by isolation from the world and closer and more continual communion with God.”—GEIKIE, “Hours with the Bible,” vol. 2. p. 114.

Berthean (“Geschichte,” p. 242) thinks that Moses in Midian would come in contact with a form of faith of Abraham, preserved in Jethro’s tribe, purer than survived among the Jews in Egypt.

Even so Jesus, in order that He may be the more fitted to be the Leader of His followers in this world, was sent down to this earth by the Father in order that He might first Himself learn the way by which He was to bring many sons into glory (Hebrews 2:10); and so perfectly has He learnt it that there is not one single step throughout the pilgrimage of our lives which He is not acquainted with, and knows the dangers, difficulties, and trials, by which it is beset. Has He not Himself had to pass through the sea of troubles, so that He had to cry, “All Thy waves and Thy billows are gone over Me” (Psalms 42:7), experienced what it is to be without a home, hungry, thirsty, and weary? (Matthew 4:2; John 4:6; Matthew 8:20). Does He not know what it is to endure reproach, to be forsaken and despised of men, and to be “tempted as we are”? Yea, has He not Himself endured dreadful agonies and pains, and “tasted death,” and even experienced the most awful and dense

darkness, occasioned by the withdrawal of God's presence, when standing as our Substitute to answer to the call of Divine justice? Oh! then, what more reliable or more sympathising Leader can you have, Christian? And remember that He has trodden the rough and thorny path in order that He may now be able to lead you to your promised land by a more pleasant one. He does not necessarily lead those who follow Him now through the path of poverty, suffering, and pain, which He had to tread, except it be to teach them some specially precious lessons of His tender care and love; nor is it possible that those whom He leads can ever walk in the dense darkness occasioned by the hiding of God's face from them; for He Himself has said, "I am the Light of the world; he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." Rather the experience of those to whom He stands in the relationship of a Shepherd or Leader7 has generally been that they have everything that can conduce to their comfort, and that goodness and mercy follow them all their days, for "He maketh them to lie down in pastures of tender grass, and leads them by the waters of quietness. He restoreth their souls: He leadeth them in the paths of righteousness for His Name's sake!" And when they have to walk through trouble or the "valley of the shadow of death, He is still with them, and with His rod and His staff He comforts them." Yes, this is what our blessed Saviour is to us; He leads us all through life; He leads us through, or "carries us over"8 death, and even in heaven He still retains the character of Leader; for we read that there "the redeemed follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth." "For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (Revelation 7:17).

7 In the Hebrew ■■■■■■ means both Shepherd and Leader; in fact, the two terms become almost synonymous if we bear in mind that in the East the shepherd does not, as in Western lands, drive the sheep before, but "he leadeth them out, and goeth before them, and the sheep do follow him."

8 This is a justifiable rendering of ■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■ in Psalms 48:14. As a last point of analogy between Moses and Christ, I point to the fact that Moses was a

KING, as it is written, "He was king in Jeshurun, when the heads of the people and the tribes of Israel were gathered together" (Deuteronomy 33:5); and our Lord Jesus is King too.

He was born King (Matthew 2:2), and "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews," was inscribed on the cross on which He poured out His soul unto death, and now in heaven "He is exalted a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel and the forgiveness of sins;" and when He returns it will be as King, to sit on the throne of His father David and "reign in Mount Zion and before His ancients gloriously." It is true that, like Moses, He is as yet an uncrowned King, but soon He will return in power and glory; and then "on His head there shall be many crowns" (Revelation 19:12); and perhaps the one that will sparkle most gloriously on that head that was once in derision crowned with a crown of thorns will be that which will be put on it by repentant Israel—the crown of David, which is peculiarly His by right as the Son of David. It was not always that Moses was thus recognised as Israel's king. There was a time when on manifesting himself to Israel, and "supposing that they would have understood that he was their deliverer" (Acts 7:25), they rejected him, saying, "Who made thee a prince and a judge over us?" (Exodus 2:14), so that he had to flee and for forty years abide with Gentiles, out of whom also he took a bride for himself. Even so Christ, on His first advent, when He came to His own, "they that were His own received Him not."

They rejected Him, “and sent a message after Him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us” (Luke 19:14). And this has been the occasion of opening the door of grace to the Gentiles, out of whom are now gathered the majority of those who constitute the Church, which is the bride of Christ (Revelation 21:2, Revelation 21:9). But just as Moses, after his union with his Gentile wife, returned to his brethren according to the flesh when they were in their greatest distress, although they once rejected him, and delivered them, so Christ, after the election of that number which are to be brought into union with Him as His bride is complete, will once more return to Israel and deliver them from their national and spiritual bondage (Acts 15:14-18; Romans 11:25-26; Zechariah 12:10; Zechariah 14:1 &c.). Then shall be fulfilled the words of Jeremiah, “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In His days Judah shall be saved and Israel shall dwell safely, and this is His name whereby He shall be called, Jehovah our Righteousness.” And just as Moses combined in his own person both the dignity of priest and king (Psalms 99:6; Deuteronomy 33:5), so of the Messiah too we read, that “He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne; and He shall be a Priest upon His throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both” (Zechariah 6:13).

These are the most prominent points of analogy between Moses and Christ9; there are many more parallels which we might draw from minute details, but only those given are, I think, of sufficient general interest and striking enough to be noticed in a chapter of this kind. I rather hasten to the conclusion now by briefly referring to a few points of

CONTRAST which will demonstrate the pre-eminence of our Redeemer, Leader, Prophet, Priest, and King, over him who stood in all these different relationships to Israel.

9 H. L. Hastings, editor of the American Christian, in an excellent pamphlet on “The Mistakes of Moses,” which is a reply to the infidel attacks against the Pentateuch and the inspiration of Moses, gives no fewer than twenty-four points of analogy between Moses and Christ. For the sake of those interested, I produce them here in an abridged form.

1. Moses was born of poor parents, under the reign of Pharaoh, who was an oppressive tyrant; Christ was born in poverty, and under the reign of the cruel Herod.

2. Moses was persecuted and doomed to death in infancy; so Christ.

3. Moses was wonderfully preserved in his infancy in Egypt, while other infants were destroyed. And so it was with Jesus.

4. Moses spent forty years of his life in humble circumstances; Christ up to His manhood toiled as a Carpenter in Nazareth.

5. Moses was revealed to Israel by mighty signs and wonders; in like manner Christ, by His miracles, demonstrated His Divine authority.

6. Moses fasted forty days in the wilderness of Sinai; Christ fasted forty days in the wilderness of Judea.

7. Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Christ spurned the offer of

the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, and chose rather for His people to become a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

8. Moses was faithful as a servant; Christ's meat and drink was to do His Father's will.

9. Moses delivered Israel from the bondage of Egypt; Christ delivered man from the bondage of sin and corruption.

10. The sea obeyed Moses, and divided at his command; Christ rebuked the winds and waves, saying, "Peace, be still! and there was a great calm."

11. Moses was the founder of a state, the first republic the world ever knew; Christ was the Founder of a vast community of equal brethren, which has since spread into all parts of the world.

12. Moses was permitted to talk with God face to face Christ also had direct and personal communion with the Father as no prophet has ever had.

13. Moses' face shone with glory as the result of communion with God; Christ was transfigured in the presence of His disciples also while praying on a mountain.

14. Moses predicted future events which have been fulfilled, and are being fulfilled; so Christ.

15. Those whom Moses led were fed miraculously in the wilderness; Christ fed thousands miraculously in the wilderness, and now He Himself is the "Bread of heaven."

16. Moses gave Israel water out of a rock; Christ is the Rock of ages, and He gives the "living waters" to those who are thirsty.

17. Moses was mediator of a covenant; Christ is the Mediator of the new covenant.

18. Moses was "very meek;" Christ was meek and lowly of heart.

19. Israel rebelled against Moses; Christ also they received not.

20. Moses died on account of Israel's sin. (On this point I beg to differ. Moses died entirely on account of and for his own sin. But I do not question that) Christ died as an atonement for our sin.

21. Moses seems to have been raised up from death by Michael the archangel, since he appeared on the mount of transfiguration; Christ died and was buried, but He rose from the grave and entered into glory, and now sitteth at the right hand of God.

22. Moses' greatest works were accomplished after his death, his law leaving its impress on the world for more than thirty centuries, and marking him as the most influential man that ever lived on the globe; Christ's real work also only commenced when His earthly career was finished, and in its ever-widening influence through eighteen centuries, shows Him to be the Son of God, the Saviour of the world, the mightiest Being Who ever wore the human form.

23. Of Moses it is said, "There arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face, in all the signs and the wonders, which the Lord sent him to do" (Deuteronomy 34:10-12); of Christ it is written that He did "the works which none other man did" (John 15:24; Luke 24:10).

24. Moses was the first and only man whom the Lord ever authorised to give laws to Israel; in like manner Christ is the last and only Person Whom God has authorised to give laws for the government of mankind. And although the revelations and laws of both have been corrupted and perverted by the traditions of man, yet they both still stand forth in unapproached and unapproachable excellence, as revealers of the Divine will to the sons of men.

1. The first and greatest point of the superiority of Christ to Moses consists in this, that while Moses was mere man and the servant of God, Christ is Divine and the Son of God. “For He,” says Paul, “hath been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, by so much as he that built the house hath more honour than the house. For every house is builded by someone; but He that built all things is God. And Moses indeed was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were afterwards to be spoken; but Christ as a Son over His house; Whose house are we, if we hold fast our boldness and the glorying of our hope firm unto the end” (Hebrews 3:3-6, R.V.).

2. Then if we contrast the redemption accomplished by Moses with that which was accomplished by Christ, we must also assign the superiority to Christ. The redemption which Moses accomplished was temporal in its character, and that only for one nation, while the redemption accomplished by Christ is, as I have already shown, spiritual and eternal in its character, and for the whole world. Oh! that I could bring this truth home to the heart and conscience of every member of the Church of Christ! Jesus Christ is the propitiation not for our sins only, but for the sin of the whole world, both Jew and Gentile (1 John 2:2). And it is the duty of those who know it to proclaim this blessed fact to those who are still in ignorance of it. “God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

3. Moses was, as I have shown, a priest, but, like his brother Aaron, with whom he is classed (Psalms 99:6), and all the Aaronic family, his ministry was imperfect, both in itself and in its efficacy, and changeable, “serving unto the example and shadow of heavenly things,” but Christ, “because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood,” and His priesthood is also perfect and perfecting, because He Himself is perfect. “For such an High-priest became us, holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; Who needeth not daily, like those high-priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins, and then for the sins of the people: for this He did once for all, when He offered up Himself. For the law appointed men high-priests having infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was after the law, appointed a Son, perfected for evermore” (Hebrews 7:26-28, R.V.).

4. By Moses was given the law, “which made nothing perfect” (Hebrews 7:19), for the object of it is only to show up man’s imperfection, by showing him what he ought to be and is not (Romans 7:1 &c.); but by Jesus Christ came grace and truth (John 1:17), and a revelation of what God is to us, and His righteousness, which finds us just where the law of Moses has left us—in a state of imperfection—and makes us “complete in Him” (Colossians 2:10). This really is the principal point of difference between the old covenant which God made through Moses and the new covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34) which He made through Christ. The first was conditioned on the righteousness of man; the second is conditioned only on the righteousness of God. The first, instead of making man perfect, required him to be perfect before he could enjoy the privileges

attached to it; and, as man could not fulfil this condition, the covenant was “broken” (Jeremiah 31:32); but in the second man is recognised as a sinner, who still is not disqualified from sharing in its blessings on account of his sin, for along with it comes the blessed promise, “I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more” (Jeremiah 31:34); and being conditioned on the righteousness of God, it can never be broken, for “His righteousness endureth for ever” (Psalms 111:3).

5. Moses was Israel’s leader; and “he led them forty years in the wilderness,” but he never led them across the Jordan, nor brought them into their promised land; but Jesus, our Leader, leads His followers right to glory, for, as I have already shown, He not only leads us all through life, but He also leads us through the “valley of the shadow of death,” and even in heaven He still retains the character of Leader, for there He leads His own “unto the living fountains of water” (Revelation 7:17).

6. Moses gave Israel twice water out of a smitten rock, which typified Christ (1 Corinthians 10:4), but the water he gave them did not even satisfy their physical thirst, for, throughout their wanderings, their most frequent cause of complaint was that they were thirsty; but Christ says, “Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life” (John 4:14).

7. “Moses was very meek” (Numbers 12:3), and in this respect a type of Him Who was “meek and lowly” (Matthew 11:29), but when severely tried, his meekness and patience gave way, for “when they provoked his spirit he spake unadvisedly with his lips” (Psalms 106:33); but Christ endured the “contradiction of sinners,” and “when He was reviled, reviled not again, and when He suffered He threatened not” (1 Peter 2:23), but always, even under the greatest provocations, manifested a more than human spirit of long-suffering and forgiveness; thus on the very cross He could pray to His Father to forgive His enemies (Luke 23:34).

8. The real glory of the ministry of Moses, that is, its typical reference to the Messiah and His mission, was hidden, as was typified by his putting on the veil to hide the shining of his countenance, which signified that the “children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end” (i.e., “Christ, the end of the law”) “of that which was abolished” (2 Corinthians 3:12-18); but now “God, Who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” And this glory is not hidden, for “we all, with unveiled face reflecting as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit” (2 Corinthians 3:18, 2 Corinthians 4:6, R.V.).

9. Then there is also a glorious contrast between the miracles of Moses and the miracles of Christ. The miracles of Moses were all destructive in their character, while those of Christ were healing. The first miracle of Moses was turning water into blood, but the first miracle of Christ was turning water into wine.

And, lastly, Moses was “king in Jeshurun;” but Christ is King of kings and Lord of lords (Revelation 19:16), and when He returns, “He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. . . . The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him” (Psalms 72:1-11).

“And I saw as it were a glassy sea mingled with fire: and them that come victorious from the beast, and from his image, and from the number of his name, standing by the glassy sea, having harps of gold. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are Thy works, O Lord God the Almighty; righteous and true are Thy ways, Thou King of the ages. Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name? for Thou only art holy: for all the nations shall come and worship before Thee; for Thy righteous acts have been made manifest” (Revelation 15:2-4, R.V.).

1.07. Isaiah 53: Messianic or Not

“Behold, My Servant shall deal wisely, He shall be exalted and lifted up and shall be very high. Like as many were astonished at Thee (His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men), so shall He sprinkle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths at Him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they understand. “Who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? For He grew up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. He was despised and rejected of men; a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and as one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we esteemed Him not. Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. “He was oppressed, yet He humbled Himself and opened not His mouth; as a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep that before her shearers is dumb, yea, He opened not His mouth. By oppression and judgment He was taken away: and as for His generation, who considered that He was cut off out of the land of the living? for the transgression of My people was He stricken. And they made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death; although He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth. “Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief: when Thou shall make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied: by His knowledge shall My righteous Servant justify many; and He shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong; because He poured out His soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”

CHAPTER VII.

Isaiah 53:1-12 : MESSIANIC OR NOT?

Modern Jews, in common with a number of rationalistic so-called Christians, are trying hard in these days to weaken the Messianic application of this remarkable prophecy, and no wonder, for the doctrine of a suffering Messiah, Who is a Saviour from sin, which is so clearly taught in this chapter, is repugnant alike to Jew and Gentile who do not possess that which alone makes this doctrine acceptable, namely, the knowledge of sin and the consciousness of the need of salvation, “because, not knowing the holiness of God and being ignorant of the import of the law, they imagine that through their own strength, by the works of the law, they can be justified before God.”1

1 Hengstenberg. Their objections to the Messianic interpretation, and the interpretation they would have us substitute instead we shall consider further on, but first I shall endeavour to show that the weight of Jewish authority preponderates in favour of the Messianic interpretation of this chapter; and I would point out that on this particular subject the authority of tradition is of so much the greater importance since the picture of the Messiah we have here drawn is utterly opposed to the disposition and the fancied hopes of the Jewish nation. That until recent times this prophecy has been almost universally received by Jews as referring to Messiah is evident2 from Targum Yonathan, who introduces Messiah by name in chapter 52:13; from the Talmud ("Sanhedrin," fol. 98, b); and from the Zohar, a book which the Jews as a rule do not mention without the epithet "holy," and which contains the following passage in its comments on Exodus:—"The souls which are in the garden of Eden below go to and fro every new moon and sabbath in order to ascend to the place that is called the Walls of Jerusalem. . . . After that they journey on and contemplate all those that are possessed of pains and sicknesses and those that are martyrs for the unity of their Lord, and then return and announce it to the Messiah. And as they tell Him of the misery of Israel in their captivity, and of those wicked ones among them who are not attentive to know their Lord, He lifts up His voice and weeps for their wickedness; and so it is written, 'He was wounded for our transgression,' etc. Then those souls return and abide in their own place. There is in the garden of Eden a palace called the Palace of the sons of sickness: this palace the Messiah then enters, and summons every sickness, every pain, and every chastisement of Israel; they all come and rest upon Him. And were it not that He had thus lightened them off Israel and taken them upon Himself, there had been no man able to bear Israel's chastisements for transgression of the law; and this is that which is written, 'Surely our sicknesses He hath carried.' "

2 See Appendix, Note 5.

It is also admitted by Abarbanel, who commences his comments by saying, "The first question is to ascertain to whom it refers; for the learned among the Nazarenes expound it of the man who was crucified at Jerusalem at the end of the second Temple, and who, according to them, was the Son of God and took flesh in the virgin's womb, as is stated in their writings. But Yonathan ben Uzziel interprets it in the Targurn of the future Messiah, and this also the opinion of our own learned men in the majority of their Midrashim." In fact, until Rashi, who applied it to the Jewish nation, the Messianic interpretation of this chapter was almost universally adopted by Jews, and his view, which we shall examine presently, although received by Aben Ezra,3 Kimchi,4 and others, was rejected as unsatisfactory by Maimonides, who is regarded by the Jews as of highest authority, by Alshech, and many others, one of whom5 says that the interpretation adopted by Rashi "distorts the passage from its natural meaning," and that in truth "it was given of God as a description of the Messiah, whereby, when any should claim to be the Messiah, to judge by the resemblance or non-resemblance to it whether he were the Messiah or no." And another6 says, "The meaning of 'He was wounded for our transgression. . . . bruised for our iniquities,' is, that since the Messiah bears our iniquities, which produce the effect of His being bruised, it follows that whoso will not admit that the Messiah thus suffers for our iniquities must endure and suffer for them himself."

3 Aben Ezra, however, betrays some doubt, for he begins his comments with the acknowledgment "This Parashah is an extremely difficult one."

4 Kimchi admits that he wrote controversially "in answer to the heretics."

5 R. Mosheh Kohen Iben Crispin, of Cordova, and afterwards of Toledo (fourteenth century). He rightly says of those who for controversial reasons applied this prophecy to Israel that by so doing “the doors of the literal interpretation of this Parashah were shut in their face, and that they wearied themselves to find the entrance, having forsaken the knowledge of our teachers, and inclined after the stubbornness of their own hearts and of their own opinions.” With what greater force and truth these remarks apply to the few Jews in this nineteenth century who still have the courage to venture on the field of Scripture interpretation, let those judge who have, for instance, read the articles now appearing in the Jewish Chronicle under the heading of “The Revised Bible” (the articles dealing with the Messianic passages are scattered between May 22nd and September 17th, 1885), which are most remarkable for the cool audacity and careless indifference on the part of the writer to the ideas and opinions of everyone else, no matter of how great authority, and whether Jew or Christian. Those articles, moreover, show the writer possessed with very, strong faith in the blissful ignorance of his Jewish brethren, of not only the letter of the Hebrew Scriptures, but also of their traditional interpretation thereof. In this, however, he may find himself mistaken, and he may, one of these days, have some Jew tell him, for instance, that bethulah (■■■■■■■■) does not always denote a “virgin,” since, in Joel 1:8, a bethulah is represented as weeping and girded in sackcloth for the husband of her youth, while almah (■■■■■■■■) is never applied to a married woman; that to render Isaiah 53:1-12, “By his knowledge shall my servant justify the righteous before many,” is a perversion, and not a translation of the Hebrew text, the reading of which, according to all competent authorities, both Jewish as well as Christian, is, “By His knowledge shall My righteous Servant make many righteous.” And besides, it is absurd and self-contradictory; for what does it mean, the servant justifying (the Hebrew is “making righteous”) the righteous “before many” and bearing their iniquity? If they are righteous, why should they require being made righteous, and whence the iniquity which the servant bears? And, finally, the writer’s ingenious attempts to eliminate the doctrine of a personal Messiah from the pages of the Old Testament, though intended as a defence against Christianity, are in truth directed against the foundation of true Judaism, which is based on the belief that a personal Messiah is taught in the Hebrew Scriptures, which would be disproved if the position taken up by him were a justifiable one.

6 R. Eliyyah de Vidas.

Before entering into controversy, I add two more testimonies from a Jewish source in favour of the Messianic interpretation of this prophecy. The first passage is from the prayers for the Day of Atonement used by the Jews at the present time, and the second is from the very ancient Pesikta cited in the Abkath Rochel (■■■■ ■■■■). Here, as also in the foregoing quotations, I give the translations made by Driver and Neubauer in their most valuable collection of Jewish interpretations of Isaiah 53:1-12.7 The passages are as follows: “We are shrunk up in our misery even until now! Our Rock hath not come nigh to us; Messiah, our Righteousness hath turned from us; we are in terror, and there is none to justify us! Our iniquities and the yoke of our transgressions He will bear, for He was wounded for our transgressions; He will carry our sins upon His shoulder, that we may find forgiveness for our iniquities; and by His stripes we are healed. O Eternal One, the time is come to make a new creation; from the vault of heaven bring Him up, out of Seir draw Him forth, that He may make His voice heard to us in Lebanon a second time by the hand of Yinnon!” (Yinnon is one of the Rabbinical names of the Messiah, derived from

Psalms 72:17) “The Holy One brought forth the soul of the Messiah, and said to Him, ‘Art Thou willing to be created and to redeem My sons after six thousand years?’ He replied, ‘I am.’ God replied, ‘If so, Thou must take upon Thyself chastisements in order to wipe away their iniquity, as it is written, ‘Surely our sicknesses He hath carried.’ The Messiah answered, ‘I will take them upon Me gladly.’ ”

7 “The Jewish Interpreters of Isaiah 53:1-12,” with Introduction by Pusey.

Now to apply ourselves to an examination of the prophecy itself; and first we notice that it is universally agreed that it properly commences with Isaiah 24:13—“Behold My Servant!” so that if we can ascertain who this “Servant” is, we shall, of course, discover the subject of the whole passage; for that the whole chapter speaks of the same Person (or of the same body, as our opponents would have it) cannot be denied, seeing that towards the end the same name again occurs, where it is said, “By His knowledge shall My righteous Servant make many righteous, and He shall bear their iniquities!”

We shall not dwell on critical examination of words, as next to nothing turns upon renderings of the Hebrew, and almost any Jewish literal translation would serve our purpose. The three or four words the meaning of which Jews who write controversially dispute, and which they render in such a manner as to make them inapplicable to Jesus, we shall consider further on, when we reply to Jewish objections.

Rashi, who certainly has the largest following among Jews and rationalists at the present day, says, that by the “Servant” is meant “Israel,” or “the righteous among them;” and this theory we think the only one worthwhile to refute, for all the other interpretations, whether of Jeremiah, Isaiah himself, Hezekiah, or Job, which have been variously attempted, have been exploded by Jewish commentators and critics themselves.8

8 Another theory has been started, and for the most part advocated by Gentile opposers of Christianity, viz., that, under the designation of “Servant,” in the singular, the body of the prophets is here personified, but to this Dr. Alexander McCaul has rightly replied, first, that the subject is spoken of throughout in the singular, and that not only in the third, but in the first person (Isaiah 49:1-6; Isaiah 50:4-9); secondly, the whole body of the prophets were not sufferers, and least of all vicarious sufferers for the sins of others; thirdly, the prophets did not restore Israel, or convert the Gentiles; fourthly, neither did the prophets attain to the exaltation and glory described of the Servant of Jehovah, Who was to be “exalted and extolled and to be very high” (Isaiah 49:7; Isaiah 52:13-15). Not so, however, with this one, and for the simple reason, perhaps, that it is too flattering to the national feeling and rather plausible on a mere artificial acquaintance with the passage and context.

But, first, while we admit that Israel is addressed in the preceding chapters of this prophecy in the singular as “servant,” he is always done so by name except in Isaiah 43:10, where, however, the subject is addressed in the same verse in the plural to prevent mistake. Thus in Isaiah 41:8, “Thou, Israel, art My servant;” Isaiah 44:1-2, “My servant Jacob;” and in Isaiah 49:3, “Thou art My servant, O Israel” (see also Isaiah 44:21; Isaiah 45:4), so that the mere fact that the subject of our prophecy is styled “Servant” no more identifies Him with Israel, because he too is styled so, than it does with the prophet Isaiah himself, who is called “servant” (Isaiah 20:3; Isaiah 44:26), or with Eliakim, who

also is addressed by the same name by the same prophet (Isaiah 22:20). Nay; the fact that the prophet speaks of the subject of this prophecy in the singular, and without specially distinguishing Him by name, proves that he could not have meant Israel any more than Isaiah or Eliakim, else he would have acted on his principle and added the name of Israel or Jacob, as he invariably does.

We have direct and positive proof from the context that the “Servant” here cannot mean Israel, for in Isaiah 49:7 of which this Servant is introduced, and described in a manner which leaves not a shadow of doubt as to His identity with the subject of Isaiah 53:1-12, He is spoken of thus: “And now, saith the Lord that formed Me from the womb to be His Servant, to bring Jacob again to Him, and that Israel be gathered unto Him . . . Yea, He saith, It is too light a thing that Thou shouldest be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give Thee for a Light to the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be My salvation unto the end of the earth.” (Isaiah 49:5-6)

Now if this Servant is to raise up the tribes of Jacob and restore Israel, how can He be Israel or Jacob itself? In Isaiah 42:1-25 we read, “Behold My Servant, Whom I uphold; My chosen, in Whom My soul delighteth; I have put My Spirit upon Him: He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles . . . I the Lord have called Thee in righteousness, and will hold Thine hand, and will keep Thee, and will give Thee for a Covenant to the people, and for a Light to the Gentiles.” (Isaiah 42:1; Isaiah 42:6) ■■■■, “people,” standing here in opposition to ■■■■■■, “Gentiles,” must mean Israel. This Servant, then, is to be the “new Covenant” to Israel which God promised to make with them (Jeremiah 31:31; Ezekiel 34:24-25; Ezekiel 37:26), and cannot therefore be Israel. Again, in the passage itself we have it stated in Isaiah 53:8 ■■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■ (“for the sin of My people was He stricken”). Now who is the “■■■■■■” (“My people”)? And the answer comes from everyone, including the Jews, who are rightly too proud of this epithet (which in the singular is always applied to them) to deny it, that it means Israel. Then if the subject of this prophecy is “stricken” on account of the transgression of Israel, it follows, surely, that it cannot be Israel who is the innocent sufferer. To this may be added the fact that the subject of this prophecy is the same Who is represented as Zion’s Intercessor (Isaiah 62:1) and Israel’s Comforter (Isaiah 61:3).

To assert that the “Servant” here describes Israel as a nation, and not the Messiah, is equivalent to saying that there is no Messiah in the Old Testament Scriptures. This passage, and the whole prophecy (Isaiah 40 - 66.), deals with the national deliverance of Israel and the spiritual deliverance of both Jew and Gentile which should be effected by the revelation of the glory of God, so that all flesh shall see it.

In fact, it is an enlargement of the promise made to Abraham and the prophecy delivered by Jacob; and if the Deliverer is not Messiah, but Israel, then there is no Messiah at all, for it is the “Servant”—the subject of Isaiah 53:1-12.—that “sprinkles” many nations (Isaiah 52:15); Whom “kings shall see and arise, and princes worship;” Who is “the Covenant to Israel, and the Light of the Gentiles, and the salvation of God unto the end of the earth” (Isaiah 49:5-6). But I have already shown the falsity of the assertion that Israel, apart from the Messiah, is to be a blessing to all the families of the earth. This glory belongs only to One Individual out of one particular family and tribe in Israel. This fact is proclaimed by Isaiah himself, who says that only one “Root” of the stem of Jesse “shall be an ensign to the people; unto Him shall the nations seek; and His rest shall be

glorious" (Isaiah 11:10). Now mark, the name the prophet applies to Him Who is thus to be the centre round Whom the nations will gather is ■■■■■■, "root," and this is exactly how he speaks of the subject of the fifty-third chapter—"He shall grow up," he says, as a "root" (■■■■■■■■■) "out of a dry ground!" Yes, it is the "Root," which sprang up in humility, in Whom men could at first discover no form or comeliness, that is exalted and extolled and made very high, and Who is yet to develop into a tree the fruit of which shall be for the healing of all the nations on the face of the earth.

The description of the Servant in Isaiah 52:13-15, Isaiah 53:1-12. does not agree with the character of Israel as given, not only in other parts of Scripture, but by the same prophet; for He is described as perfectly innocent, but suffering for the sin and guilt of others—yea, more, He is represented as being not only righteous Himself, but as possessing the prerogative of constituting others righteous. "By His knowledge," it says, "shall My righteous Servant make many righteous; and He shall bear their iniquities!" And in Isaiah 53:10 we read, "Yet it pleased Jehovah to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief: when Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin" (or trespass offering, ■■■■■■), "He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in His hand." Now if we go to Leviticus, we shall find that an offering for sin, whether lamb or bullock, had itself to be perfect, without one fault or blemish, which typified that He Who in this fifty-third chapter of Isaiah was to be "led as a lamb to the slaughter" for our sin and iniquities must Himself be without one stain of sin—without one moral blemish; and this is only what our common sense dictates, for what would we think if a criminal, himself by law condemned to death, should come forth and offer himself to die for another criminal guilty of exactly the same crime as himself? It is not in his power to lay down his life, which he has forfeited, or thereby to save another. And so the "Servant" in this chapter, even if it did not say that "He hath done no violence, nor was deceit found in His mouth," we should expect to be perfect, since He is represented as an offering for the sin of others.

Now this cannot be true of any nation or of any individual if mere man; for the Bible and our experience tell us that there is "no man that sinneth not;" and that there is not even a "righteous man upon the earth, who doeth good, and sinneth not." And beside of Israel the same prophet says, "Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that deal corruptly. . . . From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness" in them. And as for making others righteous, Isaiah (Isaiah 64:6) represents even the God-fearing portion in Israel—those who wait for the salvation of God—"as unclean, and all their righteousnesses as a polluted garment," not sufficient to make themselves fit to appear in the presence of God.

Indeed, the only righteous in Israel that the prophet Isaiah knows are those "whose righteousnesses are of Jehovah" (Isaiah 54:17), themselves constituted righteous in the sovereign grace and mercy of God, and hence far from having righteousness enough to impart to others.

Then as to the Jews suffering for the sins of others, as some of the Jewish commentators on this chapter would have us believe, it is not true. They have been suffering, and are suffering, but entirely for their own sin.

Read Leviticus 26:1-46, where all the dispersions, the sufferings, and afflictions which the Jews have experienced, and will yet experience until "they turn and seek the Lord their God and David their King," are minutely described by their great lawgiver and prophet many hundreds of years

before their accomplishment; and what cause does he assign for it all? Does Moses say that these sufferings will be vicarious for the sin of the other nations on the earth? No, he says that if they suffer, it will be entirely on account of their own sin. “And if ye will not for all this hearken unto Me, but walk contrary unto Me; then I will walk contrary unto you also in fury; and I also will chastise you seven times for your sins. And ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall ye eat. . . . And I will make your cities waste, and will bring your sanctuaries unto desolation, and I will not smell the savour of your sweet odours. And I will bring the land into desolation: and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it. And you will I scatter among the nations, and I will draw out the sword after you. . . . And as for them that are left of you, I will send a faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies; and the sound of a driven leaf shall chase them; and they shall flee . . . when no one pursueth. . . . And ye shall perish among the nations, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up. And they that are left of you” (shall by their sufferings atone for the sins of the other nations? No, they) “shall pine away in their iniquity in your enemies’ lands; and also in the iniquities of their fathers shall they pine away.” And this is to continue till “they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers,” when, as a sign of their acceptance, they will be brought back from all the lands of their dispersion to their own land, and there enjoy the favour of God. But to this state of mind, alas! the Jews, as a nation, have not yet been brought, and one proof of this is that they can dare coolly to arrogate to themselves a state of perfection and stainless innocence, which belongs to none but to the Messiah—the Holy One of Israel. But in truth the Jews themselves contradict in principle the theory on which their interpretation is based; for while, for controversial reasons, they interpret Isaiah 53:1-12. of themselves, and thus make themselves out as perfectly innocent and righteous, they at other times, when other prophecies are pressed home to them—those predicting the time of Messiah’s advent, which they acknowledge to be past—make themselves out as most guilty, for they turn round on the Christians and say, “You are not right in your conclusions; the time when Messiah was to come according to the prophets is indeed past, but it does not prove that Jesus was the Messiah because He came at the right time; for the fulfilment of the prophecies is postponed, and the reason of the delay is our sin and great wickedness.” An example of this inconsistency we have in Rashi himself, who was the first one who interpreted Isaiah 53:1-12. of the Jewish nation; for while he here makes Israel out so righteous, in his commentary on the Talmud (“Sanhedrin Chelek,” fol. 97, col. 1), he says, on a passage which tries to account for the fact that Messiah came not at the right time—i.e., at the end of four thousand years after creation—“For our iniquities the Messiah came not at the end of one thousand years.”9

9 In fact, the contradiction is still more striking and direct, for in his commentary on the Talmud Rashi actually interprets Isaiah 53:1-12 of the Messiah (“Sanhedrin,” fol. 93, c. 1). A similar case of Rashi contradicting himself is to be seen in the double manner in which he deals with Zechariah 12:10, “They shall look upon Me Whom they have pierced and mourn.” for, while in his commentary on the Bible he says on this passage, “They shall look back to mourn, because the Gentiles had pierced some amongst them,” he says in his commentary on the Talmud (“Succah,” fol. 52, col. 1), “The words ‘The land shall mourn’ are found in the prophecy of Zechariah, and he prophesies of the future, that they shall mourn on account of Messiah, the son of Joseph, who shall be slain in the war of Gog and Magog.” (On the doctrine of two Messiahs see footnote 27, Chapter 1.) The reason of this double-dealing will be seen in his comments on Psalms 21:1-13, where he says, “Our Rabbis have expounded it of the King Messiah, but it is better to expound it

further of David himself in order to answer heretics."

There is yet one more point to which we must refer, which also proves beyond doubt that the prophecy is not applicable to Israel and can only be referred to the Messiah. The subject in Isaiah 53:1-12. is not only Himself innocent and suffering for the guilt of others but He is also a voluntary and unresisting Sufferer and His sufferings end in death. "He was oppressed," it says, "yet He humbled Himself and opened not His mouth: as a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, yea, He opened not His mouth. . . . Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong; because He poured out His soul unto death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet He bare the sin of many, and maketh intercession for the transgressors."

Many and bitter have been the sufferings and afflictions Israel has experienced at the hands of the Gentiles; and these persecutions, for which the perpetrators will yet have to settle their account with the righteous God, are not quite at an end yet; but who shall say that these sufferings have been borne voluntarily on the part of the Jews? And as to their sufferings ending in death, let the miraculous preservation of Israel on the part of the Almighty, in spite of the confederacy on the part of almost all the nations on the earth, who were leagued in hatred against them, reply to that.

Israel still lives, and can say, as of yore, "Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth, yet they have not prevailed against me." "The Lord hath chastened me sore, but He hath not given me over unto death."

Then as to the Jewish nation suffering without any resistance, we need only point to history, which speaks for itself in this matter. How brave!—some would say how desperate!—was their resistance to the Roman power at the final great struggle for their national independence. Then after their temple was burned and their land laid waste the lion did not entirely change into a lamb; for we read of them at one time rebelling and massacring 220,000 Libyans (A.D. 115); at another time as engaged in a sanguinary war under the leadership of the great impostor Bar Cochab (A.D. 132); then, in the time of Constantine, as inciting, out of revenge, a furious persecution against the Christians in Persia, in consequence of which many, including Ustasades, one of the chief eunuchs of Lapor the Second, suffered horrible martyrdoms, and which ended in the destruction of the Churches throughout Persia; and then, also out of revenge, as putting thousands to death in Jerusalem, when (A.D. 613), by their assistance, Chosros made himself master of that city. It is not my object to incite prejudice or ill-feeling against the Jews by mentioning these facts, which can be multiplied, for too often the Jews have been driven to madness and desperation by the enormous wrongs they had to bear, but they show that the Jew is but human, and that when he only had the power, he could become quite as cruel a persecutor, as the Gentile, and hence the Jewish nation cannot be the Righteous Servant of Jehovah—the subject of Isaiah 53, Who is represented as being perfectly innocent, but voluntarily and without resistance suffering for the guilt of others.

These points are sufficient, I believe, to convince any candid reader that Israel cannot be the subject of this prophecy, and that the only satisfactory interpretation is the Messianic one, which is not only adopted in the New Testament, but also, on the testimony of the famous Jewish Alshech, "received by tradition and confirmed by the Rabbis with one mouth." And to this may be added that it is the only interpretation that agrees not only with the context, but with the description given of

the Messiah in other parts of Scripture, for this is not the only prophecy of Messiah's death and vicarious sufferings. Daniel says distinctly, "Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself" (Daniel 9:26); and David and Zechariah not only foretell that Messiah shall be brought up in humility, and die for no sin of His own, but they describe even the very manner of His death, as I have elsewhere shown.10 Then as to the glory with which the prophecy commences and ends, it, too, answereth to the glory of Messiah, and belongeth to none other. It is He Who is exalted and extolled to the right hand of Jehovah of hosts (Psalms 110:1-7); it is He Who is a Priest upon His throne (Zechariah 6:13), which answers to the priestly character of the subject of this prophecy, Who bears the sins of others, not only in a sacrificial sense, but in a priestly sense (compare Isaiah 53:12 with Numbers 18:1, Heb.), and of Whom it is said, "He maketh intercession for the transgressors;" and it is only the Messiah "Who was to sprinkle many nations," at Whom kings were to shut their mouths, and Who was to be the Light of the Gentiles and the salvation of God to the end of the earth.

10 See Appendix Note 3 But now we come to another and distinct question, namely, "Has this prophecy received its fulfilment in Jesus of Nazareth?" for it is not sufficient merely to prove that the "image and superscription" this prophecy bears is that of the Messiah, but we must also prove that the image or likeness answers to Jesus. That there is a marked resemblance between the subject of this prophecy and the Christ of the Gospels and Epistles is admitted even by a Jewish polemical commentator, who says, "In this Parasha" (chapter) "there seem to be considerable resemblances and allusions to the work of the Christian Messiah and to the events which are asserted to have happened to Him, so that no other prophecy is to be found the gist and subject of which can be so immediately applied to Him!"11

11 Abraham Farissol, born at Avignon, in Italy, about 1451. Of course after this admission he goes on to argue against its fulfilment in Jesus and in favour of its application to Israel, but he only repeats the arguments of others. This also is for the most part admitted by intelligent Jews who are acquainted with the facts of Christ's history, and many of the seed of Abraham have had their eyes opened by this portion of the Word of God to see in Jesus their long-expected Messiah and Saviour. But many raise the following objections against its application to Jesus, which we shall consider one by one.

1. The subject of the prophecy, they say, is "to prolong His days" (by which they understand that He is to live long on the earth), but Jesus was put to death at the age of thirty-three.12

12 All these objections, which are often brought forward by Jews, are originally taken from the Chizzuk Amunah by Rabbi Isaac ben Abraham, of the sixteenth century, which is the most bitter and formidable attack on Christianity ever made by Jews. I have in my possession the new edition of this work in Hebrew and German, published in Leipsic in 1873.

ANSWER. The passage reads thus, "When" (or if) "Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin (or trespass offering), "He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in His hands." To become an ■■■■■■, "sin offering," plainly implies death (see Leviticus 6:2-7), and since, as is plainly indicated, He was to prolong His days after and to some extent on condition of becoming a sin offering, it surely refers to life after death, and implies that Messiah must rise from the dead and then live. The passage in fact is parallel to the fifth verse (English, fourth) of the twenty-first Psalm, (Psalms 21:4) which is admittedly Messianic: "He asked

of Thee life: Thou gavest Him length of days” (■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■) “for ever and ever,” with regard to which even Kimchi admits, “Length of days means the life of the world to come,” and in fact it must be so, since it is “for ever and ever.”

It is true that Jesus died a violent death at the age of thirty-three, but it is just as true that on the third day He rose again, to which every true Christian is a witness, and is “seated at the right hand of God” (Psalms 110:1.), from whence His voice comes to us saying, “I am the First and the Last, and the Living One; and I was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore; and I have the keys of death and of Hades” (Revelation 1:18).

2. Of the subject of Isaiah 53:1-12 it is written, “He shall see His seed,” but Jesus had no children; therefore He cannot be the one spoken of.

ANSWER. His seeing His seed was also, as well as His prolonging His days, to follow, and to some extent be conditioned on, His becoming a sin offering (dying) first; therefore it cannot refer to natural seed, which are begotten of man during his lifetime on earth. And besides, the assertion on which this objection is founded, namely, that ■■■■■■, “seed,” cannot be applied to any except “natural offspring,” is false. ■■■■■■, “seed,” is used figuratively in Isaiah 57:4, where it is said, “Are ye not children of transgression, a seed” (■■■■■■) “of falsehood?” In the same sense also it is used in Malachi 2:15. In Psalms 22:30-31, also referring to the Messiah, and parallel to the verse in Isaiah 53:1-12 on which the objection is founded, the word ■■■■■■ “seed,” again occurs; but there it is admitted even by Aben Ezra, that it is used in the sense, not of natural issue, but of disciples or followers. The passage referred to in Psalms 22:30 reads thus, “A seed shall serve Him” (■■■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■); “it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation,” and there also “the seed serving Him” is to follow His being “despised” and brought to the “dust of death” by having His hands and feet pierced. Jesus of Nazareth was indeed childless as far as natural issue is concerned, but of this the passage in question does not speak. And as to a spiritual seed which was to be the reward and outcome of His being made a “sin offering,” there are at the present day millions; and in every age since the era commenced with Calvary’s cross, there have been innumerable multitudes of those who have been begotten of God through the Spirit by Jesus Christ; and in every place truly “a seed doth serve Him,” every one of whom can testify that from Him they have received the power or right to become the sons of God (John 1:12).

3. Many Jews, led by Kinichi and Aben Ezra, say that ■■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■ ought to be translated, not “For the sin of My people was He stricken,” but “For the sin of My people were they stricken,” ■■■■■, as they assert, being equivalent to ■■■ and plural. This of course would lend colour to the suggestion that the subject is a collective one, and might be applied to Israel.13

13 The fact that the word ■■■■■■■■■, rendered in the ninth verse “in His death,” is in the plural, has also been made to serve as an argument that the subject is a collective and not an individual one. But this plural is used in the same way to denote the singular in Ezekiel 28:10, “Thou shalt die the deaths” (■■■■■■) “of the uncircumcised by the hands of strangers,” The singular pronoun his should, however, decide the question that the subject is an individual, especially when we remember that the whole context speaks of this subject in the singular.

ANSWER. In the first instance let Kimchi answer to himself, for, although in his “challenge to the Nazarenes” he uses this as an argument against the application of this prophecy to Jesus, he says in his grammar “■■ occurs as the affix of the third person singular, as in Job 20:23, Job 22:2. . . . and is therefore used both of many and of one.”14 ■■■■■ is used as a singular pronoun in Genesis 9:26, “And he said, Blessed be the God of Shem; and Canaan shall be a servant to him” (■■■■■); and again, in Genesis 9:27, “God shall enlarge Japhet, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be a servant to him” (■■■■■). So also it is used in Isaiah 44:15, “Yea, he maketh a god, and worshippeth; he maketh it a graven image, and falleth down to it” (■■■■■).

14 Pusey quotes this passage from Kimchi’s Grammar. See his introduction to Jewish Interpreters on Isaiah 53.”

These objections are really the only ones worthy of serious consideration; others are brought forward in the work referred to (“Chizzuk Amunah”) and by modern Jews, such, for instance, as, “How can Jesus be called a Servant, since He is asserted by Christians to be Divine?” overlooking that Messiah is called Servant in Zechariah 3:8, as admitted by almost all Jewish commentators; and again it says, “He made intercession for the transgressors;” but if Jesus be God, to whom did He pray? ignoring the humanity of Jesus altogether and the fact that as Son, Jesus was subject to the Father (see Php 2:5-11); but we have neither the required time or space to waste in refuting them.

All that I can say is that people must be very hard up for a reason why they should reject Christ if they are driven to such trifles as these. Oh! that men would cease from trifling away their soul’s salvation and turn to the Lord Jesus Christ, Who for them was “led as a lamb to the slaughter,” and on Calvary’s cross was numbered with transgressors, and poured out His soul unto death in order that they might by the knowledge of Him be reckoned with the righteous and have eternal life! Oh! that they may, while there is yet time, seek Him, Who, after He was offered up as a trespass offering, rose again on the third day and is now exalted and extolled to the right hand of the Majesty on high, where He ever liveth to make intercession for us! for ere long He Who has ascended will also descend again, but no more in humility as the world’s Sacrifice, but as the Judge in flaming fire, taking vengeance on those that know not God and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord bath laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:6).

“Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him” (Psalms 2:12).

1.08. Appendix Note 1

NOTE 1

“I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shall bruise His heel.”—Genesis 3:15.

Several references are made in this work to the above passage, and I now give one or two reasons for believing that this promise contains the germs of Messianic prediction and of universal blessing—“the Bible in embryo, the sum of all history and prophecy in a germ.”1 1 H. Grattan Guinness in “The Approaching End of the Age.” In this chapter, we have related the dreadful catastrophe of the fall, when our first parents, in consequence of it, passed from a state of immortality to physical mortality, and from a state of perfect innocence to a consciousness of sin and guilt. The narrative must be treated in the same way as the call of Abraham; the deluge; the wickedness of the Antediluvians; the birth of Seth; the murder of Abel, etc., all which are related as and admitted to be real historical occurrences. There is no more reason for making an allegory of this narrative than of any other one related in the Book of Genesis, of which the fall of man forms an indispensable part. But there ought to be no questioning on the subject on the part of those who are followers of Christ and believe in the inspiration of Paul, for the temptation and fall, and even the creation of Eve, are spoken of in the New Testament in such a manner as to preclude the possibility of allegorical interpretation (Matthew 19:5-6; Romans 5:12; 2 Corinthians 11:3; 1 Timothy 2:13-14). To this it may be added that most Jews and, with isolated exceptions, all Jewish commentators receive what is narrated in Genesis 3. as real history. But supposing for one minute that the account is merely allegorical of the fall of man and the introduction of evil into the world, if the allegory mean anything at all, it still pictures the serpent as a tempter by whom our first parents were deceived, and in consequence brought on themselves a great calamity; therefore the promise that the serpent shall be overcome and have his head bruised must signify deliverance from the evil which he was the means of bringing on Adam’s race. The promise, it is true, was general and obscure, but no doubt clear enough so far as it spoke of a Deliverer and deliverance. That it was well understood by Adam and Eve as a promise of a Redeemer, we have remarkable evidence in Genesis 4:1., where we read that, at the birth of the first child, Eve, in an ecstasy, exclaimed, “I have obtained the Man, even the Lord”—[redacted]. What does it mean except that Eve believed that the promised Deliverer had already arrived?

It may be pointed out that the deliverance promised is universal in its character; is of a moral and spiritual nature; that the Deliverer must of necessity be someone more than mere man, since every son of Adam is among the fallen and unable to help himself, much less to save others; and also that from the very first we have it more than hinted that Messiah shall suffer; for He was to have His heel bruised when bruising the serpent’s head.

1.09. Appendix Note 2

NOTE 2

“The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come, and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be.”—Genesis 49:10. With regard to this prophecy, the first thing I want to point out is that all antiquity agrees in interpreting it of a personal Messiah. This is the view of the LXX. version; the Targumim of Onkelos, Yonathan, and Jerusalem; the Talmud; the Sohar; the ancient book of “Bereshith Rabba;” and, among modern Jewish commentators, even of Rashi, who says, “Until Shiloh come, that is King Messiah, Whose is the kingdom.” The word ■■■■■■, as already said, means more accurately the “Tribal Staff,” denoting tribal independence. Thus it is used in Genesis 49:16, in Judges 5:14 (Heb.), and in many other places in the Scriptures. Some modern Jews attempt to render it “rod of correction,” in order to manufacture for themselves an argument against the claims of Jesus, “for,” say they, “does not the rod of correction still lay heavily upon us? how can the Messiah have come?” But they entirely overlook that ■■■■■■■ “sceptre,” must be parallel to ■■■■■■■■, “Lawgiver,” and must therefore imply a rod of authority and not of correction. This is endorsed by the Targum of Onkelos, and by almost every Jewish commentator and modern Jewish translations of the Old Testament.

“Nor a Lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come.”

Some Jews divide the passage and translate ■■■■ , “until,” “for ever,” rendering it thus, “Nor a Law giver from between his feet for ever, for Messiah” (Shiloh) “will come, and Him will the people obey.” But this rendering is contrary to the Targum of Onkelos, Aben Ezra, and a good many other ancient and modern Jewish commentators. And, besides, we have Scripture authority for saying that ■■■■ ■■■■ must be taken together, and that it signifies “until.” So it must mean in Genesis 26:13, “And the man waxed great and grew more and more until” (■■■■ ■■■■) “he became very great;” Genesis 41:49, “And Joseph laid up corn as the sand of the sea, very much, until” (■■■ ■■■■■) “he left numbering;” 2 Samuel 23:10, “He arose and smote the Philistines until” (■■■■ ■■■■) “his hand was weary.”

Some modern Jews, in common with rationalists, translate thus, “The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, or a Lawgiver from between his feet, until he come to Shiloh;” but first, as already said, there is not a shred of evidence that the town of that name existed at all in the days of Jacob. It is not mentioned in the Pentateuch, and occurs first in Joshua 18:1, where the circumstances suggest that it was then, or subsequently, named Shiloh because the ark and the children of Israel rested there (compare Psalms 132:8).

Secondly, it is contrary to fact, for this rendering would imply that the leadership would devolve upon Judah until they came to Shiloh, while Judah’s supremacy never properly commenced till a long time after they reached Shiloh. Judah only was foremost in fighting, but Moses, who led Israel for forty years, was of the tribe of Levi; and Joshua, who brought them to Shiloh, was an

Ephraimite.

Thirdly, it ignores wilfully that the prophecy was delivered by one who himself waited for the salvation of Jehovah (Genesis 49:18), and was distinctly announced by him as having reference to the ■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■■■, “last days” (Genesis 49:1), which, as already said, signifies the time of Messiah (see Daniel 2:28; Isaiah 2:2; Micah 1:1; Hosea 3:5).1 1 See Chapter 1, footnote 9.

Fourthly, it makes the whole passage unintelligible, for who is he, if Shiloh be not a person, to whom the peoples gather? And be it remembered that ■■■■■■■, “peoples,” here signifies the Gentile nations (compare Genesis 27:29; Exodus 15:14; Deuteronomy 32:8). Did the nations pay homage to Judah when he came to Shiloh? No amount of ingenuity or sophistry will make anything else of this passage but a prophecy which has been fulfilled in Jesus Christ; and the manner in which it has been handled by some Jews (who, in this respect, act contrary to the authority of their own traditions) and rationalists only proves the extremes to which those are driven who reject Him.

I purposely abstain from theorising upon the real or most likely significance and derivation of the word ■■■■■■ “Shiloh,” as nothing new can be said on it. Whether Shiloh is the same as Solomon, and signifies “Peace” (compare Micah 5:4-5), or whether, as Onkelos, Rashi, and others would have it, it signifies “Whose it is,” or “He to Whom it belongs,” both significations apply alike only to the Messiah, Who is the Prince of peace (Isaiah 9:6), and to Whom the universe and the kingdom of this world belong by “right” (Ezekiel 21:27). For more elaborate criticisms on this passage, and especially on the word “Shiloh,” see Hengstenberg, “Christology of the Old Testament,” who says, “With respect to the signification of the name, the analogy of the name ■■■■■■■■, ‘Solomon,’ which is formed after the manner of ■■■■■■, ‘Shiloh,’ indicates that it has here an adjective signification, and, like Solomon, Shiloh denotes ‘the man of rest,’ corresponds to the Prince of ‘Peace’ (Isaiah 9:6), and, viewed in its character of a proper name, is like the German ‘Friedrich’—Frederick, i.e., rich in peace, or the peaceful one.” See also Pusey, “Lectures on Daniel,” p. 255, and McCaul, “Messiahship of Jesus,” who argues that Shiloh is a noun of the form ■■■■■ “and signifies peace, or the peaceful one.”

1.10. Appendix Note 3

NOTE 3

Psalms 22:1-31 Are Christians right in interpreting this psalm as a prediction of Christ? to which I venture to reply that, beside New Testament authority for doing so (Matthew 27:46; John 19:24; Hebrews 2:12), it is the only interpretation which accords with common sense. In substance, the contents of this psalm are the same as in that other remarkable prediction (Isaiah 52:13-15, Isaiah 53:1-12) delivered by Isaiah some three hundred years later. In both cases we have the perfectly innocent suffering. Isaiah tells distinctly, “He had done no violence, nor was deceit found in His mouth;” and in this psalm, the only charge laid against Him is, “He trusted in the Lord.” In both cases also the sufferings of this innocent One bring salvation to others—the guilty. Isaiah says, “By His sufferings shall the many be made righteous;” and here in our psalm the remembrance of them will cause the ends of the earth to turn unto the Lord, and the hearts of those who seek Him to live. As in Isaiah 53, so also here, the Sufferer is brought to “the dust of death,” but subsequent to it (which surely implies that He must rise from the dead), He attains to high honour and glory, and has a numerous “seed,”1 or followers, “who serve Him.” All this can only apply to Christ.

1 See latter part of chapter on Isaiah 53. The most plausible interpretation of this psalm offered by our opponents is that it refers “to the whole congregation of Israel” (Rashi); but this cannot be, for the following reasons:—

1. The subject is despised by the people (Psalms 22:6); ■■■■, “people,” is used here in opposition to ■■■■■, “mankind,” and must mean Israel; and as the despised and despisers are generally not the same, the subject of this psalm cannot be the Jewish nation.

2. Psalms 22:10 and Psalms 22:11, and the minuteness of detail concerning this subject throughout the Psalm, extending even to his garment and vesture, can only refer to an individual.

3. Psalms 22:22 reads, “I will declare Thy Name unto my brethren in the midst of the congregation;” Psalms 22:25, “Of Thee is my praise in the great congregation.” The subject of this psalm cannot, therefore, be the congregation itself.

4. The subject of this psalm is not only a sufferer, but his sufferings end in death, the very manner of which is described. He was not only to be brought to “the dust of death,” but he was to be brought so by having his hands and feet pierced, which well describes crucifixion. Now this is certainly not true of the Jewish nation, as I have shown in my remarks on Isaiah 53.

5. On account of the subject of this psalm, the ends of the earth are to turn unto the Lord; and this, as I have already shown, was only to be brought about by the Messiah, Whom the peoples or nations should obey.

Jesus of Nazareth is the only individual in the history of the Jewish nation in Whom all these characteristics are to be found.

Modern Jews, in order to get rid of this remarkable prediction of a crucified Messiah, which is not exactly according to their taste, attempt to translate Psalms 22:16, ■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■ “As a lion my hands and my feet,” instead of “They pierced my hands and my feet,” which is the rendering, not only in the English versions, but of the Septuagint (a translation made by Jews long before its alleged fulfilment), also the Vulgate and Syriac; or, instead of another rendering on the authority of Gesenius and others, who make ■■■■■■■■■■ a participle either from ■■■ or ■■■■■, to dig, to pierce, which would make the whole verse read thus, “The assembly of evil-doers surrounded me, digging or piercing my hands and my feet.” Our reply is that supposing the word ■■■■■■■■■■, as here punctuated, could by effort be made to signify, “as a lion,” this could not be its signification here, for the simple reason that it would give a senseless reading to the whole passage, and would not be in harmony with the context. The word, according to this rendering, would be either in the nominative or accusative. One would read, “The assembly of the wicked doers like a lion have surrounded me, my hands and my feet;” and the other, “The assembly of wicked doers have surrounded me like a lion, my hands and my feet.” The figure employed in both would be equally absurd, for what could be meant by a lion surrounding a man, or an assembly surrounding a man’s hands and feet? But we have proof that the ancient Jews did not favour the rendering of ■■■■■■■■■■ in this passage, “as a lion;” for the little Massora says that “the word ■■■■■■■■■■, occurs twice in the Bible with Kametz under the ■ in different senses.”2 As the only other place where it occurs is Isaiah 38:13, and there it must mean, “as a lion,” it must therefore have another meaning in our passage, and this on the authority of the Jewish Massora.

2 On this point see Delitzsch’s Commentary on the Psalms, English translation, vol. 1. p. 317.

1.11. Appendix Note 4

NOTE 4 As has been said, Isaiah 4:2; Jeremiah 23:5-6 Zechariah 3:8; and Zechariah 6:12-13, with the exception of Jeremiah 33:15, which is a repetition of Jeremiah 23:5-6, are the only four instances in the Hebrew Scriptures where the Messiah is designated by the title ■■■■■■ (Branch), and in the connections pointed out. English readers may be surprised at this statement and inclined to doubt its accuracy as Psalms 80:15, Isaiah 11:1, etc., are brought to their minds; but I must explain that I have only to do with the original. The word rendered Branch in Psalms 80:15 is ■■■■■, and literally means “son,” so that that sentence ought to be rendered, “And the Son Whom Thou hast made strong for Thyself.” In Isaiah 11:1, the word rendered Branch is ■■■■■■ and literally means twig, sprout, or sucker. It has also the idea of concealment or secrecy, something hidden, so that the prophet may have intended to describe the insignificance and unobtrusiveness of the Messiah on His first advent; hence some think that the words of Matthew 2:23, “That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene,” were in reference to this verse, i.e., they trace Nazarene to ■■■■■■ (Netzer). The little town Nazareth was probably so called from its insignificance, as we know that it was so obscure that it was neither mentioned in the Old Testament nor in Josephus. It was of no account compared with other towns, the same as a Netzer (twig) is of no account when compared with the tree. But for my own part I believe that Matthew does not refer here exclusively to this passage nor to any other single passage, but to the general tone of the prophets, all of whom spoke of the humiliation of the Messiah on His first advent as well as of the glory that was to follow His second coming, “that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets” (not one prophet), “He shall be called Nazarene,” i.e., Netzer, one despised.

I might mention that on comparing the Hebrew with the English text I found no fewer than thirteen different Hebrew words all rendered by the word “Branch” in the English, and in several instances incorrectly so, but as none of these passages are of any Messianic import, I do not dwell on them.

1.12. Appendix Note 5

NOTE 5 IN DEFENCE; OR, MORE ON Isaiah 53:1-12.

Since writing these pages, my attention has been drawn to a volume of “Lectures and Sermons,” recently published (1884), by Professor Marks, Rabbi of the West London Synagogue of British Jews, in which several of the said lectures are devoted to refute the Christian, or Messianic, interpretation of certain prophecies, and among them Isaiah 53:1-122. I mention it here, not with a view to pass criticism upon it; indeed, the only criticism necessary is to state that not only the conclusions, but also the premises from which are drawn the conclusions at which the author arrives, are those which have been advanced by Jews scores of times, and have as often been refuted; thus the stale arguments of Abarbanel and the author of the “Chizzuk Ammunah” are again made to serve the purpose of establishing the theory that Israel is the subject of this prophecy, though Professor Marks, like all the rest of those who seek to avoid Him Who is the Door by which alone we can enter into the true meaning of this prophecy, seems rather uncertain after all, or else why does he, in the first instance, recount all the reasons for its applicability to the prophet Jeremiah—an interpretation concerning which even Abarbanel says, “What may be the goodness or excellence that they see in it, I do not understand”? Professor Marks, however, makes one rather serious statement—a statement as cruel as it is false—to this effect, “Whatever be the errors into which conversionists in general fall by reason of ignorance, they are completely outstripped by Jewish converts who deliberately and designedly falsify facts, and put words into the mouths of Hebrew authors which they never uttered, and attribute to them motives of conduct of which they never dreamed.” For an exemplification “of this patent fact,” he “takes leave” to refer to a work of the late Rev. Moses Margoliouth and to strictures passed upon it in several numbers of the Jewish Chronicle in 1847 by Professor Theodores. In that work, which I have not the pleasure of knowing, the position that I have taken up in these pages is asserted, viz., that the oldest, and, till Rashi, the commonest received interpretation of this prophecy, was that which made it apply to the Messiah. This is denied by Professor Marks and his patron saint, Professor Theodores, under whose banner he is fighting. Of course, they are quite welcome to deny anything they please, but they have no right to accuse Hebrew Christians of “falsifying facts,” and misrepresenting Jewish authors, because they declare that the originally received interpretation of Isaiah 53:1-12 among the Jews was the Messianic one; for it is not merely converted Jews who assert this, but unconverted Jewish rabbis of great reputation. Thus Alsech (Alsheich), who was chief rabbi in Safet, Upper Galilee, in the sixteenth century, in his “Commentaries on the Earlier Prophets” (■■■■■ ■■■■■■■) says of this chapter: “Our Rabbis with one voice accept and affirm the opinion that the prophet is speaking of the King Messiah, and we shall ourselves also adhere to the same view.” And Abarbanel, who wrote so bitterly against Christianity, is also obliged to admit this fact, for he says, “This” (that it refers to Messiah) “is also the opinion of our own learned men in the majority of their Midrashim” (Abarbanel in loc.). Why, I may ask here, if Jewish opinion did not preponderate in favour of the Messianic interpretation, has it been made to apply to the Messiah in the Jewish liturgy which is used by Jews in the present day on the most

solemn day of the year? Why also is the reading of this prophecy omitted at the synagogue but because of a tacit acknowledgment that it favours the claims of the crucified Nazarene? I have purposely, in the selection of passages from Jewish sources which favour the Messianic interpretation, given the translations made by Dr. Driver and Professor Neubauer, the latter of whom, being an unconverted Jew, could certainly not be accused of “falsifying facts,” or “putting words into the mouth of Hebrew authors which they never uttered.”1 Christian Jews might with more reason reply that such an accusation applies to modern Jewish prophets, who not only wrest the Scriptures of God to their own destruction, but who have also departed from the one grain of truth which was left in Rabbinism, and are trying to set up for themselves another system, even more at variance with Moses and the prophets. But they have learned of One, Who, when He was reviled reviled not again, and Who said, “Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.”

1 To whom the charge of falsifying facts and putting words into the mouths of authors which they never uttered more justly applies may be judged from the following passage in Professor Marks’ Lectures (p. 167), and a comparison of it with Dr. McCaul’s work to which he refers. He says: “Every Hebrew scholar knows well that in the whole volume of the Scriptures ■■■■■ has but one meaning, and that it is never used to denote anything other but bodily offspring. The late Dr. McCaul admitted the correctness of this assertion, but he argued that this was no reason why the word might not be used in a figurative sense. ‘Can any substantial reason,’ he asks, ‘be assigned why it should not be used figuratively?’ The mightiest and most substantial of all reasons is that it is nowhere so used.”

Now, this is what Dr. McCaul does say, “Let us for a moment suppose that Rabbi Isaac’s assertion is correct—that in no passage the word ■■■■■ (seed) occurs in a figurative sense; will it therefore follow that it cannot occur in a figurative sense? Can any substantial reason be assigned why it should not be used figuratively as well as ■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■■■? The expression, ‘children of the prophets’ (■■■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■) confessedly means the disciples of the prophets. The Israelites are called ‘children of the living God’ (■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■, Hosea 2:1, in the English Hosea 1:10). To Ephraim the word ■■■ (son), and ■■■■■■ (child), is applied in Jeremiah 31:20, ‘Is Ephraim My dear son?’ (■■■); ‘is he a pleasant child?’ (■■■■■■). Israel is also called God’s firstborn. ‘Israel is My son, My firstborn’ (■■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■, Exodus 4:22). If all these words be used figuratively, what reason is there for denying that ■■■■■ may be used in the same way?

“But, secondly, the assertion that ■■■■■ (seed) must mean the natural offspring is not true. It is used of the firstborn of the husband’s brother, when the husband had died without issue (see Genesis 38:8 and Deuteronomy 25:6). Here it cannot be contended that the child is the natural offspring of the deceased. In Isaiah 57:4, it is used figuratively—‘Are ye not children of transgressors, a seed of falsehood?’ (■■■■■■ ■■■■■■). And again, Malachi 2:15, ‘a godly seed’ (■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■). In the thirty-first verse of the twenty-second psalm (Psalms 22:30 English), which verse is not controversial, Aben Ezra himself takes ■■■■■■ (seed) figuratively, ‘A seed shall serve him; it shall be counted to the Lord,’ etc. Aben Ezra renders these words, ‘A seed which shall serve Him,’ etc., and adds, ‘as if that was a seed which serveth Him’ (■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■). Again, in that famous verse Genesis 3:15, ‘I will put enmity

between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed,' we cannot understand the natural offspring of the tempter, but those who do his works, and are actuated by his spirit" ("Doctrine and Interpretation of the Fifty-third Chapter of Isaiah," by Dr McCaul, pp. 29 and 30).

If the learned Professor as accurately represents the views and statements of Oxlee, Gesenius, and Schleiermacher, whom he quotes so profusely, he has but little reason for sheltering himself behind their opinions.

2.01. Part 1 - The Ancient Scriptures

PART I THE ANCIENT SCRIPTURES I. THE INTERREGNUM AND "AFTERWARD"

II. THE "ICHABOD" PERIOD AND THE RETURN OF THE GLORY OF JEHOVAH III. THE SILENCE OF GOD: HOW IT SHALL BE BROKEN 1. In Relation to the Church, 2. In Relation to Israel, 3. In Relation to Christendom, IV. THE CONCLUSION OF THE HALLEL (A Prophetic Drama of the End of the Age.)

2.02. Chapter 1. The Interegnum and 'Afterward'

I. THE INTERREGNUM AND “AFTERWARD”

“And the Lord said unto me, Go yet, love a woman beloved of her friend and an adulteress, even as the Lord loveth the children of Israel, though they turn unto other gods, and love cakes of raisins. So I bought her to me for fifteen pieces of silver, and an homer of barley, and an half homer of barley: and I said unto her, Thou shalt abide for me many days; thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be any man’s wife: so will I also be toward thee.

“For the children of Israel shall abide many days without king, and without prince, and without sacrifice, and without an image, and without ephod or teraphim: afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall come with fear unto the Lord and to His goodness in the latter days.” Hosea 3:1-5. THE short chapter of five verses (Hosea 3:1-5), which is to form our first subject, divides itself naturally into two parts, Hosea 3:1-3 being the record of a symbolical transaction, and Hosea 3:4-5 a verbal prophecy. The two parts are, however, vitally connected, for the symbolism of the first verses serves as an illustration of the truth presented in the prophecy, while the prophecy is an explanation of the symbolical transaction. There is, in fact, but one great truth in reference to Israel in this chapter which the Spirit of God wants to teach us in a twofold way; first by an illustration, and then by a verbal explanation.

If we want to know the meaning of the seemingly strange transaction recorded in the first part of the chapter, we find it in a sentence in the first verse, which says that it is “according to,” or “like unto, the love of Jehovah for the children of Israel”; and being an illustration of so lofty and glorious a theme, it is worthy a careful consideration. The prophet is told to go again and love a woman.* who is beloved of her “friend,” or her “husband” (as it is rightly rendered in the margin of the Revised Version), but who is an adulteress. There can be little doubt that the “woman” is Gomer, of whom we read in Hosea 1:1-11; and the “friend” or “husband” is the prophet, who went through this sad experience in his wedded life in order that himself and his family might serve as “signs and wonders in Israel” (Isaiah 8:18), in order to set forth realistically before their very eyes Jehovah’s attitude to and dealings with His faithless people.

* Some have supposed the transaction to have been ideal and that it did not form an actual experience of the prophet’s life; but while the truth it is meant to illustrate would not be affected, even though it were a figure without actuality in real life, the whole account is so realistic, and even passionate, that it seems to me impossible to regard it as anything but literal history. To begin with, when the prophet first took her into marriage relationship with him there was nothing lovable about Gomer; she was, in fact, a poor fallen woman. It was undeserved favour and great condescension manifested on the part of the prophet which placed her in the position of his wedded wife; but it is just for this very reason that this transaction seems, though imperfectly, to set forth “the love of Jehovah towards the children of Israel.” Why did God first choose Israel to be a people unto Himself? Was it because of anything good or lovable in them? No; wholly of grace and sovereign

was the love of Jehovah towards the children of Israel. In Deuteronomy, after warning them not to think that it was because of anything in them not because of their goodness, or righteousness, for they were a “stiff-necked people”; not because they were greater or more in number, for they were “fewest of all people,” God condescends to give a reason for His choice, and it is a strange and wonderful reason. “I loved you,” He says, “because I loved you,” because I chose to love you, and “because I would keep the oath which I had sworn unto your fathers,” which oath and promise was also wholly of grace and not of merit. But let us proceed to the second stage of the prophet’s relation and attitude to this woman.

After she became his wedded wife she forsook him and went to another man, but in spite of the intensity of her guilt and her ingratitude, the prophet did not cease to love her. This is touchingly expressed by the words, “beloved by her mate, yet an adulteress”; and in this, too, it resembles God’s dealings with and attitude to Israel. Wonderful was the relationship into which the stiffnecked nation was brought. Well might Moses in his last words exclaim, “Happy art thou, O Israel, who is a people like unto thee!” “For thy Maker is thy husband: Jehovah of Sabbaoth is His name.” But instead of entering into the blessedness of this relationship with Jehovah, Israel “looked to other gods,” and committed spiritual adultery with idols; and instead of finding all their joy in fellowship with Him, they became sensual, and “loved flagons of wine” or “cakes of raisins.” And yet, although the condition of Israel is well illustrated by this poor adulteress, the blessed truth which this transaction is meant to teach, and which Christians are so slow to learn, is that Jehovah still loves Israel. Yes, even now, while righteously given over into the hands of her enemies, a proverb and a byword among the nations, Israel is, and remains, “the dearly beloved of His soul” (Jeremiah 12:7), and God narrowly and jealously watches the conduct of the nations toward them (Zechariah 1:14-15); for, although fellowship is broken off, and “in a little wrath He has hid His face from them for a moment,” the marriage bond between Jehovah and the nation He has betrothed unto Him for ever (Hosea 2:19) is indissoluble, and His “gifts and calling are without repentance.” “Jehovah, the God of Israel saith that He hateth putting away” (Malachi 2:16). This, His wonderful covenant faithfulness, is Jehovah’s secret towards them that fear Him. “I am Jehovah,” He says, “I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.” And this infinite grace and “love of Jehovah” toward the children of Israel find their parallel also in the experience of the Church.

Why did God call us from among Jew and Gentile during this present dispensation to be “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation”? Was it because we were better or wiser than the rest of the world? Oh, no, “for ye see your calling, brethren,” says the Apostle, echoing the warnings which were given to Israel of old, “how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called, but God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty, and base things of the world, and things which are despised hath God chosen, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence.” Was it for our goodness or righteousness? Oh, no; “but God commendeth (or displays) His own love toward us” (Romans 5:8) a love inconceivable by man “in that while we were yet sinners,” utterly lost and utterly wretched, “Christ died for us.”

Israel’s history and God’s dealings with them is no encouragement to the Christian to think lightly of sin and of backsliding from God, for we see that God is a jealous God, visiting the sins of His people even more than on the sins of the world; but it also displays the marvellous faithfulness of Jehovah and His love towards His redeemed, which all the many waters of their sins and

backslidings cannot quench. In Hosea 1:2 we get a glimpse of the innate worthlessness of Israel and all such as are typified by poor Gomer. Sin, in her case, as it always does, implied a certain kind of bondage, so that she had to be bought back from the sharer of her guilt. But what is the price she is valued at? Just half the price of a dead slave (Exodus 21:32),* with an homer and a half of barley thrown into the bargain. The redemption price which the great God actually pays for those as worthless as this poor woman is more than tongue can tell. It cannot be estimated by all the precious but corruptible things known to man. It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx or the sapphire; the gold and the crystal cannot equal it, and “the exchange of it shall not be for vessels of fine gold.” It is nothing less than the precious blood of Christ, “as a lamb without blemish and without spot.”

* Keil, in loc., thinks, however, that the “homer” and “lethech,” which together made fifteen baths or ephas of barley, might also be valued at fifteen shekels, so that the silver and barley together may perhaps have been equal to the full price, or rather the full amount of compensation for a slave if gored to death.

We must touch on one more significant item in the symbolism before we proceed with the verbal prophecy.

Having bought Gomer back, the prophet gives her a charge. “And I said unto her, Thou shalt abide (or remain) for me many days ... so will I also be towards thee.” There was to be a neutral period. She was no more to follow sin, but she was not yet to enter into her conjugal rights. Meanwhile her husband would be her guardian, and ultimately there would be a full restoration of the fellowship implied in the marriage relationship. The symbolical significance of this is, I believe, as follows. A remnant of the nation was brought back from Babylon after the seventy years’ bondage, and then commenced the neutral period during which Israel is neither guilty of their old besetting sin of idolatry which, as already explained, is regarded as spiritual adultery nor are they living in fellowship with Jehovah; for, although there has been an outward return, there has never yet taken place that national change of heart for which God is waiting before He can return unto them in mercies. Indeed, soon after the commencement of this period Israel, though no longer guilty of idolatry, showed how their heart was still alienated from God by disowning Him who is “the brightness of His glory and an exact representation of His very Being.” But there is hope in their end. Israel, though sitting desolate and, to human view, forsaken, abides through these “many days” for God, who will yet fully restore the blessings of the relationship into which He once entered with them, even as He announces through this same prophet: “I will betroth thee unto Me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto Me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto Me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know Jehovah.” (Hosea 2:19-20).

We now come to the verbal message which explains the symbolism of the first part of this chapter. The connection will be seen at a glance if we compare the words addressed to Gomer in Hosea 1:3, “Many days shalt thou abide for me,” with the first words of Hosea 1:4, “For many days shall the children of Israel abide.” Israel, then, stands in relation to this woman as anti-type to type, and the many days of the neutral condition of Gomer was but a foreshadowing of the “many days” of the neutral condition of Israel in relation to Jehovah and to idolatry. The fourth verse is, I might say, the great prophecy in the Old Testament with regard to the Interregnum, a period covered by

the image of Daniel 2:1-49 and the New Testament expression, “the times of the Gentiles” the time during which the sceptre is departed from Judah, and representative governmental power is entrusted to the Gentile nations until those times are fulfilled, and Zion becomes the centre of government for the earth, and the place whence God’s law will go forth, as never before, to all nations.

It is of interest to observe that the most authoritative Jewish commentators have themselves admitted that Hosea 2:4 gives a graphic description of the present condition of the Jewish people. I translate the following passage from one of the greatest of Rabbinic writers.* Speaking on the expression “many days,” he says: “These are the days of this present captivity, in which we are in the power of the Gentiles, and in the power of their kings and princes, and we are ‘without a sacrifice and without an image,’ i.e., without a sacrifice to God, and without an image to false gods; and ‘without an ephod, and without teraphim,’ i.e., without an ephod to God, by means of which we could foretell the future, as with the Urim and Thummim; and without teraphim to false gods. And this is the present condition of all the children of Israel in this present captivity.”

* Kimchi, commonly called by the Jews “Redak,” from the initial letters of “Rabbi David Kimchi,” was born in Narbonne in 1160, and died about 1235. So great was his fame that the Jews applied to him, by a play of words, a Talmudic saying (Aboth. iii. 17), adapted to mean, “No Kimchi, no understanding of the Scriptures.” To this interpretation every critical Bible student, whether Jew or Christian, must subscribe. We shall see presently what this admission on the part of a great non-Christian Jew implies. The order of the words in the fourth verse is somewhat different in the original from what it is in the A.V. It begins with the expression, “many days:” “Many days shall the children of Israel abide” and then it goes on to describe the special conditions under which they will abide. The words “Yamim rabbim” (“many days”) are a Hebrew idiom denoting a long, indefinite period, embracing days, years, centuries, or even millenniums, and the first item in this remarkable prophecy really is, that for a long, unmeasured period the children of Israel would “abide,” that is, remain or continue to exist. I have elsewhere dealt fully with the marvel of the continued existence of the Jewish nation,* but I would here in passing simply remind my readers that if the Jewish people, in spite of all the forces which have for many centuries been brought to bear against them with terrible severity, still lives, it is to testify to the truth of this and other statements of the Word of God. God has said, “Many days shall the children of Israel abide,” and therefore no force in the universe is able to move them. God has called them “Am Olam,” the “everlasting people” (Isaiah 44:7, Hebrew), and therefore the Jewish nation has proved indestructible.

* See my book, “The Jewish Problem.” “The world has by this time discovered,” said Lord Beaconsfield, “that it is impossible to destroy the Jews. The attempt to extirpate them has been made under the most favourable auspices and on the largest scale; the most considerable means that man could command have been pertinaciously applied to this object for the longest period of recorded time. Egyptian Pharaohs, Assyrian kings, Roman emperors, Scandinavian crusaders, Gothic princes, and holy inquisitors have alike devoted their energies to the fulfilment of this common purpose. Expatriation, exile, captivity, confiscation, torture on the most ingenious and massacre on the most extensive scale, a curious system of degrading customs and debasing laws which would have broken the heart of another people, have been tried, and in vain. The Jews, after all this havoc, probably more numerous at this date than they were during the reign of

Solomon the wise, are found in all lands, and prospering in most." But the marvel of Israel's continued existence becomes intensified if we examine the conditions under which they abide. Apart from the little word translated "without," which in the Hebrew is repeated five times, there are but six words used by the pen of inspiration to portray the condition of Israel during the Interregnum, and these six words contain more than a whole volume that could be written by the most eloquent human pen. The six words are arranged in three couplets, or pairs of contrasts, which graphically describe a neutral state. The three pairs of contrasts, or opposites, are these:

1. "Without a king and without a prince."

2. "Without a sacrifice and without an image."

3. "Without an ephod and without teraphim."

Let us examine each one separately.

1. "Without a king and without a prince"

What this means is, without the king of God's appointment, and without a prince of their own choice. When Hosea uttered this prediction he could already almost hear the sound of the steps of the Assyrian army on its way finally to overthrow the kingdom of the ten tribes. Hosea's ministry, which commenced in the reign of Jeroboam II., extended into the reign of Hoshea, the last king who reigned in Israel a period of about sixty years so that the prophet may himself have witnessed the fulfilment of the threatening part of his prophecies, in the overthrow of Samaria, and the captivity of the ten tribes. But the prophecy with which we are dealing is not limited to the northern kingdom of the ten tribes, the term "the children of Israel" being, I believe, used in the proper and larger sense as embracing all the descendants of the one man who by the Divine authority was called "Israel." The geographical centre of prophecy, except when otherwise stated, is always Jerusalem, and in Divine forecasts of the chief outlines of Jewish history the schism between the ten tribes and the two, which was permitted by God as a punishment on the house of David, and was to be but temporary in its character, is overlooked. We know that Samaria was finally over-thrown in the year 721 B.C., when the history of the ten tribes as a separate kingdom terminated for ever. When the great restoration takes place God says, "I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all" (Ezekiel 37:22). The one king who shall be "king to them all" is the true David, "David's greater Son," who will raise up the tabernacle of David, and "close up the breaches thereof," caused by the defection of the ten tribes; and He is "the Lion of the tribe of Judah."

Judah continued as a kingdom about one hundred and thirty years longer after the captivity of the ten tribes, until the sceptre was finally plucked out of the hands of the house of David by Nebuchadnezzar, that "head of gold" of Daniel's great vision, the first king of the four great world-powers, whose united course makes up "the times of the Gentiles."

Now, there is a point in connection with this subject which is of immense interest, showing also that prophecy does indeed emanate from the omniscient God who alone knows the end from the beginning. About the time of the final overthrow of Judah, in the reign of the last king who sat on the throne of David, another prophet was sent by God with the following mysterious and startling

message on this subject: “Thus saith the Lord God: Remove the mitre, and take off the crown: this shall not be” (or, “is no more it” I no longer recognise it): “exalt the low, abase the high” (let anarchy and usurpation of the throne of David continue). “I will overturn, overturn, overturn it: this also” (whatever men may put up instead of Davidic rule on Mount Zion) “shall not be” (shall not be permitted to continue long) “until He come whose right it is; to Him it shall be given” (Ezekiel 21:25-27). And as God has spoken by the mouth of His prophet so it has been. Centuries elapsed between Ezekiel’s prophecy and the coming of our Lord Jesus. Nineteen centuries have elapsed since, but there has been no restoration of the throne of David; no one of the seed of David reigning over Israel on Mount Zion.

Some might think of the Hasmonean and Herodian kings of Jerusalem as militating against the truth of this assertion, but these were but incidents in the process of the overturning and usurpation foretold in the above prophecy. The Hasmoneans were priests of the tribe of Levi, who, though heroes and martyrs for Israel’s faith and worship, had no right to assume royalty, which dignity in Israel God promised and confirmed by oath as an everlasting possession to the house of David; and as for Herod, he was an Idumaean and Roman vassal. “This also shall not be, until He come whose right it is; to Him it shall be given.” Who is it whose right it is? Who is the true and lawful King of Israel? Of course every Christian answers, “Jesus,” He was born “King of the Jews” (Matthew 2:2), and even on the cross on which He died was written “Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews.” This is truth, but not the whole truth. The rightful King of Israel is Jehovah for the uniqueness of Israel’s high calling consisted more particularly in this, that it was destined to be a theocracy that is, a people whose visible head and leader is God. If we want to know what is implied in a theocracy we find it expressed in one verse by the prophet Isaiah when speaking of a future time when it shall be fully realised: “For Jehovah is our judge, Jehovah is our law-giver (or war prince), Jehovah is our King; and He will bring us salvation,” or “He also will be our Saviour” (Isaiah 33:22). “Jehovah is our king”: hence at an early period of Israel’s history when they came to Samuel saying: “Make us a king to judge us like all the nations”; and Samuel, in not altogether unselfish displeasure, prayed to God about it, the Lord answered him saying, “Hearken to the voice of the people . . . for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them” (1 Samuel 8:7). Well, God “gave them a king in His anger, and took him away in His wrath.” Saul, at the time of his election, was just such a one as answered to man’s ideal of a leader and king, but although he was granted a fair trial, he proved a failure, and serves as an object-lesson that man’s rule is not like God’s. Eventually God Himself appointed a royal family in Israel; but what was God’s purpose in the establishment of the Davidic house? Was it not that from that family there should ultimately spring one in whom the theocratic ideal would be fully realised; one who, although “of their brethren,” and “from the midst of them” (Deuteronomy 18:15-18) should yet be Jehovah-Zidkenu the mighty God, whose reign would be the reign of God, and whose kingdom would be “the kingdom of heaven” on earth? In the interval the mere human kings of the house of David were regarded as types, and God’s representatives. Thus we read that when Solomon commenced his rule “he sat on the throne of Jehovah as king instead of David his father” (1 Chronicles 29:23). The throne was Jehovah’s, and Solomon and his successors only occupied it until the real king, Jehovah’s true representative should appear. Hence it is that even when Israel had kings they were always pointed onward to another king: “Behold a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment”; or, in the words of Jeremiah, “Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch and a king shall reign and

prosper.” Did they not have kings at the time these prophecies were uttered? Yes; but those kings were mere shadows filling up the gap in time until the true king should be manifested, “He who is the blessed and only potentate, King of kings and Lord of lords.” This also is the reason why in the Old Testament the coming of the Messiah is sometimes spoken of as the advent of God: “Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion, for lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith Jehovah,” and yet He who was thus to come is the sent One, “the man whose name is the Branch.” In the fulness of time one in whom this ideal was fully realised did appear, and before His birth the following announcement was made to His mother: “Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call His name Jesus” (what can be more human? but it goes on); “He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest, and the Lord God shall give unto Him 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.” Here is that One for whose manifestation the ages were waiting, the “Immanuel,” God in man, “He whose right it is,” not merely because through His mother He is the true Son of David, but because He is the Son of the Highest; the irradiated brightness of His glory, and exact representation of the very Being of God, who, as we have seen, is the true King of Israel. Oh, if Israel had known the day of their visitation! if they had recognised that the child born in such humble circumstances in one of their families was none other than the long-expected Messiah, “the Lord of glory,” the long indefinite period of the “many days” would have terminated, and Israel would no longer have been without the longed for king. But Israel did not know, neither did they understand, and instead of hailing Him with acclamation, they said, “Not this man we will not have this man to reign over us.” Early in the ministry of the Lord Jesus, impressed by His miracle-working power, they would have taken Him by force and made Him king, but their ideals of the Messianic kingdom were altogether different from His. They wanted a kingdom, but Christ preached the kingdom of heaven, or of God; and so afterwards, when they saw that their carnal expectations would not be realised, they did indeed put a crown on His head, but it was of thorns. They handed Him over to Pilate, and when that weak Roman functionary ironically remonstrated with them, saying, “Shall I crucify your king?” they replied, “We have no king but Caesar”; and having thus deliberately put themselves afresh under the yoke of Gentile rule, they are permitted to have a good long taste of it, in order that they may learn the difference between the rule of God and the yoke of the Gentiles. This is why the children of Israel still “abide without a king,” and until they bow their knee in lowly homage before Him whom in ignorance they once despised and scorned, they will continue so to remain. Anyhow, this is an indisputable fact, that the Lord Jesus of Nazareth is the last in Jewish history whose descent from the royal line of David can now be established by sufficiently authentic proof. There are Jews and Gentiles at the present day who cavil at the New Testament genealogies, overlooking the fact that there is ample proof in the New Testament of the Davidic descent of our Lord, apart even from the genealogical records. But the difficulties in the genealogies arise not from inaccuracies, but from obscurities, which could, I believe, easily be cleared up if the national and tribal records from which they were compiled were still extant to appeal to. But since the destruction of the second Temple all these national genealogical records have perished, and apart from a few worthless traditions there is nothing that any Jew now on the face of the earth can appeal to prove even from which tribe, not to say from which family, he springs. There is neither a tribe of Judah nor a separate Davidic family now existing, and yet the true king of Israel must prove Himself a son of David!* * See for an examination of this subject, “ Die Worte Jesu,” by Professor Gustaf Dalman, pp. 260-266.

There is also this fact to be remembered, that when the claims of our Lord Jesus to Davidic descent were first asserted, they could easily have been disproved had it been possible to do so. Now, the Scribes and Pharisees among whom Christ moved were not at all slow to bring up anything they could possibly adduce which they thought would disprove His claims. Wilfully ignorant, for instance, that He was born in Bethlehem, they stigmatised Him as a “Nazarene,” and said, “Search and see, for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet”; yet although he was universally addressed as “Son of David” even by the beggars who sat by the wayside, and by a poor Gentile woman on the borders of Tyre and Sidon, His enemies never even ventured to whisper that He was not of the house of David. Afterwards, when Paul and the other apostles went everywhere proclaiming “Jesus Christ of the seed of David” as the very foundation of the gospel which they preached (2 Timothy 2:8), if the Pharisees could have proved this one statement to be untrue, it would for ever have closed the mouths of these men, whom they regarded as a trouble and danger to the nation. They had serious consultations as to what could be done to put a stop to the wonderful movement in favour of Jesus of Nazareth. They threatened the apostles, they beat them, they again and again cast them into prison, but they never once dared say that He whom they preached as the seed of David and heir to His throne (Acts 2:25-30) was not of the house of David at all. On the other hand we find that down to the sixth century, when the Talmud Babylon was compiled, the fact that Christ was of the Royal Davidic house was written deep on the consciousness of the Jewish nation, and shines out even from beneath the blasphemous legends which the Rabbis invented about Him in self-justification.* And not only is Israel “without a king” (or the king of God’s appointment); they are also without a prince of their own choice, the Dispersion having made it an impossibility for them to have one head to rule and guide them; and it is an interesting fact that although since the modern emancipation of the Jews they have a large share in the government of all civilised nations a share altogether out of proportion to their actual numbers, and men of Jewish birth have been successful leaders of great parties, and even prime ministers they themselves are under Gentile rule, and cannot be governed by one of their own nation.

* The following passage from Talmud, Sanhedrin, fol. 43, a., is most striking. “There is a tradition: On the eve of the Sabbath and the Passover they hung Jesus. And the herald went forth before him for forty days crying, ‘Jesus goeth to be executed, because he has practised sorcery and seduced Israel and estranged them from God. Let any one who can bring forward any justifying plea for him come and give information concerning it,’ but no justifying plea was found for him, and so he was hung on the eve of Sabbath and the Passover. Ulla said, ‘But doest thou think that he belongs to those for whom a justifying plea is to be sought? He was a very seducer, and the Allmerciful has said, “Thou shalt not spare him, nor conceal him.” ’ But the case of Jesus stood differently because he stood near to the kingdom.”

Laible, in “Jesus Christ in the Talmud,” renders the last words, “for his place was near those in power,” but this is unsatisfactory. The name actually used in the original in this passage just quoted is “Yeshu” which is an abbreviation of “Yemakh Shemoh vezikhroh,” “Let his name and his memory be blotted out.” This blasphemous substitution of “Yeshu” for the precious name “Jesus” often occurs in Rabbinic literature, but Christian friends will remember that it is not our Lord Jesus as we know Him that poor Israel in ignorance thus blasphemes, but the caricature of Him as presented to them by apostate, persecuting Christendom in the dark ages. Often the only way left

to the Jews to avenge their terrible sufferings and massacres was to write blasphemously of Him in whose name they were ignorantly perpetrated. Over against poor Israel's ignorant blasphemy of "Yemakh Shemoh vezikhroh" God has uttered His decree that the name of Jesus "shall endure for ever; His name shall be continued as long as the sun; and men shall be blessed in Him; all nations shall call Him blessed" (Psalms 72:17). That the legend refers to a well-known custom in the procedure of the Sanhedrim in trials for life, there is I think, no doubt, because one of their great maxims was, that "they sat to justify and not to condemn." That this humane custom of calling on those who had anything to bring forward in favour of the accused to come and declare it, was not observed in the trial of Jesus of Nazareth, for reasons well known to readers of the Gospel, is certain, but, as I have already stated, from beneath the blasphemous legend invented as a justification for poor Israel's blind leaders in reference to their conduct to the Holy One, there shines out this truth, that up to the sixth century, when the Talmud was compiled, it was admitted by His enemies that He was not only of the Davidic house, but that "he stood near to the kingdom."

2. "Without a sacrifice and without an image" "Without a sacrifice to God," as Kimchi well paraphrases it, "and without an image to false gods."

There is a striking fact which we may notice, by the way, in connection with this pair of contrasts, and that is, that the prophet Hosea, in search for one word by which to characterise the true religion of Israel in contrast to idolatry, lays his finger on the word "zebbach" ("sacrifice"). There are men at the present day, both Jews and Christians, and some who are even occupying the position of teachers, who represent that the Old Testament Scriptures, instead of being a coherent, harmonious, though progressive,* and (apart from the New Testament) relatively incomplete, revelation from God, consist of a patchwork of "codes," not one of them of so early a date as was believed for millenniums by both Jews and Christians, until these very modern gentlemen, possessed of a powerful intuitive faculty for discernment, were raised up to detect the fraud. Thus they have asserted that while, in the writings attributed to Moses (which according to them consist for the most part of clumsily forged documents in the Exilic and post-Exilic periods), stress is laid on sacrifice as a divinely appointed institution, the prophets utterly repudiate the idea of a Divine appointment, or a Divine regulation of sacrifice. The reasoning upon which this theory has been based I will not stop here to examine, but this I will solemnly state, that those who would put Moses against the prophets, and the prophets against Moses, are equally ignorant of the spirit of both. There are grand underlying harmonies in the Scriptures where "the natural man" professes to see only contradictions.

* The following is from an excellent booklet, "Bible Study," by Rev. David M. McIntyre, Glasgow: "An immense amount of research has been expended during recent years in determining the personal element which is apparent in all the Sacred Writings. One thought which has been persistently worked out is the progress of doctrine. That progress is not a development from barbarism, for the first Word of Scripture is an utterance of God, the first promise has in it the anticipation of completed redemption, the first act of worship looks steadfastly to Calvary. We acknowledge that there is in the earlier Scriptures immaturity, but it is such as is seen in the sprouting seed, the upspringing blade, the unripe ear immaturity which contains 'the promise and potency' of perfected life. We frankly confess that the doctrine moves forward into fuller light and more measured statement, but it moves along the high level of inspiration from the first. The progress of doctrine of which we speak is a progress that is sensible neither of conflict nor of

reconciliation. The promise of the end is in the opening chapters; the resonance of the first word vibrates in the last. It is a progress presided over by one mind and that the mind of Christ. The two elements in this progress are, a fuller content of truth, and a closer relation to the Person of the Redeemer. We may realise its character by placing together the first utterance addressed to faith, and the last ‘In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.’ ‘He which testifieth these things saith, Surely, I come quickly.’ ”

Here is a prophet, and a pre-Exilic prophet too, who characterises the true religion of Israel by the one word “sacrifice”; and truly there is no other word that could so well summarise the Divine system as unfolded in Moses and the prophets as the word “zebbach,” which here and elsewhere (see Isaiah 1:11) stands for slain sacrifices in general, and not for the “peace-offering,” in which sense it is sometimes used.*

* “■■■■■ (zebbach), a sacrifice (whether the act of sacrificing, &c.), an offering, a victim; opposed both to ■■■■■■ mincha), a bloodless offering when so contrasted (1 Samuel 2:29; Psalms 40:7); and to ■■■■■ (■ohloh) a burnt-offering, holocaust; so that ■■■■ (zebbach) denotes sacrifices of which but part were consumed, such as expiatory or eucharistic offerings ” (Gesenius).

There are Jews and Christians at the present day who boast that they no longer believe in the necessity of sacrifice and that which sacrifices prefigured; but such Jews have as little in common with the teaching of the Old Testament as this kind of Christians have with the doctrines of the New Testament. Let any honest-minded man turn over the pages of the Old Testament, and I can confidently declare that from Genesis to Malachi he will meet in every part one prominently outstanding object, and that object is an altar, with which of course is bound up both priest and sacrifice. On that altar there is an inscription which explains the meaning of the whole sacrificial system of the Old Testament, and it reads thus: “The life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood which by reason of the life maketh atonement” (Leviticus 17:11, Hebrew) that is, life covereth life; the life of the innocent offering in the blood poured out on this altar “covereth” the life forfeited by the guilty offerer. And turning from the Old to the New Testament there still meets us on almost every page one prominent outstanding object; and the most prominent object on the pages of the New Testament is a cross. And what is the cross? It is an altar, on which the most stupendous of all sacrifices was offered the one sacrifice to which all the sacrifices of the Mosaic economy pointed even Christ, “who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot unto God,” so that in Him we might find “redemption by His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace.” And on the New Testament altar, too, there is an inscription. I do not refer to the actual inscription placed upon the cross by Pilate, perhaps in mockery, which nevertheless describes the primary idea of the Hebrew “khapare,” the royal character of the victim, but to His own, and to the Apostle’s statements which explain the terrible necessity and true significance of Calvary; and this is how it reads: “The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.” “He who knew no sin was made sin on our behalf that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” “And without shedding of blood there is no remission” (Matthew 20:28; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 9:22). On this, as on every other essential doctrine, there is perfect accord between the teaching of the Old and the New Testament. And Israel now is “without a sacrifice.” Ever since the destruction of the second Temple, soon after the coming of Christ, they

have not been permitted to offer any kind of bloody sacrifice. There is no morning or evening lamb of burnt-offering; they still observe the “Day of Atonement,” but where is the blood of atonement, and where the priest who on that day was to make an atonement for them to cleanse them, that they may be clean from their sins before the Lord? (Leviticus 16:30). The Jews still keep the feast of Unleavened Bread, but where is the “Zebbach Pesach ” (Exodus 12:27), “the sacrifice of the Passover,” the blood of which sprinkled on the doorposts sheltered Israel’s firstborn in Egypt? On the Passover evening when gathered around the “Saider” the solemn family ritual in commemoration of the deliverance of the nation from Egyptian bondage a piece of half-burnt shankbone is all that lies on the table to remind them of the lamb appointed by God, which they once used to offer and feed on. There is perhaps no more striking commentary on this item of Hosea’s prophecy, and no more pathetic picture of Israel’s present condition, than is presented by their liturgies. In that lying before me, which is in daily use among millions of Jews in Russia, Galicia, and throughout Eastern Europe, after prescribing certain portions dealing with the sacrificial regulations in Leviticus, and in the Mishna to be recited, there follows this prayer, which I translate: “Lord of the universe, Thou hast commanded us to offer a continual sacrifice in its appointed season, and that the priests should stand in their service, and the Levites in their ministry, and Israel in their appointed place. But now, through our iniquity, the Temple is destroyed, and the continual sacrifice has ceased, and we have neither priest in his service or Levite in his ministry. . . . Therefore let it please Thee, O Lord our God, and the God of our fathers, that the words of our lips (by which is meant the repetition of the portions of Scripture where sacrifices are commanded), may be esteemed and received and acceptable before Thee, as if we had offered the continual sacrifice, and as if we stood in our appointed position.” After reading the Mishna connected with the pouring and sprinkling of the blood of the different sin-offerings, there follows this prayer: “May it please Thee, O Lord our God, and the God of our fathers, that if I am guilty of (a sin for which I ought to bring) a sin-offering, that this ritual may be acceptable before Thee as if I had brought a sin offering.” The same prayer follows after the recital of the portion dealing with the trespass-offering, the peace-offering, and the other offerings. From this, as well as from some other customs, we see that deep down in the consciousness of the Jewish nation the belief is rooted that sacrifices are a necessity as the ground of fellowship with the “Holy One of Israel,” and at the same time there is the liturgically solemn confession of the patent fact that for these “many days” they are “without a sacrifice.” As to the prayer that the mere recital of the command may be acceptable as if the offering was actually presented, as well might we believe that the mere reading over of a creditor’s account is equal to the paying of it! And not only is the present condition of Israel characterised as “without a sacrifice,” they are also “without an image.”* In the past, and until the “many days” of the Interregnum period set in, it was either the one or the other, for whenever they forsook Jehovah they always turned to idols, but now it is neither the one nor the other. In Babylon Israel was finally purged of all idolatrous tendencies, and since then they have manifested the greatest abhorrence of everything bearing the remotest resemblance to idolatry. Of course there is another kind of idolatry: there are the “idols of the heart” (Ezekiel 14:4), which are quite as hateful in the sight of God as images of wood and stone, but with this our passage does not deal.

* The marginal reading and reference to Isaiah 19:19 in the A.V. is misleading, for it leads unlearned readers to think the “image” is an emblem associated with the worship of ehovah. ■■■■■■■ (Mazehvah), which is from ■■■■■ (Nozab), is used thirty-one times in the Old

Testament, and means (1) a pillar or monument; (2) a standing image or pillar devoted to idolatrous uses. In Genesis, where it is found nine times, it is used exclusively in the first sense (Genesis 28:18-22, Genesis 31:13, Genesis 31:45, Genesis 31:51, Genesis 31:52; Genesis 35:14, Genesis 35:20); but from Exodus onward, from the time of the Divine appointment of one sanctuary when the putting up of a Mazehvah was strictly forbidden (Leviticus 26:1), and in all the other books of the Old Testament, excepting Isaiah 19:19, where it is used in the first sense of a pillar or monument which Egypt will erect to the true God, and Exodus 24:4 (where it is used of the twelve pillars of the altar which Moses built at the foot of Mount Sinai, as representing the twelve tribes of Israel), the word is always used to describe an idolatrous object or the image of an idol; and in the prophets it is used as the emblem of Baal worship. It was for raising Mazehboth that Israel was finally carried into captivity "and they set them up Mazehboth ("images," A.V.), and Asherim upon every high hill, and under every green tree, and they burnt incense in all high places as did the nations whom the Lord carried away before them: and wrought wicked things to provoke the Lord to anger . . . therefore the Lord was angry with Israel and removed them out of His sight" (2 Kings 17:10, 2 Kings 17:18). That Hosea used Mazehvah as a symbol of idolatry may be seen from the only other passage in his prophecy where this word is used, namely, in Hosea 10:1-2. As a matter of fact, as far as the gross forms of idolatry are concerned, the Jews now are entirely free from it, and have been for these "many days" since the Babylonian Captivity; and even their prejudice against Christianity is partly due to the fact that the outward aspect of it, especially in countries where the Latin and Greek Churches prevail, has led them to regard it as idolatrous an estimation which is, alas! to a large extent justified.

3. "Without an ephod and teraphim." This is the last of the three couplets, and on this point, too, we can have no better explanation than the words of the great Jewish commentator: "Without an ephod to God, by means of which we could foretell the future as with the Urim and Thummim, and without teraphim to false gods." In the ephod, as already stated, were set the Urim and Thummim, through which, in some mysterious way not at present fully known to us,* God revealed His will to Israel. At the consecration of Joshua as the successor of Moses, God commanded that he should stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall inquire for him by the judgment of Urim before the Lord (Numbers 27:21). Later on, in times of perplexity, David, for instance, had only to say to Abiathar the priest, "Bring hither the ephod," and by its means he inquired of the Lord God of Israel, who condescended in this manner to make known His will to His servant (1 Samuel 23:9-12, 1 Samuel 30:7-8).

* See Appendix I., "Urim and Thummim," at the end of the book. From this we see that though the ephod formed part of the high priest's outfit, it was a phase of the priesthood which reminds us of the prophetic office inasmuch as through it God spoke a prefigurement in this respect of the time when both offices shall meet in one glorious Person, through whom God was to speak His last words, and who, though the great prophet, shall also be "a priest upon His throne." In fact, on carefully analysing this remarkable prophecy, we find each of the three great Messianic offices referred to in the three pairs of contrasts which we are considering. The first speaks plainly of the "King"; the second of "sacrifice," with which of course is bound up the idea of priesthood; and in this last we have a reference to the revealing of the mind of God, which is more properly connected with the prophetic office. Is it accidental that just these three great offices which man needs for his relations with God are those which Israel is now "without," but which on the other

hand have always been associated by the Church with Jesus Christ? Oh, no; it is for the very reason that they are all merged and fulfilled in Christ, that poor Christless Israel, so long as they reject Him, is deprived of the blessings which flow from them. But at any rate, thus much even a Jew does not deny, that this prophetic word in the last couplet brings before us another patent fact. Israel now is “without an ephod.” As they are without a king and a priest, so it is also the time of God’s long silence, and in ignorance of the cause they continue to cry out, “Why withdrawest Thou Thy hand? O God, how long shall the adversary reproach? . . . We see not our signs; there is no more any prophet, neither is there among us any that knoweth how long” (Psalms 74:9-11). Yes, there is neither sound nor hearing, nor is there one among them who can tell what Israel ought to do. But not only are they “without an ephod,” but as in the other pairs of contrasts, so here too, they are also without that which is the direct antithesis to it, namely, the “teraphim”? or speaking oracles of the heathen.* * See Appendix II., “Dean Farrar on the Teraphim,” at the end of the book.

Apart from our passage there are only seven other scriptures in the Hebrew Bible where the teraphim are introduced, but these suffice to show that they were not only idols, the use of which is classed together by God with “witchcraft, stubbornness, and iniquity” (1 Samuel 15:23), but that they were a peculiar kind of idols, namely, those used for oracular responses. The first mention of the teraphim is in connection with Jacob’s flight from Laban, in Gen. 31, and in the light of the other passages there seems probability in the explanation of Aben Ezra* that Rachel stole them in order that her father might not discover the direction of their flight by means of these oracles.

* See Aben Ezra in loc. Gesenius traces “Teraphim” to the unused root “Toraph,” which in the Syriac has the significance of “to inquire.” The second place where we find them is in that strange narrative about the Ephraimite Micah, and the Danite expedition to Laish in Judg. 17 and 18, where we get a sad and characteristic glimpse of the condition of some among the tribes in those days, “when there was no king in Israel and every man did that which was right in his own eyes.” This narrative supplies an illustration of the fact that not only is an incapable of himself to find God, but that, left to himself, he is incapable of retaining the knowledge of God in its original purity even when once divinely communicated; and that even the things revealed, apart from the continued teaching of God’s Spirit, are liable to become corrupted and distorted in his mind. Here we have a sad instance of a certain knowledge of Jehovah mixed up with the worship of “a graven image and a molten image,” which were abomination in His sight, and the illegitimate use of the divinely instituted ephod, which was only to be borne by the high priest, joined together with the pagan teraphim. But the point to be noted is that here also these teraphim were used for oracular consultations, for it was of them that the apostate Levite of Bethlehem asked for counsel for the idolatrous Danites (Judges 18:5-6). In Ezekiel 21:21 we find the exact antithesis to David’s consulting the ephod in the pagan king of Babylon “consulting with images” (literally, “teraphim”) in reference to his projected invasion of Palestine.* Now it is clear that in olden times, whenever by apostasy and disobedience fellowship with Jehovah was interrupted, and when in consequence there was no revelation from Him, “neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets,” Israel turned to the pagan teraphim, or like poor Saul they “sought unto such as had familiar spirits, and wizards that peep and that mutter.” But ever since the Babylonish captivity Israel has been free from this, as from the other forms of gross and outward idolatry.

* The only other instances where teraphim are mentioned are 1 Samuel 19:13-16, from which we gather, first, the sad fact that idolatry was practised by Michal, the daughter of Saul, and, secondly,

that the teraphim must have had some resemblance to the human form since the idol could be mistaken for the body of David. There were no doubt larger ones in the temples, and smaller ones of all sizes, and for idolatrous purposes in the houses. The last mention of these is in Zechariah 10:2, which is referred to below. A parallelism, in its spiritual significance, is to be found in Christendom. What the ephod or the prophet was in olden times, Holy Scripture is now. It is even “a more sure word ” than voices from heaven, or answers by Urim and Thummim. The Scriptures, first spoken by holy men of God as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, are now “the oracles of God” themselves speaking with voices which carry their own conviction to hearts honestly seeking for truth, and ever confirming themselves in the world’s history and in the Christian’s experience; but men in the present day, even in Christendom, stumbling at the supernatural element in them, as if there could be a revelation of the Infinite and Everlasting One without such element, turn away from these oracles often on the flimsiest grounds, and instead are giving heed on the one hand to the speculations of a “science falsely so called,” and on the other hand “to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils,” and are thus in a measure already supplying an illustration of the solemn words of the apostle, that if men receive not the love of the truth that they might be saved, “God shall for this cause send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie” (2 Thessalonians 2:12). For of the modern Christian teraphim it is as true as of the ancient pagan; to adopt the language where they are last mentioned in Scripture, “they speak vanity,” or “wickedness”; and as for their “diviners,” or false prophets representing them, “they see a lie, and tell false dreams; they comfort in vain” (Zechariah 10:2); for it is a comfort not well founded, and will not stand the test of death or of a judgment to come.

“AFTERWARDS.” But the prophecy does not stop with describing the present it goes on to the future. “Afterwards,” it says, after the “many days” of the Interregnum when the “times of the Gentiles” shall be fulfilled, and the period for the treading down of Jerusalem accomplished, “shall the children of Israel,” that is, “all Israel,” as the great apostle to the Gentiles assures us, in contrast to the remnant who seek and find God now “return, and seek Jehovah their God and David their king.” They shall “return” to their land, but, better still, to their God. The word translated here “return” is the Hebrew for repentance. It is the word the prophets so often used when they cried, “Turn ye; turn ye, for why will ye die O house of Israel?” but they have never yet as a nation returned to God, neither will they return until the Spirit is poured upon them from on high, and the work of grace begins in their hearts. Then “a voice will be heard upon the high places, even the weeping and supplication of the children of Israel, because they have perverted their way and have forgotten Jehovah their God.” And in the midst of this weeping and supplication the voice of God will finally break in saying, “Return, ye backsliding children; I will heal your backslidings,” and then will come the immediate glad response, “Behold we come unto Thee, for Thou art Jehovah our God”(Jeremiah 3:21-22; see also Zech. chaps, 12 to 14.). And not only will they “return,” but they will seek “Jehovah their God.” Now and for a long season Israel hath been “without the true God,” and without a priest to teach them the true meaning of the law. These words from 2 Chronicles 15:3 proclaim a present as well as an historic fact, and portray perhaps the saddest feature in connection with the present condition of Israel. In spite of religiousness and great zeal, Israel is now “without the true God,” and if we inquire for the reason it is found in the words of our Lord, “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me”; and again, “This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.” “No man hath seen God at any time,” nor can we see or truly know Him except

the only-begotten of the Father declare Him unto us; and by rejecting Him even the revelation in the scriptures of Moses and the prophets has become obscured to Israel, for that too was a revelation of God in Christ. Therefore the prophet says that they will not only seek Jehovah their God, but also “David their King.”

Now it is unnecessary to prove that “David” here stands for David’s greater son, or Messiah. The Jews themselves have so understood it. Even the Rabbis, in commenting on the parallel passage in Jeremiah 30:1-24, where we read that “In that day . . . they shall serve Jehovah their God and David their king whom I will raise up unto them,” have said, “David their king whom I will raise up unto them,” and not “whom I have raised up unto them” showing that it is not King David who reigned in Jerusalem some four hundred years before who is meant, but the Messiah who is to be of David’s seed, as it is written in Jeremiah 23:5-6, and other scriptures. In truth, He is the true David, the “Beloved,” the King and Man after God’s own heart, in whom the promises of the kingdom are centred. There are a number of passages where the name David is applied to Messiah the king in the prophecies, but those in our passage in Hosea 3:1-5 and in Jeremiah 30:9 are especially remarkable: “They shall seek Jehovah their God and David their king”; “They shall serve Jehovah their God and David their king,”showing that there is neither true seeking nor true serving of Jehovah God if we do not also seek and serve David (Messiah) the king, notwithstanding all that poor Israel now thinks to the contrary.

Now let us return for a moment to the first of the three pairs of contrasts in Hosea 3:4 “Without a king and without a prince” and by comparing that statement with another prophecy of Israel’s future, observe a most beautiful truth about the Lord Jesus in relation to that nation.* In Ezekiel 37:21-25 we read, “Thus saith the Lord God, Behold I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land. And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel: and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all. Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions; but I will save them out of all their dwelling-places wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them; so shall they be My people, and I will be their God. And David, My servant, shall be king over them, and they all shall have one shepherd; they shall also walk in My judgments, and observe My statutes and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob My servant wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children’s children for ever: and My servant David shall be their prince for ever ” (Ezekiel 37:21-25).

* This section is transferred here from my book, “The Jewish Problem,” as it is important to the context and a full understanding of this prophecy.

“And David My servant shall be King over them . . . and My servant David shall be their Prince for ever.” Here is both Israel’s King and Prince in the same person.

But, you say, do not the two terms substantially mean the same thing? No; the word in the original translated “prince” in this passage does not mean prince in an hereditary sense of the word. “Nassi,” the term used, signifies one exalted, or elected by the freewill of the people. What a glimpse we get here of the change that will come over Israel at the appearing of Jesus Christ! At His first coming Israel as a nation deliberately rejected Him. “Not this man, but Barabbas!” they

said; and as to Christ, “Crucify Him! Crucify Him! We will not have this man to reign over us!” was their cry. But the national verdict with regard to Jesus Christ will be revoked; the grand mistake of the Jewish people shall yet be acknowledged and repented of. Instead of “Crucify Him!” they will cry “Hosannah! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord!” They will recognise His claims, not only as “the King,” the One whose right it is to reign over them; but they will deliberately declare Him their “Nassi,” their elected, or exalted one. This simply means that Israel will ratify God’s choice. David himself, whose name Messiah bears, is a beautiful type of Christ in this, as in many other respects. In 1 Samuel 16:1-23 we read of his being chosen and anointed king over Israel by the command of God. But what followed? Did he at once commence his reign? For fifteen years he was a fugitive; his claims were unrecognised; his home was the cave of Adullam or the wilderness of Judah. There was another king who hated David and disputed his sovereignty. Meanwhile, instead of a throne on Mount Zion and the hosts of Israel, his court was outside the camp, and his following consisted of his brethren and all his father’s house: “And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented” a strange, typical lot, not at first numbering altogether more than about “four hundred men.” But at last, after years of rejection, the people’s heart turned toward him, “and the men of Judah came, and”as if he had never been anointed king before “there (in Hebron) they anointed David king over the house of Judah” (2 Samuel 2:4).

Thus it is with Christ. From His incarnation He was designated King of the Jews. Jehovah Himself has anointed Him as His king on the holy hill of Zion; and it was even then announced that “the Lord God shall give unto Him 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.” But my people knew not the day of their visitation; and for all these centuries have resolutely, as a nation, refused to acknowledge His claims. Meanwhile, also, the god of this world, “the prince of the power of the air,” is permitted in the infinite wisdom of God to usurp Christ’s sovereignty over the nations; and the followers of our blessed, glorious Master are a mere handful of individuals from all nations, who spiritually are like that motley crowd in the cave of Adullam, “in distress, in debt, and discontented, or bitter of soul,” because of a sense of sin and sorrow. These are painfully conscious that Jesus Christ is not yet accepted king over the earth; for instead of a crown, which will come by and by, we have to take up His cross and follow Him “without the camp, bearing His reproach.” But as sure as there was a cross planted for Him on that Golgotha, outside the walls of Jerusalem, so surely, if the word and oath of our God stand for anything, is there yet to be a glorious throne for our Redeemer and Master on Mount Zion. “The stone which the builders have rejected has become the headstone of the corner;” and, however marvellous and improbable in our eyes, Israel shall yet “serve Jehovah their God and David their king,” and deliberately elect Him, whom during centuries of unbelief they have despised and rejected, as their “Nassi” their freely chosen ruler and Prince.

Another beautiful glimpse into the time and circumstances of Israel’s seeking and finding Christ, is to be found in the words of the same prophet at the end of the fifth and the beginning of the sixth chapters: “I will go and return to My place till they declare themselves guilty, and seek My face; in their affliction they will seek Me early.” In their fulness these words can only be understood in the light of New Testament history. It is our Lord Jesus who, by His spirit, speaks through the mouth of the prophet. He was the Lamb of God, but by reason of their unbelief and the judgments which have befallen them in consequence of His rejection, His first coming to them, as depicted in the

preceding verse, has been “as a lion, and as a young lion to the house of Judah: He has torn and gone away.” Whither has He gone? The answer is: “to My place” to “the glory which He had with the Father before the world was” (John 17:5). Having come from God He went, when His mission of suffering and death was accomplished, to God (John 13:3), and there, at His Father’s right hand, He will remain “till they declare themselves guilty.” The word here is the same, and seems to me to be designedly taken by the prophet from Genesis 42:1-38, where we read the confession of Joseph’s brethren in the midst of their trouble in Egypt. “We are verily guilty” they said one to another, “concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this tribulation come upon us. . . . Behold, also his blood is required” (Genesis 42:21-22). So it will be with Israel in relation to the Messiah, the Beloved of the Father, whom also they sold for thirty pieces of silver, and whom they have believed all this time to be dead. The day is drawing nigh when this greater than Joseph, who meanwhile has been exalted a Prince and a Saviour, will reveal Himself to His own brethren, but not until, by the aid of the “spirit of grace and supplications which will be poured out upon them,” “they declare themselves guilty” of the most terrible crime in their national history, even the rejection and crucifixion of the Son of God, and their own brother according to the flesh. And it was in the time of trouble that this heart-searching among Joseph’s brethren took place, and the confession was wrung from them. So it will be with Israel. “In their affliction,” in their tribulation (the word being the same as is used to describe “Jacob’s trouble” in Jeremiah 30:7, and other scriptures) “they will seek Me early.” Then the prophet, reaching out towards these promises from afar, and eager to hasten that longed-for time, says: “Come, and let us return to the Lord, for He hath torn, and He will heal us; He hath smitten, and He will bind us up. After two days will He revive us, in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight.”

“One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” For nearly two such millennial days since the Dayspring from on high has visited us, has the national history of Israel been suspended, and the nation itself been as dead, but the third is the resurrection day, when the Lord will quicken and help Israel “at the breaking in of the morning” (Psalms 46:5, Hebrew). “Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord. His going forth is prepared as the morning, and He shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.” And when once Israel learns to know God in the face of Jesus Christ, and has unveiled to them His absolute truth and righteousness, as well as His infinite love, “they shall fear toward Jehovah and His goodness in the latter days.” His love and forgiveness which they will experience on the ground of redemption will not make them think lightly of sin, or to have low views of God’s holiness. A filial fear will take possession of their hearts in relation to Him, in whom alone they will find, even as we do now, all their blessedness; in the loss of whose fellowship they will have discovered the cause of all their misery. Yes, this is the effect which the grace of God has on the regenerate heart: “With Thee there is forgiveness that Thou mayest be feared.” This is not the terror of the ungodly, but a fear springing from a sense of forgiveness and acceptance a fear which dreads to offend against love so wonderful, and which cannot bear to think even of the possibility of being once again excluded from the fellowship of Him whose lovingkindness is better than life. And all this will take place in the “latter days.” This brings us to the same landmark of time as indicated in the inspired forecast of the history of Israel given by Moses at the very beginning of their national career (Deuteronomy 4:30).

“In the latter,” or “last days,” “the days of Messiah,” as Jewish commentators themselves explain, which to them will not begin until they shall say: “Blessed is He that cometh in the name of Jehovah!” Israel’s sin and sorrow shall end; the yoke of Gentile rule shall be broken; men shall no more serve themselves of him, but “they shall serve Jehovah their God, and David their king, whom God will raise up unto them.” For thus said Jehovah: “Like as I have brought all this great evil upon this people, so will I bring upon them all the good that I have promised them.”

2.03. Chapter 2. The 'Ichabod' Period and the Return of the Glory of Jehovah

II. THE “ICHABOD” PERIOD AND THE RETURN OF THE GLORY OF JEHOVAH WITH Isaiah 40:1-31 begins the second half of the Book of Isaiah, Isaiah 40:1-31, Isaiah 41:1-29, Isaiah 42:1-25, Isaiah 43:1-28, Isaiah 44:1-28, Isaiah 45:1-25, Isaiah 46:1-13, Isaiah 47:1-15, Isaiah 48:1-22, Isaiah 49:1-26, Isaiah 50:1-11, Isaiah 51:1-23, Isaiah 52:1-15, Isaiah 53:1-12, Isaiah 54:1-17, Isaiah 55:1-13, Isaiah 56:1-12, Isaiah 57:1-21, Isaiah 58:1-14, Isaiah 59:1-21, Isaiah 60:1-22, Isaiah 61:1-11, Isaiah 62:1-12, Isaiah 63:1-19, Isaiah 64:1-12, Isaiah 65:1-25, Isaiah 66:1-24 forming a separate and continuous prophecy by itself. This grand prophetic Messianic epic of the Old Testament, the centre and heart of which is Christ, forms one of the very richest portions of God’s self-revelation. Sublimely grand is its very style and language. “There is in fact no more Johannic book in the whole of the Old Testament than this book of consolation,” says a great German Bible student.* “It is like the product of an Old Testament gift of tongues. The fleshly body of speech has become changed into a glorified body, and we hear, as it were, spiritual voices from the world beyond, or world of glory.”

* Delitzsch.

It is remarkable and masterly in its structure, for as we proceed we find the one larger cycle of twenty-seven chapters divided into three smaller cycles of nine chapters, each interlinked with the other, and ending with the same refrain of peace and blessedness to the righteous, and “no peace to the wicked.”* * See Appendix III. on the structure of the second half of Isaiah at the end of the book.

Wonderful also is its comprehensiveness, the whole order of the New Testament being anticipated in it. It begins where the New Testament begins with the ministry of John the Baptist, the voice crying in the wilderness, and it ends where the New Testament ends, with the new heavens and the new earth, wherein shall dwell righteousness. A certain school of modern criticism, of some of the representations of which I am bold to say that they apply to the study of Scripture a wisdom which is certainly not from above, claim most positively to have discovered another author for these last twenty-seven chapters; or to speak more accurately, being positive only in putting aside the claims of the Son of Amoz under whose name they stand, and who was believed to be the writer by the compilers of the Old Testament canon, and by the Apostles of the New Testament, these gentlemen are at a loss to find the real author, and not unfrequently call their pseudo Isaiah by the significant name of the “Great Unknown.”* On my shelf yonder there stands a book on Messianic prophecy by a clever writer, and in the section devoted to the second half of Isaiah I was greatly struck when reading it with the frequent repetition of the phrase the “Great Unknown.” The words impressed me as of solemn significance. Prophecy is not of man’s origination, but emanates from the Great Omniscient God. “Holy men,” Scripture assures us, “spake as they were moved (or borne along) by the Holy Ghost.” Now God forbid that I should characterise alike all who have been entrapped by the novelties and the daring of this school, but of many of them I must

utter the sad conviction that it is the Holy Spirit, the real author of prophecy, who is the “Great Unknown,” or they would not speak and write of Scripture as they do. Once granted that prophecy is supernatural in its essence, and that there is nothing improbable in the fact that one speaking from the mouth of God could definitely foretell things to come, and speak of things and persons which as yet were not, as though they were and most of the arguments in favour of a later date and different author for these chapters fall to the ground. As to the supposed differences in language and style, I can only state that to one dissimilarity it would be easy to point out many marked features both of style and language which are peculiar alike to both parts of the Book of Isaiah. One little link which binds together the two halves of this prophecy shines out in connection with the subject we are about to consider, namely, the Revelation of the glory of Jehovah.

* “Great” the writer of these chapters certainly was, but for that very reason we may doubt his being unknown, or that there was any necessity of a work which bears on its very face the true prophetic stamp being smuggled in under another name to give it authority.

Isaiah’s earlier prophecies terminate with the thirty-fifth chapter, that wonderfully sublime paragraph which contains, in germ, most of the leading thoughts of the last twenty-seven chapters.* Following that, we have four chapters of contemporary history, containing the account of Sennacherib’s invasion; the destruction of his army; Hezekiah’s sickness and recovery; and of the embassy sent by Merodach-baladan, ostensibly to congratulate Hezekiah on his recovery, but in reality, as we know also from 2 Chronicles 32:31, to “inquire of the wonder that was done in the land,” in the great reverse which befell the arms of Assyria, whom Babylon, till then a subject power, was before long to supersede. In that thirty-ninth chapter we have a most striking definite announcement to Hezekiah of the seventy years’ captivity among the very people whose ambassadors he had tried to impress with the importance of his kingdom, and the riches of his treasures. “Then said Isaiah to Hezekiah, Hear the word of Jehovah of Hosts. Behold the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store until this day, shall be carried to Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the Lord. And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the King of Babylon.”

* Delitzsch, who to the grief of many, finally gave way in a measure, to the rationalistic pressure around him, and accepted the theory of a later authorship of the last twenty-seven chapters of Isaiah, says in his commentary on the thirty-fifth chapter that it is “like a mosaic” from passages in the second half of the book, and continues: “We have intentionally avoided crowding together the parallel passages from chapters 40 - 66. The whole chapter is, in every part, both in thought and language, a prelude of that book of consolation for the exiles in their captivity. Not only in its spiritual New Testament thoughts, but also in its ethereal language, soaring high as it does in majestic softness and light, the prophecy has now reached the highest point of its development.” This announcement forms at once the threshold and the standpoint of the last great prophecy written at a later period of the prophet’s life. The captivity has become ideally a present fact to the prophet, and in vision he already beholds the land desolate, the Temple destroyed, the people pining in Chaldean bondage; and it is just like God, to open up in advance, a stream of consolation, to accompany the faithful remnant all through the weary wilderness march of the shorter, and of the present much longer captivity. But to return from the short digression. What is the climax to which we are gradually led up in the earlier prophecies of Isaiah? It is found in the

second verse of the thirty-fifth chapter, “They shall see the glory of Jehovah, the excellency” (or “the majesty”) “of our God.” And what is the great theme of the last twenty-seven chapters? It is the same. The central thought of the prologue, or introduction, consisting of the first eleven verses of chapter forty is: “And the glory of Jehovah shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together,” which is explained in the last of the brief four sections into which the introduction is divided, by the words “Behold the Lord God will come with strength and His own arm shall rule for Him; behold His reward is with Him and His work before Him.” It is from this blessed announcement that the streams of comfort flow; it is for this glorious culmination that the way is to be prepared, and all the twenty-seven chapters but unfold the process by which this grand consummation will finally be brought about.

“The glory of Jehovah shall be revealed.” I wonder if we all understand what is meant by the expression, “The glory of Jehovah.” I fear that some expressions that are much on our lips, are but little understood by us. Let me then state at the outset that the words, “Khebod Jehovah” (the glory of Jehovah), in the Hebrew scriptures, always mean the glory of the personal presence of Jehovah; the glory surrounding and attendant on the visible manifestations of Jehovah on the earth. In order to elucidate this important subject, let me draw your attention to several different scriptures. No sooner did God bring Israel out of Egypt than, in keeping with His purpose of a theocracy, He Himself came, and took His place at the head of that nation, and the visible symbol of His as yet invisible presence was the pillar of cloud, which at night turned into a pillar of fire. The first mention of this symbolical cloud is in Exodus 13:21-22, where we read: “And Jehovah went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light; to go by day and by night. He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night from before the people.” In verse 19 of the following chapter we have this pillar of cloud associated with the Angel of Jehovah, for we read: “And the angel of God which went before the camp of Israel removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face and stood behind them.”

Now I need only point out in passing that there is only one Being in the Old Testament who bears the name of the “Angel of Jehovah,” and that is Messiah, the Son of God, the second Person in the Blessed Trinity. The word angel, either in the Hebrew or Greek, does not in itself denote the nature or quality of the messenger. It may be one of the heavenly messengers or spiritual intelligences whom we usually call by this name. It may be a man, or it may be He who pre-eminently is the Messenger of God to man, of whom we read “last of all He sent His Son.” It was this Divine Angel or Messenger of Jehovah, who, when the time arrived for the bringing Israel out of Egypt, appeared to Moses in the burning bush, and said of Himself, “I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,” so that Moses, recognising Him to be God, was afraid and hid his face (Exodus 3:2-6). And it was He also who “in His love and in His pity redeemed them, and bare them, and carried them” all the days of old, and went before them in His pillar of cloud all through their wilderness journeys.

He is called the “Angel of God’s Presence” (or “of His face,” Isaiah 63:9), because He is the only face or personal manifestation of God which man has ever seen, or can see, and who, after His incarnation, could therefore say in answer to the yearning desire of man, “Show us the Father and it sufficeth us,” “He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father”; and He is “the Angel of the Covenant,” even the Divine Lord who was suddenly to come to His Temple to inaugurate the new

dispensation. When once the Tabernacle was built for His dwelling-place, the symbol of His special presence in the midst of His redeemed people was always associated with the sanctuary. Thus we read of its dedication in Exodus 40:33-35, “Moses finished the work” (that is, of putting the Tabernacle together). “Then a cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of Jehovah filled the Tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of meeting because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of Jehovah filled the Tabernacle.” “So it was always; the cloud covered it by day and the appearance of fire by night” (Numbers 9:16). When in process of time, after the establishment of the kingdom of Israel, the permanent “House” or “Palace”* of Israel’s true King took the place of the movable tent, we read the same thing in connection with the consecration of the Temple as we do of the Tabernacle.

* During the time of the Theocracy there was only one word for Temple and Palace.

“And it came to pass when the priests were come out of the holy place that the cloud filled the house of Jehovah so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud; for the glory of Jehovah had filled the house of Jehovah” (1 Kings 8:10-11). “So it was always.” I would not assert that all through the frequent lapses into apostacy, and in the latter evil days of the history of the kingdom, the people could always see the symbol of God’s presence with them, but so long as the first Temple stood He did not finally withdraw from the people He was pleased to call His inheritance; and Israel’s high priests on entering once a year into the Holy of Holies were conscious that there, “between the Cherubim,” God dwelt as in no other nation, although His presence fills the universe. Thus it continued until a particular point in the history of Israel, recorded in the Book of Ezekiel. The prophecy of Ezekiel forms a very important link in the progress of Old Testament revelation, but it is specially important for the light it throws on two great events in Jewish history. One of these events is the departure of governmental power from Judah. This is announced in the remarkable passage in Ezekiel 21:26-27, and was explained in a preceding section of this work.* * See “1. Without a King and without a Prince,” page 9. But secondly, simultaneous with the removal of governmental power the prophet saw the departure of the glory of Jehovah from Israel. The connection is most significant. The true King of Israel, as already explained, was Jehovah, and the removal of crown and mitre, and the departure of the sceptre from Judah therefore really meant the withdrawal of God from them. We all remember the touching account the prophet gives of the departure of the glory in three earlier chapters.* * Ezekiel 9:1-11, Ezekiel 10:1-22, Ezekiel 11:1-25.

First he sees it in its wonted place between the Cherubim in the Holy of Holies then he sees it lift itself from off the cherub and move to the threshold, where it evidently remained for awhile. Then he sees it move again, this time mounted on the Cherubim, the symbols of God’s executive power on the earth, and passing out by the east gate it “stood,” or remained hovering, over the court, “So that the court was full of the brightness of the glory of Jehovah.” Again he sees it depart from the court of the temple and stand over the city. Have you ever asked yourself the reason of this slow and deliberate departure of the glory from Israel? Why not depart from them at one bound? Oh, my dear friends, in symbolical language God the Father thus spoke to His rebellious but beloved people the very words that Jesus spoke to Israel centuries later: “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings and ye would not.” He did not want to leave them. Oh, if they had but repented and cleansed their way,

then would He not have taken His presence from among them. “For the space of three years and a half,” said Rabbi Youchanan, “the Shekhinah was sitting upon the Mount of Olives thinking peradventure Israel might repent;”* but instead of repenting they only grew bolder in their sins, and, as God Himself pathetically complains to the prophet, they iterally drove Him from their midst by their wickedness. “Son of man,” he says, “seest thou what they do, even the great abominations that the house of Israel committeth here, that I should go far off from my sanctuary” (Ezekiel 8:6). So that the prophet again sees the glory of Jehovah going up from the midst of the city to the Mount of Olives (Ezekiel 11:23), and after it “stood” there for some time it finally departed.

* Quoted by M. Margoliouth in his “Lord’s Prayer,” from the Preface to the Kabbalistic commentary on the Book of Lamentations, Aychah Rabatha. He also points out “that this was just the time that our Saviour laboured personally to bring His own to repentance and while on the Mount of Olives wept over the holy city.”

Since that event there is one word written across Jewish history, and that one word is “Ichabod ” where is the glory? For the Lord has withdrawn Himself, and the glory of Jehovah has departed from His land, and from His people.

They then went to Babylon, and when the seventy years were expired the comparative handful who returned commenced to build a Temple, and while they were engaged in that task the first of that great trio of post-Exilic prophets, Haggai, the messenger of Jehovah, in Jehovah’s message (Haggai 1:13), was commissioned to make to them the following announcement: “Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do ye see it now? Is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing? Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the Lord; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest; and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the Lord, and work: for I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts: according to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so My Spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not. For thus saith the Lord of hosts, Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts; and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts ” (Haggai 2:3-9).

Now it is certainly true that in its fulness this, like every other prophecy in the Old Testament which announces Messiah’s advent, looks on to the second coming and to a time yet future.

There is truth even in the rendering of the ninth verse of this passage adopted in the margin of the Revised Version, which, instead of “the glory of this latter house,” translates it “the latter glory of this house,” which is more literal, and corresponds with the third verse of the same chapter, though the inference drawn from it by some, that the primary reference of the “latter” or “last” glory of “this house” is to the Temple yet to be built in the future, is very doubtful. The Temple of Solomon and the one they were then building was, in a sense, the same house, because there was a living link connecting the two, in the lives of some of the old men, who had returned from the seventy years’ exile, to whom the prophet was speaking, who had seen “this house” (Solomon’s Temple) in its first glory, before it was destroyed by the Chaldeans, and were now eye-witnesses of its restoration, though on a much smaller scale. But there is no such link between the second Temple

and a temple yet to be built more than nineteen centuries later. Anyhow, the fact remains that it was to encourage them in the task in which they were then engaged that Haggai was sent, and when the prophet spoke of “the house, this one,” those who heard it could only have understood it as referring primarily to the Temple they were then building. But then there are two important questions which naturally suggest themselves to every intelligent student. First, What is the glory promised in Haggai’s prophecy? Second, Where was the glory? As to the first point a great deal of learned trash has been written, the underlying fallacy of which is the assumption that it is an outward or material glory that the prophet is here speaking about, overlooking the fact that the expression Khebod Jehovah (“the glory of Jehovah”), when used in connection with Beth Jehovah (“the House of Jehovah”), has a technical meaning, and signifies the glory of the manifestation, or personal presence of Jehovah, which filled the Temple, which was His dwelling-place. But then comes the second question. Where was the glory? When the Tabernacle was finished we read of its consecration. “A cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of Jehovah filled the Tabernacle.” This, by the way, shows us what true consecration means. Any thing or place or person of which God takes possession becomes consecrated and holy. The Tabernacle was planned and made under Divine superintendence. When all was finished Moses put it together, but it was not yet holy to the Lord until the symbolical cloud of His presence came and covered it and His glory filled it. Thus it became consecrated and holy and no Israelite dared enter it, and even Israel’s high priest only once a year, and that on the ground of shed blood. But this is a digression. When Solomon’s Temple was finished we again read of its consecration, the symbolical cloud and the glory of Jehovah filled the house, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud. But when the second Temple was built we never read of any such occurrence in connection with it, and as a matter of fact it never was after this manner formally taken possession of by God, nor was it in this sense ever consecrated. Where was the glory? According to Jewish historians themselves there were five things present in the first Temple which were lacking in the second Temple. I. The ark and its contents. II. The holy fire which descended from heaven to consume the sacrifices in token of God’s acceptance. III. The Urim and Thummim. IV. The spirit of prophecy.1 V. The Shekhina glory. As a matter of fact we know from Jewish as well as from heathen writers that the Holy of Holies in the second Temple, through the nearly five centuries of its existence, was a vacuum—an empty place, waiting for God to come and take manifest possession of it. Where, we ask again, was the glory? Nearly five centuries elapsed, and in the interval Herod, to gain favour with the Jews, was, at the cost of great labour and expense, completing considerable alterations and enlargement of the Temple; but Josephus, who is our authority on this subject, and who gives us the full account of the alterations carried out by Herod, is careful to emphasise that it was still the same house, and that in the history of the Jews hitherto there have been only two Temples the one built by Solomon and destroyed by the Babylonians, and the other built by Zerubbabel and afterwards enlarged and beautified by Herod.2 One day to “this house” a poor young woman of the House of David brought her first-born child to be presented to the Lord “and to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the Word of the Lord, a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons.” At the very same time an aged man, to whom it was revealed by the Holy Ghost that he should not see death was led by the Spirit into the Temple, and seeing the Child Jesus, he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said: “Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people, a light to lighten the Gentiles

and the glory of His people Israel." The central promise in Haggai's prophecy in relation to "this house" had to wait long for its fulfilment, but here at last was the greater glory; here was the real Presence. Later, after His entry on the Messianic office, when Christ, with a scourge of cords, drove before Him out of the Temple the money-changers and sellers of doves saying, "Make not my Father's house a house of merchandise" that was its consecration.

1 The canon of the Old Testament being closed with Malachi, who prophesied soon after the completion of the second Temple, the subsequent silent centuries of its existence may well, from their standpoint, be characterised by the absence of "the spirit of prophecy."

2 This is what Josephus says, speaking of the destruction of the second Temple: "Now, although any one would justly lament the destruction of such a work as this was, since it was the most admirable of all the works that we have seen or heard of, both for its curious structure and its magnitude, and also for the vast wealth bestowed upon it, as well as for the glorious reputation it had for its holiness, yet might such a one comfort himself with this thought, that it was fate that decreed it so to be, which is inevitable, both as to living creatures and as to works and places also. However, one cannot but wonder at the accuracy of this period thereto relating; for the same month and day were now observed, as I said before, wherein the holy house was burnt formerly by the Babylonians. Now the number of years that passed from its first foundation, which was laid by King Solomon, till this its destruction, which happened in the second year of the reign of Vespasian, are collected to be one thousand one hundred and thirty, besides seven months and fifteen days; and from the second building of it, which was done by Haggai, in the second year of Cyrus the king, till its destruction under Vespasian, there were six hundred and thirty-nine years and forty-five days" ("Wars," vi. 6-8). But there were not many, alas, whose eyes were opened to recognise the Divine glory of this holy Child. There was an aged Simeon; there was "Anna, a prophetess"; there were those "that looked for redemption in Jerusalem," to whom this holy woman probably prophesied the near approach of the Saviour. After His entrance on His public work there was a Nathaniel, a Peter, a John, and the company of other apostles and disciples to whom it was given "to behold His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth"; but as to the nation, they saw in Him no form nor comeliness, and when they beheld Him they saw no beauty in Him to desire Him, and what was foretold by Isaiah came to pass: "He was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and there was, as it were, the hiding of the face from Him; He was despised and we esteemed Him not." In the end, after He had for three and a half years with outstretched arms continued to call Israel to Himself, but without response that which was symbolised by the departure of the Glory from the Mount of Olives, received a second, personal, and more striking fulfilment, when Jesus, also slowly and reluctantly, after shedding tears of sorrow for Jerusalem, and from the same spot whence the prophet saw the Glory depart, finally ascended out of sight. He led His disciples out as far as Bethany (on the Mount of Olives), and He lifted up His hands and blessed them, "And it came to pass while He blessed them He was parted from them and carried up into heaven." And since that event since the departure of Jesus from Israel and the world, the word I have already quoted is written more legibly and in letters of fire across the eighteen or nineteen centuries of Jewish history: "Ichabod." Where is the glory? The Temple destroyed; the land a continual desolation; the people given over to be tossed to and fro among the nations. But will the present state of things continue for ever? Will man on earth no more behold the visible display of God's glory? For answer we take up the

words of the fortieth chapter of Isaiah with which we started: “And the glory of Jehovah shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it.”

Ezekiel, who saw the departure of the glory of Jehovah, also, in his visions of the future, beheld its return; and from the same direction whence it departed. “Afterwards,” we read, “He brought me to the gate, even the gate that looketh toward the east, and behold the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east, and His voice was like the noise of many waters, and the earth shined with His glory. . . . And the glory of Jehovah came into the house by the way of the gate whose prospect is toward the east. So the Spirit took me up and brought me into the inner court; and behold the glory of Jehovah filled the house.” And what is this but the same announcement in symbolical language made to the “men of Galilee,” just as the Lord was departing from them, that “this same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner, as ye have seen Him go into heaven”? As man in the glorified body He ascended, and “this same Jesus,” as the “Son of Man,” bodily, He shall return. Visibly, with a cloud He was received out of their sight, and “in like manner,” visibly, “with the clouds of heaven,” He will descend again. It was from the Mount of Olives they saw Him finally depart; and on the same spot, “upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east,” His blessed feet “shall stand in that day.” (Zechariah 14:4).

Then, and not till then, will Isaiah’s prophecy be fulfilled. “And the glory of Jehovah shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it.” But let us for a moment touch on the difference between the past and the future.

1. In the past Israel saw the glory of the personal presence of Jehovah only in symbol, and then the glory was always associated with the cloud, which while revealing also concealed; for man was not yet able to bear the full unveiling of His majesty, and even Israel’s prophets, who heard His voice, and were borne along by His power, had wonderingly to cry: “Verily Thou art a God that hidest Thyself, O God of Israel the Saviour!” And even when in the fulness of time He came, in whom all the attributes of Jehovah were embodied, who was “the effulgence of His glory and an exact representation of His very being,” we still observe the same principle at work of concealing while revealing Himself; for there was the “emptying of Himself”; there was the veiling of His glory; there was “the hiding of His power.” How else could man have approached Him and lived? How else could He have patiently endured the contradiction of sinners, and the dulness and frowardness of His own disciples, during those years of suffering as the Lamb of God? But by and by, “the glory of Jehovah shall be unveiled? and will be no longer in symbol, but in bodily presence. There will be no longer a cloud to hide His glory from our eyes; no longer as in a glass darkly, but face to face, for “He shall be manifested and we shall see Him as He is.”

2. In the past it was only men of Israel who beheld even the symbolical or veiled glory of God, but by and by “all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it.” “Behold He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him; and they also which pierced Him, and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn because of Him. Even so. Amen.”

We shall behold the unveiled glory of that face once so marred for us, and beholding it shall be finally and everlastingly conformed to that same image to be for ever “like Him” (1 John 3:2); the escaped of Israel “shall look upon Him whom they have pierced,” now manifested in His true glory and power, and shall “mourn” and be saved (Zechariah 12:1-14); while a Christ-rejecting world will behold Him too, and seek to hide themselves in the caves and the rocks of the mountains; and say

to the mountains and to the rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb” “at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven, with the angels of His power, in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus . . . when He shall come to be glorified in His saints and to be marvelled at in all them that believe . . . in that day” (2 Thessalonians 1:6-10, R.V.). This is the hope of Israel and of this sin-burdened earth. Not till then will the world be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Jehovah as the waters cover the sea; not till then will the inhabitants of the earth learn righteousness, or the dream of universal peace be realised. And it is the hope of the Church. “For the grace of God, bringing salvation,” says the apostle (Titus 2:11-15), “hath appeared to all men.” This is a terse summary of all that is implied in the first Advent. It was a marvellous display of the grace or undeserved favour of God to man; a glorious Epiphany, as the word is in the original, on the darkness and hopelessness of the world. But no sooner does grace bring salvation to us than it becomes our school of discipline, and the great Teacher in that school is the Holy Spirit. And these are the lessons which we have to learn, by means and processes often very trying to flesh and blood, namely, that “denying ourselves in reference to ungodliness, and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly.” This sums up the whole of Christian character and conduct both from the negative and positive side in relation “to this present age.” But what is our attitude and expectation in relation to the future? Here it is: “Looking for” (or “awaiting with expectation”) “the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” Here is the same blessed hope of the appearing of the glory of the personal presence of the great God and our Saviour brought over from the Old Testament into the pages of the New, and all those who have become subjects of grace are pointed to it as the goal and consummation of their blessedness, and are told eagerly to look for it. Two Epiphanies are spoken of in this comprehensive scripture.

One is already past, and that was the Epiphany of Grace, which shone forth at the incarnation and culminated on Calvary; but the other, to which both apostles and prophets bear witness, is yet future, and is the Epiphany of the Glory, when Christ shall come to claim His own, and when our eyes shall behold the King in His beauty.

“And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He shall be manifested we may have confidence, and not be shamed away from Him at His coming.”

2.04. Chapter 3. The Silence of God: How It Shall Be Broken

III. THE SILENCE OF GOD: HOW IT SHALL BE BROKEN–

1. In Relation to the Church “God, even God, the Lord, hath spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof.

“Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined forth.

“Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him.

“He shall call to the heavens above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people.

“Gather My saints unto Me; those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice.

“And the heavens shall declare His righteousness; for God is Judge Himself. Selah.

“Hear, O My people, and I will speak; O Israel, and I will testify unto thee: I am God, even thy God.

“I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices; and thy burnt offerings are continually before Me.

“I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he-goats out of thy folds.

“For every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills.

“I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are Mine.

“If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is Mine and the fulness thereof.

“Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?

“Offer unto God the sacrifice of thanksgiving; and pay thy vows to the Most High:

“And call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me.

“But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare My statutes, and that thou hast taken My covenant in thy mouth?

“Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest My words behind thee.

“When thou sawest a thief, thou consentedst with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers.

“Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit.

“Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother; thou slanderest thine own mother’s son.

“These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself:

“But I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes.

“Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver:

“Whoso offereth the sacrifice of thanksgiving glorifieth Me; and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I show the salvation of God.”

Psalms 50:1-23. (R.V.). The Second Advent in Relation to the Church, Israel, and Christendom 1. In Relation to the Church

IT must be obvious, even to the most superficial student of the Scriptures, that we have in the Old Testament two distinct series of prophecies referring to the coming and person of the Messiah; the one describing Him as coming in humiliation, “lowly and riding upon an ass”; “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; led as a lamb to the slaughter, and pouring out His soul unto death;” while the other series speak of Him as coming in visible power and great glory, and receiving dominion and a kingdom, so that “all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him.” “His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.” The Jews many centuries ago puzzled over the apparent discrepancies in the picture of Messiah, drawn by the prophets on the pages of Scripture, and at last invented a characteristic solution of their own. There must be two different persons, they said; and they called the one Messiah Ben-Joseph, who must suffer and die; and the other Messiah Ben-David, who should come in power and reign.* Of course this explanation is absurd, for there is no trace of two Messiahs or of a Messiah Ben-Joseph anywhere in the Old Testament. Christian commentators and theologians have had their own way of explaining the difference, and this has been by applying two different principles and methods of interpretation. The prophecies of Messiah’s suffering, they said, must be taken literally; but those speaking of His coming in manifest glory, and of a throne on Mount Zion, must be explained spiritually, or referred to the reign of Christ in heaven. But the system of the two principles is scarcely more satisfactory, and has even less consistency about it, than the Jewish one of the two persons; for if a prophecy of a glorious appearing of Messiah to reign over the earth is not to be taken literally, why should one describing an advent in suffering be so explained? The true solution which should commend itself to the minds of all God’s people is that there is but one person, Jesus Christ; one principle of interpretation for all prophecy, whether fulfilled or unfulfilled, to believe and take God’s Word as it stands, but that there are two advents one in humiliation, the other in glory; one to suffer and die, the other to take unto Himself His kingdom and reign.

* See on this subject of the Jewish doctrine of two Messiahs a note on p. 44 of my book, “Rays of Messiah’s Glory.” To the two distinct series of prophecies announcing two different advents, two well-known prophetic scriptures may be taken as key passages. The first is Micah 5:2, which tells us that “the Ruler in Israel,” whose origin is Divine, and whose goings forth are from the days of eternity, will be born as a child in Bethlehem Ephratha. The second is Daniel 7:13-14, where we see Him no longer as a child born on earth of a Jewish virgin, but as “the Son of Man,” coming with the clouds of heaven to receive the homage of the world.

These two scriptures, which are only representative, each in its line, of many others, cannot surely describe the same advent, and we may also ask the question how, as Son of Man, can Messiah come with clouds from heaven, except He was first taken up into heaven for the very name “Man” implies a human origin? The answer is simple and fully supplied by Scripture. Though “God blessed for ever,” He is made of a woman, and “took hold of the seed of Abraham,” and being

found in fashion as a man, He, for our salvation, “humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” “He was buried according to the Scriptures,” but He was not left in Sheol, nor did God suffer His Holy One to see corruption. “On the third day He rose again,” also “according to the Scriptures,” and in accordance also with that which prophets and psalmists sang in advance, “He ascended on high, leading captivity captive,” and there as the God-man, at the right hand of the Majesty, He now sits as our blessed High Priest, waiting until His enemies shall be made His footstool, when He shall descend again in power and great glory. To this truth both apostles and prophets bear witness.

This, however, is only a word of introduction to the exposition of one of the most sublime scriptures in the Bible, with regard to which the testimony of the Church throughout the ages has been almost universally agreed that it refers to the second series of prophecies of which we have spoken, and describes the appearing in glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. In order to impress us with the power and majesty of the glorious Being whose advent the psalm announces, He is introduced by an array of Divine titles, the order and conjunction of which is only paralleled in one other passage in the Old Testament.* El Elohim Jehovah are the three august and blessed names with which this Psalm commences, and they are in keeping with the great subject it teaches, for while He is represented as appearing at last as the El and Elohim, the mighty and awful God of power and judgment, the terror of the ungodly, He also comes as the faithful covenant Jehovah of redemption, to gather His saints, and to consummate His everlasting purposes of love and mercy towards them.

* Twice repeated in solemn oath by the two and a half tribes in Joshua 22:22. This glorious Lord of Majesty “hath spoken.” It is from the mountain-top of prophetic vision that the inspired psalmist describes the certainties of the future. The Divine programme here unfolded is so certain of accomplishment, that in relation to the Church, to Israel, and the world, from the standpoint of God’s purpose it can already be announced as past, or in the very act of accomplishment. The first verse is His call of attention to the whole universe in reference to the great events which are about to take place. When He came the first time the words of Isaiah were fulfilled in Him, “He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street.” He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth; but now He comes speaking, and at His voice the earth trembles “from the rising of the sun until the going down thereof.” The chief and central act of the prophetic drama which is unfolded in this Psalm is that announced at the end of the second verse, “God hath shined!” And what is this but an Old Testament proclamation of the Epiphany, or shining forth of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ? In the Psalms this expression is found three times, and these are all based on that remarkable passage, in Deuteronomy 33:2, “Jehovah came from Sinai, burst forth (as the rising sun) from Seir unto them; He shined forth from Mount Paran, and He came from the myriads of His holy ones; from His right hand went forth a fiery law unto them.” The imagery of this passage is beautiful, the figure being borrowed from the breaking of the dawn and the progressive splendour of the sun rising. Oh, what a wonderful event in the history of the world and of Israel was the revelation of the glory of Jehovah on Sinai! What a bursting forth of light on the moral darkness of this earth! But alas! by reason of the weakness of the flesh it was not the light of life, but rather of death, for it revealed to us our sin and utter helplessness, and the perfect holiness of the God who is “a consuming fire.” But the law contained not only the promise, but was in itself also a

preparation for the gospel; and, therefore, in the fulness of time, though not attended by outward splendour as on Sinai, another Epiphany (2 Timothy 1:10) of God our Saviour took place, bringing not “a fiery law,” but the gospel of His grace, which abolished death and brought life and immortality to light. The acceptable year of the Lord ushered in by that Epiphany is rapidly running to its close, and although for nigh nineteen centuries favour has been preached to the wicked, yet has he not learned righteousness, and men are beginning to ask if the faith founded by the Son of God has not already proved a failure,* Psalms 1:2, Psalms 80:1, Psalms 94:1, and scoffers boldly say, “Where is the promise of the coming, and what sign is there of any change or interruption of the present state of things?” Even the professing Church, lost for the most part in worldliness and error, seeks to strike its roots in the earth, crying peace and progress, and acting as if all things will for ever continue as they are.

* In my remarks on this sentence of the psalm, I take the liberty of making free use of notes made many years ago in my interleaved Bible of a powerful address, to which it was my privilege to listen, by that true father in Christ, the late Dr. Horatius Bonar, who, together with his two worthy brothers, Andrew and John, were the representatives in Scotland of those who waited for the Lord’s appearing.

But, as already shown, this earth shall yet again see the glory of the personal presence of theLord, and, as sure as there was an appearing of Christ in humiliation, so surely will there be a shining forth of the Son of God in glory and majesty, and this time in the combined character of Lawgiver, Judge, and Saviour. The centre of the future Epiphany of God’s glory will be “Zion,” even as Zion was the focus of all God’s revelations in the past. The earthly centre for the carrying out of His gracious purposes in relation to the nations, has never been, and never can be changed, for “Jehovah hath chosen Zion; He hath desired it for His habitation. This is My rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it” (Psalms 132:13-14). Yes, to Zion shall come the Redeemer, but from Zion, and Israel as the centre, His glory will radiate to earth’s utmost limits. And Zion shall then be “the perfection of beauty.” The word “Zion” comes from a root which means a dry, barren place or arid wilderness, and in this its original condition it is a type of Israel. If the renown of the moral beauty of Israel in the past went forth among the nations, there is no praise due to them, for in themselves they ever formed most unpromising material. “From Me is thy fruit found,” God says; and it is wholly owing to the power and skill of the great Husbandman that so barren a plot of ground was transformed into a fruitful garden. “Thy beauty is perfect through My comeliness which I put upon thee,” saith the Lord (Ezekiel 16:14). At present the land and the people are seen again in their naturally barren and desolate condition. “They called thee an outcast, saying, This is Zion (a barren, unpromising plot of ground), which no man seeketh after” (Jeremiah 30:17); but as surely as this has been fulfilled, so surely will Zion, covered once again with God’s glory, be the very “perfection of beauty,” and “a praise in the midst of the earth.” The Epiphany of the second verse is explained by the Parousia which is the subject of the third verse: “Our God shall come (or ‘cometh’), and shall not keep silence.” Oh, what a startling announcement to some! “Behold He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him, and all the tribes of the land shall wail because of Him. Even so. Amen!” But this verse chiefly describes the manner of the manifestation of the awful presence and majesty of God: “He shall not keep silence.”*

* There are notable pauses, during which God seemed to have withdrawn Himself from man in so far as visible interposition was concerned.

Compare this with what He says in Psalms 50:21, “This hast thou done, and I kept silence.” Or rather, contrast this announcement of a visible manifestation and inter-position on the part of the great God, with the present long period of silence. In looking back on the ages that are past we see that God has His times for speaking and His times also for keeping silence. In Eden we hear “the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day,” but soon that blessed converse ceases on account of the Fall. The last echoes of that voice die away, and there ensues a period of silence during which men lived and the world made progress, in the sense in which it always does, until the silence was broken, and Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying: “Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among men, of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly men have spoken against Him.” After Enoch another pause of long centuries set in, and the earth again went on developing in the old way, until the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and until it became manifest in the sight of the heavens that “every imagination of the thoughts of man’s heart was only evil continually.”

Again God spoke, and again it was in judgment. He sent the Flood; but it was judgment blended with mercy, for a few that is to say eight souls, were saved by means of the ark, which He commanded Noah to build.

After the Deluge the world began anew; man had a fresh chance. God withdrew Himself from open interposition, and for a space of long centuries there was silence. But what was the result of the new test? The world again made progress, and man developed what was in him, until by the end of the time “darkness covered the earth and gross darkness the peoples.” But in the midst of the universal darkness the God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, saying, “Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house.” From this point of time onward, from Abraham to Malachi, a period of more than fifteen hundred years, may preeminently be called a time of God’s speaking. There were, indeed, in the course of this age both longer and shorter spells of silence, but it nevertheless remains a fact that the chief characteristic of the period of Israel’s national history, up to the point when “the times of the Gentiles” set in with the destruction of the first Temple, was that it was a time of God’s self-revelation, and manifest interpositions. At sundry times and in divers portions and ways God spake unto the fathers by the prophets. Wonderful, astonishing fact! fifteen long centuries at one stretch bearing witness to the fact that the great God hath spoken! Was it a long successional lie? Was it a continual self-deception as infidels and rationalists would have us believe? Oh no; the whole history and continued existence of Israel, the Divine and wonderful character of the words preserved to us, and the consciousness of the Christian cry aloud against so monstrous a supposition. But after this long period of speaking there followed again a long interval of about four centuries which was suddenly broken by the cry, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!” From this time there recommenced another period of revelation on the part of God, during which He spoke His most wonderful words of all through His Son, and through the apostles by the Spirit. But the period of New Testament history, lasting about ninety years, soon ends. The last echoes of that voice die away on the barren rock of Patmos in the words, “Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus,”

and there sets in this long silence, the longest silence the world has yet experienced. How wonderful, how long, how deep, how mysterious is this silence! How often have the hearts of God's people grown impatient under the long strain! How often has the Church cried, "How long, O Lord, how long?" but there is neither audible voice nor sound. Will this long silence never again be broken? Will God never again outwardly and manifestly interpose in the affairs of man and in the government of the world? The answer of this sublime scripture is, "Our God cometh, and shall not keep silence." But before considering further this great and awful event, let me remind you that there is deep significance even in God's silence.

(a) The silence of God is designed to drive man to that which He has spoken; He would remind us of His Word, which in His good providence is preserved to us, and which is sufficient and profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works. Out of it He still speaks by His Spirit, although not by audible voice, to all who have ears to hear. In it He tells thee, O man, what is good, and what the Lord requires of thee.

(b) The time of God's silence is another testing-time for man under more favourable circumstances than in preceding ages. It is a time of opportunity for the full development of good and evil, so that when God again interposes it may be manifest to principalities and powers that "He is justified when He speaks, and clear when He judges." And what has been the result? While God has been silent, man has taken the opportunity of speaking, and his words are ever more foolish, proud, and blasphemous against the Most High, as may be seen from the press and the literature of the present day. But out of his own mouth man shall be judged, and all his thoughts and words shall be "set in order" before him, and riseup in judgment against him.

(c) The period of God's silence is the period of His longsuffering, which, in the riches of His goodness, is designed to lead men to repentance. The continued length of that period gives us a glimpse into the infinitude of the patience and forbearance of the everlasting God, but man should be the last to complain about it, since it lengthens the time in which God commendeth His love and undeserved favour to men, and in which peace and pardon is proclaimed to the vilest sinner. The Christian, too, becomes more reconciled to the long delay in his Master's return by the thought that in the interval the acceptable year of the Lord is still running its course, and that by the preaching of the gospel multitudes of souls are being gathered into the company of the redeemed, to the praise and glory of Him who died to save them. But the time of God's long-suffering, protracted as it is, has its limit. It is a set time appointed in the eternal counsel of God, and at the exact "day and hour," known to the Father, it shall cease, the long silence shall be broken, and to the world the day of vengeance shall commence by the coming of our God. Then "Jehovah shall cause His glorious voice to be heard and shall show the lighting down of His arm, with the indignation of His anger, and with the flame of a devouring fire, with scatterings and tempest and hailstones" (Isaiah 30:30).

"A fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him." This is explained in another scripture in Isaiah (Isaiah 66:15-16): "For, behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with His chariots like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury and His rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by His sword will the Lord plead with all flesh: and the slain of the Lord shall be many" and forms also the basis of that sublime and terrible description of the descent of the Son of

God “in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power” (2 Thessalonians 1:8-9). The main object of His coming is stated in the fourth verse: “He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth that He may judge His people.” In this term both His earthly and His heavenly people are included. In times past the heavens and the earth are often called upon as witnesses of Israel’s apostasy and consequent punishment.

Thus at the very beginning of their history Moses again and again says, “I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto ye go over Jordan to possess it.” Thus Isaiah cries, “Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for Jehovah hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me.” And the same heavens and earth which were witnesses of the commencement of God’s controversy with Israel, shall also behold both the climax of judgment on their apostasy, and also the faithfulness of the Righteous Judge in executing vengeance on their enemies in the day when their transgressions shall have an end, and His own covenant people be finally delivered. And professing Christendom shall then be judged too, for “when the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory, and before Him shall be gathered all nations, and He shall separate them one from another as a shepherd divideth his sheep from his goats. And He shall set His sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world . . . and to them on His left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels . . . and these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.” And the individual Christian also, though free from all condemnation in his person, shall then be judged in his works, “for we must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in His body according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.” (2 Corinthians 5:10). But the great and solemn event of His glorious appearing is viewed in this psalm in relation to three different sections of humanity, namely, the Church, Israel, and the apostate nations of Christendom. Indeed, the psalm divides itself into three almost equal parts, the key words of which are, “the saints” (Psalms 50:5), “Israel” (Psalms 50:7), and “the wicked” (Psalms 50:16).

2. In Relation to Israel Let us now briefly examine the section devoted to the Jewish nation, Psalms 50:7-16.

It begins with a solemn address: “Hear, O My people,” and in the very form of this address we can read the promise of grace, for it shows that the “Lo-Ammi” period (Hosea 1:9-10) is at an end, and that Israel has again become “Ammi” (“My people”). When God is displeased with them He says, “This people”; or speaking to Moses with reference to their sudden apostasy, He says, “thy people”; but whenever He speaks of them in grace, He always acknowledges the covenant indissoluble relationship that has been established between Him and the nation, and says, “My people.”

If we want to know the exact prophetic point of time when Israel as a nation will truly become “Ammi,” God’s own acknowledged people, we must go to the Book of Zechariah. There we read

how that in the midst of their final great sorrow, when “it shall come to pass that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die, but the third part shall be left therein,” and when even this third part shall be brought into the fire to be refined as silver is refined, and to be tried as gold is tried, then “he shall call on My name, and I will answer him; I will say, Ammi Hu (‘it is My people’); and he shall say, Jehovah Elohoi (‘Jehovah is my God.’)” The address continues, “O Israel, I will testify against thee,” or “protest unto thee.” The form of speech implies a strong desire on the part of the speaker, to obtain at last Israel’s ear and heart for His message. The words translated “I will testify against thee” is a form of speech used for God’s gracious reasonings with man with a view to bringing him to Himself. Thus we find the same words in Nehemiah 9:29, “And testifiedst against (or ‘to’) them that Thou mightest bring them again unto Thy law.” But the subject of His solemn testimony or protestation to them in this psalm is not the law, as in the passage just quoted, but chiefly and foremost concerning His own glorious Person. “I am God, even thy God,” or, as in the Hebrew, where the order of the words is more forcible, “God, thy God, I am.” But we might ask, What does it mean? Did not Israel know all along that God was God? Alas! no, never yet has Israel as a nation truly known or understood Him; never yet have they fully entered into the blessedness or responded to the obligations implied in the relationship, “Thy God.” This blessing of full knowledge and recognition of Jehovah or Elohim as their own, is ever held out in the prophets as the yet future experience of Israel. It is the constant refrain which runs through Ezekiel’s visions of the future: “And they shall know that I am the Lord”; even as it is the climax of the visions of the son of Amoz that in the day in the which the glory of Jehovah shall be revealed, Israel and all flesh “shall know that I Jehovah am thy Saviour, and thy Redeemer the Mighty One of Jacob.” But there is a special secret here which Israel in particular has yet to learn. He who appears here in Divine power and majesty is the long-rejected Messiah. It is the greater than Joseph discovering Himself at last to His own brethren, saying not only, “I am Joseph” (Genesis 45:3); not only in His human character, “I am Jesus”; but, “I am God.” In the days of His flesh, when He claimed to be the Son of God, or when He said, “I and My Father are one,” the Jews took up stones to stone Him, and when He appealed to them for which of His good works they were ready to stone Him, they replied, “For a good work we stone Thee not, but for blasphemy, and because Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God.” Alas! their eyes were holden then, and they knew not that His name was Immanuel, and that veiled in flesh there stood among them One whose goings forth are from of old, even from everlasting, and in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; but “in that day” when the spirit of grace and of supplications is poured upon them, and Messiah appears to them, saying, “God, even thy God, I am,” Israel will respond, “This is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us; this is Jehovah; we have waited for Him; we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.”

Yes, long-doubting Israel, like doubting Thomas, shall yet look up with adoration to the crucified, risen Jesus, and say, “My Lord and my God!”

Having revealed to them His glorious Person, He proceeds to instruct them in the subject of true spiritual worship and service. These two ever go together. Only He who knows God aright as Spirit, can worship Him in spirit and in truth. The temptation of Israel in the past, as alas! of so many in Christendom at the present day, was to trust to outward form and mere ceremonial. Now these God puts aside as secondary in their nature. “Not in reference to thy sacrifices,” He says, “will I reprove thee, and as to thy burnt offerings, they are ever before Me. I will take no bullock out

of thine house, nor rams out of thy folds." Do you think you put the great God under obligation to you because you bring Him an animal sacrifice? "Behold, every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains, and the wild beasts of the field are ready at My hand." Even that which by My appointment of grace you bring to My altar is out of Mine own bounty. Or, have you sunk to the degradation of the heathen, who thought that their gods needed to be supplied by them with food and drink? "Behold, if I were hungry I would not tell thee, for the inhabited world is Mine and the fulness thereof: will I eat the flesh of strong bulls, or drink the blood of rams?" The very idea of such a thing is blasphemous. Nay, I will tell thee the sacrifices which refresh the heart of God: "Sacrifice to God praise," or thanksgiving in acknowledgment of His mercies, and "pay thy vows" of national obedience and loyalty to the Most High. Or in the words of another Messianic psalm, "Praise the name of God with a song, magnify Him with thanksgiving (or 'by confessing' His mercies);* this shall please Jehovah better than an ox or bull that hath horns and hoofs. "These verses contain nothing against the truth, proclaimed by Moses and the prophets, of the Divine appointment of animal sacrifices as a means of approaching God; but they preach against the perversion and misuse of that blessed institution, and the trusting to mere outward form and ordinances, without exercise of heart, which is always a sign of apostasy from the living God a feature which is, as already remarked, noticeable in Christendom of the present day as it was in Israel of old.

* This is the significance of the Hebrew word. To do also means confession (Psalms 69:30-31). The significance which God intended that Israel should see in the Levitical sacrifices was a threefold one, i.e., a moral, a symbolical, and a typical one. Symbolically that animal led forth to death by the offerer, and slain on God's altar, was meant to teach him that this is just what he himself deserved, but that God in His infinite mercy accepted the death of the innocent victim instead. And this again with a heart rightly exercised, would have the moral effect of impressing him with the holiness of God and the awfulness of sin. Apart from these there was also the great typical truth continually set forth by the whole sacrificial and ritual system of the sufferings and substitutionary death and the various aspects of the character and redeeming work of the Messiah, who, already in the Old Testament, is the Lamb who should be led to the slaughter, andwho by His righteousness would justify the many (Isaiah 53:1-12). But when these moral and spiritual truths were lost sight of, then sacrifices became a form of mere outward ritual, and in that case were "vain oblations," and highly displeasing to God. But in the day when Israel shall recognise Christ, and in Him learn to know God, and the true meaning of the sacrificial system, they will also know what it is, with or without divinely instituted ritual, to worship God in the spirit and truth, and by Him they will offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is the fruit of their lips by giving thanks, or "confessing " His name (Hebrews 13:15). The address to Israel concludes with an exhortation which is at the same time a prophecy and a promise: "And call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me." This is often used by Christians with reference to themselves, and with perfect right, for in principle the exhortation and promise is true to every child of God. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." No one who trusts Him has ever called on Him in trouble without being delivered or "succoured," as the word in our psalm also means. It is true we may not always be delivered from the trouble, but, blessed be God, there is such a thing as being delivered in it; and to receive for an answer, "My grace is sufficient for thee" (even with the thorn in thy flesh) "for My strength is made perfect in weakness." In view of the relation of the sufferings of this present time "to the glory

which shall be revealed in us" by and by, we do not always know which is the greater deliverance, whether to have God specially near and present with us in the trouble (Psalms 91:15), or to have it removed from us. But He knoweth our frame and remembers the weakness of our flesh, and graciously permits us to ask that, "if it be possible," the cup of suffering may pass from us, though, in the power of His Spirit we too should ever be ready to add, "O, my Father, if this cup may not pass from me, Thy will be done." And He will deliver us, if not by removing the burden, by sending an angel from heaven to strengthen us to endure it, so that we shall be able all the more to glorify Him. But, though there is this general principle in this passage applicable to the saints of God in all ages, it has primary and special significance in relation to Israel at the climax of their national history, and is in strict harmony with all the rest of this sublime prophecy which deals with the great events of the time of the end. As we have shown elsewhere, there is a culminating sorrow for Israel after a representative section is back in the land. "For then shall be the great tribulation such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Matthew 24:21). "Alas! for that day is great, for there is none like it; it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it" (Jeremiah 30:7). For, in the very midst of that great day of "trouble," or "tribulation," or "affliction,"* the spirit of grace and of supplications shall be poured on the saved remnant, and, as we have already seen, Israel shall call on the name of their Redeemer and "be saved" not only from outward trouble, but also from their sin and unbelief.

* The word is the same as in Deuteronomy 4:30, Hosea 5:15, and other scriptures which bring us up to the same prophetic point of time when Israel's sorrows come to a climax after their restoration to the land.

It is to that blessed event that the prophecy and promise of this verse in our psalm primarily refers. Israel on the day of his greatest trouble, shall call on the name of Jesus and be delivered, and then from that "day" on, throughout the remaining years of their separate national existence on earth, "they shall glorify Him," or, as the word literally means, "honour" Him with that filial loving regard that a son owes to his father.* * The word is the same as in the command "Honour thy father and mother."

Then shall the chief end in Israel's call as God's first-born son among the nations be realised, and "this people" which He has "formed for Himself" shall in a special manner show forth His praise.

3. In Relation to Christendom

We now come to the last section of this psalm (Psalms 50:16-23), addressed to a third party which is distinct from "His saints" (Psalms 50:5) and "Israel" (Psalms 50:7). "But to the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare My statutes, or that thou shouldest take My covenant in thy mouth?" Who are these? Not the nations who have not heard of the fame or glory of Christ, but professors in Christendom who know in a manner God's statutes, and who unworthily take His holy covenant in their mouth (Psalms 50:16). This feature marks them off at once from the heathen, and from those who are truly God's. The distinguishing characteristic of those who are true subjects of the new covenant of grace is this: "I will put My law in their inward parts, and will write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people." (Jeremiah 31:33); but these have the covenant only in their mouth.

They cry indeed, “Lord, Lord,” and are often so like the real and true that it is impossible for man to distinguish (Matthew 13:24-30), but they are the tares among the wheat; the foolish virgins, who merely imitate the wise; the goats among Christ’s true sheep, to whom He shall say in that day, “I never knew you; depart from Me, ye workers of iniquity.” They are those represented by the evil servant who says in his heart, “My Lord delayeth His coming,” and begins to smite the true menservants and maidens in Christ’s Church, and to eat and drink and be drunken; to whom the Lord will “come in a day when he looketh not for Him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.” (Luke 12:45-46). They are the same of whom the apostle warns us as especially manifesting themselves in the perilous times of the “last days,” when “men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, ostentatious, arrogant, defamers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, irreligious, without natural affection, trucebreakers, intriguers, without self-control, fierce, despisers of good men, traitors, reckless, puffed up, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof” (2 Timothy 3:1-5). The very fact of their knowing and speaking of God’s statutes is an aggravation of their guilt, and will increase their condemnation, for they are like “that servant who knew his lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, and who shall be beaten with many stripes.” (Luke 12:47). Better far had it been for them had they been born in heathen lands, and never heard of God’s grace or covenant faithfulness, instead of hearing it and responding only with their mouth. But the address continues: “And thou hatest instruction, and castest My words behind thee.” Here are other striking features of apostate professors. They have God’s statutes in their mouth, and it may be are very careful in chanting the responses as the solemn words of the Ten Commandments are read out to them in the church on a Sunday. They know also that “instruction in righteousness” is one of the chief ends for which these statutes were given by God, yet in their heart they hate instruction; nay, in wilful rebellion they cast God’s words behind their back in contemptuous disregard. This is no poetic fancy or exaggeration, but a graphic picture of what may already be seen even in Protestant Christendom, and what is becoming more and more manifest as the time of the end draws nigh.

Alas! Christendom is guilty of the very same things which characterised the last stages of Israel’s previous apostasy which culminated in judgment. They also were disobedient and rebelled against God by “casting His laws behind their back” (Nehemiah 9:26), wherefore they were given into the hands of their enemies, and wrath came upon them to the uttermost; and this to a more terrible degree will be the lot of Christendom. The casting God’s laws behind their back is naturally followed by definite breaches of the commandments, as is brought out in the following verses: “When thou sawest a thief then thou consentest with him, and with adulterers is thy portion. Thy mouth hast thou sent out to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit. Thou sittest down deliberately to speak against thy brother, and thine own mother’s son thou woundest by slander.” Here is the direct violation of the commands, “Thou shalt not steal”; “Thou shalt not commit adultery”; “Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.” Atheists and sceptics may insist that man can properly fulfil his obligations to his fellow-men without the recognition of the authority of God or His Word, and may attempt to separate faith from ethics, but Scripture, and also history and experience, testify to the contrary.

Men who turn their back upon the living God, and question the Divine authority of His revelation, are sure in time to break loose against their fellows. The commandments which the wicked are

here accused of breaking, are all taken from the second table, on which is inscribed man's duty to man, and their violation is traced to the fact of their first alienating their hearts from all allegiance to God and then casting His law behind their back.

It would seem almost incredible that such flagrant wickedness could exist alongside outward profession of religion, but experience of what is actually going on in our midst, and the world's "progress" as chronicled even in the secular press of this Protestant country, where the Bible has been an open book for centuries, and where almost everybody takes God's covenant in their mouth, proves the literalness and accuracy of this Divine forecast. Is it not but yesterday that we read of a prominent legislator being convicted of the vilest uncleanness only a few days after he had made a speech at the laying of the foundation-stone of a chapel? And still more recently have we not read of one guilty of defrauding the public presenting a gold communion service to the Cathedral Church of London?*

* While preparing these notes my eyes are directed to an article in the current number of a widely-circulated newspaper, the usual tone of which is rationalistic and abstract Unitarian. I quote a few sentences as a testimony from a mouth piece of the world concerning its morals: "The revelations of the past few weeks might well give pause to any one who strongly believes in the progress of the world. The case (then before the Courts), followed by an article in The Times, which it is not extravagant to term the most startling journalistic article of the year, revealed a deep-set corruption in our modern society more characteristic, we would fain hope, of old Rome, in its corrupt and licentious decay, than of modern England. . . . The Emperor Augustus vainly tried by law to stem the foul flood of gross degradation, which was the real cause of old Rome's downfall. For that Niagara London society, or a portion of it which is called 'smart' seems to be steering straight. . . . If we turn from that sink of corruption to the financial world, the prospect is no brighter. . . . The race for wealth which characterises the present generation is not short of appalling." And even among those who "declare God's statutes" as teachers and preachers, are there not some, even as in the apostle's time, who profess the truth in hypocrisy, and who, though transforming themselves as angels of light, and with feigned words make merchandise of many, are enemies of the Cross of Christ, "whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly," and whose real care is for "earthly things"? Such are but samples and illustrations of "the wicked" in this solemn scripture to whom the words of warning are addressed. But what shall be said of the still more apostate "Christian" nations of the Continent, where the most shameless immoralities are often found hand in hand with the most incredible superstition, and where the name "Christian" to a pious Jew is the very synonym of lawless wickedness? But we proceed to the solemn closing words of the address to this class of "the wicked": "These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest therefore that I am become one altogether like unto thee, but I will reprove thee (or convince thee by reasoning), and set (all thy deeds and words) in order before thine eyes." The word translated "these things" is emphatic, as if to express, "To such lengths didst thou presume in thy wickedness, and I kept silence." Man has always misunderstood and misinterpreted the marvellous patience and long-suffering of the everlasting God. "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil" (Ecclesiastes 8:1-17). Because the thunderbolts of God's wrath do not immediately fall, even the righteous have been sometimes tempted to say, "How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the Most High?" The wicked, not knowing that it is infinite goodness

which is the cause of infinite patience on the part of the Righteous and Holy One, have blasphemously insulted His majesty by lowering the standard of His absolute holiness, as the One who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and who cannot look upon evil except to abhor it. They think, or hope, that they will find God altogether like unto themselves in their abominable complacency and compromise with sin. But God, who takes note of what man thinks, as well as of his words and deeds, warns him that he is mistaken. Far from thinking lightly of, or overlooking "the ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him," a full and minute record of them is kept in His book, and "in that day" when the book of God is opened, they will be "set in order" (or "in regular array") before their eyes, and oh! what a terrible indictment of professing Christendom, both collectively and individually, that record will be found to contain! "The encouragement of anti-Christianity for the sake of gain, the coalition of Christian governments with the guilds of Mammon against justice, truth, religion, humanity, and liberty; their covenants made and broken; their rivalries and envies, highway robbery and rapacity; their greed of gold and lust of supremacy; their defiance of Christian sentiment and of every appeal to virtue; their despotism, pride, mis-government, duplicity, oppression of the weak, and guilty trade with the strong, and, most of all, their shedding of innocent blood all are here recorded with a pen unerring. No injustice is forgotten, no massacre or devastated homes, no crimsoned fields strewn with upturned faces of the dead. Nor is the name of one who took part in producing such scenes, or consented to the wrongs that begat them, misspelled, or his place of residence misread. The whole apostasy of Christendom, the Horn's loud-mouthed arrogance, and the words of the cry, 'We will not have this Man to reign over us,' are written in the 'Books,' and judgment by the records must pass on the kingdoms whose boast was their Christianity, culture, civilisation."* * "Daniel's Great Prophecy," by Dr. Nathaniel West. And not only these collective and national sins of Christendom, for which every member of the evil confederacy is more or less responsible, will then rise up in judgment against them, but remember, man's individual open and secret sins, are recorded too, and will then be "set in order before his eyes," so that the opened book of his own conscience may attest the faithful accuracy of the terrible record kept by God, for although, as has been well observed, "sin does not purpose to remember or be remembered, it registers itself with perfect and unfailing regularity in two books the book of God, which shall be opened in that day, and on our own character, mind, and imagination. Only the blood of Christ can blot out sin from the one book, only the Spirit of God from the other."* * Adolph Saphir in "The Lord's Prayer."

We come now to the two last verses which form the epilogue to this wonderful psalm, and which are especially addressed to the last two classes dealt with, namely, "Israel" and "the wicked." "Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver." This is God's last word to the wicked, and it is a word of warning mixed with entreaty, for the first words of this verse might be properly rendered, "Consider, I entreat you," and shows God's heart of yearning even for the lost. Like the God of grace that He is, He cannot let them go on the way to perdition, even after they have spurned His authority, and cast His words behind their back, without a final appeal. "Consider," or be wise and repent, "for 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, Oh house of Israel?" And Oh sinners of all nations, "give glory to Jehovah your God before He cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and while ye look for light He turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross

darkness.” Oh, be wise and consider; flee for refuge to* the only hope set before you in the blood and righteousness of Christ, before God arises terribly to shake the earth, and to tear you in pieces with “none to deliver.” But if ye will not hear, “My soul shall weep in secret places for your pride, and Mine eye shall weep sore and run down with tears,” because of the hardness of your heart, and because of your deliberate choice of darkness rather than the light, and of death rather than life.

* This is the rendering of Delitzsch and the margin of the Revised Version, and I think it is the most satisfactory. The last words to Israel, which are also of application to us, are, “Whoso offereth (or ‘sacrificeth’) praise glorifieth Me, and prepareth a way in which I may show him the salvation of God.”*

* The first part of this verse is a condensation of what He has already taught them in verses Psalms 50:14-15, where, as we have seen, Israel’s deliverance and salvation will come when they turn from mere outward and lifeless form and ceremony to worship God in the spirit and truth, and to praise Him for redemption already accomplished. But thus also with hearts and souls humbled and attuned to God, a way will be prepared for more and more of the fulness of God’s grace and salvation to be revealed to them. In connection with the building of Solomon’s Temple we read: “It came to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the Lord, saying, For He is good; for His mercy endureth for ever: that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord; so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God” (2 Chronicles 5:13-14). So also by and by, after Christ’s manifestation to them, when Israel with one heart and voice lift up their souls in praise and adoration to Jehovah, the God of their fathers, for all His wonderful dealings with them, and especially for His unspeakable gift of His only-begotten Son, and the individual and national blessings purchased by His precious blood, God’s glory will appear in their midst and the fulness and riches of His salvation be manifested to them.

2.05. Chapter 4. The Conclusion of the Hallel

IV. THE CONCLUSION OF THE HALLEL O praise the Lord, all ye nations:

Laud Him, all ye peoples. For His mercy is great toward us; And the truth of the Lord endureth for ever.

Praise ye the Lord.

O give thanks unto the Lord; for He is good: For His mercy endureth for ever.

Let Israel now say, That His mercy endureth for ever.

Let the house of Aaron now say, That His mercy endureth for ever.

Let them now that fear the Lord say, That His mercy endureth for ever.

Out of my distress I called upon the Lord: The Lord answered me, and set me in a large place. The Lord is on my side; I will not fear:

What can man do unto me? The Lord is on my side among them that help me:

Therefore shall I see my desire upon them that hate me.

It is better to trust in the Lord Than to put confidence in man.

It is better to trust in the Lord Than to put confidence in princes.

All nations compassed me about: In the name of the Lord I will out them off.

They compassed me about; yea, they compassed me about In the name of the Lord I will cut them off.

They compassed me about like bees;

They are quenched as the fire of thorns: In the name of the Lord I will cut them off.

Thou didst thrust sore at me that I might fall: But the Lord helped me. The Lord is my strength and song; And He is become my salvation. The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tents of the righteous: The right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly. The right hand of the Lord is exalted: The right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly.

I shall not die, but live, And declare the works of the Lord. The Lord hath chastened me sore: But he hath not given me over unto death.

Open to me the gates of righteousness:

I will enter into them, I will give thanks unto the Lord. This is the gate of the Lord; The righteous shall enter into it.

I will give thanks unto Thee, for Thou hast answered me, And art become my salvation. The stone which the builders rejected Is become the head of the corner. This is the Lord’s doing;

It is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made;

We will rejoice and be glad in it.

Save now, we beseech Thee, O Lord:

O Lord, we beseech Thee, send now prosperity.

Blessed be He that cometh in the name of the Lord:

We have blessed you out of the house of the Lord. The Lord is God, and He hath given us light:

Bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar.

Thou art my God, and I will give thanks unto Thee:

Thou art my God, I will exalt Thee.

O give thanks unto the Lord; for He is good: For His mercy endureth for ever.

Psalms 117:1-2 and Psalms 118:1-29. A Prophetic Drama of the End of the Age) THE series of six psalms beginning with Psalms 113:1-9, Psalms 114:1-8, Psalms 115:1-18, Psalms 116:1-19, Psalms 117:1-2, Psalms 118:1-29 constituted “the Hallel.”1 Hallel means praise, and although the whole collection of Psalms abounds in praise, this series was particularly so-called, because they formed the special praise, sung in the Temple courts in circumstances of great joy and solemnity, on the three great “feasts of the Lord” Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. But it was with the Paschal feast that the Hallel was more especially associated, and even to this day it forms the chief feature in the Haggadah2 used in every pious Jewish home on the evening of the Passover, when they meet to “show” or “tell forth” the wonders of the Exodus from Egypt, and to express their hopes of another greater national redemption yet to come. In connection with that feast the Hallel used to be divided into two parts : the first part, consisting of Psalms 113:1-9 and Psalms 114:1-8, being usually sung at an early part of the supper, and the second part, consisting of the last four psalms of this series, was sung at the end.

1 See my articles on “The Commencement of the Hallel” in Nos. 21 and 22 of The Scattered Nation.

2 Special liturgy. The word literally means the “telling,” or “showing” forth. On the night on which our Lord was betrayed, when He turned the service in commemoration of deliverance from Egyptian bondage into the blessed ordinance which should henceforth “show” or “tell forth” the greater spiritual redemption accomplished by the breaking of His own body and the shedding of His own blood this was doubtless the “hymn” or “psalm” (Matthew 26:30) which they sang before He went forth to Gethsemane and Golgotha.

Psalms 117:1-2 forms a fit and solemn introduction to Psalms 118:1-29, which is the climax of the Hallel. It will not be without profit if we briefly study the introduction first. Though it is the shortest psalm in the collection, it is most comprehensive. It is a psalm for Israel, yet it is universal and cosmopolitan, embracing in its scope “all nations and peoples,” so that in the Epistle to the

Romans it forms part of the Apostle's argument that Gentiles too are called upon to glorify God for His mercy. It is a thoroughly evangelical psalm, for it sings of grace and truth; it is a beautiful psalm of praise, for it begins with a Hallelujah and ends with a Hallelujah, and there is a third fervent call to praise in between. But above all it is a prophetic psalm. The speaker is Israel, or that godly remnant of Israel who on that day will be made subject to God's grace. It is Israel, I say, who is here calling on the other nations, and in the language of David saying:

"O magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt His name together . . . "O praise Jehovah, all ye nations; laud Him ye peoples." The ground on which they are to praise Him is given in the second verse: " For His merciful kindness is great toward us, and the truth of Jehovah endureth for ever." The expression "merciful kindness," is, I think, the solitary instance in the Authorised Version of such a rendering of the word "hessed," which I prefer to translate by the word "grace." There is also an idiom in this verse which brings out a beautiful truth. The words rendered "great toward us" are literally "prevailed over us" or "overcome us." The figure which the idiom brings to my mind is that of a man who has been resisting some one who has been trying to overpower him, but is finally overcome and is thankful for it.

I am always reminded by this verse of the solemn transaction in Jacob's history recorded in Genesis 32:1-32. On "that night," we read, "Jacob was left alone, and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And when He saw that He prevailed not against him, He touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint as He wrestled with him. And He said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except Thou bless me. And He said, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. And He said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with man, and hast prevailed. And Jacob asked Him and said, Tell me, I pray Thee, Thy name. And He said, Wherefore dost thou ask after my name?" (which was not yet to be revealed). "And He blessed him there. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel; for I have seen God face to face and my life is preserved. And as he passed over Peniel the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh." This symbolical transaction is a parable of the history and experience of the Jewish nation. Now is the "night" period of Israel's history, and a long, dark and dreary night it has proved. And it is the "Jacob" period of Israel's history. Not yet have they become a nation of "Israelites" "princes in all the earth" (Psalms 45:16), "having power with God and with man, and prevailing."

There are, indeed, and ever have been from among them, those to whom the Lord already bears witness saying, "Behold Israelites indeed, in whom there is no guile," but as far as the majority of them is concerned the name "Jacob" as yet describes them. And there is a man wrestling with them. Oh, although in the darkness of the night they see Him not, it is the Divine Angel of the Covenant (Hosea 12:3, Hosea 12:5), "the man Christ Jesus." What are all His dealings with them, what are all their sorrows and sufferings, but His wrestlings with them in order to deliver them from their stubbornness, so that "their uncircumcised hearts be humbled," and they acquiesce in the justice and love of God in all His ways with them? But so far they are resisting and cannot be prevailed over, until in the darkest hour of their night, in "the time of Jacob's trouble," their thigh will be put out of joint. Then all their self-strength and resisting power will be gone, and all that they will be able to do will be to cling to Him and cry, "We will not let Thee go except Thou bless us." Then Jacob will become "Israel," and the "wonderful" name of the Divine Angel, which to them is still "secret," will be revealed to them as "Jesus."

Looking upon Him, Israel will cry also “Peniel” “the face of God”; for the “little moment” during which He has hid His face from them in anger will be at an end, and they shall behold “the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ.”

It is at this prophetic point of time that Israel calls on all nations and peoples to praise Jehovah because His grace, which they have so long withstood, has finally “overcome” them, and they see as never before, that His “truth” or “faithfulness” endureth for ever. Israel will then be brought into the same frame of mind as the Apostle Paul, whose history and conversion is typical of that of His people, in reference to whom he speaks of himself as “one born out of due time,” and who gloried in the fact that his mighty Conqueror, whom he had so long resisted, was now leading him about in triumph* as a trophy of His victorious power, so that after the manner of the captives chosen to follow the triumphal procession, he might chant the praises of the Victor in all the cities of the Greek and Roman world; for he learned the secret which we too must learn, that “our only true triumphs are God’s triumphs over us; that His defeats of us are our only true victories.”

* This is the true sense of 2 Corinthians 2:14.

How grace finally prevails we see in the next psalm. Psalms 118:1-29 is not merely a “general” psalm of praise and prayer; it is a prophetic drama, with many tragic points in it, which will be literally enacted in the future history of Israel, immediately before, and at, the Second Advent of our Lord Jesus.

If we want rightly to understand this psalm and its chronological relation to the “things to come,” we must be lifted by the hand of God into the future, and presuppose several events which are most clearly revealed in other parts of Scripture.

I will remind the reader here of only one or two, with regard to which there can be no controversy. One of these events is the restoration of the Jews to Palestine in a condition of unbelief.* Not a complete restoration of the whole nation, which will not take place until after their conversion, but of a representative and influential section.

* Those who need or desire proofs for such a restoration will find it in my small book, “The Jewish Problem,”

It seems from Scripture that in relation to Israel and the land, there will be a restoration, before the Second Advent of our Lord, of the state of things as they existed at the time of His First Advent, when the threads of God’s dealings with them nationally were finally dropped, not to be taken up again “until the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled.”

There was at that time a number of Jews in Palestine representative of the nation, but compared with the number of their brethren, who were already a diaspora among the nations, they were a mere minority, and those not in a politically independent condition. So it will be again. There will be at first, as compared with the whole nation, only a representative minority in Palestine, and a Jewish state will be formed probably under Turkish suzerainty. The nucleus of this politically dependent Jewish state is already to be seen in the 120,000 Jews who have wandered back from all regions of the earth to the land of their fathers. Already Jerusalem is almost a Jewish city, while the thirty and more Jewish colonies* which dot the land “are so many milestones marking the advance which Israel is making toward national rehabilitation.” And in no other country in the world

do the Jews to the same extent represent the nation.

* See Appendix iv.

If any one wants to see the whole Jewish people in miniature, let him go to Jerusalem and to the other Jewish settlements in Palestine. There you can see them from East and West, from India and from the burning plains of Southern Arabia; from the extreme North of Siberia and the Caucasus; there you can hear them speaking nearly all languages under heaven. Around this nucleus, a large number more, from all parts of the world, will be gathered, and there is no doubt that before long this part of the Zionist programme will be realised, and Palestine will become the "openly recognised, legally assured home" of the Jews. But what follows? After a brief interval of outward prosperity there comes a night of anguish. "These are the words that Jehovah spake concerning Israel and concerning Judah," just after commanding the prophet to "write in a book" the fact that He would bring again the captivity of His people, and cause them to return to the land that He gave to their fathers: "We have heard a cry of terror, fear, and no peace. Ask now and see. Is it a man travailing with child? Wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins like a woman in childbirth and every face turned to paleness? Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it; it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it." (Jeremiah 30:4-7). The cause and occasion of the night of sorrow for Jacob is the yet future siege and final gathering of the nations against Jerusalem. In some of the prophecies this solemn event is set forth with such clearness that it reads like history. "Behold I will make Jerusalem a cup of reeling unto all the peoples round about . . . and in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all peoples; all that burden themselves with it shall be cut to pieces, and all the nations of the earth shall be gathered against it. . . . Behold the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee, for I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle: and the city shall be taken and the houses rifled and the women ravished, and half of the city shall go into captivity" (Zechariah 12:2-3; Zechariah 14:1-2). And not only will this be the case with Jerusalem, but it "shall come to pass that in all the land, saith Jehovah, two parts therein shall be cut off, . . . and I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined and will try them as gold is tried." It is the time of Jacob's greatest trouble the very darkest hour of Israel's long night of sorrow. The enemy thinks his end almost accomplished; he has but to lift his hand for one final blow, and Israel will be no more when suddenly in the clouds of heaven, attended by His angelic hosts and "all the saints with Him," Israel's true Messiah and Deliverer appears, "and His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives which is before Jerusalem on the East." The enemies' hand stretched out to give the final blow becomes suddenly withered: "And the multitude of all the nations that fight against Ariel, even all that fight against her and her stronghold, and that distress her, shall be as a dream, a vision of the night. And it shall be as when an hungry man dreameth, and, behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty: or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and, behold, he drinketh; but he awaketh, and, behold, he is faint, and his soul hath appetite: so shall the multitude of all nations be that fight against mount Zion" (Isaiah 29:7-8). But simultaneous with their outward deliverance there takes place also Israel's spiritual redemption: "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication; and they shall look unto Me whom they have pierced: and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. . . . In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the

inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness."

Now, imagine Israel, at that time overwhelmed with the sense of God's marvellous grace in their deliverance, joining together in this glorious song of praise and triumph: "O give thanks (or literally 'confess') unto Jehovah; for He is good: For His mercy endureth for ever. Let Israel now say, That His mercy endureth for ever. Let the house of Aaron now say, That His mercy endureth for ever. Let them now that fear Jehovah say, That His mercy endureth for ever." The ground of this universal call to the entire nation solemnly to confess "the ever gracious goodness of God" is given in the narrative of praise which follows: "Out of my distress (or 'Out of the straitness,' or 'siege '3) I called upon Jah;4 Jah answered me in (or 'with') a large place" by breaking the enemies lines which pressed me on every side: "Jehovah is on my side I will not fear, What can man do unto me? Jehovah is for me as my help.

3 The Hebrew word can also be properly so rendered.

4 An abbreviation of ■■■■■■■ "J■ehovah."

Therefore I shall see my desire upon them that hate me. It is better to trust (or 'to hide one's self') in Jehovah Than to put confidence in man."

Psalms 118:8 is said to be the middle verse of the Bible, and if so, there is no grander truth which could be more appropriately enshrined in this central position.

It is the lesson above all others, which God desires to teach us through all His dealings with us: it is the truth which Israel will learn when they are at last brought to an end of themselves, and experience to the full the bitter disappointment of misplaced confidence in man. In times past they always sought an arm of flesh to lean on, and when national danger threatened "they called to Egypt, they went to Assyria" (Hosea 7:1-16) and trusted in their own strength, or in human alliances; but in that day Israel will say: "Assur shall not save us; we will not ride upon (or put our confidence in) horses (which come from Egypt); neither shall we say to the work of our hands, Ye are our gods: for in Thee the fatherless findeth mercy":

"It is better to trust in Jehovah than to put confidence in man Yea, it is better to trust in Jehovah than to put confidence in princes.

Put not your trust in princes, Nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; In that very day his thoughts perish.

Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, Whose hope is in the Lord his God: Which made heaven and earth, The sea, and all that in them is: Which keepeth truth for ever." (Psalms 146:3-6). The verses now following must seem hyperbole to those not seeing the solemn prophetic import of this psalm, but they are plain enough in the light of the other scriptures already indicated. We regard the conclusion of the Hallel as "the prophetic expression by the Spirit of Christ, of that exultant strain of anticipative triumph wherein the virgin daughter of Israel will laugh to scorn the congregated armies" of the final Gentile confederacy.

"All nations compassed me about; yea, they compassed me about:

"In the name of Jehovah I will destroy them" (or, literally, "cut them off.")

“They compassed me about; yea, they compassed me about. But verily in the name of Jehovah I will cut them off. They compassed me about like bees” completely, persistently, full of hatred like the Amorites who, “as bees” (Deuteronomy 1:44), chased and beat down our fathers in Seir but suddenly “they are quenched as the fire of thorns. In the name of Jehovah I will verily cut them off.”

Then, turning to the leader of this confederacy the future king of the united armies of the apostate nations, or, it may be, addressing Gentile power as personified Israel says:

“Thou hast thrust sore at me that I might fall, But Jehovah helped me. My strength and song is Jah, And He is become my salvation.” This last verse is here transferred bodily from “the song of Moses and the children of Israel” (Exodus 15:1-27) which they sang at the overthrow of their enemies in the waters of the Red Sea, and which is typical of the final overthrow of the nations which shall be confederate against Jehovah and against His anointed.

It is also incorporated a third time by Isaiah at the end of that section of his prophecy called “the Book of Immanuel,” which closes with that beautiful little millennial song of confidence and triumph (Isaiah 12:2) which Israel shall sing “in that day,” the last words of which are: “Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion; for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.” The day when Jehovah will become Israel’s “salvation” is that in which they will recognise their “Jeschua” their Jesus, whose very name in Hebrew is here used, and which, being interpreted, means “God’s salvation.” Then also, and as a blessed consequence, there will be “The voice of rejoicing and salvation in the tents of the righteous: (because) The right hand of Jehovah doeth valiantly. The right hand of Jehovah is exalted: The right hand of Jehovah doeth valiantly.” The “right hand,” which is a figure for energetic interposition, united to the almighty “arm,” which in Scripture is the emblem of effectual power that carries through the thing designed, may well be used as a title of the Messiah, who is God’s visible executive power in delivering His people, and in executing vengeance on the nations.

This, again, has for its basis the “Song of Moses” in Exodus 15:1-27, where we read “Thy right hand, O Jehovah, is glorious in power, Thy right hand dasheth in pieces the enemy. And in the greatness of Thine excellency Thou overthrowest them that rise up against Thee” which overthrow of Pharaoh and his host, forms but the historical foreground of the final overthrow of the confederated anti-Christian world powers, at the time of the end. The next verse brings us to Israel’s final shout of triumph, even as it has been their defiant answer to the nations all through the ages, who sought their extermination.

“I shall not die—but live, And declare the works of Jah.” The cries of “Down with the Jews!” “Death to the Jews!” now raised by anti-Semitic mobs in the streets of Paris, Berlin, or Vienna, have been reverberating from age to age among the Gentile nations who have been brought in contact with this “Peculiar People.”

“Many a time (or ‘O how greatly!’) have they afflicted me from my youth up, Let Israel now say: O how greatly have they afflicted me from my youth up: Yet they have not prevailed against me!” is the similar song of Israel in Psalms 129:1-8.

Israel’s national youth or childhood was in Egypt, and already there “the plowers plowed on his back, and made long their furrows.” Pharaoh cried, “Death to the Jews!” and brought out an edict for their extermination. “But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew,” and

Israel passed through the baptism of suffering in Egypt with the defiant shout,“ I shall not die but live, and declare the works of Jehovah.”

Then, not to mention Canaanites, Philistines, Midianites, and the other small powers who were ever ready to afflict and harass them, there commenced the march of the great world powers Syria, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, and savage Rome, who each in turn took up the cry, “Death to the Jews!” But where are all these powers? They have crumbled away and died, but Israel lives, and, they have not “prevailed over him.”

Then came the centuries of Dispersion, when it might be supposed that a comparative handful of men scattered on the great ocean of humanity would soon be swallowed up of the multitude. As a matter of fact, every force was brought to bear against them with terrible severity. Their enemies were united, and seemed confident of success. The crusaders went from west to east with the cry, “Hierosolyma est perdita!” I and perpetrated wholesale massacres of the Jews as a commencement of their “holy” wars. Again and again apostate Christendom in the dark ages showed its zeal for the Jewish Messiah, who teaches His followers to love even their enemies, by burning whole communities of Jews, numbering sometimes thousands of souls, on one huge scaffold. But in spite of it all, Israel lives; “they have not prevailed over him”; for there are more Jews in the world after all the centuries of banishments, massacres, and untold sufferings, than there have been at any previous point of the world’s history, and the Jews at the present day, as is proved from official statistics, in some parts of the world increase in proportion to their Gentile neighbours at the ratio of three to one. Well might the eloquent Michael Beers, in his “Appeal to the Justice of Kings,” make use of the following language:

“Braving all kinds of torments the pangs of death, and still more terrible pangs of life we have withstood the impetuous storm of time, sweeping indiscriminately in its course, nations, religions, and countries. What has become of those celebrated empires whose very name still excites our admiration by the idea of splendid greatness attached to them, and whose power embraced the whole surface of the known globe? They are only remembered as monuments of the vanity of human greatness. Rome and Greece are no more; their descendants, mixed with other nations, have lost even the traces of their origin; while a population of a few millions of men so often subjugated, stands the test ‘Or “Hep! Hep!” ’ which is an abbreviation formed from the three initial letters of this Latin phrase. The English corruption of it is ‘Hip! Hip!’ of revolving ages, and the fiery ordeal of eighteen centuries of persecution. We still preserve laws that were given to us in the first days of the world, in the infancy of nature. The last followers of a religion which had embraced the universe have disappeared these eighteen centuries, and our temples are still standing. We alone have been spared by the indiscriminating hand of time, like a column left standing amid the wreck of worlds and the ruins of nature. The history of our people connects present times with the first ages of the world, by the testimony it bears to the existence of those early periods. It begins at the cradle of mankind; it is likely to be preserved to the very day of universal destruction.”* * These remarks are here transferred from my notes which appeared in The Scattered Nation, October, 1899. The sorrows of Israel and the hatred of the nations is yet, as we have already seen, to reach a climax, when the cry of the confederated armies under the leadership of anti-Christ, will be: “Come, let us destroy them from being a nation, that the name of Israel be no more in remembrance” one more blow and the Jewish nation will be no more; but even then the answer of the saved remnant, the nucleus of the blessed nation, will be: “I shall not die but live, and declare

the works of Jehovah." Israel is indestructible. The bush may burn but can never be consumed, because the Angel of God's Presence is in it. And if we ask why this miraculous preservation? the answer is given in the words, "And declare the works of Jehovah." This was the purpose of God from the very beginning in the call and election of Israel.

"This people," He says, "have I formed for Myself; they shall show forth* (or 'declare') My praise" (Isaiah 43:21). In a measure this has been fulfilled in the past, for it is through the lips of Jewish prophets and apostles that the wonderful "works" and the "praises" of Jehovah have been "declared" to the world; but in its fulness this prophecy will only be realised in the future, after the final deliverance and conversion of the nation.

* The word is the same as in our psalm.

Now poor Israel is "dumb," and the Church has taken his place as God's witness to the world, with the result that, after an opportunity of two millenniums in which to evangelise the nations, about two-thirds of the human race have never heard of the precious name of our Redeemer. But wait till "the eyes" of blind Israel "shall be opened" to behold their glorious Messiah, and the tongue of the nationally dumb man is unloosed to sing His praises (Isaiah 35:5-6) then it will not be long before the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Jehovah as the waters cover the sea. Not as though the Word of God has proved of none effect, for the number of God's elect are being gathered, but it is reserved for repentant Israel in the future to "declare the works of Jehovah" on a scale and in a manner such as the world has not known before. "Beautiful upon the mountains" will be the feet of Jewish evangelists, with souls fired with love to the once despised Jesus, bringing "good tidings," publishing peace to the nations, who will name them "priests of Jehovah and ministers of our God" (Isaiah 61:6), and the result will be that "many peoples shall go and say, Come ye and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem."

Continuing the retrospect of his national history, Israel says:

"Jah hath chastened me sore, But hath not given me over unto death." This is in agreement with the word of the Lord to them in Jeremiah 30:11, "For I am with thee, saith Jehovah, to save thee; for I will make an end of all the nations whither I have scattered thee, but I will not make a full end of thee; but I will correct thee in measure, and not leave thee altogether unpunished."

"Sore" indeed have been the chastisements which God has sent upon Israel, and terrible the corrections, but He never has and never will give them over "unto death," because He has sworn that as long as the sun and the moon endure, and the seasons continue, so long shall Israel abide "a nation before Him for ever" (Jeremiah 31:35-37); and therefore, whenever they are in special danger, and it seems as if there were no more help or deliverance, the covenant-keeping Jehovah appears on their behalf, and the mighty God of Jacob becomes their Refuge. The next three verses follow in beautiful sequence. It is the custom in Israel to this day for any man or community who has escaped some terrible danger to go in solemn procession to thesynagogue, to recite a special form of thanksgiving to God; and this, in the day of their marvellous deliverance, will be done by the whole nation:

“Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will enter into them that I may give thanks unto Jah:” And the response of those who receive the solemn procession (probably the Levites) will be “This is the gate of Jehovah,”

“The righteous (or ‘the righteous nation,’ Isaiah 26:2) may enter there, which having done,” “all Israel” as one man will say “I give thanks unto Thee, for Thou hast answered me, And art become my salvation.” A faint idea of what will then take place may be gathered from the following graphic and pathetic picture given by Motley of the thanksgiving service after one of the most famous sieges and wonderful deliverances in profane history. It was in 1574. For one hundred and thirty-one days the citizens of Leyden “had literally been living in the jaws of death.” Thousands and thousands of the population of the devoted city had died of famine and pestilence, and yet the survivors, with their noble Burgomaster Van der Werf, held out against the Spanish tyrant. At last, on an October morning, when there seemed no more hope of their holding out, the relieving flotilla which had been so wearisomely long in coming overland, flooded by the breaking of the dykes, at last arrived, helped on by a providential storm, which sent a panic among the besiegers, causing them to flee at the very moment when an extraordinary accident had laid bare a whole side of the city for their entrance. This is what followed after the starving crowd, looking more like ghosts than men, had eagerly snatched at the bread which was thrown to them on to the quays from the ships. “The Admiral, stepping ashore, was welcomed by the magistracy, and a solemn procession was immediately formed. Magistrates and citizens, wild Zealanders, emaciated burgher guards, sailors, soldiers, women, children nearly every living person within the walls all repaired without delay to the great church, stout Admiral Boisot leading the way. The starving and heroic city, which had been so firm in its resistance to an earthly king, now bent itself in humble gratitude before the King of kings. After prayers, the whole vast congregation joined in the thanksgiving hymn. Thousands of voices raised the song, but few were able to carry it to its conclusion, for the universal emotion, deepened by the music, became too full for utterance. The hymn was abruptly suspended, while the multitude wept like children.” So it will be with the spared remnant of Israel in the day of their final national deliverance, when in solemn procession they enter through “the gates of righteousness” to “give thanks unto Jah.”

They too will mingle weeping and “confessions” with their thanksgiving, for “in that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. And the whole land shall mourn . . . every family apart and their wives apart” (Zechariah 12:1-14). But the great comforter will be in their midst, and “as him whom his mother comforteth, so will He comfort them, and they shall be comforted in Jerusalem,” so that the note of praise will predominate, and the Hallel will then be sung as never before in their whole history.

We now come to the passage in this psalm which is the most familiar and most often quoted, but the full significance of which can never be fully understood if taken away from its context. It is, indeed, a most precious jewel in itself, but it is the striking setting of it which enhances its beauty and manifests its full brilliancy.

“The stone which the builders refused Is become the head stone of the corner: This is the Lord’s doing, It is marvellous in our eyes.” That it is a glorious Messianic prophecy, of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow, no one to whom the authority of our Saviour is worth anything can doubt, for He more than once uses and applies it to Himself.

During the last three or four days before His crucifixion, His mind seemed specially to dwell on this climax of the Hallel, as we may judge from the solemn way in which he uses it in His last prophetic words to the Jewish nation (Matthew 21:42; Matthew 23:39); and on the night on which He was betrayed, as He led His disciples in singing this “hymn” or psalm (Matthew 26:30) in the upper room where He celebrated the Passover with them for the last time, we may be permitted reverently to imagine the thrill that went through His human soul on reaching these words, just as He was girding Himself to go forth to Gethsemane and Calvary for the joy that was set before Him, to endure the cross, despising the shame.

But, I repeat, it is only in the light of the full context of the prophetic drama unfolded in this psalm that this passage can be understood. It is one of Israel’s thankful “confessions” summing up their whole attitude to their Messiah from His first appearance in humiliation, to His second advent in glory

According to a tradition, the figure employed in this ode, the groundwork of this short but comprehensive parable, was an actual occurrence, a real historical transaction, which was well known to them at that time. In connection with the building of the Temple by Solomon, we read in 1 Kings 6:7, “And the house when it was in building was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither; so that there was neither hammer, nor axe, nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was in building.” For a long time it was generally supposed that the huge blocks of stone as well as the timber for the Temple were brought from Phenicia, until the discovery in 1852 of the vast subterranean quarries, which in one direction alone stretch 213 yards in a straight line beneath the city of Jerusalem.

I shall never forget my rambles there one night accompanied by a small party of friends well provided with torches. On the sides are still seen niches for the lamps of the quarry men, and traces of their work looking almost as fresh as if they had been done yesterday, though the hands that made them have crumbled to dust probably three thousand years ago. Here and there the rocky ground on which Jerusalem stands above is supported by huge pillars. The process of quarrying in those days was by water power, the blocks being separated from the rock by means of wooden wedges which were driven in, and wetted so as to cause them to swell.

We came to one place which we named the workshop a huge hall strewn with chips and rockdust. Here, most probably, in this subterranean place, every stone of the Temple “was made ready before it was brought thither,” and prepared and marked for the position it was to occupy in the building above. The object lesson learned in those midnight hours is still fresh in my heart. I thought that it beautifully illustrated the process in connection with the spiritual Temple which is now being built “for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” Now is the quarrying time the breaking away of the “living stones” from the hard rock of “this present evil world.” Then there is the blow of the hammer, and the cutting of the sharp “tool of iron,” which sometimes enters our very soul; and the unpleasant painful gratings of the polishing instrument. But we may be sure that the great Master Worker, who has us in hand, gives not one unnecessary blow with the hammer, or one needless cut with the chisel, “for He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.”* * Lamentations 3:33, margin. In view of the fact that “the sufferings of this present time” are designed by Him to fit us for the position we are to occupy in that Temple of which it is written that “every wit of it uttereth His glory,”* we would rather, by His grace, not forego any part of the

necessary preparation however painful the process, remembering that our “light affliction which (compared with the eternity of blessedness) is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”

* Psalms 29:9. But to return to the tradition in reference to the Headstone of the corner, which is as follows. In planning and preparing the stones in this subterranean workshop, one was marked to occupy this crowning position, but “the builders,” when they were actually putting the structure of the Temple together on Mount Moriah, and came to the point when the crowning stone should be put on which should give the building the look of finish and completion, looked upon it, and regarding it as too insignificant for this place of honour, “refused” or literally “despised” it. They took up one stone after another which they thought more worthy of this commanding position, but they did not fit. At last driven by necessity, or by Divine interposition, they after all took up the stone with the mark on, and placed it there, and lo! it fitted beautifully, and they sang:“ The stone which the builders rejected is after all become the Headstone of the corner. This is the Lord’s doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.”

Now this probable actual occurrence in connection with the building of the Temple, the Spirit of God makes use of in this prophetic drama as emblematic of Israel’s attitude in relation to their Messiah. Already from “the days of eternity,” our Lord Jesus was appointed to be Israel’s head and crown of glory, and “Him hath God the Father sealed,” as the rightful King of Zion, from the day of His birth in time. But when He was manifested to Israel, and when they should have welcomed Him with shouts of joyous acclamation, the “builders” those pharisaic and sadducean priests and lawyers who looked for earthly pomp and grandeur of which they saw none in Christ “despised” Him, and said, “We will not have this man to rule over us,” and the words of Isaiah have been literally fulfilled: “He was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their face, He was despised, and we esteemed Him not.”

Since then Israel has tried to substitute others in His place, and has been innumerable times deceived by false messiahs and prophets; but just as in the individual heart there is a place which only He can fill, so also does the Jewish “House” (Matthew 23:38) remain “desolate” and forsaken ever since they rejected Him. But this terrible unnatural antagonism to Christ on the part of “His own” nation, will not last for ever. Oh, there is a day coming when the eyes of “the blind shall be opened,” and Israel shall recognise that He is just the very One whom they have needed, and for whom they have been waiting through the ages, and with lowly and contrite hearts will hail Him as their King and Redeemer. Then, in a sense more glorious than in connection with the building of the Temple, they will sing: “The stone which the builders despised, Is become the Headstone of the corner; This is Jehovah’s doing, It is marvellous in our eyes.”

Yes, then the mystery of Israel will at last be solved, and it will be seen that the whole thing was of Jehovah that even their guilty unbelief and rejection of Him was overruled to the enrichment of the Gentiles, and the consequent temporary “casting away of them” to the “reconciling of the world.” Then the great Joseph will say to His brethren: “But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass as it is this day, to save much people alive.” The joyous song continues:

“This is the day which Jehovah hath made; We will rejoice and be glad in it.” Not the Sabbath, or Lord’s Day, is here meant, in which sense the passage is sometimes quoted, but the great Day of

Israel's national deliverance and conversion so full of momentous issues to the world the day of joy which will succeed their present long night of darkness and sorrow the day appointed by Jehovah, in which the nation "shall be born" into true spiritual life, and rejoice and be glad in their long rejected Messiah, "with joy unspeakable and full of glory." The drama is drawing to a close, amid the shouts of "Hosanna" to the Son of David on the part of the saved remnant of Israel, and their reverent salutation to the long absent King.

"Save now, we beseech Thee, O Jehovah (or 'Hosanna,' which is a contraction of the two Hebrew words used): O Jehovah, we beseech Thee send now prosperity. Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of Jehovah." The meaning of which prayer is: Oh, let Thy people "now" at last enter into the spiritual "salvation," and the whole land into the outward "prosperity" which Thou hast long promised to characterise the blessed reign of Messiah over His people Israel. That the Jews generally at the time of Christ regarded this part of the Hallel as Messianic, is proved by the spontaneous manner in which they used it at His Triumphal entry into the city, when "the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David!"

"Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest!"

But, alas! the true glory and spiritual significance of Messiah's person and work were then "hid" from the mass of Israel. It is probable that only three or four days later, when their expectations that He would now at last reveal Himself in His true character as Deliverer from the Roman yoke, and establish an outward visible kingdom were finally dashed to the ground, by His arrest and mock trials before the Jewish and Roman tribunals, some of the very crowds who thus hailed Him as the Son of David, cried with the priests and lawyers, "Let Him be crucified!"

Christ Himself, although it was necessary to allow this public homage as a sign and pledge of the time when He shall appear in His glory as Israel's true King, knew that He was going up to Jerusalem this time, not to be received and acclaimed as the expected Deliverer, but to be officially rejected. Three times over on His last journey He had warned His disciples as to what was awaiting Him:

"Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn Him to death; and shall deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify Him; and the third day He shall rise again."

Therefore it was, that during this so-called triumphal entry, as the procession was descending the western brow of the Mount of Olives, that as "He beheld the city He wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, in this thy day, the things which belong unto peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes." (Luke 19:41-44). The people might cry "Hosanna! Blessed be the Kingdom of our father David that cometh in the Name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" (Mark 11:9-10); but He knew full well that "the Kingdom" they were expecting was not like the one He then came to inaugurate, and that before that part of the Hallel could be fulfilled the stone must first be despised by the "builders," and Israel must in consequence be left for a long time in desolation and sorrow, until, in brokenness of heart, they return and "seek Jehovah their God and David their King."

Anyhow, it is clear that our Lord applied the words used by the triumphal procession from this part of the Hallel to a time yet future, for in His solemn words of farewell to the Jewish nation, uttered subsequently to His public entrance, after pouring out His heart's pity in the memorable

lamentation “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, . . . how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.” He adds, “For I say unto you, ye shall not see Me henceforth until ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord ” (Matthew 23:37-39).

It is noteworthy that while the Hallel as a whole was the great song of praise at all the three great festivals, the Hosanna verses were especially associated not with the Passover, but with the Feast of Tabernacles. On the seventh day called “Hoshanna-rabba,” the great Hosanna “that great” and most solemn day in this festival, a procession of priests was formed to the pool of Siloah, to draw water in a golden pitcher to be poured as a sacred libation on the altar the vessel containing it being borne aloft to be seen by all.* The joyous crowds of worshippers on that day, seen from one of the flat roofs of Jerusalem overlooking the Temple area, would resemble a forest in motion, for all carried palm branches in their hands which were more than a man’s height in length. Willow branches also surrounded the high altar and drooped their green ends over the smoking surface of the fire which had been kindled for the morning sacrifice. Great silence would fall on the assembled throng as the choir of Levites commenced to sing the Hallel, to each line of which the people had to respond with “Hallelujah.” Soon the whole crowd fell into order, and, led by the priests, marched in procession round the altar. Seven times they encompassed it. As the singers reached these verses and joined in the words, “Ana Adonai Hoschio-na!” (“Hosanna! make Thy salvation now manifest, O Lord.”), “Ana Adonai Hatzlicha-na!”

* See “Israel’s Hosannah,” by Professor Gustaf Dalman, in No. 14 of The Scattered Nation.

(“O Lord, send now prosperity!”), the people waved their palm branches and accompanied the song with loud exclamations of joy. And as they reached the words, “Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of Jehovah,” the godly and spiritual among them would in their hearts greet the coming Messiah and King to whom they well knew that these words applied.

Now of the sacred calendar of the history of redemption prefigured in the “Feasts of the Lord,” which Israel was called to celebrate, the Passover has been fulfilled, the Feast of Pentecost is fulfilling itself throughout this dispensation, but the Feast of Tabernacles, the last in the cycle, which celebrated the completion of the harvest and the ingathering of the vintage, will not be fulfilled until after Israel’s great national Day of Atonement, which will take place when they look upon Him who was pierced and mourn, is passed.

Then when the number of God’s elect from all the nations in this dispensation is complete, when the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled, when the long-absent Master shall return to the now “desolate” house of Israel, when Israel’s unbelief and consequent sorrows shall be ended, and the “Stone” once despised shall at last be exalted by them to be the “Head stone of the corner” it is then that the Hosanna will at last be sung to the Blessed One who cometh in the name of Jehovah, and that “salvation” and “prosperity” shall at last come to Israel and to the world.

After the joyous and solemn acclamation of their King by the multitude, a voice proceeds from the Temple, “We have blessed you out of the house of Jehovah.” This is supposed to be the voice of the priests or Levites from within the Temple, uttering benediction on the assembled multitudes without; which is probable, but in its fullest sense it may be regarded as the voice of saved Israel, who, immediately they themselves enter into blessing, will begin to bless the nations, by whom

they shall be called “the priests of Jehovah; ministers of our God.”

Yet once again, before the curtain finally falls on this prophetic drama, we hear the shout of happy Israel, and this time they acclaim their Deliverer not only as coming “in the name of Jehovah,” but as Jehovah Himself. The twenty-seventh verse reads literally thus:

“El (the Mighty One) is Jehovah, And He hath shined upon us!”

“Great is the mystery of Godliness, God manifest in the flesh!” “The Son of David,” in whose Epiphany or “shining forth” (compare Titus 2:1-15) the nation now rejoices, is “the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ,” the brightness of the Father’s glory and the express image of His Person, and overwhelmed with the visible display of His Divine power and glory, long doubting Israel bow their knees at last before Him, crying like Thomas of old, My Lord and my God “Thou art my God, and I will give thanks unto Thee; Thou art my God, and I will exalt Thee!”

I have left out part of the twenty-seventh verse, which needs explanation. They are the words:

“Bind the sacrifice with cords, Even up to the horns of the altar.” The word “chag,” primarily meaning “feast,” and here translated “sacrifice,” describes the special sacrificial offerings at the great feasts, and the word in the original translated “unto” cannot mean “on” or “to,” but “up to” or “until,” “the horns of the altar”; the explanation of the idiom being that there was so vast a number of sacrificial offerings on those festivals, that “the whole space of the court of the priests was full of them, and the binding of them consequently had to go on as far as to the horns of the altar.”*

* Dr. Andrew Bonar, in “Christ and the Church in the Book of Psalms,” has a very ingenious rendering and explanation of this verse. He translates: “Bind the sacrifice with strong cords! Let us away to the horns of the altar!” And adds, “The last line is peculiar, for ‘to the horns’ can scarcely be connected with the verb to bind in the sense of hold fast the victim till you reach the horns of the altar.” But it may be asked, How does this fit in with the sequence of events in connection with Israel’s future? Is there to be a restoration of a sacrificial ritual after the one great offering on Calvary and after the glorious Epiphany of Christ? The answer must be that there is no other consistent or satisfactory explanation of the last eight chapters of Ezekiel, and many passages in the other prophets and the Psalms, except on the supposition that some of the divinely appointed feasts and a modified form of the sacrificial ritual will, for a time at any rate, be restored in the millennial dispensation as ordinances of commemoration. It is a difficult subject, I admit, one on which even the most spiritual must speak with diffidence and pray for more light, but the following considerations may be suggested:

“The word ‘ad’ (up to, or until) is rather a particle of locality. In Lamentations 3:40 it occurs thus, ‘Let us search and try our ways; and let us return (let us go) to the Lord!’ And so we take it here. The restored and grateful people are hastening to bring their offerings of praise to their God and King, stimulating one another’s zeal; ‘Sursum Corda!’ to the altar! to the altar! whose horns holdup to view the blood of sacrifice.”

I. The sacrifices and all the divinely appointed observances were types, that is pictures of Christ and His one perfect offering; but is it not possible for a type to point backward as well as onward? The ordinance of the Lord’s Supper points backward to the cross, and onward to His coming in glory.

II. Israel as a nation has never yet understood the typical character of the sacrificial ritual, and “to this day when Moses is read this veil is on their hearts.” Nevertheless, when as a nation “they shall turn to the Lord” the veil shall be taken away, and in the light of the full knowledge of Christ they will go back to these types in order to keep before them the all-sufficiency and perfection of the great Antitype, who will not be always present with them on earth, but with the Church in the heavenly Jerusalem.

III. Jerusalem during the millennium will be the school where representatives from all the nations will go up to be taught in the ways of the Lord; and it is beautiful to contemplate how by means of a divinely appointed ritual and sacrificial system converted Israel will realistically set forth to the whole world the atoning work of their glorious Messiah. That a sacrificial ritual has no place in the present dispensation is clear from the Epistle to the Hebrews and other New Testament scriptures. Those who endeavour to introduce into the Church a sacrificial ritual and a priesthood distinct from the great assembly of God’s redeemed people, are either going back to the “weak and beggarly elements” of the law, and are two thousand years behind time, or they anticipate the millennium, when such a priesthood will again be introduced. In either case the system is out of time and out of place, for even the millennium can present no parallel to the Church of this dispensation. Then God will deal with nations as nations, but the Church of this dispensation is an election of individuals from all peoples. Among the millennial nations there will be differences and distinctions even as regard their relationship to God; thus not only will Israel be the priests of the Lord to the other nations, but even Egypt and Assyria, &c., are to occupy positions different from the rest of mankind (Isaiah 19:24-25), while it is the peculiar glory of the Church that in that holy congregation, composed of individuals of every nationality, there is no difference, “for there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (Romans 10:12; Galatians 3:28; 1 Corinthians 12:13). The home, calling, and blessings of Israel and the other nations in the millennium will be earthly, and there will be a priesthood to correspond with such a state of things; but ours is a heavenly calling, and our peculiar blessings are spiritual in heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 1:3, Ephesians 2:6; Php 3:20; Colossians 3:1-6). But to return to the last two lines of the Hallel. It ends as it began, forming a complete circle of praise, and it leaves happy Israel calling upon the nations to magnify Jehovah with them and to exalt His name together:

“O give thanks unto Jehovah for He is good; For His mercy endureth for ever!”

2.06. Part 2 - The Modern Jew

PART II THE MODERN JEW I. A BIRD’S-EYE VIEW OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE II. THE GENERAL CONDITIONS OF THE JEWS AT THE CLOSE OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY FROM A JEWISH POINT OF VIEW III. THE RELIGIOUS CONDITION OF THE JEWS AND CAUSES OF JEWISH UNBELIEF IN CHRIST, FROM A CHRISTIAN POINT OF VIEW IV. RELIGIOUS DIVISIONS AND SECTS AMONG THE JEWISH PEOPLE V. THE PRESENT ATTITUDE OF THE JEWS IN THE RELATION TO CHRISTIANITY VI. ANTI-SEMITISM VII. ZIONISM AND THE ZIONIST CONGRESS VIII. ISRAEL’S MISSION TO THE WORLD, AND THE CHURCH’S MISSION TO ISRAEL IX. ANGLO-ISRAELISM AND THE TRUE HISTORY OF THE TEN "LOST" TRIBES (A Letter to an Inquirer.)

2.07. Chapter 1. A Bird's Eye View of the Jewish People

I. A BIRD’S-EYE VIEW OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE Numbers and Distribution of the Jewish People THE subject of Jewish statistics is a very difficult one, for in some parts of the world where they are scattered, it is almost impossible to obtain exact data as to their actual numbers. From earliest times in their national history, the Jews have had a religious aversion to being systematically counted, and in modern times, especially in countries where they are only “aliens,” with scarcely any civil rights, and where the forced military service without any chance for a Jew of rising above the ranks is greatly hated, the ancient superstitious feeling against registration is strengthened by the desire to save as many of their sons as possible from military bondage, or themselves from the extortions and persecutions of corrupt officials. That the difficulty is a very ancient and continuous one may be gathered from the conflicting figures which are handed down to us by contemporaries of different periods of their history since the destruction of their Temple, and the desolation of their land, by the legions of Vespasian and Titus. Take, for instance, the number given of those who left Spain to commence their unparalleled and woeful experiences after the cruel edict of expulsion, which was signed by Ferdinand and Isabella at Granada in March, 1492. Zurita reckons their number at 170,000; Cardoso at 120,000; Abarbanel, the Jew, who was Minister of State in the Spanish Court at the time, in the Preface to his Commentary to the Book of Kings, puts them down at 300,000; while Miguel de Barrais and Mariana give us as high a figure as 800,000. Now all these were contemporaries. In an old history of Poland it is related that King Sigismund Augustus (1548-1572), alarmed at the fact that the Jews were increasing so rapidly in his kingdom, and also desiring to replenish his empty coffers, determined on subjecting them to a capitation tax, from which, at a florin per head, he calculated on receiving about 200,000 florins. His surprise and that of his court, however, was very great, on finding that the registration roll did not contain more than about 17,000 names. Of course scarcely a tenth of their actual number was returned by the Jews. Sigismund complained of this to his friend, the Bishop of Cracow, a prelate remarkable for the fact that in his superstitious age he did not believe in magic. “Bishop,” said the king, “you, who do not believe in magic, or that the Evil One has anything to do with human affairs, tell me, I beseech you, how the Jews who yesterday were 200,000, have to-day, that a capitation tax is wanted, been able to conceal themselves so as to count scarcely 17,000?” The bishop is said to have replied that his Majesty must be aware that the Jews are clever enough for anything without requiring the help of the devil; but if he had been less prejudiced he might have told him that if he had tried the same process of persecution and extortion on his Orthodox Catholic subjects, he would have found them equally clever in concealing themselves, with or without the help of the devil. I only mention these instances as illustrations of the difficulty connected with the subject of Jewish statistics. The tables in the footnotes are taken from “The Jewish Year Book” for 1899-1900, a fairly reliable work, edited by Mr. Joseph Jacobs, who bases his calculations on a statistical article by I. Loeb in “Diet, de Geographic,” 1879.*

Some of the figures are obviously below the actual number, and the totals put down for Africa and Asia ought, according to my estimation, to be at least doubled.

* For the sake of comparison I give here also Professor Gustaf H. Dalman's figures in his "Kurzgefasstes Handbuch Der Mission Unter Israel," published Berlin, 1893, which are based on Professor Juraschek's "Geographisch-Statistischen Tabellen iiber alle Lander der Erde," compared with the "Annuaire des Archives Israelite" for 1886-1891. Professor Dalman's tables are as follows:

(a) Europe: Austro-Hungary, 1,652,000; Belgium, 5,000; Bulgaria, 24,000; Denmark, 4,000; Germany, 579,000; France, 80,000; Greece, 6,000; Great Britain, 60,000; Italy, 45,000; Luxemburg, 850; Netherlands, 90,100; Portugal, 300; Roumania, 400,000; Russia, 3,236,000; Sweden, 3,800; Switzerland, 8,800; Servia, 4,400; Spain, 6,900; Turkey in Europe, 94,600. Total number of Jews in Europe, 6,301,550.

(b) Asia: Afghanistan, 14,000; British India, 26,000; Persia, 19,000; Russian-Asia, 40,000; Turkish Possessions, 195,000; Palestine, 50,000. Total number of Jews in Asia, 294,000.

(c) Africa: Abyssinia, 200,000; Egypt, 8,000: Algeria, 48,500; Morocco, 200,000; Tripoli, 6,000; Tunis, 45,000. Total number in Africa, 507,500.

(d) America: British North America, 2,500; Dutch Possessions, 2,700; Central and South America, 50,000; United States, 300,000. Total number in America, 356,200.

(e) Australia and Polynesia: 16,000 Jews.

Professor Dalman estimates the total number of Jews in the whole world between seven and half and eight millions, but his figures are in many cases below the actual number. At the end of these tables, however, Mr. Jacobs says, "There are probably eleven millions of Jews existing in the world at this present time."

Jews in Europe.

Country. 1881 – 1891.

Austro-Hungary 1,643,708 – 1,860,106 elgium 3,000* – 3,000 Denmark 3,946 – 4,800 England, &c 60,000* – 101,189 France 63,000* – 72,000 Germany 561,612 – 567.884 Greece 2,652 – 5,792 Holland 81,693 – 97,324 Italy 40,430 – 50,000* Luxembourg 777 – 1,000*

Norway 34 Portugal 200* – 300 Roumania 265,000* – 300,000* Russia 2,552,145! – 4,500,000* Servia 3,492 – 4,652 Spain 1,902 – 2,500* Sweden 2,993 – 3,420 Switzerland 7,373 – 8,690 Turkey 115,000* – 120,000* Total ... 5,408,957 – 7,701,266 * Estimated numbers.

(f). Loeb omitted 1,000,000 in Poland, 1881.

Jews in Asia (after I. Loeb).

Turkey in Asia 150,000

Persia 30,000 Russia in Asia 47,000 Turkestan, Afghanistan 14,000 India and China 19,000; 260,000

N.B.: In "The Jewish Year Book" for 1900-1901, edited by Rev. Isidore Harris, M.A., other tables are given, but the totals are about the same. The new editor adds: "The Jewish population of the

world at the present time can hardly be less than eleven millions, and in all likelihood it is in excess of that number."

Personally, I believe that the actual number cannot be much under twelve millions.

Note this remarkable fact: Less than two hundred years ago the historian Basnage, who devoted much time and careful labour to this subject, estimated that the number of Jews had in his day, after centuries of untold sufferings, dispersions, and massacres, been reduced to about 3,000,000 in fulfilment of the inspired prediction, that among the nations where they would be scattered, in case of apostacy from God, they would become "few in number" (Deuteronomy 4:27).

Jews in Africa (after I. Loeb).

Egypt 8,000 Abyssinia, Fellashas 50,000

Tripolis 60,000

Tunis 55,000 Algeria and Sahara 43,500

Morocco 100,000 Cape of Good Hope 1,500

318,000 Jews in America.

United States 750,000 Canada, &c 7,000

Antilles 3,000 South America 12,000

772,000 Jews in Australasia.

Australasia 15,268 Jews in the World.

Europe 7,701,266

Asia 260,000

Africa 318,000

America 772,000 Australasia 15,268

9,066,534 1 There are now probably some 20,000 in South Africa.

2 In 1882 a statistical inquiry established that there were 250,000 Jews in the United States. Between that date and 1891, 380,000 were added by immigration, not to mention the natural increase. But in less than two centuries they have multiplied again fourfold. This rapid increase, which has been specially noticeable since their so-called emancipation in this nineteenth century, is a great puzzle to statisticians and statesmen who study the Jewish Question apart from Holy Scripture. The following is from a recent work which must be described as anti-Jewish in its tendency and unsatisfactory in many respects, except for some of its statistical information:

"The first complete census of the Russian Empire was taken in February, 1897. The figures are not yet complete, but the Central Statistical Commission of the Minister of the Interior annually publishes figures of the rate of increase of the Russian population which demonstrate the overwhelming importance of the Jewish Question to the ruler and people of Russia. In most of the

text-books published on the subject of the Jewish population in the world the number of Jews in Russia is greatly underrated.

“The late Sir Robert Morier, G.C.B., as British Ambassador for many years at St. Petersburg, gave great attention to the subject. In 1891 he was of opinion that the Jewish population in Russia was about 5,250,000, the figures being arrived at by the statistics of birth-rate, death-rate, and conscription. The totals of the deaths, births, and marriages of the various religions in European Russia supply the absolute data. These figures have been elaborated by Mr. E. J. Dillon. The figures of the birth and death rates, when compared, establish the ratio between the two. For every 100 Russian Jews who died during the decade ending 1892, the number born was 171.42. The number of Orthodox Christians per cent, born in Russia during the same period was only 138.14 per cent. This fecundity of the Jewish race is attributable to the universal practice of marriage, and to the phenomenally low death-rate; 407 Orthodox Russian infants died out of every thousand. Only 232 Jewish children died. But these figures do not really indicate the rapidity with which the Jewish population is growing. Military service is immensely unpopular among the Jews, and they resort to many devices in order to free their sons from liability to serve in the army. One method is the concealment of the births of their children, and the number of Jews is therefore greater, and the death rate is therefore lower than the official statistics actually show.

(See his “History of the Jews from Jesus Christ to the Present Time.” English translation by Theo. Taylor, published London, 1708, chap. 34, pp. 744-748.)

“This relatively small death-rate of the Jews is noticeable, not only in Russia, but also in New York and Roumania. The Jews form but one-fifth of the urban population of Roumania, but they contribute no less than 63 per cent, of the entire annual increase, whereas the Orthodox Christians, who amount to 72 per cent, of the inhabitants of the towns and cities, contribute no more than 39.9 per cent, to the total increase. Both in Russia and Roumania the Jewish element is better fitted for the struggle for existence than any of the Christian sects. The devotion bestowed by Jewish parents on their children, the respect and tenderness paid to women during the critical events of their family life, enable the Jewish element in Poland to increase twice as rapidly as the Christian sects. One-third of the population of Warsaw is Jewish, but the Hebrew increase is equal to that of the Christians, who form two-thirds of the population. The more Jews there are in a city the smaller the death-rate among the children. In Warsaw the Jews are one-third of the population, and the death-rate of 1,000 children during the first year of their lives is only 187. In Moscow, where the Jews are only 2 per cent, the death-rate of infants is 391.

“The Russian people, with the exception of the Jews, have the highest birth-rate and the highest death-rate of all the peoples of Europe. Of all the races and religious faiths professed in Russia the Jewish element is the most fruitful.

“In the cities and towns of the sixteen provinces which constitute the Jewish Pale, the Israelitish increase is four times more rapid than that of their Christian fellow-subjects. Their net annual increase amounts to 71.4 as compared with that of all the Christian denominations, which is only 17 souls. Their annual increase appears to amount to 80,000 a year, a rate which will continue to increase in the absence of pestilence, famine, or extermination.”* * “The Modern Jew,” by Arnold White. The rapid increase of the Jews at the present day is a most significant sign of the times. The only parallel to it is to be found in the history of the last days of their sojourn in Egypt, in

reference to which we read that “the more they afflicted them the more they multiplied and grew.” The same God who caused them to multiply so marvellously after centuries of cruel bondage, just before the deliverance from Egypt, is repeating the miracle now that the time is drawing nigh for the “dayspring from on high” once again to visit them. Anyhow, it is a powerful reminder to all intelligent observers, even apart from prophecy, that the Jewish nation is not dead, nor is it likely to become defunct from exhausted vitality. The perplexity of some even Christian people on witnessing the revival of the Jewish nationality is very natural, because they can find no place for a revived literal Israel in their political or theological programmes. The attitude of such Christians in relation to the Jews has been humorously illustrated by that prominent Jewish witness for Christ, the late Joseph Rabinowitch, in the following story: During the last Russo-Turkish war, after a great battle, a certain number of men in a particular regiment were returned in the list as dead, and an officer with a company of soldiers were commissioned to attend to the sad duty of seeing them decently buried. While engaged in this task they came across a poor man who was badly wounded, and left on the field for dead, but who had life enough in him to refuse to be buried. But the amusing part of the business was that the officer in command seemed very much perplexed. He asked the poor man’s name, looked at his list, and then said, “Well, I do not know what to do with you; in my list you are put down as dead.” This, Mr. Rabinowitch said, is the attitude of many Christians in relation to the Jew. In their political and religious creeds the Jews as a nation are put down as dead, and even many true Christians, when reading in the Scriptures the exceeding great and precious promises which God made to Israel, say, “Oh yes, Israel that is a nation that once lived, but died some nineteen centuries ago, when they rejected Christ, and now ‘Israel’ means no longer Israel, but the Church which has entered into their inheritance.” But Israel, though seriously wounded, is not dead, and refuses to be buried; and the remarkable signs of vitality which as a people they are now manifesting, are in themselves sufficient to show that they are not merely a nation of the past, but pre-eminently the nation of the future. In reference to their distribution, there is this remarkable fact to be noted that although scattered over the whole surface of the globe, in fulfilment of the Word of God, “Lo, I will command and I will sift (or toss) the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve,” yet the great bulk more than two-thirds of the entire nation have for many centuries past been located in Europe, and more especially in Central and South-Eastern Europe. Thus in the two great empires of Austria and Russia alone there are at least six and a half million of the Diaspora. Is it a mere coincidence that God, who has foreordained the course of Israel’s wanderings, has in His providence arranged it so that the bulk of the nation should, during all these centuries, have been sojourners in that part of the world where the name of Jesus of Nazareth, the rejection of whom brought about their banishment, is at least nominally professed? I humbly believe that God had a design in it. Israel, even in unbelief, is God’s witness, and He intended that they should be a continual object lesson and a reminder to the so-called Christian nations that “they also, if they abide not in His goodness, shall be cut off” (Romans 9:22).

Then what a splendid opportunity was given to Christendom by the preaching of the gospel, and the exhibition of the power of Christ in their life, to provoke Israel to a holy emulation, and to make them feel that they have committed a grievous mistake in rejecting their own Messiah and King, in whom the Gentiles have found life and salvation! But alas! Christendom, instead of being able to impress the Jew with the attractiveness of Christ, and the transforming power of His gospel, has, on account of its idolatries and cruelties, proved a great repellent force and stumbling-block to the

Dispersion in their midst. In one of his last addresses on the Jewish Question, the late Dr. Adolph Saphir pointed out the sad fact that, instead of the professing Church proving itself a power in the conversion of the Jews, it, from a very early period of its history, became corrupted by the great errors of Rabbinism. The two outstanding errors of modern Judaism are these: They have perverted and made of none effect the Word of God by their traditions, which they have exalted to an almost higher place than the Scriptures; and secondly, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, they set about seeking to establish their own righteousness.

Now these are also the two outstanding errors of Christendom. There is a Christian as well as a Jewish Talmud, and Christendom also, since it lost the understanding of Scripture, has departed from the simplicity of the gospel, and has substituted for it a system of salvation by works, which is not different from Rabbinism.

2.08. Chapter 2. The General Conditions of the Jews at the Close of the 19th...

II. THE GENERAL CONDITIONS OF THE JEWS AT THE CLOSE OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY FROM A JEWISH POINT OF VIEW THE following comprehensive survey was given by Dr. Max Nordau, at the first Zionist Congress in Basle, in August, 1897. It has been translated by Mrs. Baron, from a special report in German. The footnotes are mine.

“This picture might almost be tinted as a monochrome, for wherever Jews are dwelling in any number among the nations, there Jewish misery prevails. This misery is not that of mere common poverty, which, according to the unchanging lot of earth, is ever our unfailing companion. It is a peculiar misery which befalls the Jews, not as men, but as Jews, and from which they would not suffer were they not Jews. Jewish distress is of two kinds, physical and moral.

“In Eastern Europe, in North Africa, in Western Asia, exactly in those lands where the overwhelming majority of Jews, probably nine-tenths of them dwell, Jewish misery is to be understood literally. It is a daily physical oppression, a terror of the day to follow, a torturous struggle to support a bare existence. In Western Europe the battle of life is of late somewhat easier, although indications are not lacking to show that even here it may become more severe. But still, for the time being the question of food and shelter, of safety of body and life, is less anxious. Here the misery is of a moral description, and consists in daily mortification of self-respect and sense of honour, in the rough suppression of their effort to attain complete mental rest and satisfaction which none who is not a Jew need deny himself.

“In Russia, where the Jewish population is over five millions, and which is the home of more than half of the Jewish race,* our brethren are subject to many legal restraints. Only a small Jewish sect, the Karaites, enjoys the same privileges as the Christian subjects of the Czar. To the rest of the Jews residence in a number of the provinces is prohibited. Freedom of movement is only enjoyed by certain classes of Jews, such as merchants of the first guild, possessors of academical titles, and so forth. But in order to belong to the first guild, a man must be rich, and there are few Russian Jews indeed who are rich; and also very few are the Russian Jews who can obtain an academical title, for the State, middle, and high schools admit but a very limited number of Jewish students, and foreign diplomas are not recognised by the law. To Jews in Russia many trades are closed which are free to all Russians. These unhappy ones are packed together in a few provinces where no opportunity is permitted them to exercise their talents and to prove their capabilities by lawful means. Education as provided by the State is very little accessible to them; schools of their own they cannot provide, they are too poor for that. Whoever can leaves the land to seek abroad the opportunities which are denied to him at home; he who is not sufficiently young and courageous for this, remains in his misery and pines away intellectually, morally, physically.

* This estimate of the number of Jews in the world, given at the first Zionist Congress in August, 1897, is considerably below the actual figure. At the fourth Congress in London in August, 1900,

Dr. Nordau in a speech corrected his estimate in the following passage: “When we began to preach Zionism, and to try to win followers and supporters for that movement, the wiseacres of our nation always urged the politico-anthropological argument, ‘You speak of the Jewish nation; there is no such thing; Israel is not a nation.’ We admit that as regards Western Jewry . . . that in those there is not left the slightest trace of Jewish national feeling, so speaking from their own sentiment they are right to deny the existence of a Jewish nation. But how many Jews are there in the world. According to the latest statistics, we muster about 12,000,000. Out of that number, perhaps, 300,000 have lost the national feeling. But the 11,700,000 who remain feel so convinced that they are a nation, that they would simply burst out into roars of laughter were anybody to seriously contend that they are not a nation.”

“Of Roumania, with its quarter of a million Jews, we learn that our brethren there are also without rights. They are only permitted to live in towns, and are at the mercy of every whim of the civil authorities, and even of the lower officials, and from time to time they suffer terribly from the bloodthirsty mob, and are in the worst possible circumstances.* Our Roumanian informant places the number of Roumanian Jews who are entirely without means of support at one-half of the Jewish population.

* Since then the condition of things in Roumania has become still less tolerable, and the year 1900 has witnessed the sad and pathetic spectacle of a tremendous exodus of Jews from that Balkan State which has the unenviable fame of being the most anti-Jewish in Europe. Hundreds of these Roumanian refugees have wandered across the whole of Europe on foot, from the Black Sea to the North Sea, some of them dying by the way.

“Horrible are the conditions which our reporter from Galicia reveals to us. Of the 772,000 Jews of Galicia, Dr. Salz estimates that 70 per cent, are literally beggars by profession, who ask alms mostly without receiving them.

“Of Western Austria, with its 400,000 Jews, Dr. Mintz informs us that of 25,000 Jewish householders in Vienna, 15,000, on account of poverty, cannot be assessed at all for Jewish communal purposes. Of the 10,000 who are so assessed, 90 per cent, have only the lowest possible tax laid upon them, and of this category of the lowest assessed, three-quarters are unequal to fulfil their obligation. The written law in Austria, unlike that of Russia and Roumania, knows no difference between Jew and Christian. But the public authorities boldly treat the law as a dead letter, and custom recreates the Jewish ban, which the law had abolished. The sentiment of society which is inimical to the Jew makes it exceedingly difficult for him to make a living, and in the near future this will become wholly impossible.

“The same cry of distress greets us from Bulgaria. Again we find a hypocritical law which recognises no difference of privilege on account of difference of creed, but which is set aside by the authorities; again an enmity in all circles which everywhere repulses the Jews; again misery and wretchedness, with no hope of improvement.

“In Hungary the Jews make no complaint. They enjoy full rights of citizenship, can work and trade freely, and their condition continually improves. It is true that this happy state of things has not lasted sufficiently long for the majority of the Jews in Hungary to have worked their way out of the deepest poverty and attained to even a commencement of comfort. And we are assured by

observers of the times that in Hungary also hatred of the Jew begins to make its appearance, which may break out destructively at the first opportunity.

“The 150,000 Jews of Morocco,* and the Jews of Persia, whose number is unknown to me, I must leave out of count. Those whose plight is most miserable are powerless even to resist their wretchedness. They bear it with a dull endurance, and do not complain or attract our notice except when the rabble storms their Ghetto, plundering, abusing, and murdering.

* The actual number of Jews in Morocco is at least 200,000.

“The lands of which I have made mention determine the lot of over seven millions of Jews, and, with the exception of Hungary, they all oppress the Jew, and official and social disfavour reduce him to a condition of wretchedness and professional beggary, without possible hope either by personal or united effort of being able to rise a single grade in the social scale. Those ‘practical’ people who will have nothing whatever to do with useless visions, and direct all their effort to the seemingly attainable, imagine that the cessation of legal oppression would terminate the woes of the Jews in Eastern Europe. Galicia is itself a contradiction of this view; and not Galicia only, for salvation by means of legal emancipation has been attempted in all the higher civilised states. Let us see what the experiment teaches.

“The Jews of Western Europe suffer from no legal restrictions. They are free to go and come and develop their resources in the same way as their Christian compatriots. The social consequences of such freedom ought without doubt to be the most favourable. Diligence, endurance, sobriety, and thrift, which are characteristics of the Jews, quickly brought about an amendment of their extreme poverty, which in many lands would be entirely at an end were it not for Jewish immigration from the East.

“The emancipated Jews of the past succeeded in a fairly short time in attaining to a measure of prosperity; at any rate, the struggle for daily bread does not assume such dreadful forms as have been described in Russia, Roumania, and Galicia. But among these the second phase of Jewish misery appears, i.e., the moral.

“The Jew of the West has daily bread but man does not live by bread alone. The Western Jew no longer finds his body and life endangered by the mob, but wounds of the flesh are not the only ones which give pain, and of which one may bleed to death.

“The Western Jew looked on emancipation as truly effecting his deliverance, and hastened to draw from it all possible inferences. The nations let him know that he was mistaken in being so ingeniously logical. The law magnanimously established the theory of equality. Government and society so practised this equality as to make it a mockery, corresponding to the appointment of Sancho Panza to the brilliant post of viceroy of the island Barataria. The Jew naively remarks, ‘I am a man, and to me no man is a stranger.’ The answer returned is, ‘Softly; your manhood is matter for circumspection; you lack a right sense of honour, the sense of duty, of morality, love of Fatherland, and love of the ideal. On account of this we must withhold ourselves from dealings with you which presuppose these qualities.’ None have ever attempted to substantially prove these accusations. At the most, now and again some individual Jew, an outcast from his race, and a reproach to humanity, has been triumphantly pointed out as a sample of Jewish character. But this is in accordance with a well-known law of psychology.

“It is the usual practice of the human conscience to seek some apparently reasonable foundation for the prejudices which have stirred up its passions. Folk-lore has long recognised this law of psychology, and has intentionally embodied it in expressive form.

“The proverb runs thus: ‘If a man wants to drown a dog, he says it is mad.’ All manner of crimes are imputed to the Jews because their enemies would justify themselves in their abhorrence of the Jew.

“I must give utterance to the painful truth: the nations who have emancipated the Jews have been self-deceived as to their true sentiments. In order for the emancipation to have been complete it must have been perfected in goodwill ere ever it found expression in law. But this was not the case. The opposite was the case. The history of Jewish emancipation is one of the most remarkable chapters in the history of European thought. It is not come of the perception that a race has been shamefully sinned against, and that it is high time to atone for a thousand years of injustice; it is simply the outcome of the straight-ruled geometrical manner of thought of French rationalism of the eighteenth century. This rationalism was simply bare logic without the slightest reference to living sensibility; its principles were of the certainty of a mathematical axiom, and consisted in efforts to realise these visions of pure reason and to make them of account in the world. ‘Sooner let the colonies perish than one principle of reason,’ was the well-known cry, which shows the effect of rationalism on politics.

“The philosophy of Rousseau and the encyclopaedists had led to the Declaration of the Rights of Man. From the Declaration of the Rights of Man, the inflexible logic of the men of the great Revolution had led on to Jewish emancipation. They established a legalised equality. To every man by nature certain rights belong; Jews are men; it follows that they have human rights. And so the equal right of the Jew was proclaimed in France, and this from no sentiment of brotherly feeling for the Jew, but because logic required that it should be. Popular sentiment was against it, but the philosophy of the Revolution commanded that principle should rule over sentiment. Forgive me the expression which is free from any ingratitude, the men of 1792 emancipated the Jews purely from chivalry of principle.

“The rest of Western Europe imitated the example of France, again, not from the force of sentiment, but because the civilised nations experienced a kind of moral obligation to make the attainments of the great Revolution their own. As France at the great Revolution gave to the world the metrical system of weights and measures, so it created also a kind of intellectual measure, which was willingly or unwillingly accepted by the other lands as the normal standard of civilisation.

“A state which laid claim to a high grade of civilisation must necessarily have accepted some of the reforms of the great Revolution, such as representation of the people, freedom of the press, trial by jury, division of power, and so forth. Jewish emancipation became one of the indispensable signs of a highly civilised state, something like the piano which on no account must be missing in the drawing-room, though no single member of the family can play it. Thus in Eastern Europe Jewish emancipation came to pass not from heart compulsion, but merely in imitation of a fashion of the period; not because the nations had resolved to extend the hand of brotherhood to the Jew, but because the leading spirits had recognised a certain European ideal of civilisation which required that their statutes should embrace Jewish emancipation.

“One land only remained uninfluenced by European thought, and this land was England. The English nation does not endure that important changes should be imposed upon it from without; it develops them from within. In England Jewish emancipation is a reality it is not merely decreed, but it is experienced. Long before it had become law it was perfected in the conscience of the nation. Without doubt a great and thoughtful nation will not be diverted from its course whether good or evil by any intellectual tendency of the time, and so it comes to pass that in England there are still individual instances of anti-Semitism. But then it is but an imitation of an old-world fashion re-dressed in modern foppish garb, giving itself out as the latest novelty from abroad and as something worthy of note. The account given by Mr. de Haas in his interesting report on the condition of the Jews in England is the most comforting in detail of all which will be laid before you.

“Emancipation has wrought a complete change in the character of the Jew and made an entirely different man of him.

“In pre-emancipation times the Jew without rights was an alien among the nations, but he never for a moment thought of resenting this. He felt himself to belong to a peculiar people who had nothing in common with the races of the lands in which they dwelt. He did not love the prescribed yellow badge on his mantle which proclaimed his nationality, because it excited the mob to treat him with violence, and justified their excesses in advance to the magistrates; but of his own will he accentuated his peculiarity far more than the yellow badge could ever have done for him. When he was not confined in Ghetto walls by the civil authorities he made himself a Ghetto. He desired to dwell with his own, and to have none other than business connection with the Christian people of the lands.

“To-day there is a suggestion of disgrace and humiliation in the word Ghetto, but whatever may have been its sense in the intention of the nations, it is not difficult to perceive that to the Jew of the past the Ghetto was no prison but a place of refuge. It expresses an historical truth to say that the Ghetto alone gave a chance to the Jew of surviving the horrible persecutions of the Middle Ages. Here he lived in a world of his own, where he dwelt apart, and which mentally and morally was his Fatherland. Here there dwelt also those for whose good esteem he cared, and with whom he could be of account; here also was that public opinion whose approval was the aim of his ambition and whose contempt or disfavour was the punishment of unworthiness. Here all virtues peculiarly Jewish were appreciated, and more especially by their development was that admiration to be attained which is the eager desire of the human heart. What did it matter to them that outside the Ghetto men despised what they valued so much. They cared nothing for the opinion of those outside, for it was the opinion of ignorant foes. The Jew strove to please his own people, and the approval of these brethren was to him the whole sum of life. And thus the life of the Ghetto Jew was not stunted or crippled, but whole. Their condition outside the Ghetto was insecure, often seriously endangered, but within they developed their own peculiar life and thought, and there was nothing incomplete about them. They were harmonious beings in whom none of the usual elements of ordinary social life were wanting. The Jews were painfully aware of the value of the Ghetto as regards their religious life, and their one care was to compass it about with an invisible wall far higher and more impenetrable than the stone walls which met the eye. All Jewish customs and practices were unconsciously directed to this one object of keeping the Jews distinct from the other peoples, to cherish the Jewish community, and to keep continually before the individual Jew the thought that to give up his distinctive peculiarities were to perish and be utterly lost.

“The aim at enforced separation was the origin of most of the ritual laws, the observation of which was considered by the average Jew as equivalent to his religion, and other purely external and strange marks of difference, principally of garb, and personal appearance which are common among Jews, were, when first received, religiously imposed, in order the more surely to guard their isolation. The Kaftan, temple locks, fur caps, and jargon, have certainly nothing in common with religion, yet in the East if a Jew attire himself in Western habit, and speak any language correctly, he is regarded with mistrust, as already almost an apostate from the faith, for he has destroyed those links which united him to his race, and they are aware that these alone secure adherence to their community, apart from which the individual Jew must perish morally and spiritually beyond hope of recovery.

“This was the psychology of the Jew of the Ghetto. Then came emancipation.

“The law assured them that they were fully recognised citizens of the land of their birth. During its brief existence, it gave rise to expressions of sentiment from Christians, which gave the law a sound of hearty goodwill.

“Intoxicated with joy, the Jew hastened to break all bridges behind him. He had now another home, and no longer needed the Ghetto; he had other associations, and needed no more to cling to the community of his own faith. He adjusted his life immediately to the new order of things. Formerly all his effort was directed towards maintaining the strictest separation, now he did his utmost to approach, and to be in outward seeming like his neighbours. Instead of finding his safety, as heretofore, in legal observance, he gave himself up to mimicry of his Gentile countrymen. For one or two generations, according to the land in which he dwelt, this worked exceedingly well. The Jew might believe himself German, French, Italian, &c., and drew all the requirements of his life from the same national source as his Gentile compatriots, a thing indispensable for the all-round development of the individual.

“After a slumber of from thirty to sixty years anti-Semitism broke out afresh in the heart of the nations of Western Europe, revealing to the terrified Jew his actual position. He could still vote at the election of representatives of the people, but he found himself rudely excluded from all societies and assemblies of his Christian countrymen. He could still go where he would, but everywhere he met the warning: ‘No entrance to the Jew.’ He could still fulfil his duties as a citizen, but those privileges which are far more esteemed than the power to vote the acknowledged rights of talent and ability were unceremoniously denied to him.

“This is the present condition of the emancipated Jew of Western Europe. His Jewish separatism is lost, but the nations make it plain to him that they still hold aloof from him. He shuns his fellow Jew, for anti-Semitism has made him sick of them; and his fellow countrymen repulse him when he would be one with them.

“He has lost his Ghetto home, and the land of his birth denies him a home. He has no ground beneath his feet, no claim on any society to which he can belong as a full privileged and welcome member. Neither his personality nor his services give him any claim on the justice, not to say goodwill of his Christian countrymen, while he has lost cohesion with his Jewish compatriots. He feels that the world is cruel to him, that there is no place on earth where he can find true sympathy when he desires and longs for it.

“This is Jewish suffering in its moral aspect, which is far more bitter to endure than the physical, because it touches men of finer calibre and greater pride.

“The emancipated Jew is unstable, uncertain in his relations with other men; anxious in dealing with strangers, mistrustful even of the secret feelings of friends. He misuses his best powers in the wearisome attempt to conceal his own proper being, for he fears to be known as a Jew, and has never the joy of confessing himself for what he is in truth, which every thought and sentiment, every tone of voice, and every gesture of eye or finger, proclaims him to be. He is crippled in soul; his outer life is not genuine, and consequently he is ridiculous, and abhorrent to all right-minded people, as everything that is false must be. All the Jews of Western Europe groan under this burden, and seek relief or escape from it. They no longer hold that faith which gives patience to endure all trial because it recognises in it punishment from the hand of God who nevertheless loves them. They cherish no more the hope of the coming of Messiah, who should miraculously deliver and raise them to glory. Many seek to save themselves by forsaking Judaism, but anti-Semitism has no faith in the power of baptism to change the Jew, and even this hope of safety is but a poor one. Neither is it exactly recommendable that those whom it concerns should enter the Christian Church mostly still unbelievers at heart with a blasphemous lie upon their lips. Of the minority of true believers I say nothing.1 A new sect of Marranos has thus come into existence, of far worse character than the old, in whom there was a yearning after truth, heart-breaking pangs of conscience and repentance, which frequently led them to seek atonement and purification by giving themselves up deliberately and of their own free-will to the sufferings of martyrdom.2

1 It is well that Dr. Nordau acknowledges that there is at least “a minority” among Jews who have become Christians from conviction. For the rest he may be assured that right-minded Protestant Christians deplore even more than he does, the fact that Jews should nominally profess Christianity for the sake of worldly advantage and be received into the Church with minds unconvinced and hearts unsubdued to the gospel. Hypocrisy is detestable, whether practised by Jew or Gentile.

2 The Marranos were those who in Spain at the time of the Inquisition nominally adopted Christianity, but in their hearts remained Jews and hated the Romish system which compelled them to live a lie. Many of them afterwards escaped more particularly to Holland, where they threw off the mask and went to the other extreme of Jewish fanaticism. Many of them were put to most cruel deaths by the Inquisition. Most of the Sephardi (or “Spanish”) Jews in Holland and England are descendants of Marranos. It is a sad fact that thousands of Jews, who, however, have long ceased to cherish the Hope of Israel, harassed by legal and social disabilities are being baptized and received into the Greek and Roman Catholic communions, without a spark of faith in their hearts and without any real-acquaintance with the doctrines of Christianity. This can be no matter of congratulation to earnest-minded Christians, but rather of humiliation, that Churches which claim to be “Christian” should have sunk so low as to be satisfied with such a mere outward adherence.

“The new Marranos take leave of Judaism in anger and exasperation, and at heart, unconsciously to themselves, and to their own shame and humiliation, they carry over towards the Christian Church the hatred which impelled them to that lie. I dread the future development of this new sect of Marranos, whose mind is poisoned alike against those of its own blood and those who are not of

kin, and whose self-esteem is disturbed by the consciousness of a lie at heart. Other Jews there are who anticipate relief from Zionism, which, to them, is no fulfilment of a mystic passage of Scripture, but the way to an existence in which the Jew at last shall acquire the right to enjoy these simplest original necessities of being which are matter of course to all men beside himself in both hemispheres, i.e., a secure social standing; a kindly fellowship: the possibility of using his energies to develop his own proper being, instead of misusing them to his own suppression, falsification, or disguisement.

“Finally, there are other Jews who are indignant at the lies of the Marranos, but who are too much attached to the lands of their birth not to feel the renunciation which Zionism involves, as too hard and cruel for them to accept.

“These madly throw themselves away with the hidden hope that in the remodelling which must follow the dissolution of the present order of things, hatred of the Jew may not be considered a commodity worth retaining. Such is the aspect which Israel presents at the close of the nineteenth century.

“To put it in one word, the Jews in their majority are a race of despised beggars. More diligent and inventive than the generality of Europeans, not to speak of lazy Asiatics and Africans, the Jew is condemned to the direst poverty, since he is not permitted the free use of his abilities. Consumed with the fever of uncontrollable thirst for knowledge, wherever this knowledge is attainable to others, he finds himself repulsed, a very Tantalus of knowledge in our most matter-of-fact times.

“Gifted with enormous energy, by means of which he always rises from the miry depths into which he has been thrown, and in which his foes would fain bury him once for all, he dashes his skull against the impenetrable icy barrier of hatred and scorn which encompasses him. Essentially a social being, whose very religion recommends eating with three and praying in company with ten, as pleasing to God, he finds himself excluded from ordinary intercourse with his fellow-countrymen, and condemned to a tragic isolation.

“One charge brought against the Jew is that he is ambitious. He, however, only strives for superiority because equality is denied him. He is reproached for his fellow-feeling with Jews the wide world over, but it is rather his misfortune that all Jewish solidarity ceased with the first sweet word of emancipation; that in order to make room for the sole sway of love of fatherland he tore the last rays of Jewish unity from his heart.

“Dazed with the storm of anti-Semitic accusations, he is beside himself, and often nigh believing himself the physical and mental monster which his deadly enemies represent him to be. Not seldom do we hear him say that he must learn from his foes, and seek to cure himself of the evils which they point out, not considering that the reproaches of the anti-Semites can work him no good, since they are not the result of observation of actual characteristics, but come of the working out of a law of psychology by which children, savages, and fools make other beings or things responsible for their own sufferings, and visit ill-will upon them. At the time of the Black Death the Jews were accused of poisoning the wells; to-day the corn merchants accuse them of beating down the price of grain; the artisans, of destroying small trades; and the Conservatives that they are in their principles opposed to a constitutional form of government.

“Where no Jews exist, other associations, mostly foreigners, or even native minorities or societies, are accused of these evils.

“In truth this hatred of the Jews proves nothing against the accused; it proves only that they were already hated when their enemies, in their misfortune, began to look about for a scapegoat.

“This picture would be imperfect were I not to add another feature. A saying held to be true by grave and thoughtful men, not necessarily anti-Semites, is that the Jews possess all the riches of the earth, and have all power and rule in their hands. These unhappy ones the possessors of power! These who are not even in a position to protect their co-religionists against a miserable rabble of Arabs, Moors, or Persians, who thirst for their blood! These Jews, the personification of Mammon, of whom by far the greater number own not even a stone whereon to lay their head, or rag to cover their nakedness! This is the mockery which drops poison into the wound which hatred has struck. True, there are some few Jews superfluously rich whose rumoured millions attract attention far and wide, but what has Israel to do with these? Most of them a minority, I willingly except belong to the lowest grades in Jewry, with a moral adaptation for callings in which millions are quickly made ask me not how!

“In an ordinary independent Jewish community such men could never rise to the esteem of their brethren, or receive from them titles of honour such as those with which they are decorated by Christian societies.

“These money-pots, who despise what we honour and honour what we despise, know nothing of the Judaism of the prophets and the Tanaim; of Hillel, Philo, Ibn Gabirol, Jehuda Halevy, Ben Maimon, Spinoza, and Heine.

“These Jews are the principal excuse for this new Jew-hatred, the causes of which are more economic than religious in their nature. For Judaism which suffers on their account, they have done nothing beyond throwing an alms which cost them nothing, and which keeps alive the cancer of Schnorring from which Judaism suffers. For ideal purposes they have never stretched out a helping hand, nor ever will.

“Many of them forsake Judaism, and we wish them good speed, only regretting that they are at all of Jewish blood, though but of the dregs.

“No one should be indifferent to the suffering of the Jews, neither Christian nor Jew. It is a great sin to let a nation whose worst enemies do not deny that it is highly gifted to perish mentally and physically. It is a sin against the nation, and a sin against civilisation in general, in whose service it would be no indifferent co-worker.

“It may also become a grave danger to the nations to have embittered men of indomitable will, the weight of whose influence for good or evil is far above that of average men, and thus to render them opposed to the constituted order of things.

“Micro-biology tells us that there exist tiny organisms which are perfectly harmless, so long as they live in the open air, but become the cause of frightful disease when deprived of oxygen.

“Governments and nations may well beware lest the Jews in like case become a cause of danger to them. Sorely may they have to repent any attempt to exterminate the Jew, who, as a result of

their own guilt, has become an occasion of hurt to them."

2.09. Chapter 3. The Religeous Conditions of the Jews at the Close of the 19th....

III. THE RELIGIOUS CONDITIONS OF THE JEWS AT THE CLOSE OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY FROM A JEWISH POINT OF VIEW

I HAVE special pleasure in embodying in my bird's-eye view of the Jewish nation the following able summary of their religious condition by my dear friend, Rev. C. A. Schönberger: The present condition of the Jews is intimately connected with their past history, with the dealings of God, of the Lord Jesus, and of the Apostles with them, as narrated in the Old Testament Scriptures, the Gospels, the book of Acts, and the Epistles. All ended, as we know, in the judgment which ultimately came upon them in the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, and in their forced dispersion among all the nations of the earth.

We know that Jesus was the Christ, the promised Messiah, that He came to His "own" and His own received Him not. How easy should it have been for them to receive Him, for He declared unto them the glad tidings of salvation. He brought to them the fulness of truth and grace of that God who had been previously declared to them by Moses and the Prophets.

He honoured the law, revealing its depth, and came not to destroy but to fulfil it. As an Israelite He came to Israelites. As a Prophet He spake to them as to a people who had been educated and trained by Prophets. He did everything that superhuman wisdom and love could devise in order to win them to Himself, to gather them as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but they would not. He was "rejected and despised" by the very people whose "Crown and Glory" He was to be. Rejecting Him, they rejected Jehovah Himself, the counsel of God and eternal life. How can we understand this? What can be the true explanation? Well, it is this: their hearts were not right with God; they had the form of godliness, but knew not, and denied the power thereof. They boasted of the Temple, and all the while their hearts did not thirst after true communion with the living God. They boasted of the predictions of a Messiah which were given to them, but they did not sigh with broken and contrite hearts after true redemption. They were zealous for the law of God without understanding the spirituality of that law, and instead of its leading them to humble themselves and lament their unworthiness, they rather boasted and prided themselves in the way in which they kept it: and thus it was that hardness as well as blindness of heart fell upon them, and that the judgment of God visited His own beloved nation. It was a terrible visitation. No other nation has ever tasted the bitterness of the cup of the indignation of the Lord like Israel. The word of Amos became true to the letter "You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities." They were driven away from their beloved city, and having seen the Temple, the sanctuary of the Most High, in which the glory of the Lord was revealed, demolished, they wandered fugitives and exiles, till they were scattered over the whole earth.

God's judgment of Israel is the most terrible thing in history yet they have been preserved to this very day through the power of that very God who punished them so terribly. Here they are a

monument of the truth of God's Word a monument, also, of God's faithfulness. None of the persecutions which they have endured have availed to destroy them, neither have they broken their energy or subdued their indomitable will, or crushed their power of mind; and no sooner as the great pressure which the nations so-called Christian nations put upon them, removed, than we see them prosper in every country, and take leading positions in every sphere of life, in commerce and politics, as well as in literature and art, showing that the Lord God has made them to be a peculiar people; a nation to be perpetuated, and that it was He who gave them nerve to endure, in order that in the future, when His grace shall melt their hearts, they may be a mighty instrument to show forth His praise. There is still visible among scattered Israel something of blessing and influence, the effect of God's training through so many centuries. Their history since the rejection of Christ is unspeakably sad, yet we cannot help noticing that in the midst of Christless Israel some traces of the grandeur and beauty of their Father's house still linger. Behold their zeal for God, their zeal for the Scriptures, their zeal for the Sabbath day; behold the sacrifices which they make in order to carry out the injunctions of the law. Yes, there are many features in the Jewish character which we cannot explain in any other way than this that there is still a blessing resting on them, that the voice of God which was heard upon Sinai has still its echo in their hearts and consciences, and that the prayers which have been offered up on their behalf by patriarchs, kings, prophets and saints, are still held in remembrance before the throne of God. But when we look more closely at their religious condition, we find that without Jesus, who is both the centre of the Scriptures, and the key to open them, they are not able to understand the full and true meaning of the Scriptures. They reverence them, they have counted all the verses of the holy Book, and the exact number of its letters, and which is the middle verse and letter of each particular book of the Scriptures. They have watched over every iota and tittle of that record which they believe, and justly believe, was given them by God Himself. They hold in high esteem their Rabbis, who devote their lives to the study of the law and oracles of God; and yet not knowing the centre and star of the Scriptures, not knowing that Jesus is the Messiah, not knowing the counsel of God, that through suffering He should enter into glory, they are not able to understand the scope of the Scriptures. All their minute knowledge of the letter does not help them. They cannot enter into the spirit of it. Both the Law and the Prophets must remain an enigma to them, for as the greater and more vital part of the law has vanished, as the Levitical dispensation has disappeared, as the Temple has been destroyed, as the sacrifices are no more offered, as the Priesthood, with its head, the High Priest, no more exists, oh! how impossible it is for them to account for the removal of things which God established, the discontinuance of those holy symbols which God Himself instituted, and the absence of the glory.

Israel at present is exactly in the same condition as their ancestors were in the wilderness, when Moses tarried in the mount and the people said, "We do not know what has become of this Moses," and appealed to Aaron, "Now go and make us gods, for gods we must have." And so it is that Israel for the last eighteen centuries says "Moses" the whole Levitical dispensation, has been taken from us, our Temple is destroyed, our sacrifices are no longer offered, our whole holy ritual is gone. What shall we do? We do not understand it. We must make some substitute for that which we have lost. We must invent something to take the place of these sacrifices. We must adopt some theory instead of the theory which God has given to us in His own Word. And thus it is that the Bible has become a sealed book to them.

Look at the Law of Moses, of which they pride themselves and boast to this very day. We know that that Law is so deep that it takes cognisance of the inmost secret springs of our life; that it is so high that it aims at nothing less than love to God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our strength; that it is so broad and comprehensive that it takes notice of all the details of our daily life, of our thoughts and hidden motives, as well as of our outward actions; that it is, indeed, the Law of God, divine and wonderful. But, alas! “the People of the Law” did not and do not understand its true meaning. Why was Jesus so delighted when that scribe said to Him that to love God with all the heart and to love our neighbours as ourselves was the whole law? Why was the Saviour so pleased with him that He replied, “Thou art not far from the kingdom of God”? Why? Because it was a rare thing to find a man who in sincerity of heart and mind understood the drift of the Law, its true meaning and original purpose, and who was thus able to condense all the different precepts and injunctions into this, its real aim love to God and to our neighbour. This had been and yet is the fatal error of Israel, that instead of understanding the unity of the Law, they have regarded the Law as a compact which God made with them, in which He laid down a number of regulations; and that if they observed so many of the 613 commandments into which the scribes have divided it, they gave themselves credit for honouring it, forgetting that they could not break one commandment without breaking all, as it is so beautifully brought out in the Epistle of James. “Do you not know that the Law is one?” Do you not know that the Law is like a body, like a living organism, and that if you break one commandment you break the whole Law? That if you transgress the will of God in one particular point you sin against God? But Israel did not understand the unity of the Law, or its spirituality, and thus the purpose of the Law was not attained in them. What was the real purpose of the Law? The Law was not given that people should be saved by it, or feel comfortable under it. It was given to show people how utterly corrupt is the heart from which comes our outer life; to show people how exceedingly sinful sin is in the sight of God. It was not given for life, but for death, to bring people to despair about the depravity of their moral nature. In one word it was given that the heart should be broken, and not that it should become proud. In that Pharisee who went into the Temple to pray, enumerating before God his good deeds, and thanking God that he was not like other people, we have a striking example of misconception of the Law. In that man and all like him, the object of the Law is frustrated. He thought he had a surplus of credit in his account with God. He came as one eminent, distinguished, superior to all others, who had only to thank God for his own excellences. This Pharisee so much misunderstood the meaning of the Law that he exactly answers to those Romanists who imagine that they can do more than both the Law and the Gospel require, and that their so-called saints have actually surpassed the requirements of God, and have thus accumulated merits beyond their own need, which may avail for others also. To such as these the Law in the one case, and the Gospel in the other, have become a cause of pride in the sight of God, instead of humility, and thus it is with the Jews to this day. They are still going about to establish a righteousness of their own, through their own works and merits, and they do not know that there is only one true righteousness for sinners, even the righteousness of God for us. They have the Scriptures, yet are not able to understand them, seeing that the typical dispensation has disappeared without being fulfilled. They have the Law, but are not humbled by it, since it has not wrought in them knowledge and conviction of their sin. Oh! what a sad picture of Israel! The truth which God ever impressed upon Israel was that in themselves they had nothing but what was bad, but that He was their salvation, He and He alone. This is almost entirely hidden from their eyes.

That one expression which runs through the whole of the Old Testament, “My righteousness,” is sealed to them; they do not understand it. “Jehovah Zidkenu” (Jehovah our righteousness) they do not know, their supposed own righteousness stands in the way; they think that this is sufficient, and sometimes they think it more than sufficient. This misunderstanding of the law and the sad frustration of its object, dates far back in the history of Israel. The prophets had to contend with those who either made the law void or made it merely external, and the false prophets and their followers did their best to blind the people to its unity and spirituality. Soon after the return from Babylon the scribes and teachers of the law abounded, and in the course of time they acquired great power and influence until at last we have those doctors of the law, the Pharisees and Scribes, who are pictured to us in the Gospels, and concerning whom Jesus said that they made the Word of God void through their traditions. Tradition! Why is it so dangerous? Because it is heaped upon the Word; because ultimately the Word of God becomes hidden by it, and lost sight of. They did not only corrupt the Word of God by their traditions, but these theologians and teachers put themselves between God and the people, drawing away the hearts of the people from God. And so it is that Israel is not only not able to understand the true meaning of the Scriptures, but is altogether misled by the traditions and additions of the elders, following much more their self-invented laws and regulations than the pure and God-ward teaching of the Word of the living God. This is just what Isaiah said: “O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths.” And again: “For the leaders of this people cause them to err; and they that are led of them are destroyed.” Just what Jesus said also: “Blind leaders of the blind.” And again: “Your house shall be left unto you desolate.” The house is there, the foundations, the walls, the chambers. All is there; the name of Jehovah, the Ten Commandments, the Sabbath, Passover, Pentecost, the Day of Atonement, the Festival of Tabernacles. It is all there, but it is desolate! He is not there. His life-giving Spirit is not there. They celebrate the Passover, but where is the Lamb which God has ordained for Himself as a sacrifice? They keep the Day of Atonement, but where is that blood without the shedding of which there is no remission of sin? They read the law of Moses, they peruse the words of the prophets, but a vail is on their hearts, they cannot see Him of whom Moses and the Prophets testify. They weep, they mourn and lament over the destruction of Jerusalem, but they have not yet acknowleged the one great national sin on account of which this evil has come upon them. Joseph’s brethren as recently shown in the Zionist Congress at Basle are in sore distress, but they have never yet confessed what they have done to their brother Joseph-Jesus.

Oh, it is very sad! And well may we have continual sorrow in our hearts on account of Israel. But there is yet another aspect of Israel which is still more melancholy. They have not learned faith in Christ from Christians, but that which they have taken in, is the unbelief of the so-called Christian world. The more educated Jews are well acquainted with everything that is said and written by nominal Christians and antiChristians against Christ and Christianity. Masses of Jews all over the world speak now on this wise: “We do not see any miracles nowadays, so we do not believe that miracles have ever been. Moses, David, the Prophets, and Jesus were great men, wise men, men of great moral force and character. We respect, we honour them but there has been great progress in everything since their day, and we are not bound to receive what they teach, especially as regards the supernatural.” A considerable number of Jews in all lands are decidedly rationalistic and not a few of them are outspoken agnostics, who have renounced all the promises of God to their fathers and are sunk in utter worldliness. They say: “Things remain as they were from the

beginning. Where is the promise of the Messiah's kingdom of righteousness and peace?"

Thus in proportion as the old-fashioned Talmudism lost its hold upon the minds of the Jews, the influences of rationalism and scepticism have wrought great havoc among them, leading to downright unbelief in all positive and revealed religion. There are now everywhere Jews to be found who believe in the Old Testament just as little as in the New. And yet they keep together. What power is it that holds them together? We know from the Word of God that it is God, the God of Israel, who keeps them together. Within the last twenty years the national consciousness of the Jews has been once more roused from its slumber, and now as was lately shown at the Zionist Congress it is more vigorous than ever before. They feel that they are a nation, and separate from the other nations. They feel they are still "a peculiar people," though dispersed among so many nations. They feel something of the peculiar position which God has assigned to them in the world, although they do not know exactly what it is. Thus we have this strange and contradictory condition of things. On the one hand they seem to be falling away from their old faith, and on the other they are drawing more closely together, reviving their national feeling. But Israel's nationality is unlike all other nationalities. It is more than natural, there is something in it which is beyond nature.

Verily "the dry and dead bones" of Ezekiel's vision and "their coming together" were presented to us in that much spoken of Zionist Congress, but until the Spirit of the Lord breathe upon them there will be no life. Jesus, and Jesus alone, the "Prince of Life," the "Living One," can bring life to this nation. The truth and mystery of Israel is Jesus. What Israel is without Him is manifest, what Israel shall be when it will see and acknowledge and adore Him is beyond human thought, but it is described with prophetic and apostolic pens in the Scriptures. Without Him they do not know the way of God, nor the truth of God, nor that life which is life indeed.

Jesus is the Way: "No man cometh to the Father but by Me." There is no other way. Jesus is the Truth, the full and whole truth of God: "The law was given by Moses ; grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." And Jesus is Life: "This is life eternal that they might know Thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." Although the Jews have the law, they cannot come to God, because Jesus is the Way. Although they have the Old Testament, they do not know the truth, because Jesus is the Truth and Life! Until we come to see Jesus, until we come to the atonement He made for us, until we come to know the "Lamb of God," we do not know God the Father. Yes, there are sighs; there are misgivings; there are fears; there are mournings; there are longings, in the human heart towards God but adoption and true spiritual life there is none, where Christ has not kindled it. Israel in its present state, the Christless Israel, shows this to the whole world. Notwithstanding the great activity and energy of the religious life of the Jews, they have we say it with great sorrow no life indeed what they have is all carnal and this accounts for the phenomena that they have not been of much spiritual use to the world since Christ's coming. In Christ alone will Israel live again and be a blessing to the world.

2.10. Chapter 4. Religious Divisions and Sects Among the Jewish People Religiously

IV. RELIGIOUS DIVISIONS AND SECTS AMONG THE JEWISH PEOPLE

RELIGIOUSLY, the Jewish nation over the whole globe may be divided into four classes. Without attempting to describe, I may just enumerate them, as this may help to form a sound judgment on the question of Jewish evangelisation.

(a) First, there are the ordinary Talmudical or Conservative Jews, embracing by far the largest part of the whole nation, and answering in many respects to the Pharisees in the days of Christ. Of most of these it may be said that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. They still cling to and are buoyed up in all times of persecution and suffering, by the hope of the speedy coming of the long looked-for Messiah, and a restoration to their own land. Their education is purely religious, or “Jewish.” It begins with the Hebrew alphabet, goes on to the Prayer-Book, and from that to the Hebrew Scriptures, and culminates with that “encyclopaedia of human wisdom and human folly,” as Dean Milman has well styled the Talmud, in which the mental ingenuity of the Jew finds sufficient scope for all the rest of his life. Of this class of Jews, forming, as we have said, the bulk of the nation, it may truly be said that they are “a people dwelling alone and not reckoned among the nations,” of whose history, ways of thinking, and even language, they are ignorant. They move in a world of ideas of their own which are scarcely comprehensible to the ordinary Gentile.

Like the Pharisees of old, they are often indiscriminately condemned as hypocrites or fanatics; but the truth is that, as amongst the Pharisees in the days of Christ, so among the Talmudical Jews, there are many Nathanaels, of whom it may be said that they are “according to the law, blameless” men walking consistently according to the light they have, and whose lives are noble examples of religious zeal and unselfishness; though, alas! it is true also that the minds of most have been perverted and their sense of sin blunted by the traditions of men, so that they are vainly going about seeking to establish a righteousness of their own.

(b) Next we have the famous sect of the Chassidim, which originated with that remarkable man Rabbi Israel Baalshem during the eighteenth century, and which has a following of perhaps three or four hundred thousand, with Galicia and Southern Russia as its strongholds. These have turned somewhat from the letter of Talmudism, and have gone in for the mysticism of the Kabbalah. They are ascetic in practice, and their particular tenets are “that purity and holiness, and not learning or knowledge of the Talmud, is the great requisite for obtaining a high spiritual life, and that the Holy Spirit operates still through certain chosen vehicles called Zadikim (righteous ones), who are endowed with miraculous gifts, and who are particularly qualified to be mediators between God and their believing disciples.” To the Chassid, the Zadik, or miracleworking Rabbi, is the same as the Pope to the bigoted Roman Catholic.

Many will sell all they have and undergo all sorts of privation in order to make a pilgrimage to the man whom they believe to stand in the nearest possible relationship to God. To get the Rabbi's blessing is worth more to them than the whole world.

There is nothing in a Chassid's estimation which the Zadik cannot attain by his prayers, and many are the books which contain the records of the miracles which he works. As to his cabalistic wisdom, it is simply wonderful. A story is told of a number of Chassidim on their way to Zadagora, to visit the great Rabbi, who fell in with another party who were returning after having seen him. Those going interrogated the party returning, who expressed their admiration as follows:

"On Freitag zu nacht (commencement of Sabbath) the Rabbi preached! Oh, so wonderfully! Only the greatest saints present could understand what he said! On Sabbath morning, the Rabbi spoke again, and this time it was marvellous! He spoke so wonderfully that not even the greatest saints present could understand him. Only he himself knew what he said! Again on Sabbath evening the Rabbi spoke, and truly this time it surpassed all in wonder, for no saint could understand, neither could he understand himself what he said God only could understand!"

Awed and delighted with this description, proving the extraordinary sanctity of the man they were going to see, the interrogators pressed on their way. The Chassidic Jews hold the maxim that "Scripture is to be interpreted, not according to the letter, but according to the spirit," around which has grown the huge pile of Cabalistic literature, much of which stands in the same relation to Judaism as the writings of Svvedenborg to Christianity. The following extract from my journal of a visit to the Bukowina in 1898, when my companion, a Swedish missionary, and myself paid a visit to Zadagora, the seat of perhaps the most noted of the Jewish popes, may be of interest: "There are quite a number of 'Zadikim' in Galicia and Russia, and while there is no doubt that some are downright impostors, who trade on the ignorant credulity of their devotees, there are others whose days and nights are wholly given over to religious and ascetic practices, and who are mistakenly seeking holiness and purity by a life of mere outward observances. Among all these Zadikim the one in Zadagora has been perhaps the most famous, though in recent years, owing to a dispute among the brothers as to the succession, and owing to the fact that one of the sons of the late Zadik was suspected of being 'apikoress,' or, as some say, a secret Christian, on which account he met an untimely end, the family has lost somewhat in prestige. But still the road from Czernowitz to Zadagora, especially on a Friday, or before a great festival, may be seen lined with vehicles carrying pilgrims to this Jewish pope, who lives like a king in a palace, while the town itself is one of the poorest and filthiest in Galicia.

"It was about eleven o'clock when we arrived, and accompanied by Mr. Reichman, colporteur of the British and Foreign Bible Society in Czernowitz, who came with us, made our way first of all to the palace, and the splendid private synagogue of the Rabbi, which stands opposite to it. The Rabbi, we found on inquiry, was still at his morning prayers, all by himself in a room adjoining the synagogue, but we might see the eldest son and future Zadik in the Beth-hammedrash. But already before we entered, some in talith (praying shawl) and phylacteries came to the threshold gazing at the three strangers without peyoth (side-locks), which to the Chassid is a sure sign of apostasy.

"Inside by a corner of the 'Oren Kodesh' ('the ark of the law'), the Rabbi's eldest son, and heir-apparent, in a fine talith, and extra large phylacteries, stood, screened off from the others,

finishing his prayers; while the gabbai (his attendant) was at hand waiting to carry his prayingbag and escort him to his house. On a long table to one side were lying about volumes of the Talmud and Cabalistic works, and while looking at some of them a number of ‘saints’ gathered round to gaze at us. After a little the Schamess (beadle) came to tell us that the Rabbi would soon be going across from his praying-room to his palace, and that if we would stand by the entrance we could see him well. As to speaking with him, such a privilege is not granted to every one, and certainly not without an appointment, and a good deal of backsheesh to the Gabbaim, or bodyguard, who are sometimes great rogues.

“I happened to stand close to the side entrance of his private synagogue, when suddenly the door opened and the Zadik himself, a finely-built, tall man in silk kaftan, and with long beard and peyoth, walked out; as he passed me he steadily gazed at me for a moment, and then stopped and held out his hand, saying, ‘Schalom aleichem.’ I had just time to answer, ‘Schalom-al-yedai-sar-Ha-Schalom’ (‘Peace through the Prince of peace’), when he was surrounded by two or three of the zealous Gabbaim, and passed on. The surprise among the company of the Chassidim, who stood looking on, was very great. That the Zadik should give his hand and say ‘Schalom’ to a suspicious stranger, perhaps an ‘apikoress’ was something wonderful. On the piece of road between the synagogue and his palace the Rabbi was besieged by a number of women, who stood with pieces of paper in their hands, on which were written requests for particular objects, for which they wanted his intercession; these they thrust on him imploringly. Some of these poor women had no doubt come long distances, and it was rather sad to see the stalwart, stout Gabbaim push them aside rather pitilessly, so that only two or three of the papers reached the Rabbi’s hands. We were sad too, beyond measure, to see the credulity of these people, and their readiness to put confidence in their poor blind leaders, while all the time forgetting the true ‘Zadik,’ the alone ‘righteous One,’who is at the right hand of the Father, and whose intercession alone can prevail.”

(c) Thirdly, we have the ever-growing Reformed section, of which the Jewish philosopher, Moses Mendelssohn, who was born in Dessau, Prussia, in 1729, is generally regarded as the father. This division includes Jews of very diverse opinions, ranging from those who only reject the traditions of the Rabbis, to those who have thrown overboard all revealed religion, and are avowedly rationalistic if not infidel. The strongholds of Reformed Judaism are Germany, Austria-Hungary, and America, though their “Temples” are multiplying even in Russia and Chassidic Galicia. As the Talmudic and Chassidic Jews may be said to be the representatives of the Pharisees of the time of Christ, so these Reformed Jews are in true succession of Sadducees, as may be gathered from the following Confession of Faith, or rather of unbelief, drawn up in 1888 by Dr. Krauskopf, head of the “Reformed” Jewish Community of Philadelphia: “We discard the belief in a God who is man magnified, who has his abode somewhere in the interstellar spaces. We discard the belief that the Bible was written by God, and that its teachings are therefore infallible. . . . We discard the belief in the coming of a human Messiah who will lead us back to Palestine. . . . We discard the belief in bodily resurrection, hell torments, all Biblical and Rabbinical beliefs, rites, and ceremonies and institutions, which neither elevate nor sanctify our lives.”

(d) The fourth religious division is numerically small, but is in some respects the most interesting section of the dispersed people. I refer to the Karaim, who may be styled the Protestants among the Jews, having never submitted to the yoke of the Talmud, and kept only to the written law and

the prophets, and who have in consequence been much persecuted by the Rabbis and their followers, who have sometimes shown more bitterness against them than even against the Gentiles. Their stronghold is in the Crimea on the Black Sea, but there are small communities of them in other parts of Northern and Eastern Europe, and in the Orient They are in many respects different from Talmudic Jews, with whom they do not intermarry, and they have also been treated differently by the governments in the lands where they are settled. Thus, for instance, in Russia they enjoy full civil rights, while the four or five million of their Rabbinic brethren do not.

Without entering into the somewhat difficult question of their origin, and the history of the development of their doctrines, I append here an extract from my journal written in Cairo on March 13, 1898: “Nine years ago, when I first came in contact with the Karaites in Cairo, I had a most interesting experience with the Rabbi in the synagogue, where I met him by appointment, accompanied by two English Christian gentlemen. Unlike what is customary on entering the synagogues of the Talmudic Jews, we had to take off our boots at the door, and walk inside in our socks. This practice, the Rabbi told us, they base on God’s command to Moses in Exodus 3:5.” The following is a note in my diary written at that time:

“The synagogue is a plain but substantial structure, looking almost new. It was built thirty-five years ago by special permission obtained from the Sultan of Turkey, by their chief Rabbi in Constantinople. Up to that time they used to meet in a catacomb, in the ground just below where their synagogue now stands. Until they received permission to build the synagogue they had no civil rights whatever, and the other Jews even intrigued against them with the authorities to have them expelled from the city, but now, thanks partly to the American and to some of the European Consuls, their existence is recognised, and their religion tolerated.

“This small Karaite community has the honour of possessing one of the oldest manuscripts of the Old Testament in existence. It is a copy made in Tiberias, on the Lake of Galilee, by a learned Karaite Rabbi, who must have been a grand scribe, for it is beautifully written in the large square Hebrew characters.

“It is not a scroll, as is often the case with old Hebrew manuscripts, but written on separate large square leaves of parchment, in a case of thin wood covered with a thin coating of leather. Originally it was a complete copy of the Old Testament Scriptures, but now the whole book of Job, part of the Pentateuch, and other fragments are missing. The first page, however, which has been photographed for the Bodleian Library, and on which is the Jewish date (which I am sorry I neglected to copy) is preserved all right. It begins with a preface by the copyist, which ends with a prayer, in which the passage occurs, ‘This is the Word of God; may nothing be taken from it, and nothing be added to it’

“I well remember a touching incident of this first visit. We were examining the old manuscript and some of their printed books, when I suddenly asked the Rabbi to tell us what he thought was the greatest need of the Jewish people. Without a moment’s hesitation he replied, ‘The coming of the King Messiah, the Son of David.’ ‘We, and millions of others,’ I said, ‘believe that the Son of David has already appeared in the time of the second Temple.’ He remained silent for a moment, and then said, ‘I know that the Protestants believe this, but our eyes have not yet seen the salvation of God.’ There was something pathetic in his tone, and I could not but lift up my heart to God that the time may soon come when he, and all Israel, will ‘see the salvation of God’ in the Person of Jesus,

who was so called because ‘He shall save His people from their sin.’ Before we parted on that occasion I offered him a New Testament. He thanked me, saying that he had one given him twenty years before in Constantinople, by a friend now dead, which he would read. You can imagine that I was eager to see this old man again. With that object in view we went to the Karaite synagogue on Friday evening, at the commencement of the Sabbath, and it was a touching sight which there met our view. Unlike the different sects of Rabbinical Jews, the Karaites kneel in prayer. There was no candle or any artificial light in the building, as they are very strict in reference to the command, ‘Thou shalt kindle no fire in thy dwellings on the Sabbath day.’ It was service time, and the plain but neat and pleasant building, in which there are no seats, was fairly filled with men, all bending low on their knees, while my old friend the Rabbi, whom we could discern in the dim light at the other end of the building before the ark of the law, also on his knees, was leading their prayers, to which the whole congregation responded now and again. Some of their prayers are expressive of an intense longing for the appearing of the Deliverer, and for ‘the raising up of the horn of David.’ Poor Israel! If they would but look up and around them, they would see the very One for whom they have so long been waiting and praying, looking down upon them with infinite compassion from the right hand of the Father, saying, ‘Oh, that My people had hearkened to My voice, and that Israel had known the day of His visitation then had their peace been as a river, and their righteousness as the waves of the sea’; then would Israel, instead of being a proverb and a by-word, be a praise and glory in the midst of the earth. But yet for a little while longer these things are hid from their eyes, until the Spirit be poured upon them from on high, and Israel looks upon ‘Him whom they have pierced.’ We waited till service was over, and then spoke a few words to the Rabbi, who appointed to meet us at his house this morning.

“The people all waited till the Rabbi passed to his house, which is a little distance off, before they dispersed. His noble, patriarchal figure in flowing Sabbath robes and turban, walking with slow steps in all Oriental dignity, brought up to one’s mind an ideal picture of our father Abraham, or of the high priest Aaron.

“At ten this morning we arrived at his house, and were kindly welcomed by him on the threshold. His wife soon brought us lemonade, and we felt quite at home. Mr. Gordon drew out his sympathy by telling him that we feel much drawn to the Karaite Jews, because we too reject the Talmud and Rabbinical tradition, and take our stand on the Word of God, the difference between us and them being that we have not only the Old, but also the New Testament, in which we find the completion and hope given to our fathers. He told us that about thirty-five years ago, when he was a teacher in Constantinople, he had a friend, a Hebrew Christian, whom, said he, ‘I loved as a brother,’ who used to talk to him of these same things. It was this same friend, now many years dead, who gave him the New Testament. We were very happy to find that he was not now unacquainted with the contents of that blessed Book, and that he spoke of it with respect. In the course of our interview I had the privilege of reading to him several long passages out of the Gospels and portions of Romans 9:1-33, Romans 10:1-21, and Romans 11:1-36, from which we wanted to show him what Christians believe in reference to Israel’s future, and how that future is wholly bound up with Christ. We remained about an hour and a half with him, and before parting we presented him with several Hebrew pamphlets, setting forth the claims of our Lord Jesus, which he very gladly accepted.” The following short entry in my journal, written on May 17, 1897, refers to a visit paid to another Karaite community in quite a different part of the world:

“At 2.5 we arrived in Halicz, which is about 2 miles from the railway station.

“It is beautifully situated on the right bank of the Dniester within sight of the Carpathians, and is commanded by a hill which is crowned by a picturesque ruin of an ancient castle. Halicz was once the residence of the great Ruthanian lords, and from its name is supposed to be derived ‘Galicia,’ the name of the province, which was written at one time ‘Haliczia.’ There are a considerable number of Jews in Halicz, but our interest centred chiefly on the Karaite community.

“It seems difficult to ascertain how this small community found its way to the borders of the Bukowina, they themselves not being very enlightened in their history; but this much is clear, that they were invited to settle there by a Polish king during the period of the Tartar invasion, to act as interpreters, Tartar being the language which the Karaim speak among themselves.

“Their quarter, which is inhabited exclusively by them, looks most picturesque, consisting of a very irregular long street of low, white houses. One is struck with the neatness and cleanliness of their dwellings both inside and out, as compared with the other Jews. The most prominent building is their temple, or synagogue, which has a very interesting inscription outside, which is painted in the spaces of the design known as the ‘Magin David’ (Shield of David, the traditional coat-of-arms of the Davidic house), a double crossed triangle.

“In the centre are the words, ‘This is the house of Jehovah, the great God.’ In the outside spaces of the double triangle there is the pathetic prayer of Psalms 84:9, ‘Behold, O God, our shield, and look upon the face of Thine Anointed.’ In the inside spaces there is the other similar passage from Psalms 89:18, ‘For with Jehovah is our Shield, and with the Holy One of Israel is our King,’ and below, in a straight line, are the words, ‘For Jehovah God is a Sun and Shield.’

“We could not help longing for the day when Israel, with eyes open to the glory of Christ, will turn the above into prayers of their hearts, and ask God to look, not on them and their sins, but on the face of His Anointed, who is both Israel’s Sun and Shield!

“After awhile the Haham, or one who temporarily acts as such, brought the keys and took us inside the synagogue. Several of his congregation followed. They seemed suspicious of us at first, the reason being, as I afterwards gathered, that some unscrupulous Jews who had visited the place had abused the confidence of the simple-minded Karaim, and stolen some of their valuable books and manuscripts. However, they soon convinced themselves that we were not of that class, and became quite frank and at ease in their manner. They showed us their remaining treasures in the way of books and manuscripts, and as they were explaining to us the history of an old copy of the Torah, we opened it at several places on the reader’s desk, and pointed them to a few Messianic passages, which we explained as proving the claims of Israel’s true King, who is now at the right hand of God, and who will soon be manifested in the clouds of heaven.” In this classification I have not included the black Fallashas in Abyssinia, whose origin and history are subjects of great uncertainty, and who religiously cannot be included in the category enumerated above, inasmuch as they observe a sacrificial cult based on the law of Moses, ignoring the fact that, apart from the valuelessness of any sacrificial system now that the great Anti-type has appeared, it is enjoined in that very law to which they seem to cleave, that the divinely appointed sanctuary in Jerusalem is the only place where sacrifices can be offered; and even there only by priests of the house of Aaron. I have also omitted the other small section of black Jews, namely, the Beni-Israel in India,

whose origin is likewise a subject of doubt, many Western Jews even disputing their geniune Israelitish descent. The whole Jewish nation, at any rate in Europe, is usually divided into two great bodies or families. The division which consists of the great bulk of the people who for many centuries resided chiefly in Poland and the north-westerly countries of Europe, and whose language varies from the lowest jargon, the “Jiidisch” or “ Yiddish,” to the most polished German, are called Ashkenazim (or “German,” as the word means); while the other, who number perhaps not more than about one million, consisting of those whose home, till their cruel banishment in 1492, was Spain and Portugal and other places where the languages of these countries are spoken, but who are now spread chiefly over North Africa, Egypt, and the countries under Turkish sway, and who speak Judea-Spanish, are called “Sephardim” (Spanish).

2.11. Chapter 5. The Present Attitude of the Jews in the Relation to Christianity

V. THE PRESENT ATTITUDE OF THE JEWS IN THE RELATION TO CHRISTIANITY

ONE of the first questions which arise in our minds, after a bird's-eye view of the nation as a whole is presented to us, is, "What attitude do these different sections assume to Christianity?" I say to "Christianity"; and looking over its history in relation to the Jews, one becomes painfully impressed with the fact that the term "Christianity" must be distinguished from Christ and the gospel.

It may sound like exaggeration in the ears of Christians in England and America, when I say that millions of Jews are as ignorant of Christ as are the unevangelised tribes in Central Africa; and as to the New Testament, except to a growing minority, its very existence is unknown.

It is a fact that the great bulk of the "orthodox" Jews think and speak of the New Testament, when they first come in contact with it, as a modern production written by some missionary, so little do they know of its history and contents. In one of my missionary journeys about sixteen years ago I spent two or three days in the ancient town of Thorn on the Vistula. On the Sunday morning I went out by the riverside, where I met a party of Galician Jewish "Chassidim," wood merchants, who owned some of the huge rafts that are being continually floated down the river from Russia and Galicia to Memel for export. After a few words of salutation I pulled out a Hebrew New Testament from my pocket, and asked them if they had ever seen this book, or heard of Him of whom it speaks. Taking it out of my hand, and coming across the name of Jesus, which in the Hebrew is "Jeschua," he looked up and said, "I know; it is about Joshua"; whereupon another took it out of his hand, and turning over some pages and seeing it was in the sacred tongue, and that some of the names such as Abraham, Moses, David, &c., were familiar to him from the Old Testament, he put it to his lips and reverently kissed it.

They had never in their lifetime either seen or heard of the book before, and if they had known that it was the book on which the so-called Christians around them, whom they call "Goim," are supposed to base their religion, they would most probably have thrown it to the ground and spat upon it.

"Christianity," or more correctly, "Christendom," the seven or eight millions of Jews in Central and Eastern Europe have seen and, alas! felt, and it they hate with great detestation and abhorrence; so that I can testify to this fact from experience, that there is less opposition to the gospel when first preached, on the part of the Jews who live in Mohammedan countries, like Morocco and Asia Minor, than there is on the part of those who live in Christendom. In 1899, while on a Mission journey in Slavonia, we visited in a town on the Danube a rich and learned Jew who is well known in that district. Before we parted, after a long discussion, the venerable old man stood up quite excited and said, "Look here, what I have read of the New Testament I like very much, but I don't see what this book has to do with the Christians around me. Christianity as you represent it I know nothing about, but I will tell you this, that if the Christ whom the Christians around me worship was

what they represent Him to be, then He deserved to be crucified" This is the language of a typical Jew speaking in the bitterness of his soul; and what wonder, seeing that the outward aspect of Christendom and the cruelty of Christians has led the Jews in those parts to associate two ideas with the holy name of our Saviour, namely, idolatry and cruelty. The attitude of the Reformed and more enlightened Jews in countries like Germany, Austro-Hungary, England and America is somewhat different. Most of these are intelligent and educated, and are brought in constant touch with "Christian" thought and literature; though it is a sad fact, greatly to be deplored, that the so-called Christian books which this class of Jews read, are written almost exclusively from the neological and rationalistic point of view, and only help to spread unbelief amongst them. Hence it is that though unconsciously they have been permeated with Western ideas, and cannot but see and feel that the coming of Christ has wonderfully affected the history of the world, speaking generally, the tendency of this class is towards rationalism and negation, and, from a gospel point of view, they are less hopeful than even the most bigoted of their orthodox brethren, who still tenaciously cling to the hope of Israel.

Some prominent leaders of this "Reformed" or "Progressive" school have taken up the untenable and inconsistent position of regarding the Lord Jesus as a great and good man, and have even extolled the ethical teaching of Christ as in advance of Moses and the prophets, while they repudiate utterly His claims of divinity, and regard Christian doctrine, especially the great and central fact of atonement, "as a return to the crude and barbaric ideas of primitive times, and altogether opposed to progressive views of religion." The attitude of these "enlightened" rationalistic Jews to the Person of our Lord Jesus, may be summed up in a letter of one of the best known Jewish writers, Dr. Max Nordau, in answer to one addressed to him by Pere Hyacinthe of Paris, in which he compared Dreyfus with Christ, and invited the Jewish people to revise the judgment which condemned Jesus of Nazareth, even as France ought to have revised that against Alfred Dreyfus. Nordau's reply was as follows:

"I can only answer for myself, having no authority to speak for my brethren. It is not for me to discuss the question whether Jesus is a historical figure or a legendary synthesis of several real personages, or even a mythical incarnation of the thought and sentiment of the epoch in which tradition places His existence. In any case, He whom we see through the recitals of the Gospels is a figure typically and ideally Jewish. He observes the law; He teaches the moral of Hillel, 'Love thy neighbour as thyself.' He is constantly preoccupied with eternal things; He feels Himself in spiritual communication with God. He has contempt for what is mortal in Himself, and for all the ephemeral contingencies of eternal life. The same traits characterised the best Jews at the time of the Roman Conquest, and more particularly the Essenes, whose religious life was so intense. Like His origin, like His moral physiognomy, the language of Jesus is absolutely Jewish. For each of His parables we can cite one or more parallel passages from the Talmud. His prayer, the finest which a believer had ever invented, is a resumé of Jewish ideas on the relation of man to his Creator. The Sermon on the Mount is the quintessence of Rabbinical ethics, and is adorned with images and comparisons familiar to the Rabbis. Jesus is soul of our soul, as He is flesh of our flesh. Who then could think of excluding Him from the people of Israel? St. Peter will remain the only Jew who has said of the Son of David, 'I know not the man.' If the Jews up to the present time have not publicly rendered homage to the sublime moral beauty of the figure of Jesus, it is because their tormentors have always persecuted, tortured, assassinated them in His name. The Jews have drawn their

conclusions from the disciples as to the Master which was wrong a wrong pardonable in the eternal victims of the implacably cruel hatred of those who called themselves Christians. Every time that a Jew mounted to the sources and contemplated Christ alone without His pretended faithful, he cried, with tenderness and admiration, ‘Putting aside the Messianic mission this man is ours. He honours our race, and we claim Him as we claim the Gospels flowers of Jewish literature and only Jewish.’

“The revision of His trial has long since been made. The most learned authorities on Jewish criminal law and procedure have proved irrefutably that the trial of Jesus, as it is presented to us by tradition, could never have taken place, at least before a Jewish tribunal. If Jesus was condemned to death, He was so condemned by Roman judges, and no Jew, faithful to the law of his nation, could have taken the least part in the condemnation. Before a Jewish tribunal, a holy man, professing the Essene or Ebionite doctrine, even emancipating himself from the law of the Sabbath, even exalting the spirit and denouncing the letter, even proclaiming himself the promised anointed of the Lord, could never have been condemned to death on the cross, which is not the form of execution admitted by the Jewish law, and He could never have been executed on the Friday before Passover, the law absolutely prohibiting any execution on such a day. If the Jews had condemned Jesus in the conditions in which the trial was accomplished according to tradition, they would have committed a series of crimes each of which exposed itself to the severest punishment according to the Jewish law. Therefore, it is certain that all the story of the trial of Jesus is only a vengeance of those who wished to punish the Jews for not having recognised the Divine mission of Christ.

“To sum up, we claim as ours Jesus, His moral doctrines, His conception of life, and the Gospels, except that of St. John. We are under no need to revise His trial, seeing that, according to the Jewish law, Jesus could never have been condemned to death and crucified. But were we to make all the amends for a crime which our fathers never committed nineteen centuries ago, or at all, and for which, even if they had committed it, we should certainly not be responsible, that would change nothing of the disposition and spirit of the anti-Semites.” In spite of the almost patronising and merely literary homage “to the sublime moral beauty of the figure of Jesus,” this is one of the most daring epistles which has ever issued from the pen of man in relation to Jesus of Nazareth. Putting aside the attempt to revive the so-called “mythical theory” of the life of Jesus, which is now discarded by every critical scholar of any note, Dr. Nordau’s letter is a cool and flippant denial of the history of the last nineteen centuries, and is full of assertions which are contrary to facts, and could only be made by one who, though a brilliant writer and orator, has evidently only a second-hand acquaintance with Jewish history and Jewish literature, and whose sources for the unhistorical picture of Christ which he draws are the daring fancies of Renan and the absurdities of Strauss. Take, for instance, the assertions that “the most learned authorities on Jewish criminal law and procedure have proved irrefutably that the trial of Jesus, as it is presented to us by tradition, could never have taken place before a Jewish tribunal. That He could never have been crucified . . . that He could never have been executed on the Friday before Passover,” &c. That the proceedings at the trial of Jesus were for the most part in flagrant contradiction with the established laws of procedure both of the Jewish and Roman tribunals, and that the record of it is a humiliating story to Gentile as well as Jew, are facts of which the whole world is aware, but that the most learned authorities on Jewish criminal law have repudiated that trial is not true.

Perhaps the most illustrious exponent of Jewish law and procedure is Moses Maimonides, and he, far from repudiating, speaks of Christ and His death as historic facts, and adds that the Jews, by handing Jesus over to be crucified, “have done to Him as He deserved.” In a passage also from the Talmud, which is already quoted in this volume,* the trial of Jesus is not only acknowledged as an historic fact, but it is expressly said that it was on the Passover Eve that Jesus was led forth to be “hanged,” or crucified.

* See especially the “Iggeret Teman,” the letter addressed by Maimonides to the Jewish communities in Yemen, written in Arabic in 1172, and translated into Hebrew in 1210 by Samuel Ibn Tabon, now printed from a MS. in the possession of the late Dr. Jellineck, Vienna, 1873, See page 18. But I quote Dr. Nordau’s letter here, not to refute the false assertions which are made in it for to do that in detail would require a good-sized treatise but only as an example of the attitude of this class of Jews to Christ and Christianity.

Reformed Judaism speaks sometimes in vague and impudent terms of its future mission on earth, when Christianity shall have become effete, regardless of the fact that it is in itself utterly apostate from God, and has nothing but cold negations and abstractions to offer which have never yet brought hope and comfort to any man. The Christian standing on the impregnable rock of New Testament truth, against which even the gates of hell shall never prevail, can well afford to smile at such vain, empty boasting; but I refer to it simply to show the spirit of this type of rationalistic Judaism, which is in a measure responsible for provoking unenlightened Christians in Germany and other lands to join in the anti-Semitic agitation a movement altogether opposed to the spirit of Christ, and fraught with many dangers to Christendom itself.

2.12. Chapter 6. Anti-Semitism

VI. ANTI-SEMITISM

THERE are many difficult problems grouped around the name “Jew” powerfully affecting the world and the Church, and as, in Europe especially, the issues involved become intensified from year to year, the nations of Christendom, in the midst of whom the mass of the Diaspora has been located since the destruction of the second Temple, are earnestly beginning to find solutions, and it is more and more obvious that “the Jewish question” is fast becoming an international one. To the Bible student, with the key of the future in his hand, it is very interesting to watch some of the more recent phases in the development of this “question,” and to observe how the great God is, in His providence, now rapidly preparing the way for its final and only possible solution. Anti-Semitism, though no doubt a symptom of the diseased moral, political, and economic systems of Christendom, for which Jew and Gentile must bear equal blame, is nevertheless of great significance, and an unmistakable sign of the times when viewed from a Scriptural standpoint.

What is anti-Semitism?

Before me lies the 10th edition of the “Anti-Semiten-Katechismus,” a small book of four hundred closely-printed pages compiled by Theodor Fritsch, and published in Leipzig. It is one of the very vilest products of the nineteenth century, and carries its condemnation within itself. The first part is in the form of a catechism, containing twenty-one questions and answers, and the first question is, “Was Versteht man unter Antisemitismus?” (What is to be understood by anti-Semitism?) And then the answer, “Anti” means against, and “Semitism” describes the character of the Semitic race. Anti-Semitism, therefore, signifies waging war with Semitism. As in Europe the Semitic race is almost exclusively represented by the Jews, we understand the term Semites as referring in its narrower sense to the Jews. An anti-Semite, therefore, in our case means an opponent of the Jews (“Judengegner”).

Into the long indictment which this oracle of anti-Semitism contains I will not enter. The fact is that the professional “Judengegner” on the Continent, has been morally blinded by his hatred and prejudice to the extent of being no longer able to distinguish between light and darkness, truth and falsehood, and often allows himself to be carried by his passions to the greatest lengths of injustice and villainy. In the eyes of the anti-Semite it is not only a question whether Jews, like other men, are sinners, or are greater sinners than others, but the Jew himself, from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head, his very existence is an unpardonable crime. His very virtues are brought up as accusations against him, and the whole literature of the world, from the writings of Cicero down to the ravings of the unspeakable Edouard Drummond of Paris, are ransacked, and often misquoted, in order to prove that every Jew who has ever had the impudence to live, has been nothing else than an unmitigated rascal, to whom all the woes which have ever come upon the uncircumcised are to be traced. For samples of anti-Semitic accuracy in quoting ancient or modern writers commend me to the collection of passages from Talmudic works and from the Bible which takes up a good part of this handbook. The promises of God to Abraham, Isaac, and

Jacob, and passages from the prophets, are quoted as proofs of Jewish pride and arrogance, and when the prophets utter curses and scathing denunciations on account of sin, it is still brought up in proof against the Jews that they are, and ever have been, the very worst nation under heaven. It reminds one of the story told of the Roman Emperor, who, walking one day with his retinue, happened to meet a poor Jew on the roadside, who most humbly bowed and saluted. The Emperor stopped and cried out, “What, you, a Jew, have the impudence to salute the Roman Emperor! Off with his head!” A little further on he met another Jew, who, observing from a distance what had been done to his unfortunate brother, simply stopped on the roadside, and in fear and trembling allowed the tyrant to pass by without saluting, whereupon the Emperor turned round and cried: “What, you, a Jew, have the impudence not to salute the Roman Emperor! Off with his head!” An instance how an anti-Semite reads Jewish history is supplied by the brief summary of the life of Joseph, who in words of Scripture is made out to be first an ungrateful profligate, who immorally assaulted the chaste and virtuous wife of his master Potiphar, and later on robbed and despoiled the famished Egyptians for his own ends, and for the enrichment of his tribe.

How is it done? Very easily: all you have to do is to string together some half-sentences broken off from their context, and quote a lie as if it were a truth, and the thing is done.

But, as an instance how the anti-Semitic Diabolus can quote Scripture for his own ends, I will translate the section on Joseph verbally just as it stands.

“Joseph in Egypten.

“The Hebrew slave which thou hast brought unto us came in unto me to mock me; and it came to pass as I lifted up my voice and cried that he left his garment with me and fled.

“... Let him appoint officers over the land, and take up the fifth part in the seven plenteous years (without payment).

“... And Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea very much until he left off numbering, for it was without number.

“... And Joseph gathered up all the money that was found in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan for the corn which they brought.

“... Joseph said, Give your cattle, and I will give you for your cattle if you have no more money.

“... We will not hide from my lord how that our money is spent; my lord also hath our herds of cattle; there is not ought left in the sight of my lord but our bodies and our lands.

“... And he made it a law that they should give from everything a fifth. And so Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt in the country of Goshen, and they ruled over it and grew and multiplied greatly.”

It is a sad fact that perhaps ninety-nine out of every hundred “Christian” readers of this vile production in Germany and Austria are so ignorant of Bible history that they are taken in by these parodies of Jewish characters as if they were actual history. I may mention that my first acquaintance with this “Antisemiten-Katechismus” was in the drawing-room of a Christian Hospitz in Berlin, where it was evidently kept for the enlightenment of benighted Christian travellers. But is there no ground for the accusations of anti-Semites? I am not one to hide up the sins of my

people. There were no greater patriots than the prophets, yet they speak of Israel as “a sinful nation; a people laden with iniquity,” and many centuries of wanderings and oppressions have not tended to ennoble them. No, Israel in a state of apostasy from their God are not a blessing among the nations as they yet shall be (Zechariah 8:1-23), but this I say, that false accusations by anti-Semites through the ages, of crimes which they knew in their conscience they were not guilty of, has been Satan’s chief means of hardening Israel’s heart into a Pharisaic self-consciousness, and of blinding their eyes to their real state of need before a holy God. The true underlying causes and effects of modern anti-Semitism have been well summarised by Dr. Herzl in that remarkable pamphlet, “Der Juden Staat,” which has given birth to the Zionist movement. “Modern anti-Semitism,” he says, “is not to be confounded with the religious persecution of the Jews of former times. It does occasionally take a somewhat religious bias, but the main current of the aggressive movement has now changed. In the principal countries where anti-Semitism prevails it does so as a result of the emancipation of the Jews.

“When civilised nations awoke to the inhumanity of exclusive legislation, and enfranchised us, our enfranchisement came too late. It was no longer possible legally to remove our disabilities in our old homes. For we had, curiously enough, developed while in the Ghetto into a bourgeois people, and we stepped out of it only to enter into fierce competition with the middle classes. Hence our emancipation set us suddenly within this middle-class circle, where we have a double pressure to sustain, from within and from without. The Christian bourgeoisie would not be unwilling to cast us as a sacrifice to Socialism, though that would not greatly improve matters. At the same time, the equal rights of Jews before the law cannot be withdrawn where they have once been conceded. Not only because their withdrawal would be opposed to the spirit of our age, but also because it would immediately drive all Jews, rich and poor alike, into the ranks of the revolutionary party.

“Nothing effectual can really be done to our injury. In old days our jewels were seized. How is our movable property to be got hold of now? It is comprised in printed papers which are scattered over the world, locked up maybe in the coffers of Christians. It is of course possible to get at shares and debentures in railways, banks and industrial undertakings of all descriptions, by taxation, and where the progressive income-tax is in force, all our realised property can eventually be laid hold of. But all these efforts cannot be directed against Jews alone, and where they have nevertheless been made, severe economic crises, with far-reaching effects, have been their immediate consequence. The very impossibility of getting at the Jews nourishes and embitters hatred of them. Anti-Semitism increases day by day and hour by hour among the nations; indeed, it is bound to increase, because the causes of its growth continue to exist, and cannot be removed. Its remote cause is our loss of the power of assimilation during the Middle Ages; its immediate cause is our excessive production of mediocre intellects, who cannot find an outlet downwards or upwards that is to say, no wholesome outlet in either direction. When we sink, we become a revolutionary proletariat, the subordinate officers of the revolutionary party; when we rise, there rises also our terrible power of the purse.

“The oppression we endure does not improve us, for we are not a whit better than ordinary people. It is true that we do not love our enemies; but he alone who can conquer himself dare reproach us with that fault. Oppression naturally creates hostility against oppressors, and our hostility aggravates the pressure,

“It is impossible to escape from this eternal round. ‘No!’ some soft-hearted visionaries will say; ‘no, it is possible! Possible by means of the ultimate perfection of humanity.’ Is it worth while pointing out the sentimental folly of this view? He who would found his hope for improved conditions on the ultimate perfection of humanity would indeed be painting a Utopia!

“I referred previously to our ‘assimilation.’ I do not for a moment wish to imply that I desire such an end. Our national character is too historically famous, and, spite of every degradation, too fine, to make its annihilation desirable. We might, perhaps, be able to merge ourselves entirely into surrounding races, if these were to leave us in peace for a space of two generations. But they will not leave us in peace.

“For a little period they manage to tolerate us, and then their hostility breaks out again and again. The world is provoked by our prosperity, because it has for many centuries been accustomed to consider us as the most contemptible among the poverty-stricken.

“It forgets, in its ignorance and narrowness of heart, that prosperity weakens our Judaism and extinguishes our peculiarities. It is only pressure that forces us back to the parent stem; it is only hatred encompassing us that makes us strangers once more.

“Thus, whether we like it or not, we are now, and shall henceforth remain, an historic group with unmistakable characteristics common to us all.” To turn again to the oracle of anti-Semitism to which I have already referred, in answer to the question, “Wie soil die Judenfrage nun gelost werden?” (How shall the Jewish Question be solved?) we have the following paragraph: “Either the Jews must procure some territory for themselves best if it were out of Europe (means they have plenty) and be allowed a definite period, say ten years, to depart from our midst, or, if they remain, the following enactment should be made: ‘The Jews are only allowed to occupy themselves with agriculture or productive manual labour, in which they are to have only Jews as their assistants. From every other sphere and occupation they must be excluded, and for a non-Jew to be in any way in the employment of a Jew should be highly punishable to both parties.’

“The laws emancipating the Jews, and which granted them civil rights, should be repealed, and they should only be allowed to exist as aliens under special law” (“Judenrecht”).

I hold in my hand three curios of modern anti-Semitism. One is an exact imitation of a German railway ticket. On the front we read these words: “Nach Jerusalem (to Jerusalem). There, but not return, 4th class, 20 mark.” Across one end the route and date are as usual indicated, which are “Germany Palestine,” and across the other end, which usually has the initials of the railway company, the word “Isaac” is spelt out. Turning it over, on the reverse side we find the following inscription. First, in large letters, there is the Hebrew word “Kosher” (“clean”), a word with which things lawful for Jews to eat are usually sealed, and then this admonition, “Fahre hin mit 100,000 Deiner Bruder and taufe in Jordan Dich doch Kehre niemals wieder” (“Go with 100,000 of thy brethren and immerse thyself in the Jordan, but never return.”). The second curio is an anti-Semitic bronze medal bearing the arms of the city of Berlin, with the date, beneath which are the words, “Hep! Hep!” On the obverse side are the names of the three best known and most violent German Jew-haters, for whom it calls “Hoch!” (“Hurrah!”) “Vivant sequentes.” The third is a ticket to a public concert in Vienna, the price of which is a florin, but beneath there is this saving clause, “Fur Juden ist diese karte ungiltig,” which is equivalent to “Jews are excluded.” The first of

these curios expresses the aim and object of anti-Semitism, which is to drive them out of Christendom: “Go to Jerusalem, and never return;” and the other two show us the weapons of anti-Semitism, by which they seek to accomplish their object, namely, by insult and exclusion, and if that will not answer, then “Hep! Hep!” This apparently harmless word is the symbol of blood and death to the Jews. It is formed as already explained,* of the initial letters of the Latin phrase, “Hierosolyma est Perdita!” and was the watch cry of the Crusaders in their attacks and wholesale massacres of the Jewish communities in their bloody march to the East.

* See page 114. The Dreyfus case and the cries of “A bas les Juifs!” “Mort aux Juifs!” which have so recently rung through the streets of the city which calls itself “the mother of civilisation,” are but symptoms of the implacable hatred of the Jew which underlies anti-Semitism. Nor are Paris and Berlin alone in their attempt to revive the cry of “Hep! Hep!”

During several recent visits to Austria I had occasion to observe the consternation manifested in large Jewish circles at the developments of the anti-Jewish campaign in that tottering Empire. In Vienna a great municipal war which has helped to demoralise all the political parties, has ended, in spite of interpositions of the Emperor, in the repeated election of a burgomaster and a vast majority of councillors who are avowedly pledged to make the life of the 125,000 in that city, and the nearly two million Jews in the Empire generally, as wretched as possible. Mr. Arnold White, in his “Modern Jew,” speaks of the leader of the anti-Semites in Austria “as a man of great personal charm.” This is a matter of taste, but his spirit in relation to the Jews may be judged from some of his public utterances, which breathe of fire and sword.

It is not so long ago that a notorious Roman Catholic vicar near Vienna ended a series of weekly harangues against the Jews, delivered in his parish church, with the words, “Verbrennt die Juden zur Ehre Gottes. Amen.” (“Burn the Jews to the glory of God. Amen.”)

“No one can deny the gravity of the Jews’ situation,” says Dr. Theodore Herzl, in that statesmanlike pamphlet from which I have already quoted.

“Wherever they live in perceptible numbers, they are more or less persecuted. Their equality before the law, granted by statute, has become practically a dead letter. They are debarred from filling even moderately high positions, either in the army or in any public or private capacity. And attempts are made to crowd them out of business also. ‘No dealing with Jews!’

“Attacks in Parliaments, in assemblies, in the press, in the pulpit, in the streets, on journeys for example, their exclusion from certain hotels even in places of recreation, become daily more numerous; the forms of persecution varying according to the countries in which they occur. In Russia, impositions are levied on Jewish villages; in Germany, they get a good beating when the occasion serves; in Austria, anti-Semites exercise terrorism over all public life; in Paris, they are shut out of the so-called best social circles and excluded from clubs. Shades of anti-Jewish feeling are innumerable. But this is not to be an attempt to make out a doleful category of Jewish hardships; it is futile to linger over details, however painful they may be.

“I do not intend to awaken sympathetic emotions on our behalf. That would be a foolish, futile, and undignified proceeding. I shall content myself with putting the following questions to the Jews: Is it true that in countries where we live in perceptible numbers the position of Jewish lawyers, doctors, men of science, teachers, and officials of all descriptions, becomes daily more intolerable? True

that the Jewish middle classes are seriously threatened? True that the mob are incited against our wealthy representatives? True that our poor endure greater sufferings than any other proletariat?

“I think that this external pressure makes itself felt everywhere. In our upper classes it causes disagreeables, in our middle classes continual and grave anxieties, in our lower classes absolute despair.

“Everything tends, in fact, to one and the same conclusion, which is clearly enunciated in that classic Berlin phrase: ‘Juden raus!’ (‘Out with the Jews!’).” But what is the meaning of anti-Semitism in relation to Israel’s future? A full answer to this question is given us in the Word of God. In Psa. 105, which sings the story of Israel’s future redemption as pre-figured by their past history, we have these words: “Israel also came into Egypt, and Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham, and He increased His people greatly, and made them stronger than their enemies. He turned their heart to hate His people, to deal subtly with His servants, He sent Moses His servant, and Aaron whom He had chosen.” Then there follows a list of the plagues which He poured out upon Egypt, culminating in the slaying of all the firstborn in their land, “the chief of all their strength,” so that “Egypt was glad when they departed, for the fear of them fell upon them. . . . For He remembered His holy promise, and Abraham His servant And He brought forth His people with joy and His chosen with gladness.” It is remarkable how history repeats itself, and in relation to Israel the words of the preacher may especially be applied: “The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be ... and there is nothing new under the sun.”

If we substitute the word “nations” for Egypt we have an epitome of the origin, development, and issues not only of the ancient but also of the modern phase of the Jewish Question in the three or four verses of the psalm which I have quoted.

I. The origin of the Jewish Question in Egypt is summed up in the words: “He increased His people greatly, and made them stronger than their enemies.” This is brought out still more clearly in the original account in Exodus, where we read: “And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceedingly mighty, and the land was filled with them.” It was on that account that the new Pharaoh who knew not Joseph became alarmed and took counsel with his people, saying, “Come on; let us deal wisely with them,” the results of which were measures of repression, and when these did not answer, the promulgation of an edict for their extermination. The modern phase of the Jewish Question originated and becomes from year to year intensified from the same cause.

We have already seen how since the commencement of the nineteenth century, the Jews are multiplying at a rate which is perfectly marvellous. Look, for instance, at the following comparative table in reference to Austria, where the Jewish problem is assuming a more and more acute phase:

Jews in Austria at various times (exclusive of Hungary).

Maria Theresa’s Reign ..... 200,000.

1830 ..... 355,000.

1850 ..... 476,000.

1869 ..... 822,000.

1880 ..... 1,000,000.

1890 .....

According to the same authority there were in Hungary in the reign of Joseph II. 25,000 Jews; at the end of the last century there were 50,000; in 1830, 100,000; in 1847, 270,000; in 1870, 500,000; in 1883, 700,000; whilst at the present time the number has reached 1,000,000. And not only is it in point of numbers that God is again causing His people “to increase greatly,” but by their superior wits and energy and by their habits of frugality and thriftiness He makes them “stronger than their enemies,” so that in those regions where the bulk of the nation is to be found, wherever the Jew has a fair chance he naturally places his Gentile neighbour in a less favourable position in the struggle for existence. The superior ability of the Jew is openly acknowledged by anti-Semites, and often appealed to as a ground for the restrictive and repressive laws which are in vogue against them in some countries. The following is taken from a chapter which summarises “the case for Russian anti-Semitism” in a work from which I have already quoted* more than once:

* “The Modern Jew,” by Arnold White.

“But there is still another element which the rulers of Russia are constrained to take into their consideration. The intellect of the Jew is masterful. His assiduity, his deadly resolve–to ‘get on,’ his self-denial and ambition surmount all natural obstacles. If all careers in the Russian Empire were thrown open to the Russian Jew not a decade would go by before the whole Russian administration from Port Arthur to Eydtkuhnen, and from Archangel to Yalta, must pass into Hebraic hands. This is a sober statement of facts.” The same is true of other Continental countries. The following is a passage from an apology for anti-Semitism in Austria, which, though somewhat exaggerated, is largely true:

“The Jews are all powerfully represented in every walk in life that leads to influence and fortune. In the professions of law, medicine, and literature their numbers are out of all proportion to their quota of the population. Finance and commerce are practically in their hands. The great business houses, the banks, the railways that do not belong to the State, are all controlled by them. The Produce Exchange, and of course the Bourse at Vienna, Prague, or Budapest, are deserted on Jewish holidays. The press, with the exception of the Czech organs, is almost exclusively in the hands of Jews.” The proportion of Jews in the Austrian Universities is far in excess of what might be expected from their actual number in the country. For instance, in the Vienna University in 1887-88, out of 6,530 students there were 2,500 Jews i.e., 40 per cent. In Vienna itself one person in every ten is a Jew, but the proportion of the Jewish population in the whole Empire is only 5 per cent. It is a notorious fact that an increasingly large proportion of the great specialists and best known Professors in Vienna are Jews or of Jewish origin. At the end of 1887, out of 660 qualified attorneys in Vienna 350 were Jews. Indeed, the faculty of law may almost be said to be a monopoly of the Jews in Austria, and also in Germany, where they form not only a large percentage of the attorneys, but also of the judges of the highest courts, and have, as in England and France, supplied from their ranks ministers of justice and judges of appeal. In Berlin 120 of the Professors and Privatdocenten are Jews, and in the whole of Germany there are about 400 Jewish Professors.

II. The next step in the old Jewish Question in Egypt was that “He turned their heart” (that is, of the Egyptians) “to hate His people, to deal subtly with His servants.” This is how the great God causes the wrath of man to praise Him, and when His purpose is accomplished “restrains the remainder.” Pharaoh and his councillors said, “Come on, let us deal wisely with them,” and attempted to solve the Jewish Question in their own way, namely, by persecution and extermination; but God turned the wisdom of the Egyptians into foolishness. “The more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew.” Instead of succeeding in drowning them in the Nile, Pharaoh and his host were in the end drowned in the Red Sea. But what is the meaning of His “turning their heart to hate His people”? It had a double significance.

(a) In relation to Israel it was the means which God employed to stir up their nest and to make them willing to leave the land in which, until the persecutions broke out, they had been content to live for centuries. “For He remembered His holy promise, and Abraham His servant,” and the time had come according to His own Divine forecast to Abraham (Genesis 15:13-14) that they should come out of Egypt, and take possession of the lands of the Amorites, whose iniquity was now full.

(b) In relation to Egypt it was “an evident token of perdition” and precursor of the plagues which came upon it. The judicial hardening of the heart of Pharaoh and the Egyptians was in itself part of the punishment from a righteous God upon a cruel nation sinking lower and lower to the most contemptible depths of idolatry. God has often chastened His people“ with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men,” but He has no pleasure in the scourge which He employs, and as a rule uses for the chastisement of His people men or nations whom He designs to give up to destruction for their wickedness.

Now, in these respects, too, the ancient Jewish Question in Egypt finds its parallel in the modern phases of the problem which are accentuated by anti-Semitism. The millions of the poor and less cultured orthodox Talmudic Jews in Russia, Galicia, and Roumania have long ago been convinced that these lands cannot much longer remain their resting-places, and that it is about time for them to “arise and depart” toward that land for which they have never ceased to cherish a yearning desire; hence the many colonising schemes and the more than thirty Jewish colonies which already exist in Palestine, consisting almost entirely of Russian and Roumanian Jews. The remarkable thing is that, as the result of the newest phases of the anti-Jewish movement on the Continent, the more cultured, wealthy, and rationalistic Jews are at last digesting the truths that it is not by the so-called “reform” movement which aims at assimilation with the nations that the Jewish Question will be solved; for, after all their efforts in this direction for more than half a century and their desperate eagerness to strip themselves of all that is true and false in orthodox Judaism, as a kind of peace-offering to the mysterious, deep-seated antipathy of the Gentiles, they find that it is just against themselves, more even than against the less cultured of their brethren in Russia and Eastern Europe, that the bitterest animosity is manifested, and that Christendom, though it is itself for the most part apostate from truth and from the faith of Christ, is even less reconciled to the rationalism and neology of the modern cultivated “Israelite,” than it is to the Talmudism of the more consistent orthodox “Jew” who still wears his kaftan and peyoth.

What is this but a repetition of the warning words which God in His providence has so often spoken to Israel: “And that which cometh into your mind shall not be at all; in that ye say, We will be as the nations, as the families of the countries.” And in relation to the nations it is again an

omen of approaching judgment which will culminate in the overthrow and destruction of the armies of the great confederacy, as shown in another part of this volume. “Jehovah frustrateth the counsel of the nations: He maketh the devices of the peoples of none effect. The counsel of Jehovah standeth for ever, the thoughts of His heart to all generations.”

2.13. Chapter 7. Zionism and the Zionist Congress

VII. ZIONISM AND THE ZIONIST CONGRESS

[Since writing the following analysis of Zionism in Basle in August, 1899, the fourth Congress, at which I was also present, was held this year in London. I prefer, however, to give my notes of the third Congress (which I have corrected where necessary and brought up to date) because on the whole it gives a better insight into the aims and spirit of the movement than the proceedings in London. It was written in the form of a journal for The Scattered Nation, but it will be found not the less interesting on that account.] The Zionist Movement BASLE, August 29th. THIS is the first day of the great public meetings of the Zionist Congress.

We began the day by a united prayer-meeting in my room in the Hotel Victoria, at 8.30, at which eight Hebrew Christian brethren were present.

It was good for us, as those who anticipate our nation in allegiance to Zion's true King, in whom we have found life and salvation, to meet at the throne of grace to plead for our people, and especially for the delegates and leaders in this Zionist movement; and that the day may be hastened when all Israel shall understand that wonderful inscription which was written on the Cross: "Jesus Nazarenus Rex Judaeorum."

9.45 a.m. I am now in my place at the journalists' table, in the body of the Congress Hall, among the delegates. What a splendidly convenient building is this Stadt Casino, popularly known as the "Jewish House of Commons." This large hall would seat about 2,000 people, and there are quite a number of other smaller halls and rooms in the building besides. In the body of the hall only delegates and journalists are admitted, the former all wearing the Zionist badge a large gold or gilt pin in the shape of a Magen David (traditional shape of the shield of David) with a blue silk rosette for background. The legend on the pin is the same as on the Zionist medal, designed by the renowned Jewish sculptor Beer. It is that of a poor wandering family, father, mother, with a babe at the breast, and two other children besides, the eldest of whom, a boy, has already a wanderer's staff in his hand. This group is meant to represent the whole "tribe of the wandering foot and weary breast." To them, in their hopelessness and dejection, an angel appears, in the shape of a graceful female figure, representing Zionism, or "the National Idea," who lays her right hand on the shoulder of the dejected man, and with her left points eastward, where the sun of hope may be seen rising on their ancient fatherland, on the other side of the Mediterranean Sea. On the other side of this medal are words in Hebrew taken from Ezekiel 37:1-28, "Behold I will take the children of Israel from the midst of the nations and will bring them to their own land."

It is the appointed hour, 10 a.m., and the Congress is not yet opened. But look around at this indescribable scene of life and animation. There are, I should suppose, about 250 delegates, and they are all on their feet, divided into groups of twos and threes, noisily arguing and discussing with one another in almost all languages under heaven with an energy which is truly remarkable.

Most of the delegates seem young or middle-aged men, only a few grey or white heads being visible in the company, and one is struck with the readiness, ability, and purposefulness which are written on most of the faces. A large proportion of them, as we see from looking over the list of names, are doctors of medicine or law, several professors, and a number of editors and literary men. There are also several lady delegates.

Another feature which I note is the great variety of types which is represented here, from the Russian and Polish Rabbis in their long kaftans and peyoth, who are beginning to take their places at the back of the platform, to the most polished English gentleman, and men known in the fashionable saloons of Paris and Vienna. In fact, it is like the whole Diaspora in miniature.

Next to me there sit several delegates from the Transvaal, while at several tables, a little to the left, is a large delegation from America and Canada. But already, from the predominance of the Russian language in a large part of the hall, one is made aware that probably one-third of the whole number of the delegates are from Russia; and no wonder, for nowhere in the world is the Jewish Question more pressing than in this great country of the North, where there are between four and five million Jews in a more or less chronic state of wretchedness.

It is twenty minutes past the time; still the formal proceedings of the Congress are not opened, the reason, I am told, being that some of the leaders are still engaged in committee-rooms, discussing programmes and resolutions, which are to be presented for the consideration of the Congress.

Meanwhile we might look round again on this extraordinary scene and ask by what right does this “Jewish Parliament” meet?

What proportion of the Jewish nation does it actually represent? And what is its aim and object?

Answers to these questions are found in the “Organisations-Statut” and other official documents of the Congress. At the first two Congresses the representative character of some of the delegates was somewhat questionable.

Any “Verein,” or Association of Jews, professing adherence to the programme formulated at the first Basle Congress in 1897, could send a delegate. But some of these “vereine” may perhaps have consisted of only ten or a dozen Jews, and it was therefore necessary, in order to test the real strength and progress of Zionism, to formulate the “Organisations-Statut,” which now lies before me, and from which I translate the following items:

(1) The Zionist Organisation embraces those Jews who approve of the programme of the Zionist Congress, and are annual subscribers of the shekel to its funds.

(2) The chief organ of the Zionist organisation is the Congress, which is constituted of the delegates elected by constituencies of the required number of electors.

(3) The Executive Council of the Congress is the “Aktions-Comite,” which has its chief seat in Vienna, with Dr. Theodore Herzl as President. For election purposes the Zionistic Organisation is divided into “countries,” “districts,” and “associations,” and each hundred shekel-paying members have a right to elect a delegate. There is no doubt that masses of Jews all over the world sympathise with this Zionist movement who are not yet formally enrolled members or shekel-payers, but I am informed that the delegates already in Basle this time represent 2,200*

mandates, of as many different constituencies. The minimum of the shekel is 1s. in England, 25 cents in America, and the equivalent sum in other countries. Some of the more popular Zionist leaders represent quite a number of different constituencies, but their vote only counts as one. So much for the actual representative character of the Congress.

* At the fourth Congress in London in August, 1900, there were about 400 delegates present. As to the aim and objects of Zionism, these have been formulated at the first Congress.

“Zionism strives to procure for the Jewish people an openly recognised and legally assured home (offentlich rechtlich gesicherten Heimatstatte) in Palestine. With a view to the realisation of this object, one of the means Congress contemplates using is the centralisation of the entire Jewish people, by means of a general institution agreeable to the laws of the lands in which they are now dispersed, and to strengthen in them patriotic sentiments and a Jewish national self-consciousness.”

There is much from the Christian standpoint to criticise and to lament in the fact that the means proposed for the accomplishment of this great end are entirely material and political; and that, so far, there is an utter forgetfulness of the cause of the long break in Jewish national history, and an ignoring of the words of their own prophets, that though He has doubtless used the nations to carry out His will, it was, all the same, God who scattered Israel on account of sin (Jeremiah 31:10; Amos 9:9), and therefore, though He may again use means to gather them, without God, and without repentance, they will never be restored in blessing; nevertheless, even to the Christian, Zionism is a movement which must be followed with the deepest interest, for what we are now beginning to see is nothing less than, to use the title of Professor Heman’s book on the subject “Das Erwachen der Jiidischen Nation” “The Awakening of the Jewish Nation,” after a sleep of nineteen centuries. A national awakening which, in spite of the dark but short night of trouble which still lies ahead, I greet as preparatory to the great spiritual awakening of Israel, the issues of which to the world will be as “life from the dead.”

It is from this point of view that this Jewish Parliament is nothing short of a miracle, which, unknown as yet to the great actors, is brought about by the power of God. Here is a people which for two thousand years has been supposed to be dead, and whom the nations have done their utmost to bury out of sight, who have even said to themselves, “Our bones are dried and our hope is lost; we are cut off from our parts.” (Ezekiel 37:11), beginning to live and move and to have a corporate being.

What is this but the forming again of a living national body out of the “very dry dead bones, which for centuries were strewn over ‘the open valley’ of Ezekiel’s vision, preparatory to the time when the blessed Breath will come from the four winds, and breathe upon these slain, that spiritually, as well as nationally, they may live?”

10.30 a.m. A scene of great enthusiasm greeted Dr. Herzl a few minutes ago, as he at last made his appearance, followed by Dr. Max Nordau, and other leaders of the movement. The whole assembly rise to their feet clapping, cheering vociferously, and waving handkerchiefs. These Zionists are evidently proud of their leader, who by his book “Der Juden Staat” may be said to have brought the whole movement into being.

He is a fine-looking man, with noble features and faultless bearing. “Just look at him,” whispers one close by. “Does he not look like a king?”

Dr. Herzl reads the opening address in German. His first word is one of thanks “an die schone, freie Stadt” Basle, which receives them so hospitably for now the third time.

“Basle, the Basle Congress, the Basle Programme these words,” he says, “already sound familiarly everywhere among our people, carrying with them comfort and hope.”* * I append the first part of Dr. Herzl’s opening speech at the fourth Congress in London in August, 1900:

“Ladies and Gentlemen, I feel that there is no necessity for me to justify the holding of the Congress in London. England is one of the last remaining places on earth where there is freedom from Jew-hatred. This one fact will give you some idea as to the terrible state in which the Jewish nation finds itself. Throughout the wide world there is but one spot left in which God’s ancient people is not detested and persecuted. But, from the fact that Jews in this glorious land enjoy full freedom and complete human rights, we must not allow ourselves to draw false conclusions.

“He would be a poor friend of the Jews in England, as well as of the Jews who reside in other countries, who should advise the persecuted to flee hither. Our brethren here would tremble in their joy, if their position meant the attraction to these shores of our desperate brethren in other lands. Such an immigration would mean disaster equally for the Jews here, as for those who would come here. For the latter, with their miserable bundles, would bring with them that from which they flee I mean anti-Semitism. Still, I doubt not that for the next few days we shall be allowed to set up the nomad-tent of our discussions, because we wish to enter into public debate upon the settlement of the Jewish Question.

“Between the intervals of Congress and Congress, our opponents are industriously busy, endeavouring to cover our contentions and aims with a tissue of subtle misrepresentation, So that, at every gathering, our first business is to clear away, with a few sharp axe-strokes, the fungus that has attached itself to the tree of Zionism. Notwithstanding all, we are happy to note that our tree is sound, is healthy, and is flourishing. Zionism seeks to find for the Jewish people a public, legally secured home in Palestine. This programme we established three years ago for ever. It must have responded to a very deep need, a very ancient yearning of our people, otherwise there is to be found no reasonable explanation as to why it has effected what it has, and met with the reception that has been accorded to it. I need not specially detail those effects at this time of day. Everybody knows them, everybody sees them, and everybody hears them. Four years ago one might have felt hesitation to speak of a Jewish nation, fearing to appear ridiculous. To-day he makes himself ridiculous who denies the existence of the Jewish nation.

“For the third time,” he continues, “we are here to discuss the grievances and the aspirations of our nation, which desires to be revivified. At the outset it might have seemed, perhaps it still seems so to some, that very little can be achieved by our coming here and making speeches speeches full of sighs. But those who are in doubt overlook the fact that in all representative bodies nothing is done except to make speeches. And who will deny that speeches from such places exercise the strongest influence on the present and the future of the people? Possessed of this knowledge, we have exerted ourselves to establish for ourselves a place from which our words will be heard this Jewish Tribune. As our people have no desire to return to the life of the past, but rather to awaken

to the life of the present, it must before all possess a modern organ, in order to be able to give expression to the wish for existence. This tribune is therefore a precious possession, which we have acquired. Let us guard it effectually! Through the earnestness and the tranquillity of our deliberations we can raise the authority of this tribune ever higher. Through indiscretion and disputes we should speedily destroy it. The tribune must be as elevated as the speeches that are delivered in it."

"One glance at this great hall, filled with delegates from all parts of the world, is sufficient, were there nothing else, to prove it. This fact means, not alone much for us, it also means something for others. It not only opens up to every country a prospect of the settlement of the Jewish Question in a manner worthy of mankind, but it also contains at the same time the elements of a great perspective for the Orient.

"Our reappearance in the land of our fathers, prophesied by Holy Writ, sung by our poets, yearned for midst tears by our stricken nation, and jeered at by miserable scoffers that return is a matter of political moment to the Powers that have interests in Asia. Permit me to quote a few words of the opening speech of the second Congress. In the year 1898, when that second Congress was held at Basle, the following words were said:

" 'The land of Palestine is not only the home of the highest ideas and of the most unhappy nation, but it is also by reason of its geographical position, of immense importance to the whole of Europe. In time, and to my mind the time is not far distant, a road of civilisation and commerce will lead to Asia. Asia is the diplomatic problem of the next decade.'

"These words of 1898 to-day sound banal, so amply have they been confirmed by the events of the last few months. The Asiatic problem grows from day to day more serious, and will, I fear, for some time be deeply tinged with blood.

"It is thus of increasing importance to the nations of civilisation that on the road to Asia the shortest road to Asia there should be set up a post of civilisation which would be at the service of civilised mankind. This post is Palestine and we are those who are ready with our blood and our substance to provide this post for civilisation. Any student of politics must perceive, quick as lightning, that here is presented a valuable opportunity for providing an easy approach to Asia. On this post of civilisation, which will be speedily set up by the powerless Jewish people, under the suzerainty of His Imperial Majesty the Sultan, no Power need look with apprehension. The Jews would be helped, others also, and at the same time; but the greatest gainer of all would be the Turkish Empire. England, great England, free England, England commanding all the seas, will understand our aims. We may be certain that from here the Zionist idea will take its flight to higher and more distant regions."

After referring, in passing, to the aims and objects of Zionism, he said:

"We must continue our work assiduously, even if there have been no outward visible signs of progress during the past year. Even if nothing had happened which denoted a strengthening of our movement, an increase in its importance and its means, even then we should have to go on working indefatigably. But the past year was not a bad one for our movement. It was a good one. We have accomplished something, we have gone one step forward.

“An important event which as usual was partly passed over in silence and partly made public in a distorted form was the reception of the Zionist deputation by the German Emperor in Jerusalem. The fact alone that the German Emperor had given his attention to our National Idea would have sufficed to give us confidence. Insignificant movements are not noticed in such high quarters.”

Turning to the mass of Zionists who keep aloof from the Basle Congress, and who think they can accomplish their ends by a process of slow colonisation, he says:

“Some people wish to plant a population in the country without having beforehand made their entire plan public. If any one enters in the night and in the mist he must not wonder if he is met with the challenge, ‘Halt! who goes there?’ All the worse is it for him if he cannot give a satisfactory and precise answer. Moreover, his position is not such in which the answer will have no suspicious ring about it. We act differently. We declare our views in the open daylight, because, thank God, we have nothing to be afraid of, and we desire to obtain sanction before we undertake at all this most difficult of all experiments. For it is not a question only of getting people in, but also of their remaining, and remaining in security.

“What is to be the nature of our present endeavours? We will say it in one word: a Charter! Our exertions are directed towards obtaining a Charter from the Turkish Government: a Charter under the sovereignty of his Majesty the Sultan. Not until we are in possession of this Charter, which must embody the necessary public legal guarantees, can we commence a great practical colonisation. In return for the grant of this Charter we shall afford the Turkish Government great advantages. These transactions can, however, not emanate from Congresses which do not possess the necessary legal qualifications for such a purpose. For the purpose of these arrangements a special partnership must be created. This is the Jewish Colonial Bank. If any one should still put the question whether the Zionist movement is to be regarded as a serious factor, the hundred thousand subscribers* to the Jewish Colonial Bank have supplied the answer. The reply has come from Siberia, from the borders of China, and from the southernmost part of Argentina, from Canada, and the Transvaal. To-day the Colonial Bank exists.”

* There are now about 300,000 subscribers to the “Jewish Colonial Bank.” The last words of Dr. Herzl’s opening address are pathetic.

“Our appeal for support,” he says, “goes forth to the upright of all creeds and nations, but we require no other external help than moral aid. . . . A people is contending here for its existence, its honour, and its freedom. It desires to emerge from darkness into sunshine. The present situation of the Jews tends towards three directions. The first is apathetic submission to insult and misery. The other is a revolt against a stepmotherly society. Ours is the third way: To soar upwards, to a higher degree of civilisation, to promote the general welfare, to prepare new paths for intercourse among the nations, and to seek an awakening for social justice. And just as our beloved poet gave forth songs out of his woes, so do we prepare out of our sufferings progress for mankind whom we serve.”

Dr. Herzl’s address is received with great acclamation, and after the nomination, lists for the election of President, Vice-Presidents, Assessors, and Secretaries for this third Congress are submitted to the delegates by Herr York Steiner, there is another scene of wild enthusiasm as the great orator of the Zionist movement, Dr. Max Nordau, ascends the tribune to speak on “The

general condition of the Jews." To me it is a sign of the times in itself to behold this world-famed author of such terrible books as "Die Conventionellen Liigen der Culturmenschheit" and "Paradoxe," who did so much to destroy the faith of Jew and Christian, with a view to remove what was thought to be the only cause of separation and estrangement between the two, now standing in this tribune, and with fiery eloquence, preaching the doctrine of Jewish nationalism and separation, and proclaiming the fact in the face of the whole world, that the only solution of the ever more perplexing Jewish Question is that of a great exodus. But in this respect Dr. Nordau (like some of the other leaders) represents, in his own person, one of the most significant facts in connection with this Zionist movement, and this is the confession that it is impossible for the Jews to amalgamate with the nations, even if they would.

This, indeed, was the pathetic cry of the founder of the movement in his original manifesto.

"We have honestly striven everywhere," he says, " to merge ourselves in the social life of surrounding communities, and to preserve only the faith of our fathers. It has not been permitted to us. In vain are we loyal patriots, in some places our loyalty running to extremes; in vain do we make the same sacrifices of life and property as our fellow-citizens; in vain do we strive to increase the fame of our native land in science and art, or her wealth by trade and commerce. In countries where we have lived for centuries we are still cried down as strangers; and often by those whose ancestors were not yet domiciled in the land where Jews had already made experience of suffering.

"We are one people our enemies have made us one in our despite, as repeatedly happens in history. Distress binds us together, and thus united, we suddenly discover our strength. Yes, we are strong enough to form a State, and a model State." But it is a greater power than "our enemies" who is keeping Israel distinct "in their own despite," and who, all through the ages, has continued to stir up the Jewish nest, whenever they have wanted to assimilate with the nations. It is the power of God, who swore, that "as long as sun and moon endure, Israel would abide a nation before Him for ever" of the irresistible Ruler among the nations, who has warned them long in advance that "that which cometh into your mind shall not be at all, that ye say we will be as the nations, as the families of the countries. . . . As I live, saith the Lord God, surely with a mighty hand, and with a stretched-out arm, and with fury poured out, will I rule over you; and I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched-out arm, and with fury poured out." But it is hard to recognise the famous agnostic in the Zionist orator. Is it because the very association with Zionism has drawn him and some of the other leaders back to a measure of faith in the God of their fathers, whose hand is so clearly to be discerned in the history of their nation? Or is it, as Professor Heman suggests, that the agnosticism and "Freigeist" of these cultured modern Jews is a mere outward garment, put on so as to be in fashion with the unbelieving Gentile world around them, but in reality covering hearts full of religious dissatisfaction, and longings for light and truth which neither effete Rabbinism, nor the corrupt forms of Christianity with which they are acquainted could supply?

Anyhow, as I am carefully following this masterly address of Dr. Nordau, there seems nothing in it to which from a Jewish point of view even the most orthodox of them could object, and as a matter of fact the Russian and Galician Rabbis in their long kaftans are among the loudest in their

applause.

Some of the passages in this speech are touchingly picturesque.

Speaking of the origin of the Zionist movement and of the enthusiasm which pervaded the first two national assemblies in Basle, he says:

“It seemed as if we were witnessing a miracle which affected ourselves and all around us. We felt ourselves part and parcel of a fairy tale, in which we saw our brethren, thousands of years buried, again become flesh and blood. We wanted, in the joy of this reunion, to rehearse the sad history of the hundreds of years in which we had been dead and in our tomb, in a grave which lacked the peace of the grave. In these three years the general condition of the Jewish nation in all lands has been ascertained. No modification occurs, or is likely to occur, unless Jews themselves bring it to pass.”

Discussing the various proposed solutions of the Jewish Question, he says:

“Three things only can effect an improvement of their condition. Firstly, an entire change of the human nature of to-day, as it shows itself in its treatment of their helpless minority; secondly, the self-effacement of the minority, implying change of faith, customs, traditions, and even of their features; thirdly, transplanting the Jewish nation to their own land, there to be no more a minority, tolerated merely, but a majority, with full exercise of civil rights.

“You have already judged that this last-named third way is the only worthy one, the only one which promises any success, and we have voiced our Zionism in a last effort to apply a remedy for the sufferings of the Jewish nation.”

What strikes me in hearing and observing these leaders of Zionism is that they have evidently looked into the very soul of their people’s long-continued misery, and are burdened with its weight.

Listen to this pathetic plaint:

“We are living like Troglodytes, in perpetual darkness. To us the sun of justice is not shining. We are living like the creatures in the depths of the ocean. Upon us press the weight of a thousand atmospheres of mistrust and disdain. We have lived for centuries in a glacial period, surrounded by the bitter cold of malice and hatred. Those are the permanent powers which have permanently influenced us, without noise, without incident, to give rise to sensational reports, yet under which we have retrograded steadily, gradually, and unmistakably.”

This, alas! is all true, but oh! when will Israel acknowledge the cause of it all? When will they see not only the rod, but Him who uses it?

“Who among you will give ear to this? Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? Did not Jehovah, He against whom we have sinned? For they would not walk in His ways, neither were they obedient unto His law. Therefore He hath poured upon him the fury of His anger, and the strength of battle, and it hath set him on fire round about, yet he knew it not; and it burned him, yet he laid it not to heart” (Isaiah 42:22-25).

Perhaps no part of Dr. Nordau’s address was so loudly applauded by the entire Congress as his laconic reference to the so-called “Protest-Rabbis,” of the Continent and England, who have

ranged themselves in bitter opposition to the Zionists. I mention it because in this growing estrangement between the masses of the Jewish people, and these modern Rabbis, lies another point of great significance in connection with this Zionist movement. And what is the meaning of this opposition on the part of the Rabbis? The answer is very simple: they are angry because the Zionists have unmasked the hollowness of their pretensions, and have shown them up to the world as strutting about with a lie in their right hand. These modern “reformed” Rabbis have tried to deceive themselves and their followers into the belief, that their dispersion among the nations, instead of being a punishment for apostasy from their God, was, on the contrary, a blessing in fact the realisation of the Messianic ideal, for only as a Diaspora can they fulfil their mission of bearing witness to the nations.

It may be news to the so-called Christian nations of Europe and America to learn, that these modern Rabbis are the true lights of the world, the salt of the earth, who must remain scattered to illumine the nations, and to preserve them from corruption; and that it is to them, and to the Rabbis who preceded them, that the nations owe what knowledge they possess of the true and living God but so they speak and write of themselves.

Now it was bad enough to hear it from missionaries and Christians that this is all false; that neither from the “orthodox” Talmudic, who are the successors of the Pharisees, nor yet from the “progressive” or “reformed” Rabbis, who are no improvement on the Sadducees of the time of our Lord, did the Gentiles learn to know of the true and living God of Israel, but from the Jewish apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ, the true light of the world, whose true glory these Rabbis have done their utmost to hide and misrepresent before their nation; that since the rejection of Christ and the destruction of Jerusalem, while the gospel of Christ has continued its triumphal march among the nations, the Synagogue has been struck with impotence, and unbelieving Israel with barrenness; that the Jews in their dispersion have indeed a mission, but quite different from that of which these modern Rabbis and their disciples boast the mission, namely, of witnessing to God’s righteous severity, as a warning to these “Christian” nations that they also, if they continue not in God’s goodness, shall be “cut off.” (Romans 11:22.)

It was bad enough, I say, to hear all this from Christians, but for these leaders of Zionism to come and tell them “A plague on you and your so-called mission; the nations do not want us in their midst; your antagonism to the national movement on the ground of ‘the Messianic’ idea and patriotic love to the countries which have granted you civil rights, is but veiled hypocrisy, covering your selfishness, and fear lest your comfortable nests should be stirred. Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? but ye modern ‘progressive’ Rabbis and your rich worldly-minded followers, who by their wealth, and at the cost of the sacrifice of Jewish principles, have succeeded in gaining for themselves a position in Gentile society what have ye done for the masses of your people?” In the words of Dr. Herzl’s opening address “You are satisfied because your powers of imagination have been weakened by your favourable circumstances, and therefore are not able to understand us Zionists. But the poor and the wretched understand us; they have the imagination created by distress. They know from the experience of to-day and yesterday what the pangs of hunger will be to-morrow. In this condition there are many hundreds of thousands of our people. . . . Judaism is an immense hostelry of misery, with branches throughout the world, and you not only do nothing yourselves, but hinder others, who by this national movement try to bring to them a ray of hope.” No wonder that a number of these modern Rabbis hate Zionism, and have bound themselves into

a union in order to “protest” and oppose; and no wonder also that when Dr. Max Nordau, towards the end of his address, said, “I will not speak of the so-called Protest-Rabbis of the West. With those we have already settled, and I hope that soon the whole Jewish people will have settled with them,” the whole Congress cheered and applauded. With Dr. Nordau’s speech, the first public session of the Congress, which in some respects turned out to be the most interesting, was brought to a close.

BASLE, August 29th.

I have been at almost all the meetings in the Congress Hall from the beginning, and have followed with the utmost interest all the long and sometimes very agitated discussions on the subjects of “Organisation,” “Finance,” “The Colonial Bank,” &c., but, excepting the first sitting, I find only very few notes in my diary apart from those relating to conversations on religious and spiritual topics, with some of the delegates and visitors, which are not meant for the public eye or ear. The fact is that many of these discussions in Congress relate to what I may call inner Zionism, and though of very great importance for the future working of the movement, it is of no special interest to the outside world, or to those who watch Zionism from the standpoint of the Kingdom of God. A few impressions and incidents, however, I must record. First, I am more and more impressed with the dead earnestness of these elected representatives of the Diaspora. From the eagerness, and air of seriousness, in all their discussions, especially in their committee-rooms) and in the intervals between the public meetings, you might think that not only are they themselves on the very eve of the proposed exodus to Palestine, and that there is not a moment to lose in making the necessary arrangements, but that on this exodus depends the destiny of the nations, and that the settlement can brook not a moment’s delay.

Yesterday, after a sitting which lasted almost continuously from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., with one or two short breaks, they assembled again at 10 p.m., for further discussion on some points connected with “The Jewish Colonial Trust,” and continued till a quarter past one in the morning, and to-day, when I arrived at the Town Casino about half an hour before the Congress opened at 10 a.m., the delegates were all in or about the building, and there was as much hurry and bustle and noisy discussion as if they had only just assembled for the first time, after a comfortable night in bed.

After carefully studying the various elements of which the Congress is made up, I am of the conviction that if Zionism does not as yet sufficiently represent the wealth and material resources of the Jewish nation, it does certainly represent a large proportion of its heart and brain; and as I look upon those hundreds of earnest, intelligent faces, gathered from all parts of the earth, and listen to the able, and often impassioned speeches made in different languages, I feel in my soul that Israel is God’s great reserve force for the future blessing of the world, and my heart goes out in yearning for the time when “the Spirit shall be poured upon us from on high,” and when these remarkable gifts, and this zeal and ability, shall be consecrated to the service of making known their long-rejected Messiah and King among the nations.

One or two incidents in the continuous excitement of the last three days are specially worth noticing. One occurred yesterday morning, when, in the midst of an agitated discussion on the question of finance, a chassidic Rabbi I am not certain whether from Roumania or Galicia ascended the tribune, pulled out a manuscript from his pocket, and after reading in Hebrew and German Isaiah 60:1-3, “Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of Jehovah is risen upon

thee," &c., began to preach a sermon, the substance of which was a glorification of Israel.

Personally, the picturesque figure, in the long kaftan and peyoth, whose face and voice reminded me very much of dear old Rabbi Lichtenstein, was a great object of interest to me; but the Congress, bent on business, was in no mood for a sermon, and vociferously called on the chairman, who happened to be Professor Mandelstamm, to call the Rabbi to order, and to remind him of the particular point under discussion. But in vain. The chairman kept knocking with his hammer; Dr. Herzl himself more than once quietly whispered from behind to the Rabbi to come to the point; but what did he know or care about finance? Was he not a duly elected delegate?

He had laboured perhaps for months to prepare his sermon, and in as good German as possible, and now, with such a splendid opportunity before him, was he to be debarred from delivering it? So the chairman remonstrated, the delegates laughed, talked, shouted noisily, but the Rabbi bravely proceeded, until his voice was finally drowned, and he had with a sigh, and an expression of great sadness on his face, to fold his manuscript together, and descend from the tribune.

DIE CULTURFRAGE.

Quite a different reception was accorded this afternoon to another but much better known Rabbi, Dr. Gaster, the Haham of the Sephardi Jews in London. Dr. Gaster, who is a scholar, and a native of Roumania, from which country he was banished for being a formidable champion of the cause of his oppressed brethren, represents "die Culturfrage" in the Zionist movement, but after reading his previous speeches, and listening to him very closely to-day, I am still at a loss clearly to define what is meant by it.

Perhaps I am very dense, but I was glad to find that the president of the Congress was equally slow of comprehension, for yesterday morning, in a most able reply to a number of criticisms from delegates on various shortcomings of the executive committee (one of which was that the culture question was not included in the agenda), Dr. Herzl humorously said, "Meine Herrn, I will repeat a question that I asked Dr. Gaster himself this morning, in the course of private conversation, and that was: 'Please tell me what is this Culturfrage? I have listened to many addresses on it, but I do not understand it.' "

Dr. Herzl did not repeat Dr. Gaster's answer to his question, but proceeded to observe that if a particular phase of the Jewish "religion" is meant, then he is determined that it shall be excluded from the discussions of the Congress, "because we Zionists respect every form of religious belief. Our movement is a national one, and religious discussions would only divide us." In justice to Dr. Herzl, and the other Zionist leaders, I must say that this does not necessarily imply that they are anti-religious, but that they have no regard for the strife between the various religious factions in modern Judaism. For my own part, I do not know what I would rather choose, whether to have religion altogether left out of their deliberations, or to have it brought up by men, whether "orthodox" or "progressive," whose conceptions of God and spiritual truth are as opposed to the principles of Israel's true "religion" revealed in Old and New Testament, as darkness to light. For the present, Zionism, like all Israel, is religiously a heterogeneous mass, embracing in its following all shades of belief and unbelief, held together only by the "National Idea." One can understand, therefore, the anxiety of the responsible leaders to keep questions of cult out of its programme. But let me give a few of the more striking passages of Dr. Gaster's speech. I suppose in answer to

Dr. Herzl's question as to "what is really meant," he said:

"As a matter of fact, our culture question is one of the greatest prophetic dreams of our people, the greatest prophetic vision which our people have cherished throughout thousands of years; the greatest ideal which has hovered before the spiritual sight, and which has deeply influenced the lives of our people. We have always had a great ideal before us, which is not to be compared with the ideals that have influenced other nations, and we have pursued this ideal, undismayed, through thousands of years. For we dream of possessing our own state on earth, where justice and love shall reign, and we name this heavenly state on earth the ideal of the Jewish people. It is entirely different to the efforts of the whole world, and therefore we have remained different, and I assert it here on a higher plane than all other nations of the world, for there is no other nation that can compare with ours. All the attempts that have been made against us, to degrade and persecute us, have failed, and we, as Zionists, now declare we remain as true to our ideal as were our ancestors thousands of years ago. You will naturally ask me, What is the connection between this heavenly state on earth with Zionism? In fact the connection is of the closest. The one is hope, the other is reality. We have now before our spiritual eyes the picture of the glorious future, and this is the secret of our eternity and indestructibleness. If our bodies have been broken, our spirit has never been broken." This is partially true. The establishment of God's kingdom on earth, with Israel as the centre, was the divinely communicated "ideal" of Israel's prophets and seers, but between the present and the time when that ideal shall be realised lies Israel's repentance and conversion, about which Dr. Gaster, and the other representatives of the "Culturfrage" say, as yet, not a word; the time when Israel's proud spirit shall at last be broken before God, and when in true contrition of heart they shall turn not only to Zion, but to Zion's true King, through whom alone, and never through Israel apart from Him, will this prophetic "dream" be fulfilled.

Then Israel will no longer boast as if by their innate goodness and power they were on "a higher plane than all other nations," but in the spirit of Paul, the type of his nation, they will say, "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief . . . By grace I am what I am." To me, one of the saddest passages in Dr. Caster's speech was the following, because it reveals an utterly mistaken view as to the real character and influence of Rabbinic Judaism:

"When the Temple of ancient times was destroyed," he said, "the leaders of the spiritual party asked of the Roman conquerors not the liberation of the Jewish people from slavery; they asked that the Jewish spirit should be liberated; they prayed for one modest thing, only to open a school. This school has never ceased to exist. Its doors, once opened, have never been closed, and through these portals the spirit of mankind has been re-created to return here in a purified form. We have acquired knowledge from all quarters; but we have also worked in every direction as spiritual teachers of the highest teachings." Was this so? I ask again. Was it from the portals of the synagogue or Beth-Hammedrash that the power went forth for the rereation "of the spirit of mankind"?

I have already shown up this delusion. The utmost which the synagogue has done since the destruction of the second Temple was to shut in its antiquated doors, and preserve in isolation those within. Not from the synagogue, where the quibblings of Rabbis took the place of the reading

of God's pure Word in Moses and the prophets, but from the new "House," the Ecclesia of the living God, of which Christ became the head, and the Jewish Apostles the stewards, did blessing and renewal come to the nations, and, it is a pity that Dr. Gaster being an historian does not seem to be aware of it. And as to the effects of Talmudism upon the Jews themselves, was it really "a liberation of the spirit"? This is not the place to analyse the Talmud, or to show the part it has played in moulding Jewish character, even if I were able for such a task, but we know something of the Talmud and its effects on the masses of the Diaspora, and I must endorse the conviction of many others who are capable of judging, that instead of "a liberation," the Talmud has brought poor Israel into a spiritual and even mental bondage, corresponding only to the outward bodily captivity, in which they have been since the Temple was destroyed by their Roman conquerors. The concluding passage of Dr. Caster's speech was a fine piece of oratory, with a germ of truth wrongly apprehended.

"And now, in conclusion," he said, "what is there left for me to say?

"Only to remind you of an old legend, the legend of the Phoenix, to which our wise men long ago compared our people. The Phoenix is immortal, but in a specified time it grows old and weak, and is consumed inwardly; it becomes ashes, and only a very small germ remains. This the priest takes to Heliopolis, the City of the Sun, where he guards the germ and gradually the Phoenix develops, and when it is fully matured, it shakes its pinions and takes flight to the sun to thank God for having permitted it to be born again.

"We also have been burnt and scattered like the ashes of the earth. Only the germ remains, and now we Zionists, the priests of the new age, we come to bring the germ to the City of the Sun, of truth, of fidelity, of devotion. We preserve it and shall preserve it, until Judaism, like the Phoenix, rises again from its ashes and soars upwards to the sun of truth, carrying the nations with it." This reminded me of Isaiah 6:1-13, where to the prophet's question "Lord how long?" God says: "Until cities be waste without habitation, and houses without men, and the land becomes utterly waste, and Jehovah have removed men far away, and the forsaken places be many in the midst of the land. And if there be yet a tenth in it, it shall again be eaten up; as a terebinth, and as an oak, whose stock remaineth when they are felled, so the holy seed is the stock thereof."

There is, indeed, an indestructible germ "a holy seed" in Israel, which always survives the terrible judgments and desolations which befall them, and over this germ Israel's Shepherd and Great High Priest is watching. Before long He will carry it back to the city of God, and there of the sun of righteousness it will take root and live anew. Then "Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit."

FRIDAY, August 18th.

It is the last day of the Congress, and being the eve of the Sabbath, a number of the delegates have already left, but still there is as much bustle and hurry as ever. The chief feature of the morning sitting was a speech in German by Sir Francis Montefiore, nephew and heir of the famous Sir Moses, whose name is still held in the highest esteem by the Jews in all parts of the world.

Sir Francis is a fair-haired thorough English gentleman, whose advocacy of Zionism shows that not all the Jewish monied aristocracy hold aloof from the movement. "I am with you," he said; "my services, I can assure you, are ever at your command. For I shall indeed consider it the highest of

all privileges if only, and in any way, be it even in the humblest of capacities, I can do but the least thing to further and promote this great and glorious cause," and to these assurances the delegates responded with tremendous cheering. The final sitting in the afternoon was taken up with election of committees and the reading of the report of the Palestine Colonisation Committee, after which there followed a scene of tumult, occasioned by Mr. Davis Trietsch, who, from the tribune, tried to unfold his plan for the temporary colonisation of Cyprus. The Russian delegates in particular, who will hear of no other land but Palestine, worked themselves up into a frenzy, and there was confusion till their motion was carried by Congress that Mr. Trietsch should not be heard. When calm was restored, Dr. Herzl dismissed the Congress with a brief and dignified speech, followed by tremendous cheering, during which all rose to their feet. A resolution of thanks to the president, and the third Zionist Congress passes into history, having certainly put the Zionist movement on a more consolidated basis than before.*

* I subjoin the following account of a pathetic incident at the close of the fourth Congress in London in 1900: "At the close there was a very strange scene. The members rose and started singing a national Hebrew song. It was all in the minor key, ending with a refrain which sounded like the sad wail of a woman in distress, or the moan of a suffering patient racked with pain, it reminded one of some of the sad plaintive songs of the negro slaves on the American plantations. It was weird and made one shudder so might slaves sing in their despondency when filled with an insatiable craving after freedom. But suddenly from another part of the hall came other sounds and another song. For a time it was difficult to distinguish it, both seemed mingled, but gradually the Hebrew slave dirge died away, the minor key gave way to the major, and England's National Anthem burst forth, and was taken up quickly by the Jew from Russia and New York, Roumania and South Africa, Jerusalem and Paris; it was the song of a free nation, a nation that had never known slavery, a nation that had helped many to freedom. Would it begin the new century by helping the nation longest enslaved to a home they would never leave again, to a freedom they would never forfeit?"

Before leaving Basle, let me bear my testimony to the kindness and courtesy of the officials and leaders of the Congress to the few Jewish Christians who were present in their midst. A spirit of tolerance has characterised the Zionist movement from the beginning, on which account it has attracted the sympathy of intelligent Christians, who have never ceased to cherish the hope of Israel's restoration and future blessing. A REMARKABLE SCENE. As an illustration of this spirit of tolerance, I may refer to a scene which I witnessed in the course of this morning, when, during a pause in the proceedings of Congress, I found in the spacious lobby leading to the galleries of the large hall, a tall Franciscan monk, surrounded by quite a large number of delegates, who were noisily disputing with him on religious topics; while on the outskirts of the little crowd was a dear, earnest Gentile Christian "Brother," with an open New Testament in his hand, in which he was pointing out some particular passages to the Jews.

It was indeed a case of extremes meeting; to see these two men the one with the rosary and cross hanging from his neck, and the other with the Word of God both arguing with the Jews.

Before I was recognised by some in the party, I managed to overhear fragments of the discussion. The monk must be very different from the majority of his confraternity and of the Roman Church in general if what he said was true.

He assured them that he was a great lover of the Jews, and that he believed they would soon go back to Palestine.

“What about Deckert?” interrupted an Austrian delegate.

Deckert, I should explain, is that Catholic parish priest near Vienna referred to in another part* who not long ago preached a series of sermons against the Jews in his church, and ended one with the words: “Verbrennt die Juden zur Ehre Gottes. Amen.” (“Burn the Jews for the glory of God. Amen.”) * See page 218. 18 The Franciscan professed not to know anything about this Deckert nor of any hatred on the part of the Roman Catholic Church toward the Jews.

“You speak of love,” interrupted another Jew, “but all we know is that for centuries we have experienced from the Christians nothing but hatred and cruelty.” The dear “Brother” with the New Testament whose name, according to his own writing in my notebook, is Herr Alfred Rosshard, of Papperswyl gave me quite a hug when he discovered who I was, and pressed me to come and stay with him in his home. His words of testimony seemed much more effective than the monk’s. When one of the Jews in the group appealed to him what he thought of the anti-Semites, he replied, “The anti-Semites they are only a scourge in the hand of our God, but as soon as you return to Him, He will throw the hateful scourge from Him, and visit upon them all their own cruelty. No true Christian who loves his Saviour and his Bible can hate the Jews, but there are many false Christians, even as Christ foretold. But you must not judge Him by these false professors.” To this I could only say “Amen.”

2.14. Chapter 8. Israel's Mission to the World., and the Church's Mission to Israel

VIII. ISRAEL’S MISSION TO THE WORLD, AND THE CHURCH’S MISSION TO ISRAEL

“Ye are My witnesses, saith the Lord, and My servant whom I have chosen; that ye may know and believe Me, and understand that I am He; before Me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after Me. I, even I, am the Lord, and beside Me there is no Saviour. I have declared, and have saved, and I have showed when there was no strange God among you; therefore ye are My witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God.” Isaiah 43:10-12.

“Ye shall be witnesses unto Me, both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” Acts 1:8.

ISRAEL’S MISSION TO THE WORLD, AND THE CHURCH’S MISSION TO ISRAEL *

* The first part of this chapter was an address delivered at the Mildmay Conference in June, 1897, the subject that year being “The Evangelisation of Our Own Generation.” It was afterwards written out in full for the Missionary Review of the World, from which excellent magazine it is reproduced here. AS we look at the passage quoted from Acts 1:1-26. “Ye shall be witnesses unto Me,” we cannot but be reminded of the very similar words addressed by God through the prophet Isaiah, to Israel as a nation, and we may well ask how is it, that instead of Israel at the present time witnessing for God among the nations, it is necessary that witness should be borne to Israel about their own God, their own Messiah, and their own Scriptures? The answer is given by the Apostle Paul in Romans 11:25, “Blindness in part is happened to Israel.” It is true that certain leaders among modern Jews claim still to have a mission, even at this present day, in their dispersion among the nations a mission, as they say, to bear witness to the unity of God. But if we examine this supposed witness that the modern Jew gives to the unity of God, we find it very defective; for it is not a testimony to God as He has been pleased to reveal Himself in His word that is, as the infinite, yet personal, triune, holy, loving God but a testimony to an abstract formula with regard to the unity of the Godhead. Of a personal, living God, modern Judaism knows, alas, very little. As a matter of fact, it is not due to the testimony to the unity of God, as given by the synagogue, that Gentiles have been brought to believe in one living and true God, but to the more truly Jewish testimony as given by the Jewish Apostles of the New Covenant, who went about preaching one God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; one Mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ the righteous; and one Holy Spirit, by whom the knowledge of God is communicated to man; and these three, one blessed Trinity.

But, speaking generally, it is the boast of modern Jews that they are not a missionary people. Thousands of times have I had it thrown in my teeth by Jews in various parts of the world, who have said, “Why do Christians trouble themselves with trying to convert us? We do not try to convert anybody.” My reply usually is: “Why don’t you? If you boast of the fact that you are not a missionary people, you simply boast of your shame; you simply testify to the fact that you are not

now answering the purpose for which God called Israel into existence. Was not the very purpose of God in creating the Jewish nation that they might be witnesses for Him, to make known His name among the nations? The fact that you are not now a missionary people is accounted for by the reason that you have no mission. In this respect it is true that the Kingdom of God has been taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. If you had a message you could not be silent, even if you tried, for you would find the word of God like a burning fire in your heart shut up in your bones, so that you would weary in forbearing to run and communicate it to others." Israel at the present day has no message. The Jews do not, and cannot, bear witness for God, excepting that passive testimony which the diaspora gives to the righteous severity of God a testimony which, would to God Christendom took to heart, because it contains the solemn lesson to them, that they also, if they continue not in His goodness, shall be cut off. But has the purpose of God in relation to Israel in this respect, that they should be His witnesses, been frustrated, or has it been already accomplished in the testimony that the Jews gave in the past? No; the Jew has yet a future of testimony for God on the earth. "Blindness in part," as the Apostle Paul says, "has happened unto Israel," and it is "in part" in a double sense. It is partial in its extent, for there is the remnant, according to the election of grace, who are not blinded, but can behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ even now, and it is partial also in its duration. There is a great contrast in the Word of God in this respect, between the condition of the Jew now, and the condition of the Jew in the future. "Blindness in part has happened unto Israel," says the Apostle Paul in Romans 11:1-36 but we read of a wonderful transformation that is to come over the Jewish people. "Then," says the prophet, Isaiah 35:5-6, "the eyes of the blind shall be opened." The very nation that has been destined by God to point all the other nations to the Sun of Righteousness, has been itself struck blind, but it is only for a time. The present condition of Israel may be very beautifully illustrated by a touching incident which I heard not long ago. It was about a child who met with an accident and suddenly lost his eyesight. At first he did not know what had happened to him, and used to follow his mother about the house, crying: "Mother, mother, when will it be day? When will the sun shine?" The poor mother had not the heart to tell her child all at once that it was day, that the sun was shining, but that something had happened to his eyes. This is the condition of the Jews to-day. "We wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, but we walk in darkness." But "the eyes of the blind shall be opened." Soon the cry will go forth, "Arise, shine, for thy light has come; the glory of Jehovah is risen upon thee." And then "the Gentiles shall come to thy light and kings to the brightness of thy rising." The prophet continues: "Then the lame man shall leap as an hart." I never read this verse in Isaiah 35:1-10 without being reminded of Acts 3:1-26, where we have the account of a notable miracle that was wrought in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We read there about a poor man who was carried every day to the gate of the temple called Beautiful, where he begged for alms of those who were going to worship God. One day Peter and John came along, and he asked alms from them also; but Peter, fastening his eyes upon him, with John, said: "Look on us!" expect something different from us than you would from others; and we read that he gave heed to them, expecting something from them. But Peter said: "Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I unto thee: in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!" and he took him by the right hand, and the lame man, leaping up, stood and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking and leaping and praising God. My dear friends, that lame man is a type and parable of Israel. Israel is that lame man. Beautiful upon the mountains should be the feet of Jewish evangelists and preachers bearing the glad tidings of Messiah's

Gospel to the nations; but Israel is lame now and outside the temple of God; that is, out of communion with God, because the temple was the visible symbol of fellowship with Jehovah. They are like the poor lame man also in this respect, that all their thoughts are fixed on money. Money, money; alms, business. I do not wish to say here, because it would not be true, that the Jew is exceptional in this respect. It is the tendency of the human heart that knows not the treasure that is at the right hand of God, to cleave unto the dust, and the Jew and Gentile are alike in this respect. I am only touching upon the fact that the Jew, like the Gentile, is at present occupied with worldly things, and he will readily deal with Christians in business. Peter and John have come to Israel and have said, “Look on us,” and, blessed be God, there is a remnant whose eyes have been opened by the Spirit of God to see that power to heal lies only in the name of Jesus, and they are leaping and rejoicing. But as far as the nation is concerned, Israel is still sitting lame, incapable of going on an errand for God among the nations. For centuries it has been in that condition; but will it always remain so? Oh, no! There is a greater One yet than Peter and John to pass Israel again. We sometimes sing a hymn, “Jesus of Nazareth passeth by.” He passed by Israel once, and Israel was then already sick; but Israel let Him pass without as much as touching the hem of His garment, and Jesus returned unto His place until they acknowledge their offence and seek His face. When He departed, He said: “Your house is left unto you desolate, for I say unto you, ye shall not see Me henceforth, until ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.” Yes, Jesus will yet pass Israel again, and they will assuredly use the words of the prophecy from Psalms 118:1-29 which He quoted. Jesus will say to Israel, “Look on Me,” and the spirit of grace and supplication will be poured out upon the Jewish nation, and they shall look on Him whom they have pierced. Jesus will again take Israel by the hand. “I will build again the tabernacle of David, which has fallen; I will build again the ruins thereof;” and then “shall the lame man leap as an hart,” and a tremendous sensation will be created on the earth. This is the hope of missions, and of the evangelisation of the world. When this national lame man is healed, all the peoples of the earth will see this wonderful miracle performed by Jesus Christ of Nazareth. We read in the same prophecy that at that time in the wilderness shall waters break out. This is a picture of Israel’s present condition a wilderness, a howling desert, spiritually; but God has said that out of this wilderness rivers will spring up for the refreshing of the whole world.

Now, in the interval between Israel’s rejection and Israel’s reception of Christ, when the Jews shall be reinstated as the witnesses of Jehovah on the earth, the Church, which is made up of Jews and Gentiles, is put into the very position of Israel, both in relation to privilege and to responsibility, (a) In relation to privilege:“ Ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people . . . and ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation,” was God’s word to Israel in Exodus, the Book of Redemption: “Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased possession,” says Peter, to all who have been redeemed with precious blood, whether Jew or Gentile.

(b) In relation to responsibility: “Ye are My witnesses,” saith Jehovah, “and My servants . . . This people have I formed for Myself; they shall show forth My praise,” are God’s words to Israel: “Ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth,” were the parting words of the ascending Christ to the Church: “That ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light.”

Yes, one of the chief ends of the Church's existence on earth is, that she may bear witness to the nations; and in her witness she dare not lose sight of the Jew, for, as the late Professor Franz Delitzsch once said, at a great missionary meeting, "Gentlemen, if you speak about the evangelisation of the world, and forget the Jew, you are like a bird that tries to fly with one of its wings clipped." But generally I find that in speaking to Christians about the Jew, it is very easy to carry them with you if you speak of the Jews of the past the Jew of Bible history or the prophetic Jew of the future; but when it comes to the actual Jew of the present day, and you want them to enter into the thoughts and mind of God in reference to Israel of the present, that is a most difficult task. Let me illustrate it practically. At the present day there is, perhaps, no country in the world where such a lively interest is taken in the Jew, and where so much is done in proportion for Jewish missions, as in Norway, although in Norway itself there are scarcely any Jews. You will ask how this interest in Israel originated in Norway. Well, it originated, for the most part, in the prayers and devotion of a noble-minded Christian lady. About fifty years ago, when the cause of foreign missions was taking hold of Christians in Norway, this lady's heart was moved by the Spirit of God with compassion for Israel. One day, as the pastor of her church was coming down from the pulpit, she said to him: "I am very glad to hear you always pray for the heathen, but I wish you would also include poor scattered Israel." The pastor turned round rather hotly, and said: "The Jews! We have nothing to do with them. They have been cast off, and now it is the time of the Gentiles." She tried to reason with him, but it was of no avail. But one day she called on her pastor, and said to him: "I have a very sad story to relate to you, and I am sure it will draw out your sympathy." He said: "What is it?" She replied: "Not far from here there lives a good man and his wife. They have one son, whom they love as their own lives. They did everything possible for him, but the son turned out most unworthy of his parents' love; he returned it only with disobedience and ingratitude. After a time, when his conduct became no longer tolerable, with great grief of heart, they let him go, and he is now a wanderer. Instead of this son of theirs they adopted a poor gipsy boy. Him they put in their own son's room, gave their own son's clothing and books in fact, they treated him in every possible way as their own child. The boy was very happy, but the parents could not forget their own child. In the evening sometimes a mist steals over the mother's eyes, and a sigh escapes from the heart of the father, and when the boy asks, 'What is the matter?' the father answers, 'Oh, our son, our son; would that he would come back; there is room in our hearts for him as well as you' But this the boy does not like, and now it has come to this, that every time the parents mention their son, he gets into a temper. What do you think of it?" The pastor stood up and said: "Oh, the ungrateful youth; if I were the parents, I would let him go; he is not a bit better than the other." The lady paused a minute or two, and then said: "Dear pastor, forgive me; Israel is that wandering son, and we are the gipsy boy; and although God was obliged to send the Jews into captivity, and has 'given over the dearly beloved of His soul into the hands of her enemies,' His heart has not ceased to yearn for them, and His 'hands are still outstretched all the day long to His disobedient and gainsaying people. "Hearken!" Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he a pleasant child? for, since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still. Therefore my bowels are troubled for him. I will surely have mercy on him, saith Jehovah.' " The pastor's heart was won, and the result was the first society that was established in Norway for the evangelisation of the Jews. May God give us the same spirit of compassion, that our hearts may go out in pity with His for this poor national Prodigal Son! Our testimony to-day to the Jews is with regard to Jesus Christ, that "this Jesus," whom they crucified and think to be dead, is Israel's true Messiah, exalted to the right

hand of God, a prince and a Saviour. If time permitted, I should like to speak of the peculiar methods which we should adopt in our testimony to the Jew; and also as to the right kind of witnesses who should be sent forth by the Church, because I believe that, to this day, God has His instruments adapted for this work, and for that work, and it is not every one who is called of God to be a missionary to the Jews. On this point it will not be out of place if I quote from a report of Professor Gustaf Dalman of the Leipzig Institutum Delitzschianum, as to the necessary qualifications of a properly equipped missionary to the Jews, with which I most heartily concur.

“1. The missionary among the Jews must have a thorough knowledge of their languages. This comprises not only a knowledge of the languages of Jewish literature, Hebrew and Aramaic; and, if possible, a good practical acquaintance with the former, which is most extensively used by the Jews in their written communications, but also ability at least to speak German, and to understand Hebrew-German, or ‘Yiddish,’ the vernacular spoken by two-thirds of the Jewish people.

“2. The missionary must be acquainted with the religion of the Jews. Without this knowledge he will find it impossible to set forth our holy religion to Jews in such a way as to commend it to them, or even to be understood by them, much less to bring it home to heart and conscience. Those who are not cognizant of the world of Jewish religious thought, cannot conceive how unintelligible the terminology of our holy faith is to the Jew. Even the great scriptural key-words of Christianity: sin, repentance, faith, righteousness, Redeemer, Christ-Messiah have a different meaning to the Jew, while, of course, all ecclesiastical terms are utterly incomprehensible to him. And thus experience has shown that the plainest and most heartfelt Gospel message coming from an untrained, though earnest Gentile Christian, will sound as a dark riddle in Jewish ears.

“3. The missionary should have studied the doctrines and sacred documents of the Christian faith in their bearings on Israel. Tracing the history of Israel through the Old Testament, and viewing their election and future in the light of law and prophecy, and noting the differences between the Jewish and Christian conceptions of Bible doctrine and statement, he should seek to obtain such a grasp of the Scriptures as to be able to meet and answer any difficulty or objection that may be propounded by the inquirer or caviller.

“4. The missionary must be conversant with the history of the mission to Israel, its nature, aims, and methods, and the lines on which the work has hitherto been carried on. Practical knowledge and insight is best obtained by commencing work under the supervision of experienced missionaries.

“Even for the Hebrew-Christian candidate special training is most desirable and necessary. As a rule, his knowledge of Jewish and Hebrew matters is insufficient and incomplete, in spite of his former surroundings, and though his own faith be firm and clearly evinced, yet in the nature of things his grasp of Scripture truth cannot be such as to fit him, without any further training, for the work of an evangelist among his brethren. We cannot fix a high enough standard of attainment for those who desire to devote themselves to this work. A training that may fully qualify a man to go out and proclaim the Gospel to the uncivilised heathen world, is utterly insufficient for a worker among the Jews, although we would never have ourselves or others forget, that technical qualifications and even Scriptural knowledge are worthless, unless accompanied by a living faith and the burning desire to promote the interests of Christ’s kingdom among His brethren according to the flesh. Better to send out no missionaries at all than to send out such as are spiritually and

intellectually unfit for their task."

Tremendous injury to the Jewish mission has resulted from two causes:

(1) The putting into the work of "workers," both Jews and Gentiles, who were utterly unfit for the holy and delicate task of holding up the banner of Christ before the Jews; sometimes mere novices, whose characters were not sufficiently tested; or even brilliant impostors, who captivated the hearts of some whose zeal for the Jewish cause is not according to knowledge. In this part of the Lord's vineyard more particularly, we need not only the spirit of love and of wisdom and power, but also of a sound mind, a spirit of Scriptural sobriety, not dissociated from a true Holy Ghost enthusiasm, for the salvation of a people in whom is bound up the hope of the world, but in whose midst Satan is entrenched more powerfully at the present day than in any other nation.

(2) There is also a great lack of knowledge of the peculiar people, and of God's present and future purposes in and through them, which is accountable for certain methods in some Jewish missions, which, however much momentary sensation they may create, and however much interest they may arouse among Gentile Christians, can only work disastrously as far as the Jews themselves are concerned. I am not speaking as a theorist, but from knowledge and experience. After being permitted to serve the Lord in the evangelisation of my people for over twenty years, I am more and more convinced that in the Jewish mission, as in the Lord's work generally, it is not sensation, but self-sacrificing hard toil, and patient continuance in well-doing that will accomplish anything of permanent value for the glory of Christ.

Then, as to the manner of presenting the Gospel to the Jews, a great deal might very usefully be said. For instance, Jewish opposition is sometimes owing to the fact that Christianity has been presented to them as a system, altogether detached from, and, to some extent, opposed to Moses and the prophets. Now, in order to remove such impressions, it is of the utmost importance in dealing with Jews to show them that the New Testament is in historic continuity, and true order of sequence to the Old Testament, and that there is not a single essential doctrine in the New Testament, the roots of which are not to be found in Moses and the prophets. This will not be successfully accomplished by always pointing the Jews to a few well-known Messianic passages, but by a methodic unfolding of Scripture as a whole. Indeed, if there is one need greater than another in the Jewish field at the present day, it is that of men mighty in Scriptures, who, in the power of the Spirit, can show to Israel how that, not only an isolated passage here and there, but that in the whole "scroll of the book it is written of Him."

It is not my intention to enter into a review of Jewish missions, and into what has been accomplished within this century, so eventful in the history of Jewish emancipation and evangelisation. All I can do now is just briefly to remark on the great change in relation to the Gospel which is at present undoubtedly passing over the Jewish nation.

Putting aside the vague, exaggerated reports based on no solid foundation, which lead those unacquainted with the facts of the case to believe that untold thousands of Jews are now pressing into the Church, and that we are on the verge of the entire nation becoming Christian, I have no hesitation in saying that the tone and attitude of large numbers of Jews in relation to Christ, in countries where hard, persevering Gospel work has been carried on for some time, have undergone a remarkable change.

It is a great thing in itself that the Christ-question is becoming familiarised in the minds of Jews, and that Talmudic Judaism is putting out its hand, however tremblingly, to receive the New Testament, and listening, though as yet with hesitating ear, as to who this Jesus of Nazareth, whom it has hitherto hated without knowing why, really was. To an eagerness on the part of many Jews in all parts of the world to hear of Christ and to receive the New Testament, I can bear personal testimony. In Germany, Austria, and the Balkan States, North Africa, in many places on the Mediterranean coast as well as in Egypt, Palestine, and Asia Minor, we have had Jews flock to us in some places from early morning till late at night to hear and dispute about Christ. Even in centres of Chassidic Jewish bigotry, in Galicia and Roumania, we have had our rooms packed with Jews in their long kaftans and peyoth, eagerly and respectfully discussing the claims of Christ, some of whom gratefully accepted the New Testament, which but a few years ago they would not even touch with their hands because they regarded it as an unclean thing. I cannot here enter into the causes which by the overruling providence of God have brought this change about, but I may just mention two.

I. It is the outcome of nearly a century's prayerful toil on the part of Jewish missions and societies, some of whom, alas! have not continued long in their first love and zeal, and are now in danger of degenerating into mere "organisations." What she has sown in tears more than half a century ago the Church of Christ is now permitted to reap in joy. It is a remarkable fact that however much interest in the Jewish mission cause has lacked in quantity, it has not lacked in quality. The sympathies of some of the holiest as well as the ablest of the servants of Christ within this century, have been enlisted in this truly Christ-like work, so full of hope for the world and in reflex blessing to the Church itself.

While painfully conscious of the inadequacy and questionable means and methods which have sometimes been adopted, I am struck, in studying the history of Jewish missions, with the amount of self-sacrificing love, devotion, and sanctified ability which have been brought to this task.

We sometimes hear it said that the most notable conversions from among Jews my friends Joseph Rabinowitz and Rabbi Lichtenstein for example are not the results of missions to the Jews, but of the study of the New Testament. Every conversion, if true, is directly the result of the Word of God applied by the Spirit of God; but how came it that Rabinowitz and Lichtenstein had New Testaments to read? Until this century, until the Jewish mission saw to its translation and printing, there was no Hebrew New Testament for use among the Jews.

II. Secondly, anti-Semitism and the grosser forms of persecution to which the Jews have been subjected in Russia and other countries, have contributed indirectly to bring about this spirit of change in the Jewish world in relation to the Gospel. Our God ever brings good out of evil and causes the wrath of men to praise Him. The whole movement, based for the most part on shallowness, lies, and inhumanity, by which these already apostate nations are hastening the filling of the cup of their iniquity, has nevertheless served to remind backslidden, apostate Israel of the long-standing controversy between them and their God, and has caused some to ask themselves what the sin can be which has brought upon them the retribution of so many long centuries, and in this indirect way their hearts have been to some extent prepared to listen to the claims of Christ. As may be said of all missions, so may it perhaps more especially be said of the Jews, the present is undoubtedly a great day of opportunity for the Church of God. A door is open

as never before, and, blessed be God, the Church is awaking to a sense of her duty to the Jew, for never before has there been such an interest manifested in missions to the Jews.

What is needed at this juncture above all things are the right kind of labourers men of God and with the fitness and ability for this peculiar work; men with the faith of Abraham, and with the sincerity, and missionary zeal, and unquenchable love for Israel which characterised the Apostle Paul; men who from the present darkness can look to the coming dawn when “all Israel shall be saved” and “the glory of the Lord cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.”

2.15. Chapter 9. Anglo-Israelism and the True History of the Ten "Lost" Tribes"

IX. ANGLO-ISRAELISM AND THE TRUE HISTORY OF THE TEN “LOST” TRIBES (A Letter to an Inquirer)

DEAR Friend, I shall endeavour to comply with your request, and to give you in this letter a few reasons for my strong aversion to the Anglo-Israelite theory, which I cannot help regarding as one of the saddest symptoms of the mental and spiritual shallowness of the present day. I am not a man delighting in controversy, and I only consent to your wish because I believe that you, like many other simple-minded Christians, are perplexed and imposed upon by the plausibilities of the supposed “Identifications,” and are not able to detect the fallacies and perversions of Scripture and history upon which the whole theory is based. The theory is, that the “lost” Israelites who were carried captive by the Assyrians under Sargon, are identical with the Saxae, or Scythians, who appear as a conquering horde there about the same time. These Scythians next swarmed westward into Northern Europe, and became the progenitors in particular of the Saxon invaders of England. The Anglo-Saxons therefore are the “lost” ten tribes, now identified. They are the Israel of the Bible, to whom belong the covenants and the blessings. It is owing to this fact that the British Empire is so great and prosperous. As to the Jews, they are not Israel at all, but, as the descendants of Judah, are still under the curse. In fact, the Anglo-Israelite by another and more mischievous method is doing exactly what the allegorising, or so-called spiritualising, school of interpreters did. The method was to apply all the promises in the Bible to the “spiritual” Israel, or the Church, and all the curses to the literal Israel, or the Jews; but by this new system, while the curses are still left to the Jew, all the blessings are applied not even to those “in Christ,” but indiscriminately to a nation, which, as a nation, is as apostate from God as any other of which “Christendom” is composed, though I thankfully recognise the fact that there are many of God’s true people in it. The supposed ethnological and philological proofs for the British-Israel theory have been again and again demolished by competent authorities. Thus Professor Rawlinson, commenting on Mine’s “Identifications,” said that the pamphlet is not calculated to produce the slightest effect on the opinion of those competent to form one. “Such effect as it may have, can only be on the ignorant and unlearned on those who are unaware of the absolute and entire diversity in language, physical type, religious opinions, and manners and customs, between the Israelites and the various races from whom the English nation can be shown historically to be descended.” As a matter of fact, there is as little absolute proof that the Anglo-Saxons are the Saxae, or Scythians, as that the Saxae are the Israelites. The Scriptural “Identifications” with which Anglo-Israel literature abound, turn out on examination to be mere verbal, and sometimes very childish quibblings on the English letter, depending for their success on the reader’s ignorance of Hebrew exegesis. Some of their interpretations I can only characterise as bordering on blasphemy. Let me quote one or two examples.

I. Great Britain is declared to be the stone cut out without hands which smote the image of Nebuchadnezzar*

* “Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream ‘in’ The British Empire of Ephraim.” A whole collection of similar perversions of Scripture may be found in an excellent pamphlet by Pastor Frank H. White, called “Anglo-Israelism Examined.”

“We will see what is to be the future of the British Empire, or, in other words, the stone that smote the image. It is to become a great mountain and fill the whole earth. Our Colonial Empire, then, will continue to grow till it covers the whole world. We have tried to avoid extending our Empire many and many a time, and yet God has caused it to grow larger and larger, and I believe will still do so. We are already by far the greatest empire there is, or ever has been, and we shall yet be far greater.

“The British Empire, again, can never be conquered. Daniel says, ‘The God of Heaven shall set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed: it shall stand for ever.’ Consequently we shall never be conquered; we must continue till the end of time, so that we are to continue to exist as the last Kingdom or Empire this world is to see.”

II. The smoke of London identified with the Shekhinah glory.* * From an article in Time Banner of Israel.

“During their wanderings in the desert His presence was manifested by the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, and during the captivity of the Two Tribes of Judah in Babylon He was with them, until, at the expiration of the seventy years, He stirred up Cyrus to release them. The same Lord still watches over the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel in England, and continues to bless them. The same miracles that were wrought in Egypt were intended to foreshadow the realisation of God’s future dealings with the Israelites; and if a gigantic panoramic view of England could be taken from an elevation above the centre of the island at midnight, a temporal pillar of fire would be as remarkable from the blazing furnaces, the gas, and steam engines, as the pillar of cloud and smoke arising from the same sources in the daytime, marking the chief position and prosperity of Israel.”

Once again the solemn words of the apostle are fulfilled in the teachers of Anglo-Israelism: “Professing themselves to be wise they became fools,” or how else could they descend to such impious trivialities, or dare to liken the glory of the Personal Presence of the uncorruptible Jehovah, of which the shekhinah cloud was the visible symbol, to the smoke ascending from “blazing furnaces” and “steam engines.”

III. Edward Hine author of the forty-seven “Identifications” is the promised Deliverer who should come out of Zion. The following is taken from an article on Romans 11:25-27, which appeared in “Life from the Dead,” which was edited by Edward Hine himself:

“Are the British people identical with the lost Ten Tribes of Israel? And is the nation, by the identity, being led to glory? If these things are so, then where is the Deliverer? He must have already come out of Zion. He must be doing his great work; he must be amongst us. It is our impression that, by the glory of the work of the identity, we have come to the time of Israel’s national salvation by the Deliverer out of Zion, and that Edward Hine and that Deliverer are identical.”

I have said above that Anglo-Israelism applies the promises given to converted Israel indiscriminately to the English nation. It does not stop even here, as the above extracts show, but goes on to rob Christ Himself of His glory by applying to the British people prophecies which belong, not even to Israel, but to Israel's Saviour. I have seen, for instance, again and again, the second Psalm, with the address of the Father to the Son, "Ask of Me and I will give Thee the heathen (or 'nations') for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession," interpreted of the British Empire; while not long ago a champion of the British-Israel theory preached on the words of the Lord in Matthew, "Therefore say I unto you, the Kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof," taking it for granted that England is that "nation," which, as a nation, is bringing forth the fruits of God's kingdom.

Now I need not explain to you that this is an utterly unspiritual and baseless assumption, for it is the Church, God's elect and converted people out of all nations, which is that "nation," which during the period of Israel's national unbelief, bears fruit unto God ; as is clear from 1 Peter 2:9, where believers in Christ are addressed as, "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation (■θνος) that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light." But now discarding the whole heap of Anglo-Israel trash, let us glance at the question of the so-called "lost" ten tribes in the light of Scripture history and prophecy. Anglo-Israelism first of all loses the ten tribes, for whom it claims a different destiny from the Jews, whom it supposes to be descendants of the two tribes only, and then it identifies this "lost" Israel with the British race. But there is as little historical reason for the supposition that the ten tribes are lost, in the sense in which Anglo-Israelism uses the term, as there is Scriptural basis for a separate destiny for "Israel" apart from "Judah." The most superficial reader of the Old Testament knows the origin and cause of the unfortunate schism which took place in the history of the elect nation after the death of Solomon. But this evil was to last only for a limited time; for at the very commencement of this new and parenthetical chapter of the nation's history it was announced by God that He would in this way afflict the seed of David, but not for ever. (1 Kings 11:39.) A separate kingdom, comprising ten of the twelve tribes, was set up under Jeroboam in 975 B.C., and its whole history, of about 250 years, is one long, dark tale of usurpation, anarchy, and apostasy, unrelieved by the occasional gracious visitations of national revival which light up the annals of the Judean kingdom under the house of David. After many warnings and premonitory judgments the kingdom of the ten tribes was finally overthrown in the year 721. B.C., when its capital, Samaria, was destroyed, and the bulk of the people carried captives by the Assyrians, and made to settle in "Halah and Habor, and by the river Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes" (2 Kings 17:6; 1 Chronicles 5:26).

Before passing on I would beg you to notice two or three facts.

I. Firstly, the kingdom of "Judah" after the schism consisted not only of Judah and Benjamin, but also of the Levites who remained faithful to the house of David and the theocratic centre.* Even those who were in the northern cities forsook all in order to come to Jerusalem, as we read 2 Chronicles 11:14, "And Rehoboam dwelt in Jerusalem, and built cities for defence in Judah . . . and the priests and Levites that were in all Israel resorted to him out of all their coasts. For the Levites left their suburbs, and their possessions, and came to Judah and Jerusalem; for Jeroboam and his sons had cast them off from executing the priest's office unto the Lord."

* According to Griitz, “History of the Jews,” vol. 50, p. 186, the tribe of Simeon, which was merely a subsidiary of that of Judah, also remained faithful to the House of David, but this is doubtful.

II. Apart from Judah, Benjamin, and Levi there were in the southern kingdom of Judah after the schism, many out of the other ten tribes whose hearts clung to Jehovah, and the only earthly centre of His worship which He appointed. Immediately after the rebellion, we read that “after them” (that is following the example of the Levites) “out of all the tribes of Israel, such as set their hearts to seek Jehovah, the God of Israel, came to Jerusalem to sacrifice to Jehovah, God of their fathers. So they strengthened the kingdom of Judah” (2 Chronicles 11:16). In every reign of the kingdom of Israel numbers of the religious and more spiritual of the ten tribes must have seceded and joined “Judah.” This we find to have been more especially the case during the times of national revival in the southern kingdom, and in the reigns of those kings who feared and sought the Lord.

Thus, for instance, we read of Asa, that “he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, with the strangers with them out of Ephraim and Manasseh, and out of Simeon; for they fell to him out of all Israel in abundance, when they saw that Jehovah his God was with him, so they gathered themselves together at Jerusalem . . . and they entered into a covenant to seek Jehovah God of their fathers with all their heart, and with all their soul” (2 Chronicles 15:9-15).

There are also several other mentions of “the children of Israel that dwelt in the cities of Judah” and were subjects and members of that kingdom.

III. The final overthrow of the northern kingdom took place, as we have seen, in the year 721 B.C., but when we read that the “king of Assyria took Samaria and carried Israel away into Assyria,” we are not to understand that he cleared the whole land of all the people, but that he took the strength of the nation with him. There were, no doubt, many of the people left in the land, even as was the case after the overthrow of the southern kingdom by the Babylonians later on (2 Kings 25:1-2). The historical proof for my assertion is found in the fact that about a century after the fall of Samaria we find in the reign of Josiah some of Manasseh and Ephraim, “and a remnant of all Israel” in the land, who contributed to the collection made by the Levites for the repair of the house of the Lord in Jerusalem, and joined in the celebration of the great Passover in the eighteenth year of that zealous and promising young king.

These were the component elements of which the southern kingdom of “Judah” was made up, when it, too, reached the stage, when, on account of its idolatries and apostasy from the living God, “there was no more remedy” (or “healing” 2 Chronicles 36:16). It consisted, as we have seen, of Judah, Benjamin, Levi, and many out of all the other ten tribes of Israel, “in abundance.”

Jerusalem was finally taken in 588 B.C., by Nebuchadnezzar just 133 years after the capture of Samaria by the Assyrians. Meanwhile the Babylonian Empire succeeded the Assyrian; but although dynasties had changed, and Babylon, which had sometimes, even under the Assyrian regime, been one of the capitals of the Empire, now took the place of Nineveh, the region over which Nebuchadnezzar now bore rule was the very same over which Shalmaneser and Sargon reigned before him, only somewhat extended.* * See 2 Kings 23:29, where the King of Babylon is called “King of Assyria.” The exact location of the exiles of the southern kingdom we are not told, beyond the Scripture statements that all the three parties of captives carried off by

Nebuchadnezzar (that in the first invasion in the reign of Jehoiakim, 606 B.C., and in the second, in the reign of Jehoiachin, 599 B.C., and in the final overthrow of Jerusalem, in the reign of Zedekiah, 588 B.C.), were taken “to Babylon” (2 Kings 24:1-20 and 2 Kings 25:1-30; Daniel 1:1-21).

Now Babylon stands not only for the city, but also for the whole land, in which the territories of the Assyrian Empire, and the colonies of exiles from the northern kingdom of “Israel” were included. Thus, for instance, we find Ezekiel, who was one of the 10,000 exiles carried off by Nebuchadnezzar with Jehoiachin, by the river Chebar in the district of Gozan one of the very parts where the exiles of the ten tribes were settled by the Assyrians more than a century previous. With the captivity the divisions and rivalry between “Judah” and “Israel” were ended, and the members of all the tribes who looked forward to a national future were conscious not only of one common destiny, but that that destiny was bound up with the promises to the house of David, and with Zion or Jerusalem as its centre, in accordance with the prophecies of Joel, Amos, and Hosea, and of the other inspired messengers who ministered and testified more especially among them until the fall of Samaria. This conviction of a common and united future, no doubt, facilitated the merging process, which cannot be said to have begun with the captivity, for it commenced almost immediately after the rebellion under Jeroboam, but which was certainly strengthened by it.

Glimpses into the feeling of the members of the two kingdoms for one another, and their hopes and aspirations for unity, we get in the writings of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, who prophesied during the period of exile. The most striking prophecy in relation to this subject is Ezekiel 37:15-28, “The word of the Lord came again unto me, saying, Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions (that is, those of Israel who before the captivity fell away from the ten tribes and joined the southern kingdom): then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and all the house of Israel his companions: and join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand.” Then follows the Divine interpretation of this symbol: “Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his companions, and I will put them with him (or literally, I will add them upon, or to him), namely, with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in my hand. And the sticks whereon thou writest shall be in thy hand before their eyes. And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all: neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwelling-places wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them; so shall they be My people, and I will be their God. And My servant David shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd; they shall also walk in My judgments, and observe My statutes, and do them. And they shall dwell in the land which I have given unto Jacob My servant, wherein your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, they, and their children, and their children’s children for ever: and David My servant shall be their prince for ever” (Ezekiel 37:20-25, R.V.).

Likewise Jeremiah in his great prophecy of the restoration (Jeremiah 30:1-24 and Jeremiah 33:1-26) and future blessing, links the destinies of “Judah” and “Israel,” or Israel and Judah together; and speaks of one common experience from that time on for the whole people. “For, lo, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will turn again the captivity of My people Israel and Judah, saith the Lord: and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it. And these are the words that the Lord spake concerning Israel and Judah” (Jeremiah 30:3-4, R.V.).

Now let it be remembered that the foreground and commencement of the restoration and future in these prophecies, especially to all the exiles at that time, was the restoration from Babylon, or Assyria, as it was sometimes called. So, Daniel also, towards the end of the seventy years’ captivity, includes not only the men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem in his intercessory prayer, but “all Israel that are near, or far off, from all the countries whither thou hast driven them,” who, he confesses, were alike involved in sin and judgment, and equally cast on the mercy of God on the ground of promises made to the fathers.

Now let us go a step farther. Just seventy years had elapsed since the first band of captives were carried away to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar in the year 606 B.C. “That the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia, that he issued a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying: Thus saith Cyrus, king of Persia, the Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem that is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? His God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah.” This proclamation, which was in reference to all the people “of the Lord God of heaven,” was issued in the year 536, two years after the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus, and was, we are told, promulgated “throughout all his kingdom,” which was the same as that over which Nebuchadnezzar and his successors reigned before him, only again somewhat extended, even as the kingdom of Babylon was identical with that of Assyria, as already pointed out. Indeed, Cyrus and Darius I are called indifferently by the sacred historians by the title of “king of Persia” (Ezra 4:5), “king of Babylon” (Ezra 5:13), and the “king of Assyria” (Ezra 6:22). The first response to this proclamation was a caravan of “forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty, beside their servants and their maids, of whom there were seven thousand three hundred and thirty-seven, and two hundred singing men and singing women,” who, under the leadership of Zerubbabel, who was a lineal descendant of the royal house of David, and of Joshua the high priest, made their way from “Babylon to Jerusalem.”

Now the leading spirits of this returned party of exiles were, no doubt, “the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and Levites”; at the same time they included “all those” from all the other tribes without distinction, “whose spirit God had raised to go up to build the house of the Lord, which is in Jerusalem” (Ezra 1:5).

They are no longer counted after their tribal origin, but in families, and after the cities to which they originally belonged, which, for the most part, are not easy to identify; hence it is difficult to say how many belonged to “Judah,” and how many to “Israel,” but that there were a good many in this company of those who belonged to the northern kingdom of the ten tribes, is incidentally brought out by the mention of two hundred and twenty-three men of Ai and Bethel alone. Now, Bethel was

the very centre of the ancient rival idolatrous worship instituted by Jeroboam, and though on the boundary of Benjamin, belonged to “Ephraim.” Between the first organised large party of immigrants under Zerubbabel and Joshua, and the second under Ezra, a period of fifty eight years elapsed, but we are not to suppose that in the interval there were no additions to the community, which now represented the whole united nation in Jerusalem. We read, for instance, incidentally, in Zechariah 6:9-10, Zechariah 6:15, of a party of four prominent men who arrived in Jerusalem in 519 as representatives of “the captivity” (that is, of those who still remained in those parts where they were exiles), bringing with them a present of silver and gold for the Temple, the building of which was resumed about five months before, as a result of the stirring appeals of Haggai. This shows that there was continual intercourse and communication between the community in Palestine and the majority of the people who were still “in Babylon”; and we may be certain that little parties and individuals, “whose spirit God had raised,” continually found their way to the holy city. In 458 B.C. Ezra, “the scribe of the law of the God of heaven,” in accordance with the decree of Artaxerxes Longimanus, organised another large caravan of those whose hearts were made willing to return to the land of their fathers. Part of this most favourable royal proclamation, was as follows: “I make a decree that all they of the people of Israel, and of his priests and Levites in my realm, which are minded of their own free will to go up to Jerusalem, go up-with thee”; and in response to it “this Ezra went up from Babylon . . . and there went up (with him) of the children of Israel, and of the priests and of the Levites, and the singers and the porters, and the Nethinim, unto Jerusalem in the seventh year of Artaxerxes the king ” (Ezra 7:7). This party consisted of about one thousand eight hundred families; and apart from the priests, Levites, and Nethinim, was made up of “the children of Israel,” irrespective of tribal distinctions, from all parts of the realm of “Babylon,” or Assyria, now under the sway of the Medo-Persians. The narratives contained in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, under whose administration the position of the restored remnant became consolidated, covers a period of about 115 years, and brings us down to about 420 B.C. Jewish history during the second period of the Persian supremacy is wrapped somewhat in obscurity, but we know that nearly throughout the whole period of its existence it was more or less friendly to the Hebrews. There was certainly no revocation of the edicts of Cyrus and of Artaxerxes permitting those “which were minded of their own free will to go and join their brethren in Palestine;” and that there were many other large and small parties of exiles who did so, subsequent to those mentioned in Ezra and Nehemiah, may be taken for granted.* Anyhow it is a fact that the remnant in the land grew and grew until, about a century and a half later, in the time of the Maccabees, and again about a century and a half later still, in the time of our Lord, we find “the Jews” in Palestine a comparatively large nation, numbering millions; while from the time of the downfall of the Persian Empire, we hear but very little more of the Israelite exiles in ancient Assyria or Babylon. By the conquest of Alexander, who to this day is a great favourite among the scattered nation, the regions of ancient Babylonia and Media were brought comparatively near, and a highway opened between East and West. From about this time settlements of “Jews” began to multiply in Asia Minor, Cyprus, Crete, on the coasts and islands of the Ægean, in Macedonia and other parts of Southern Europe, in Egypt and the whole northern coast of Africa, whilst some made their way further and further eastward as far as India and China. There is not the least possibility of doubt that many of the settlements of the Diaspora in the time of our Lord both north, south, and west, as well as east of Palestine, were made up of those who had never returned to the land of their fathers since the time of the Assyrian and Babylonian exiles, and who were not only

descendants of Judah, as Anglo-Israelism ignorantly presupposes, but of all “the twelve tribes scattered abroad” (James 1:1).

* “It is inconceivable,” says Dr. Pusey, “that, as the material prosperity of Palestine returned, even many of the ten tribes should not have returned to their country.” As a matter of fact, long before the destruction of the second Temple by Titus, we read of currents and counter-currents in the dispersion of the “Jewish” people. Thus Artaxerxes III., Ochus, on his way to re-conquer Egypt, “having taken Apodasmus in Judea, conveyed the Jewish population into Hyrcania near the Caspian Sea.” When he made himself master of Egypt we read of his finding Jews there, and, being incensed against them on account of a stubborn defence against him of places entrusted to their keeping, “he sent part of them into Hyrcania, in the neighbourhood of the country which the tribes already inhabited, and left the rest at Babylon”; while soon after many thousands were taken to Egypt by Alexander; and Ptolemy Soter, one of his chief generals, who had become King of Egypt, and had invaded Syria and taken Jerusalem in 301 B.C., carried off one hundred thousand of them, and forced them to settle chiefly in Alexandria and Cyrene. To summarise the state of things in connection with the Hebrew race at the time of Christ, it was briefly this:

I. For some six centuries before, ever since the partial restoration in the days of Cyrus and his successors, the descendants of Abraham were no longer known as divided into tribes, but as one people, although up to the time of the destruction of the second Temple, tribal and family genealogies were for the most part preserved, especially among those who were settled in the land.

II. Part of the nation was in Palestine, but by far the larger number were scattered far and wide, and formed innumerable communities in many different lands, north and south, east and west.* But wherever dispersed and to whatever tribe they may have belonged, they all looked to Palestine and Jerusalem as their national centre, and, with the exception of those (and they were no doubt many) who had ceased to cherish “the Hope of Israel” and were gradually assimilating with their Gentile neighbours, were all one in heart with their brethren in the Holy Land. “They felt they were of the same stock, stood on the same ground, cherished the same memories, grew up under the same institutions, and anticipated the same future. They had one common centre of worship in Jerusalem, which they upheld by their offerings; and they made pilgrimages thither annually in great numbers at the high festivals.” Thus Philo could represent to the Roman Emperor Caligula that “Jerusalem ought not to be considered only as the metropolis of Judea, but as the centre of a nation dispersed in infinite places, who were able to supply him with potent succours for his defence. He reckoned among the places that were still stored with Jews, the isles of Cyprus and Candia, Egypt, Macedonia and Bithynia, to which he added the empire of the Persians, and all the cities of the East, except that of Babylon from whence they were then expelled.”

* Thus Strabo (quoted by Josephus in “Ant.” 14, 7, 2) could already say in his day that “these Jew had already gotten into all cities; and it is hard to find a place in the habitable earth that hath not admitted this race and is not mastered by it.”

There is ample confirmation on this point in the New Testament. Thus, for instance, we are incidentally told in Acts 2:1-47 that among the representatives from the Diaspora who were found in Jerusalem at that memorable feast of Pentecost, who were doubtless there also during the previous Passover, when the crucifixion took place, were “Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and

dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Judea and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, in Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt and parts of Libya and Cyrene, and sojourners from Rome, Cretans and Arabians" all of them either Jews or proselytes miraculously hearing in their own tongues the mighty works of God.

Here it is to be noted that, at the commencement of the Christian era, we find in this motley and cosmopolitan Jewish crowd representatives from Israelitish settlements in the very parts where they were carried by the Assyrians and Babylonians some seven centuries before, but who are all called "Jews," and all alike regarded Jerusalem as their national metropolis.*

* "Everywhere we have distinct notices of these wanderers," says Dr. Edersheim, "and everywhere they appear as in closest connection with the Rabbinical hierarchy of Palestine. Thus the Mishnah, in an extremely curious section, tells us how on Sabbaths the Jewesses of Arabia might wear their long veils, and those of India the kerchiefs round their head, customary in those countries, without incurring the guilt of desecrating the holy day by needlessly carrying what, in the eyes of the law, would be a burden; while in a rubric for the Day of Atonement we have it noted that the dress which the High Priest wore 'between the evenings' of the great feast that is, as afternoon darkened into evening was of most costly Indian stuff."

III. The name of "Jew" and "Israelite" became synonymous terms from about the time of the Captivity. It is one of the absurd fallacies of Anglo-Israelism to presuppose that the term "Jew" stands for a bodily descendant of "Judah." It stands for all those from among the sons of Jacob who acknowledged themselves, or were considered, subjects of the theocratic kingdom of Judah, which they expected to be established by the promised "Son of David" the Lion of the tribe of Judah whose reign is to extend not only over "all the tribes of the land" but also "from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth."

"That the name 'Jews,' " writes a Continental Bible scholar, "became general for all Israelites who were anxious to preserve their theocratic nationality, was the more natural, since the political independence of the ten tribes was destroyed." Yes, and without any hope of a restoration to a separate national existence.

What hopes and promises they had were, as we have seen, linked with the Kingdom of Judah and the House of David.

Anglo-Israelism teaches that members of the ten tribes are never called "Jews," and that "Jews" are not "Israelites," but both assertions are false. Who were they that came back to the land after the "Babylonian" exile? Anglo-Israelites say they were only the exiles from the southern kingdom of Judah, and call them "Jews." I have already shown this to be a fallacy, but I might add the significant fact that in the Book of Ezra this remnant is only called eight times by the name "Jews," and no less than forty times by the name "Israel." In the Book of Nehemiah they are called "Jews" eleven times, and "Israel" twenty-two times. As to those who remained behind in the one hundred and twenty-seven provinces of the Persian Empire, which included all the territories of ancient Assyria, Anglo-Israelites would say they were of the kingdom of "Israel"; but in the Book of Esther, where we get a vivid glimpse of them at a period subsequent to the partial restoration under Zerubbabel and Joshua, they are called forty-five times by the name "Jews," and not once by the name "Israel"! In the New Testament the same people who are called "Jews" one hundred and

seventy-four times are also called “Israel” no fewer than seventy-five times. Anglo-Israelism asserts that a “Jew” is only a descendant of Judah, and is not an “Israelite”; but Paul says more than once: “I am a man which am a Jew” Yet he says: “For I also am an Israelite.” “Are they Israelites? so am I?” (Acts 21:39; Acts 22:3; Romans 11:1; 2 Corinthians 11:22; Php 3:5). Our Lord was of the house of David, and of the tribe of Judah after the flesh “a Jew,” yet it says that it is of “Israel” “that He came, who is over all, God blessed for ever” (Romans 9:4-5). Devout Anna was a “Jewess” in Jerusalem, yet she was “of the tribe of Aser.” But enough on this point.

IV. From the time of the return of the first remnant after the Babylonian exile, sacred historians, prophets, apostles, and the Lord Himself, regarded the “Jews” in the land as representatives of “all Israel,” and the only people in the line of the covenants and the promises which God made with the fathers. At the dedication of the Temple, which was at last finished “on the third day of the month Adar, which was in the sixth year in the reign of Darius the king,” they offered “for a sin-offering for all Israel, twelve he-goats according to the number of the tribes of Israel.” (Ezra 6:17).

Similarly on the arrival of Ezra with the new caravan of immigrants they “offered burnt-offerings unto the God of Israel, twelve bullocks for all Israel . . . and twelve he-goats for sin-offering” (Ezra 8:35), showing that the returned exiles regarded themselves as the nucleus and representatives of the whole nation. In the post-Exilic prophets we have no longer two kingdoms, but one people one in interests and destiny, although they had formerly for a time been divided. To show that the revived nation was made up of members of the Northern, as well as the Southern kingdoms, the prophet Zechariah calls them by the comprehensive name of “Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem” (Zechariah 1:19), or, “the house of Judah, and the house of Joseph” (Zechariah 10:6). In the prophecy occasioned by the question addressed by the deputation from Bethel, in reference to the continuation of the observance of the fasts, he says: “And it shall come to pass that as ye were a curse among the nations house of Judah and house of Israel, so will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing; fear not, and let your hands be strong” (Zechariah 8:13).

Here the formerly two houses are included; together they are for a time among the nations “a curse,” and together they shall be saved, and be “a blessing.”

Malachi, nearly a century later, when the people in the land had become a prosperous nation, and when, in consequence, the majority was rapidly falling into a state of religious formality and godlessness, addresses them as “Israel,” or “Jacob,” which surely includes all his descendants, in contrast to Esau and his descendants (Malachi 1:1-3). In the last words of the last of the post-Exilic prophets we have the expression “all Israel” addressed to the people in the land, and then the long period of silence sets in, lasting about four centuries, during parts of which Jewish national history is lost somewhat in obscurity. When the threads of that history are taken up again in the New Testament, what do we find? Is there one hint or reference in the whole book to an Israel apart from “that nation” of the “Jews,” to whom, and of whom, the Lord and His apostles speak? There is, indeed, reference and mention of the Diaspora, “the dispersed among the Gentiles” (John 7:35), forming, as we have seen, the greater part of the nation, and some of them still settled in the ancient regions of Assyria and Babylon, but wherever they were, they are all interchangeably called “Jews,” or “Israelites,” who regarded Jerusalem, with which they were in constant communication as the centre, not only of their religion, but of their national hopes and

destiny. The “Israelites” who in the time of Christ were dispersed among the Parthians, Medes, and Elamites (Acts 2:1-47), were as much one with the sojourners in Egypt, Greece, and Rome, as the “Jews” in Bagdad, Persia, or on the Caspian Sea to-day, are one with their wandering brethren in London, Berlin, New York, or Australia, although they then, as now (apart from the Hebrew which ever remains the sacred tongue, and thoroughly understood only by the minority), spoke different languages, and dressed differently, and conformed to different social and family customs. But let me give you a few definite passages from the New Testament in justification of my statement that the Lord Jesus and the apostles, equally with the post-Exilic prophets centuries before, regarded the “Jews” as representatives of “all Israel,” and as the only people in the line of the “covenant, and the promises which God made unto the fathers.”

(a) In Matthew 10:1-42 we have the record of the choice, and of the first commission given to the apostles. “These twelve,” we read, “Jesus sent forth, and commanded them saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” Of course the merest child knows that this journey of the twelve did not extend beyond the limits of Palestine, but the “Jews” dwelling in it are regarded as the house of Israel, although many members of that “house” were also scattered in other lands. In this charge of the Lord to the apostles, we see also by the way, in what sense Israel is regarded as “lost.” Now Anglo-Israelites are very fond of this word, but they use it in an unbiblical and unspiritual sense. The ten tribes were in the time of Christ, even as they still are, “lost”; but not because they have forgotten their national or tribal identity, but because they “all like sheep have gone astray, and have turned every one to his own way. Or, as Jeremiah pathetically puts it: “My people hath been lost sheep; their shepherds [their false teachers and leaders] have caused them to go astray, they have turned them away on the mountains; they have gone from mountain to hill, they have forgotten [not their national origin, but] their resting place,” viz., Jehovah, who is the true “dwelling place” of His people in all generations.

(b) On the first day of Pentecost, Peter with the eleven, addressed the “men of Judea,” and the great multitude from among the dispersed “Jews,” as “Ye men of Israel,” and wound up his powerful speech with the words: “Let all the house of Israel, therefore, know assuredly that God hath made Him both Lord and Christ this Jesus whom ye crucified.” In the third of Acts, as “all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon’s, greatly wondering,” at the notable miracle in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, Peter said: “Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this man? . . . The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified His servant Jesus, whom ye delivered up and denied before the face of Pilate when he had determined to release Him. . . . 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. . . . Ye are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying unto Abraham, ‘and in thy seed shall the nations of the earth be blessed.’ ” From Acts 13:1-52 onward, we find Paul among the “Jews” in the dispersion, and how does he address them? By the same name as Peter addressed their brethren in Palestine: “Men of Israel . . . the God of this people Israel chose our fathers, and exhorted the people when they sojourned in the land of Egypt” (Acts 13:16-17); and when he was at last brought to Rome, “and gathered the chief of the Jews” in that city to him, he assured them that he had neither done anything “against the people, or the customs of our fathers,” nor did he come to Rome “to accuse my nation,” but “because of the hope of Israel

am I bound by this chain," namely, "the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers; as he had previously explained before Festus and Agrippa unto which our twelve tribes, earnestly serving God night and day, hope to attain." (Acts 28:17-20; Acts 26:6-7).

Paul knew of no "lost ten tribes," but on his testimony the "Jews" in Palestine and in the dispersion were the "Israel" of all the twelve tribes, to whom the "hope of the promise made of God unto the fathers" belonged.

(c) And, as it is in the Gospels, and in the Acts of the Apostles, so also in the Epistles. It would be easy to multiply passages, but one more must suffice.

Romans 9:1-33, Romans 10:1-21, and Romans 11:1-36 form the prophetic, or "dispensational" section of that great epistle, and was written for the special instruction of Gentile believers in the "mystery" of God with Israel. Now I cannot, of course, stop here to give you an analysis of that wonderful and comprehensive scripture, which is also a vindication of God's ways with man; but there is not a hint or suggestion in it of a "lost Israel," apart from the one nation whose whole history he summarises from the beginning to the end, and which is now, alas! divided into the small minority the "remnant according to the election of grace" who believe, and the majority who believe not, until the day of grace for the whole nation shall come, and "so all Israel shall be saved, even as it is written, 'There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer; He shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.' " But in the touching introduction to this section (Romans 9:1-6), in which the Apostle gives utterance to his "great sorrow and unceasing pain of heart" because of the unbelief of his own nation, "his brethren and his kinsmen according to the flesh," for whose sake he had been wishing, if it were possible, even to be himself "anathema from Christ" how does he call these unbelieving "Jews" who had rejected their Messiah, and were blindly persecuting His servants? Here are his words: "Who are Israelites; whose is the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen"

Now I must try to draw this very long letter to an end. I have not followed Anglo-Israelism in all its crooked paths of misinterpretation of Scripture and history; I have only shown you the baselessness of its foundations, and that the premises upon which the whole theory rests are misleading and false. I have also given you a summary of the true history of the tribes, which I trust may prove helpful to you in the study of God's Word; and the conclusion at which you and every unbiassed person must arrive on a careful examination of the facts which I have adduced is, that the whole supposition of "lost tribes," in the sense in which Anglo-Israelism uses the term, is a fancy which originated in ignorance; and that "the Jews" are the whole, and the only national Israel, representing not only the "two tribes," but "all the twelve tribes" who were "scattered abroad" I have thought it necessary to enter all the more fully into this point, because even some otherwise sober-minded teachers and writers, who are not Anglo-Israelites, have fallen into some confusion in dealing with this subject; and no wonder, for already Josephus, who vaguely locates a separate multitude belonging to the ten tribes somewhere beyond the Euphrates ("Antiq." 11, 1, 2) a Jewish tradition which locates a mighty kingdom of the ten tribes beyond the fabled miraculous river Sabbatyon, which no one can cross because it throws up stones all the week, and only rests on the Sabbath; and the Talmud (Jer. Sanhedrin, 29, c.), which speaks of three localities whither they had been banished, viz., the district around the above wonderful Sabbatyon, Daphne near

Antioch, and the third locality could neither be seen nor named because it was continually hidden by a cloud all these show how early people's minds became muddled on this subject.* Some Christian writers have accepted the view that while some of the "ten tribes" amalgamated with the "Jews," there is nevertheless a distinct people somewhere, who are descendants of the Israel of the ancient northern kingdom, which is to be brought to light in the future, and, together with "Judah," will be restored to Palestine, and enter into the enjoyment of the promises. Thus the Nestorians who inhabit the inaccessible mountains of Kurdistan (which is part of ancient Assyria), the Afghans, and even the North American Indians, have been variously identified as that people; but this view rests upon what I believe to be a misconception of the meaning and scope of some of the prophecies.

* It has also been supposed that the references by Agrippa in his remarkable oration (reported by Josephus' "Wars," 2, 16, 4) to those who dwelt "as far as beyond the Euphrates," and to "those of your nation who dwell in Adiabene," upon whom the Jews might rely for help in their struggle against Rome, but would not be permitted by the Parthians to render them any assistance were to some unknown settlements belonging to the ten tribes. But this is a mistake. These dwellers in Adiabene might or might not have belonged to the ten tribes, but they formed part of the known Dispersion and of "your nation" the Jews.

Even if it were true that the Nestorians, or the Afghans, or some other Eastern tribes are descendants of the original Israelitish exiles in Assyria, having more or less mixed themselves up by intermarriage with the surrounding nations, and having given up the distinctive national rites and ordinances, they have, like many "Jews" in modern times (who gradually assimilate with Gentile nations) cut themselves off from the hope of Israel, and are no longer in the line of the purpose which God has in and through that "peculiar" and separate people. In conclusion, let me very briefly call your attention to the remarkable prophecy in Amos 9:1-15 which will show you that the view which I have enunciated in my letter is the only one in keeping with the sure word of prophecy. The prophet Amos, though himself a Judean, his native village Tekoa being about twelve miles south of Jerusalem, was commissioned by God to prophesy more particularly to the northern or ten-tribed kingdom; and for that purpose he went and took up his abode in Bethel, which was the centre of the idolatrous worship set up by Jeroboam in opposition to the worship and service of the Divinely appointed sanctuary in Jerusalem. There, his duty was to announce the coming judgment of God on the Israel of the ten tribes, on account of their apostasy. The last paragraph of his book (Amos 9:8-15), uttered not more than about seven years before the final overthrow of Samaria in 721 B.C., is one of the most remarkable and comprehensive prophecies in the Old Testament, and this is the inspired forecast of the history of the ten-tribed kingdom which is given in it: "Behold the eyes of the Lord God are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth; saving that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith the Lord. For lo, I will command and I will sift (or 'toss') the house of Israel among all the nations, like as corn is sifted (or 'tossed' about) in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth. All the sinners of thy people shall die by the sword, which say: The evil shall not overtake or prevent us."

Here, then, we have the whole subject as to what is to become of the ten tribes in a nutshell.

(a) First, as a kingdom they were to be destroyed from off the face of the earth, never to be restored; for its very existence as a separate kingdom was only permitted of God for a definite period as a punishment on the house of David: and when, after a period of about two hundred and fifty years of unbroken apostasy, it was finally broken up by the Assyrians, there was an end of it, without any promise of a future independent political existence.

(b) But when it was destroyed as a kingdom, what became of them as a people? This prophecy tells us: “Saving that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith the Lord” that is, they are to return to the house of Jacob. They are to form part of the one family made up of all the descendants of Jacob without distinction of tribes. But as one house of Jacob, or “of Israel” (as the next verse interchangeably calls them), something terrible and unique is to befall them; and what is it? To be “lost” for some two thousand six hundred years, and then to be identified with the Anglo-Saxon race? Oh no! this is what was to happen: “For lo, I will command and I will sift (or ‘toss’) the house of Israel among all nations even as corn is tossed about in a sieve” or, in the words of Hosea, another prophet who spoke primarily to the ten tribes, “My God will cast them away” (not for ever, as the whole book shows, but for a time), “because they did not hearken unto Him; and they shall be wanderers among the nations.”

I draw your attention all the more to this point, because a good deal has been made by some writers of the expression in Isaiah 11:1-16 where Israel is called “outcast,” from which they infer that “Israel” is to be found somewhere in one place, in contradistinction to the “dispersed of Judah.” But this is a fallacy. In Jeremiah 30:1-24 Judah and Israel are together called “an outcast,” but it by no means implies that they are therefore to be sought for and found in one particular region of the world.

It is clear from the prophecies of Amos and Hosea, which, as we have seen, were primarily addressed to the ten tribes, that if they were in the first instance “cast out” by force, from their own land, as the word in the Hebrew means, it was with a view that they should be “tossed about” and “wander” among “all nations.”

Now note, Anglo-Israelism tells you to identify the ten tribes with one nation, but if you are on the line of Scripture and true history, you will seek for them “among all nations.” And which people is it that is known all over the earth as “the tribe of the weary foot and wandering breast”? Anglo-Israelites call them “Jews” in the limited sense of being descendants of “Judah”; but God’s Word tells us that it is “the house of Israel?” or “the house of Jacob”; and, as a matter of fact, since “Judah” joined their brethren of the ten tribes on the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans in 588 B.C. the two have kept on their weary march together “wandering among the nations.” Eastward and westward (only a remnant of all the tribes returning to the land for a time), nowhere finding ease for any length of time, nor do the soles of their feet have rest, even as Moses, at the very beginning of their history, and long before the division among the tribes, prophesied would be their united experience in case they apostatised from Jehovah their God. And thus they will continue ever more mixed up and intermingled among themselves, with all genealogies lost, and not one of them either east or west being able to prove of what tribe or family he comes until the day when He that scattered Israel will gather him, and by His own Divine power and omniscience separate them again into their tribes and families. My last words on this subject must be those of warning and entreaty. Do not think, as so many do, that Anglo-Israelism, even if not true, is only a

harmless speculation. I consider it nothing short of one of the latter-day delusions by which the Evil One seeks to divert the attention of men from things spiritual and eternal. Here are a few of its dangers:

I. It goes, sometimes to the length of blasphemy, (as shown in the extracts I have copied for you at the beginning of this letter), in misrepresenting and misapplying Scripture. One of its foundation fallacies is that it anticipates the millennium, and interprets promises which will only be fulfilled in that blessed period, after Israel as a nation is converted to the British nation at the present time. But by this process it makes all prophetic Scripture meaningless.

II. It fosters national pride, and nationalises God's blessings in this dispensation, which is individual and elective in its character. It diverts man's attention from the one thing needful, and from the only means by which he can find acceptance with God. This it does by teaching that "a nation composed of millions of practical unbelievers in Christ, and ripe for apostasy, in virtue of a certain fanciful identity between the mixed race composing that nation and a people carried into captivity two thousand five hundred years ago, is in the enjoyment of God's special blessing and will enjoy it on the same grounds for ever, thus laying another foundation for acceptance with God beside that which he has laid, even Christ Jesus." After all, in this dispensation it is a question only as to whether men are "in Christ" or not. If they are Christians, whether Jews or Gentiles, their destiny is not linked either with Palestine or with England, but with that inheritance which is incorruptible, and undefiled, and which fadeth not away; and if they are not Christians, then, instead of occupying their thoughts with vain speculations as to a supposed identity of the British race with the "lost" ten tribes, it is their duty to seek the one and only Saviour whom we must learn to know not after the flesh, but in the Spirit, and without whom a man, whether an Israelite or not, is undone.

III. Then, finally, it not only robs the Jewish nation the true Israel of many promises in relation to their future by applying them to the British race in the present time, but it diverts attention fromthem as the people in whom is bound up the purpose of God in relation to the nations, and whose "receiving again" to the heart of God, after the long centuries of unbelief, will be as "life from the dead to the whole world."

Excuse such a very long epistle, and praying that you may be led in all things by the Spirit of Truth, I am, Faithfully yours,

DAVID BARON.

2.16. Appendix I - The Urim and Thummim

APPENDIX I. THE URIM AND THUMMIM NOTE TO PART 1, CHAPTER 1.

ALL that has been written on the subject, from Philo and Josephus down to this day, is more or less conjectural and much of it pure fancy. Apart from the views quoted below, it has been maintained by some that the response to an appeal to the Urim and Thummim was given by an audible voice to the high priest arrayed in full pontificals, and standing in the holy place with his face turned towards the ark; while some commentators have given it as their opinion that the Urim and Thummim were two small oracular images which were placed in the cavity or pouch formed by the folds of the breastplate and which uttered oracles by a voice—a view most objectionable, and altogether abhorrent to the spirit of Scripture. The most thorough handling of this difficult subject is that by a Hebrew Christian brother,1 which I reproduce. It gathers up the Jewish and Rabbinic views and may be taken as the most probable explanation.

1 Benjamin Weiss in his book, “A Christian Jew on the Old Testament.” The white linen habiliments of the priests signified purity and sanctity. They consisted of a coat, a girdle, and bonnet, and were common to priest and high priest, as described in Exodus 28:40-43. There were several other garments peculiar to the high priest, when engaged in his holy office, especially when he had to enter into the Most Holy, on the Day of Atonement. Some of these glorious and significant garments deserve particular notice and attention. The high priest first put on a long robe, which was called “the Robe of the Ephod,” or Meeil. This vestment was of blue colour, and did not consist of several pieces sewed together; it was woven throughout (Exodus 39:22-23). It had apertures left for the neck and for the hands. Such seems to have been the coat of our Saviour for which the soldiers cast lots (see John 19:23-24). At the bottom of this garment were fringes like the pomegranates of blue, of purple, and of scarlet, round about the hem thereof. Between every two pomegranates a golden bell was fastened; so that between every two bells there was a pomegranate, and between every two pomegranates a bell. This long and curious robe was tied round about with a girdle, which was woven and embroidered with the same colours as those of the robe. The reason for putting bells on the hem of this robe is given in the following words: “And his sound shall be heard when he goeth in unto the sanctuary before the Lord, and when he cometh out, that he die not” (Exodus 28:35). This makes it evident that the sound of the bells was intended to impress upon the Israelites who stood in the outer court when the high priest entered the Most Holy, the awful holiness of that place, and to show unto them the shortness of time which the mortal high priest was allowed to remain in the presence of the Shechinah. Otherwise we can give no explanation why the sound was to be heard, “when he goeth in unto the sanctuary before the Lord, and when he cometh out, that he die not.”

Over the long garment described above the high priest put on another short coat, called “Ephod.” This was woven of blue, of purple, of scarlet, and of fine twined linen, and woven with gold threads, and curiously embroidered. It covered his front from his neck unto his girdle, where it was tied round about with a girdle of the same materials, and of the same workmanship. It had also two

shoulder-pieces, which were to be joined behind, with two precious buttons. These two buttons were made of two onyx stones, set in sockets of gold. On these two precious stones the names of the twelve tribes of Israel were engraven—six names on each of them, according to the birth of Jacob's twelve sons. See Exodus 28:6-12. In Exodus 28:12 we read, "And thou shalt put the two stones upon the shoulders of the ephod, for stones of memorial unto the children of Israel; and Aaron shall bear their names before the Lord, upon his two shoulders, for a memorial." An express intimation was thus made unto Israel that they could not stand before the holy Jehovah in themselves. They required a Mediator to carry them, to atone for them, and to reconcile them to the Holy One of Israel. But even the high priest himself (type as well as antitype) could not appear with their names, to reconcile them to God, without the blood of atonement. In the above-described ephod there was left a square aperture over the breast. Into this aperture was placed a most wonderful piece of ornament. This ornament was the Choshen Mishpat, "the breastplate of judgment," which, according to the description in Exodus, was made as follows: Its materials were the same as those of the ephod, and were wrought with cunning work. It was made four-square and doubled. It was a span in length and a span in breadth. This breastplate filled up exactly the aperture left in the ephod and was fastened to it by golden rings and chains above, and by the girdle of the ephod below. Into the front of this breastplate four rows of precious stones were inserted; each of these rows had three different stones, making twelve in all, according to the number of the tribes of Israel. On these stones the twelve names of the tribes of Israel were graven, one name upon each stone. Thus one had the name "Reuben" on it, in Hebrew letters, another "Simeon," a third, "Levi," and so on. The four rows of precious stones were set in pouches of gold, and so fastened that they could not fall out. In Exodus 28:15-28, a minute description is given of this breastplate, and also of the stones and their different names. In Exodus 28:29 we have the reason given for which that glorious ornament was made. "And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel, in the breastplate of judgment, upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the sanctuary, for a memorial before the Lord continually." The expression "Aaron shall bear the names of Israel upon his breast before the Lord," is exactly the same with the reason given in Exodus 28:12, concerning the two stones of the ephod "And Aaron shall bear their names before the Lord, upon his two shoulders, for a memorial." So we see clearly that both the two stones of the ephod, with the names of the tribes of Israel on them, and the twelve stones of the breastplate with the same names, served the self-same purpose, namely, that Aaron might bear the names of Israel as a memorial before the Lord.

Now there remains one thing to be considered. It is this. Why was this ornament, with the twelve precious stones, called Choshen Mishpat, "the breastplate of judgment," while the two stones of the ephod, which had also the twelve names of the tribes of Israel engraven on them, and which had seemingly the same signification as the twelve stones of the breastplate, were called only Avneh Sicharon, "stones of memorial," and not "stones of judgment"? This question will be answered when we read Exodus 28:30 "And thou shalt put into the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim, and they shall be upon Aaron's heart, when he goeth in before the Lord, and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the Lord continually." From this verse we draw the following conclusions: 1st. The breastplate, without the Urim and Thummim within it, had the same signification as the two stones of the ephod. So these twelve stones could also have been called Avneh Sicharon, "stones of memorial," as the some signification is ascribed to both. In Exodus 28:12 we are told that the two stones of the ephod were

for a memorial, and in Exodus 28:29 we are told that the twelve stones of the breastplate were for the same purpose. 2nd. We see, from Exodus 28:30, that the ornament with the twelve stones received the name Choshen Mishpat, “the breastplate of judgment,” only because the Urim and Thummim were put into it. When we read that Moses was commanded to put the Urim and Thummim into the breastplate there is no mention made any more of a memorial, as is done in Exodus 28:29. We merely read, “And Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before Jehovah continually.” As soon as the Urim and Thummim were put into the breastplate it was changed from a “breastplate of memorial” into a “breastplate of judgment.” In Deuteronomy 33:1-29 we are told that Moses blessed the children of Israel before his death. In Deuteronomy 33:8 we read, “And of Levi he said, Let thy Thummim and thy Urim be with thy holy one” (viz., with the priests of Levi’s tribe). And again, “They shall teach Jacob thy judgments, and Israel thy law” (Deuteronomy 33:8-10). From this it is evident that the priests were to be instructed by the Urim and Thummim in all matters of judgment.

Therefore, when the Urim and Thummim were put into the breastplate it was called “the breastplate of judgment.” Israel was commanded to have recourse with every hard matter of judgment, which could not be decided in the small towns, unto Jerusalem, unto the priests of the tribe of Levi, and unto the judge who was in office at that time (Deuteronomy 17:8, &c.). In Deuteronomy 17:12 we read, “And the man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken unto the priest that standeth to minister there before the Lord thy God, or unto the judge, even that man shall die.” When the prophet Malachi complains that Israel has neglected to obey the priests, and has therefore violated the law, he speaks thus, in the name of God: “The law of truth was in his mouth (namely, in the mouth of the high priest), and iniquity was not found in his lips; he walked with me in peace and equity and did turn many away from sin. For the priest’s lips should keep knowledge, and they (Israel) should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts.” All these expressions refer to the oracle of the Urim and Thummim, by which the priest was instructed of God in every matter of judgment.

Every hard thing and every doubtful argument about the law was settled by it; and as this oracle was directed by God there was no fear of the priest erring; as the prophet says, “The law of truth was in his mouth, for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts.”

There was no need of instruction by the Urim and Thummim, all the days of Moses, with whom the Lord spoke in an audible voice from between the cherubim, out of the Most Holy. This oracle, therefore, was intended for the future after the death of Moses, as we read, “And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face” (Deuteronomy 34:10). This evidently refers to the great privilege which the Lord was pleased to bestow upon Moses in speaking unto him in an audible voice (see Numbers 12:6-9). When Moses ordained Joshua to be the leader of Israel in his place, we read as follows: “And he (Joshua) shall stand before Eliezer the priest, who shall ask counsel for him after the judgment of the Urim before the Lord; at his word shall they go out, and at his word shall they come in, both he and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation” (Numbers 27:21). Here we see, first, that the audible voice, in which the Lord spoke to Moses, was to cease after Moses was dead; secondly, that Joshua was to stand before the priest, who was to ask for him the judgments or directions of the Urim.

How absurd, then, is the opinion of some who maintain that the answer of the Urim was also by an audible voice! If such had been the case, would not the voice rather have continued to speak from between the cherubim? Such an opinion is surely against all testimony of Scripture, which says that after Moses there arose none unto whom the Lord spake directly. The manner of the visions of the prophets is described in the twelfth chapter of Numbers, “If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make Myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream” (see Numbers 12:6-8). By the Urim and Thummim, therefore, must have been given signs and directions only, as it is said, “He shall ask counsel for him (viz., the priest shall ask for Joshua) after the judgment (or directions) of the Urim,” not “after the words of the Urim,” for it never answered by words. We have seen now how Joshua was ordered by God to come before the priest with every doubtful matter, and ask direction of the Urim. Let us now see what was the first difficulty in judgment that occurred in the times of Joshua, and how he asked counsel of the Urim. When Achan committed a trespass, in that he took of the accursed things of Jericho, the wrath of God was kindled against Israel, and they were defeated in their expedition against Ai. Joshua, therefore, rent his garments, and cast himself down in dust and ashes before the ark of the Lord (see Joshua 7:7-9). Then we read in Joshua 7:10, “And the Lord said unto Joshua, Get thee up, wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face? Israel hath sinned; they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them; for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and have put among their own stuff.” It was evident that the Lord spoke these words unto Joshua in the same manner as he spoke to the other prophets, namely, in a vision. When Joshua lay upon his face mourning and supplicating, he fell into a trance, and the Lord communicated unto him the reason of the punishment which he had sent upon Israel. But the name of the criminal the Lord did not tell unto him. As this was a public affair, the searching and finding out of the guilty individual was to be done by the oracle Urim, and publicly. Therefore the Lord was pleased, to show unto Joshua, for the first time, how to use the oracle and how to find out the guilty person who had the accursed things. We read: “Up, sanctify the people, and say, Sanctify yourselves against tomorrow: for thus says the Lord God of Israel, there is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel; thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you. In the morning, therefore, ye shall be brought according to your tribes, and it shall be that the tribe which the Lord taketh shall come according to the families thereof; and the family which the Lord shall take shall come by households; and the household which the Lord shall take shall come man by man.” (Joshua 7:13-14). From this direction given unto Joshua, we see that there was no such a thing as an audible voice here. Had this been the case, what need was there of so much trouble? The oracle could have said at once who the guilty person was, and to what tribe he belonged. We also see that the oracle was to be asked single questions; and only single answers were to be expected, as the words of Joshua 7:14 show. The tribes were first to present themselves, and the oracle was to indicate the tribe to which the guilty person belonged. That tribe was then to present itself, and the oracle was to indicate the family of which the guilty person was a member. That family was then to present itself, and the oracle was to point out the guilty individual.

We shall now describe the nature and construction of that wonderful oracle, and the manner in which its answers were given. We have already seen how the breastplate of judgment was made like a four-square box, a span in length, and a span in breadth. Into the front of it were inserted twelve precious stones of different natures and colours. They were set in golden frames, and were

fastened to the breastplate, and formed the splendid front of the same. On each of these twelve stones the name of one of the sons of Jacob was engraven in Hebrew letters. One bore the name ‘Reuben,’ the other ‘Simeon,’ and so on. The front of this breastplate which contained these gems was not very thick, and the breastplate itself was empty within. Into the inside of the breastplate the Lord commanded Moses to put the Urim and the Thummim. The Hebrew word ‘Urim’ signifies ‘lights,’ or ‘illuminators.’ It was no more than a lamp, with twelve lights, put into the breastplate. Within, each light was directed towards one of the precious stones, by which means the brilliancy and lustre of the gems were heightened to a great degree. But all the letters of the Hebrew alphabet did not occur in the twelve names on the breastplate. These four, ■, ■, ■, ■, were wanting. To supply this defect Moses was directed to make another stone with these four letters on it. This stone was called ‘Thummim,’ which signifies ‘the completers,’ or ‘the perfecters’; inasmuch as these four letters upon it completed the alphabet, and perfected the oracle for the purpose of giving answers. These lights and perfecters were put into the breastplate whenever the high priest had to enter the Most Holy, or when a matter of difficulty occurred in Church or State affairs. The Urim, or illuminating lights, were supplied with holy oil, and kindled with that sacred fire which came down from heaven upon the altar at the dedication of the tabernacle (Leviticus 9:24). This fire was carefully preserved in the tabernacle till the time of Solomon. When that king dedicated the Temple and brought sacrifices upon the new altar which he had made, fire came down again from heaven upon the altar (2 Chronicles 7:1-3). The wonderful manner in which the Divine revelations were made by this oracle may be explained in the following illustration. When Joshua came unto Eleazar the high priest (according to his received commandment, Numbers 27:21) that he might ask counsel for him, according to the judgment of the Urim, before the Lord, the high priest put on his holy pontifical robes, and above it the ephod with the breastplate, which was illuminated by the Urim, and had the Thummim joined to it, on the side thereof. The high priest then directed his face towards the Most Holy, entreating the Lord to reveal the guilty individuals, while Joshua presented himself with the twelve elders of the tribes of Israel, in the open court of the tabernacle. Then the high priest put the simple question, ‘Which of the twelve tribes have sinned?’ He looked upon the illuminated breastplate with its brilliant stones and saw that the first stone in the second row, which bore the name of Judah, was darkened and ceased to shine.

Then he called with a loud voice, ‘Judah!’ The eleven princes were then dismissed, and the prince of Judah presented himself again with the fathers of the families of his tribe. The priest then again put the question, ‘Which family has sinned?’ He looked again upon the breastplate and found that the family of the Zarchites was taken. But as this name is composed of four different letters, ■ , ■, ■, ■ , which were not to be found complete in any of the twelve names of the breastplate, he found these different letters in different names. Thus he had to look over all the stones. He then saw, first, that the letter ■ in the name ■■■■■■ (Zebulun), was taken (viz., darkened); he next saw that the letter ■, in the name ■■■■■ (Reuben), was taken. And when he saw no more letters upon the breastplate taken, and could make nothing of the two letters, ■, ■, which he had already got, he looked upon the Thummim on the right side of the breastplate and found that of its four letters the letter ■ was taken. But no name was yet completed. He therefore looked once more upon the twelve stones, and found that the letter ■, in the name Joseph, was taken. Now he had a complete name, ■■■■ (Zarchi); he therefore called aloud that ‘Zarchi’ was taken. In the same manner, when the family of the Zarchites appeared man by man, and when the priest asked, ‘Which man has sinned?’ he looked upon the stones and saw letter after letter taken, of which,

when he put them together in the same order in which they were taken, he made the name ■■■■ (Zabdi). He then communicated this name unto the public, and when they brought the household of Zabdi man by man, Achan was taken. When he was examined by Joshua he confessed his crime, in consequence of which he and all those who were involved in his crime were put to death as the Lord had commanded.

Such wonderful services this holy breastplate, and the Urim and Thummim, rendered unto Israel all the time of Joshua. By it the land of Canaan was divided (Joshua 18:6-10). By it Israel was directed in battle. By it every difficulty was removed, and every great and hard matter of controversy in judgment was decided. After the death of Joshua Israel asked the Lord which tribe should go first to fight against the Canaanitcs. The Lord's answer by this oracle was quite brief. 'Jehudah yaleh' ('Judah shall go') (Judges 1:1-12). When Israel asked again who should go first to fight against Benjamin, the answer was, 'Judah first' (Judges 20:18). That this was done by the oracle is evident from the ninth verse of the same chapter, (Judges 20:9) where Israel says, 'We will go up by lot against it.' Compare this with verse 18, 'And the children of Israel arose, and went up to the house of God' (or to Bethel, where the tabernacle stood at that time, as Judges 20:27 shows), 'and asked counsel of God.' Compare this with Numbers 27:21, 'Who shall ask counsel for him, after the judgment of the Urim, before the Lord.' In every passage in the Old Testament scriptures where it is said that Israel or any person asked the Lord, and He answered, reference is made to the oracle Urim and Thummim, except in the lifetime of Moses, with whom the Lord spake face to face. King Saul, in his victorious war against the Philistines, asked the Lord if he should pursue his enemies the second day, but received no answer, because Jonathan his son had ignorantly transgressed against his father's oath in eating of the honey. Then Saul brought the people before the oracle, and said unto them, 'Be ye on one side, and I and Jonathan, my son, on the other.' He then said, 'Lord God of Israel, give a perfect lot.' So Jonathan and Saul were taken. Again the priest asked between Saul and Jonathan, and Jonathan alone was taken. Jonathan then confessed his guilt, and his readiness to die for it; but Israel prevailed with his father to spare his life (1 Samuel 14:18-20, 1 Samuel 14:26-46). In Saul's last and unfortunate battle the Lord would not answer him by the Urim and Thummim because of his manifold transgressions (1 Samuel 28:6). He therefore betook himself in his despair to the witch of Endor (1 Samuel 28:7-25). When he destroyed the priests of Noph, Abiathar, the son of the slain high priest, escaped and fled unto David, with the ephod and the oracle, Urim and Thummim. This rendered great and important services unto David, for he was instructed by it in all his afflictions and dangers.

David was the first person who consulted it without the tabernacle and was answered by it, for all the former consultations took place in the tabernacle, or at least before the ark of the covenant. But the Lord was pleased to answer David by this oracle in any place. According to the documents whence we have drawn the above information, this oracle ceased to answer after the death of David. Afterwards there was no other means of receiving instructions than by the prophets. Ezra and Nehemiah indeed wished that the Urim and Thummim would be restored unto Israel in the second Temple* (Ezra 2:62-64; Nehemiah 7:64-66), but neither ark nor cherubim, nor Urim and Thummim, were ever restored unto Israel.

* Josephus indeed speaks of the breastplate occasionally shining during the second Temple, which shining, he says, ceased two hundred years before he commenced his work. But Josephus might have saved himself the trouble of making such an assertion, for we affirm on undeniable

authority that neither were Urim and Thummim in the second Temple at all, nor did they in the first Temple return answers by shining, as that historian seems to imagine. Josephus would have acted much more honestly if he had let this matter alone altogether.

2.17. Appendix II - Dean Farrar on the 'Teraphim'

APPENDIX II DEAN FARRAR ON THE “TERAPHIM” NOTE TO CHAPTER I. AN example of the handling of Scripture by the “modern” critical school may be found in an article on the “Teraphim” by Dean Farrar in the third edition of Kitto’s “Cyclopædia,” which manifests the greatest confusion of thought imaginable. After summarising the earlier passages where the word is found, he comes to Hosea 3:4, of which he says, “Here it would certainly be the prima facie impression of every unbiassed reader that the matzebah and the teraphim are mentioned without blame as ordinary parts of religious worship.

“Without, however, entering into the question (which perhaps cannot be decided) whether Hosea did or did not mean to commend or tolerate these material adjuncts to a monotheistic worship, it is certainly not surprising that the reverence paid to the teraphim should have continued in Israel side by side with that paid to the calves, which beyond all doubt were intended to be mere Elohistic symbols.” This is unpardonable ignorance on the part of a would-be teacher, for it confounds God and Belial, and the symbols of the worship of Jehovah with the symbols of idolatry.

There cannot be the least question as to whether the prophet “did or did not mean to commend or tolerate these material adjuncts to a monotheistic worship,” since he treats them not as appositions but as oppositions of the symbols of the worship of the true and living God. On this point the unconverted Rabbi whom I have quoted on page 9 has more spiritual and historical insight than the prominent Church dignitary. It is certainly not at all surprising that the reverence paid to the teraphim should have continued in Israel side by side with that paid to the “calves” set up by Jeroboam, for both alike were idolatrous practices equally abominable in the sight of God, and a violation of His law.

Further down in his article, after summarising Spencer’s absurd arguments to the effect that the teraphim and Urim and Thummim were identical, he says, “On the other hand, if in the above passages we have convincing proof that the use of teraphim was common, if not universal, among the early Hebrews, there are other passages which show that it was condemned, and that strongly, by the stricter Jehovists.” Some of “the main and certain results” which he gathers from his whole review of the subject are, “that the resort to teraphim was not a practice confined to Jews; that their use continued down to the latest period of Jewish history; and lastly, that although the more enlightened prophets and strictest later kings regarded them as idolatrous, the priests were much less averse to such images, and their cult was not considered in any way repugnant to the pious worship of Elohim, nay, even to the worship of him under the awful title of Jehovah. In fact they involved a monotheistic idolatry very different indeed from polytheism; and the tolerance of them by priests, as compared with the denunciation of them by the keener insight and more vivid inspiration of the prophets, offers a close analogy to the views of the Roman Catholics respecting pictures and images as compared with the views of Protestants. It was against this use of idolatrous symbols and emblems in a monotheistic worship that the Second Commandment was directed, whereas the first is aimed against the graver sin of direct polytheism. But the whole

history of Israel shows how early and how utterly the law must have fallen into desuetude. The worship of the golden calf, and of the calves at Dan and Bethel, against which, so far as we know, neither Elijah nor Elisha said a single word; the tolerance of high places, teraphim and baetylia; the offering of incense for centuries to the brazen serpent destroyed by Hezekiah; the occasional glimpses of the most startling irregularities, sanctioned apparently even in the Temple worship itself, prove most decisively that a pure monotheism and an independence of symbols was the result of a slow and painful course of God's disciplinal dealings among the noblest thinkers of a single nation, and not, as is so constantly and erroneously urged, the instinct of the whole Semitic race; in other words, one single branch of the Semites was under God's providence educated into pure monotheism only by centuries of misfortune and series of inspired men." This is a fine specimen of the new method: first misunderstand Scripture statements, and then represent the Bible as made up of conflicting "Codes," some written by more "tolerant priests" and "Eloists," and some by "the stricter Jehovists," who differ on the legitimacy of such a cardinal point as idolatry which is most solemnly forbidden in the Ten Commandments. But some, at any rate, of Dr. Farrar's "certain results" are drawn purely from his own imagination.

There is not the slightest ground on a careful examination of the eight scriptures in question in which the teraphim are mentioned for the assertion that there is any difference of opinion in reference to them among the inspired writers. They all alike regarded them in the same light as iniquity, witchcraft, idolatry, and other "abominations" (1 Samuel 15:23; 2 Kings 23:24), and if one or another simply refer to them in passing as a matter of history, as they do to some of the other notorious sins of Israel, without stopping at the time to denounce them, it is no more fair to argue from the negative that they approve of them, than is the Dean's astounding conclusion that Elijah and Elisha did not object to the worship of the calves at Dan and Bethel because, "so far as we know, they said not a single word against it"!

It never seems to have struck the writer that in their faithful witness to the one true and living God, and in their denunciations of all apostasy from Him, this sin too was included. We might as well argue that because, "so far as we know," they did not say a single word in particular against breaches of some of the other of the Ten Commandments of which Israel was guilty, that therefore they approved of those transgressions! The only grounds which Dean Farrar adduces (in a note) for the assertion that "the priests were much less averse to such 'images' and more tolerant to 'monotheistic' idolatry" which, by the way, is an absurd paradox are the conduct of Aaron in the matter of the golden calf; the story of the vagrant Levite Jonathan in those wild and ignorant times, "who for his board and clothing and ten pieces of silver a year hired himself out to the Ephraimite Micah to become the obscure priest" of a cult in which the imperfect knowledge of Jehovah was mixed up with a "graven image and a molten image," which are an abomination in His sight; and finally the conduct of the pliable priest Urijah, who at the command of the wicked King Ahaz introduced into the Temple of God an altar after the fashion of an idolatrous altar which the king saw in Damascus.

Now it would be quite as fair and logical to argue from the fact that because two or three priests were guilty of the crime of murder or adultery that therefore the priests as an order were "less averse" and "more tolerant" of these sins than "the keener-sighted" prophets! As to Aaron's conduct, into which, according to his excuse to Moses, he was driven out of fear for the people. Moses, too, was a priest, and what he and the whole tribe of the Levites thought of it is answered

by their slaughter among the people in one day of three thousand men. And as to Jonathan, whom Dean Farrar quotes as an example of the priests, the inspired (priestly) chronicler (1 Chronicles 23:15, 1 Chronicles 23:17) is so ashamed of him that he does not record his name among the sons of Gershom, and therefore stops with the firstborn. That Gershom had other sons may be inferred from the fact that of his brother Eliezer, who only had one son, the fact is recorded. This desire to efface Jonathan from the priestly register, or at any rate from the register of the family of Moses to which he really belonged, is to be observed from the insertion of the hanging Hebrew letter nun, by which the name of “Moses” is turned into “Manasseh” (see the Hebrew of Judges 18:30), by which the early scribes meant to convey the hint that he was more worthy to be a descendant of the wicked and idolatrous king of that name than of the great lawgiver.

Then, finally, as to Urijah, who introduced that unauthorised altar into the Temple, the connection of which with the subject of the teraphim I fail to see, he was as much a model priest as Ahaz, by whose command he acted, was a model king. In the last paragraph of Dr. Farrar’s article which I have quoted, we observe in veiled language the great fallacy common to this school of writers. Instead of judging the conduct and failures of Israel by the divinely revealed law, which was perfect from the beginning, they are apt to form certain notions about the law from the conduct of the people; thus the non-observance or transgression of certain laws has been used by these writers as a proof of their non-existence at the time, and as an argument for the theory of a much later origin.

It was not the result “of a slow and painful course” of discipline “among the noblest thinkers” that men finally arrived at “a pure monotheism and independence of symbols,” but as the result of a self-revelation on the part of the true and living God, to which man is ever slow to respond. As already said in the section in Chapter I. which I have devoted to this subject, the history of Israel as of Christendom teaches man the humbling lesson that not only can he not by searching find God, but that even when the knowledge of God is divinely communicated to him he is unable, left to himself, to retain that knowledge in his heart, and is apt to fall back into idolatry whether literal or spiritual.

2.18. Appendix III - The Structure of the Second Half of the Book of Isaiah

APPENDIX III THE STRUCTURE OF THE SECOND HALF OF THE BOOK OF ISAIAH NOTE TO CHAPTER II

“HP HE Book of Consolations,” as the Rabbis call the second half of Isaiah, consists for the most part of the general announcement of a glorious future of salvation and peace, but often the salvation which the prophet foretells, is denned and specified. The message embraces a two-fold promise.

First, the certain restoration from the Babylonish captivity, which is portrayed in terms which far exceed what actually took place at that restoration, and which will only be exhausted and fulfilled in the greater restoration of Israel “from all the four corners of the earth.” The very instrument who should be the means of the minor restoration (Cyrus) is foretold, and called by name more than 150 years before he was born. But the theme with which the prophet’s soul is full and to which his thoughts ever recur, even while he deals with the minor deliverance, is the grand redemption and salvation to be accomplished by one greater than Cyrus, even by Messiah a salvation of which Israel is the centre, and all the ends of the earth the circumference. In dealing with this greater salvation the relation of time is not observed. “Now, the prophet beholds the author of it in His humiliation and suffering, then the most distant future of Messiah’s kingdom presents itself to his enraptured eye the time when Israel shall walk in the light of Jehovah and all the Gentile world shall be converted to Him; when all that is opposed to God shall be destroyed; when inward and outward peace shall prevail and all evil caused by sin shall be removed.” Elevated above time and space, his own soul full of rapturous enthusiasm for the Redeemer-King, Isaiah in these twenty-seven chapters surveys the whole development of the Messianic kingdom from its small beginning to its glorious end, and gives us the fullest portrayal of Messiah’s person and mission, humiliation and exaltation to be found in the Old Testament. On examining this glorious prophecy closely we find that the twenty-seven chapters range themselves into three equal smaller cycles of nine chapters each, all ending with nearly the same solemn refrain, “there is no peace saith my God to the wicked.” The subject is the development and certain overthrow of the evil and the wicked, who are excluded from all the blessings of Messiah’s kingdom; and the sufferings but final glory of the righteous remnant who are the subjects of that kingdom, whose King is described as passing through the same path of suffering to the glory that should follow. The subject treated throughout the three sections becomes developed and intensified as we go along until it reaches its climax in the last chapter. The first section is brought to a close at the end of Isaiah 48:1-22, where the blessedness of the righteous who are “redeemed” (Isaiah 48:20) and peacefully led and satisfied even in the desert, is contrasted with the state of the wicked to whom “there is no peace.” In the second division the same subject becomes intensified, there is development of both evil and good, righteousness and wickedness, and it ends with Isaiah 57:1-21 where “Peace! peace!” is announced to the righteous, but the wicked have not only “no peace,” but having grown in

wickedness, have become like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. In the last division the destiny of both is brought to a climax and become fixed for ever. “Therefore thus saith Jehovah God, Behold My servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry; behold My servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty; behold My servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed; behold My servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart and shall howl for vexation of spirit. And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto My chosen, for the Lord God shall slay thee and call His servants by another name.” This contrast is continued until finally we find the righteous dwelling for ever in the new heavens and the new earth wherein shall dwell righteousness, while as to the wicked who have transgressed against God, “their worm shall not die neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring to all flesh.” The heart and Messianic climax of the whole prophecy is to be found in its inmost centre, which, instead of a prophecy uttered centuries in advance, reads like an historic summary of the Gospel narrative of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. Taking our position at this central point we are almost overwhelmed with the evidence of design in the very structure of this prophecy, for on closer examination we find that each book is subdivided into three sections of three chapters each, nearly corresponding to the divisions in the Authorised Version. Thus the middle book is Isaiah 49:1-26, Isaiah 50:1-11, Isaiah 51:1-23, Isaiah 52:1-15, Isaiah 53:1-12, Isaiah 54:1-17, Isaiah 55:1-13, Isaiah 56:1-12, Isaiah 57:1-21. The middle section of the middle book is Isaiah 52:1-15, Isaiah 53:1-12, Isaiah 54:1-17, and Isaiah 53:1-12 is the middle chapter of the middle section of the middle book forming, as it were, the heart and centre of this wonderful Messianic poem, as well as the heart and centre of all Old Testament prophecy. The central verse of this central paragraph, which begins properly with Isaiah 53:5, is: “He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement with the view to our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed.” The doctrine it enshrines (substitution) is the essence of the teaching in Old and New Testaments, as well as the central truth of the prophecy. It is moreover, the essence of the message of comfort with which the prophet begins (Isaiah 40:1-2), solving the problem as to how “her iniquity is pardoned.”

3.00.1. Title Page

Title Page The Jewish Problem: ITS SOLUTION.

OR, Israel’s Present and Future. BY

DAVID BARON, Of the Hebrew Christian Testimony to Israel;

Author of " Rays of Messiah’s Glory," etc., etc. WITH INTRODUCTION BY REV. ARTHUR T. PIERSON, D.D.

3.00.2. Preface to this Digital Module

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***** Preface to this Digital Module

I've been using computer Bible study software since the days of MS-DOS - early 1990's. From the first time I did a "CTRL-S" maneuver, I've never cracked open a Strong's again! (And no regrets about that!) As a busy preacher, I've tried to assemble a classic research library inexpensively. Access to the free digital materials included in the Bible study software packages I used increased my study library in amazing ways. The amount of free stuff I've accumulated would have cost a small fortune. Then one day I realized that I owed a debt. So I started looking for public domain resources to convert to digital Bible study modules. Now my personal journey has come full circle: from the excitement of discovering free computer Bible software to the excitement of helping and being a blessing to others.

Thank you, Michelle, Jeremiah, Isaiah & Micah, for understanding my debt and graciously tolerating my near compulsive computer use for hours on end. Thank you, David Baron, for converting your studies to eternal print. Thanks, wikisource.org, for making this digital text available. And of course - most importantly - my thanks to the Lord Jesus who saved my soul for all eternity.

About the author from wikisource.org.... In this work Hebrew-Christian author, David Baron, shines a light on Biblical prophecies which foretell of the dispersion of the Jews among the Gentile nations of the Earth. He sets forth compelling arguments for the return of Jews to the land of Israel, from scripture, more than 50 years before the events that led to the reestablishment of the nation of Israel. Moreover he attacks Supersessionists, and other theologians who engage in the practice of "Spiritualizing" scripture and in so doing theologically redacting Israel from God's plan. He asserts that Christian missions to Jews are necessary part of Christian missions and continue to see growth. Though the author looked for many individual Jews to accept Jesus as the Messiah, he did not believe that Messianic Judaism would become normative within the nation until the events immediately preceding the Second Coming. This Edition There have been no changes to Baron's work, except for the following:

1. Scripture references have been converted to Scripture hyperlinks using the "Format Scripture ToolTip."

2. A few obvious Scripture reference errors have been corrected, as well as some obvious spelling errors.

3. The copy and paste process has unfortunately removed most of the italicized print. While the words have not been changed, some of Baron's emphasis may be missing. It is with regret that I have not taken the time to correct this. The sense is still accurate. [By the way - would you understand this paragraph without italics? Of course!] Also, the italicizing of the foreign words have been lost. It is my hope that the reader will be able to follow the flow regardless of these flaws. They - the flaws - are mine, not Baron's.

4. I am quite sure my edition of Baron's work is rather imperfect. I pray that, nonetheless, it will be productively useful in the study of God's Word.

Finally Feel free to contact me with comments. You can reach me via e-mail at doctordavet@gmail.com

If you convert a classic resource to e-Sword .topx file (or .dctx, .cmtx, etc.), send me your work! I'd love to utilize it! Also - make sure you stop by www.doctordavet.com - for more eSword modules. May the Lord bless you as study His word.

Dr. David S. Thomason

Florida, USA

2012

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3.00.4. Preface

Preface THIS is the fifth English edition of this little book, which has also been translated into several other European languages, including Danish, Dutch, Norwegian, Swedish, and French.

Dr. Pierson’s most kind introduction to the original American Edition, printed when I was in Palestine in 1891, tells its history; and I retain his kind words, not because I think his eulogy on myself personally deserving, but as a reminiscence of my visit to America, and of the most happy fellowship it was my privilege to enjoy with some of the choicest of Christ’s servants in that vast country. That it may still speak the praises of Him Who is the "Light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of His people Israel," (Isaiah 49:6) and that a blessing may come to every one into whose hands this little book may fall, is the heartfelt prayer of the writer.

David Baron "Northfield, Massachusetts,"

Chorley Wood, Herts.

3.00.5. Introduction

Introduction

THOSE who were present at the summer conferences at Northfield, Mass., in the months of July and August, 1890, will not soon forget DAVID BARON and his Bible Readings and Addresses. He is a converted Jew ; and is well named David Baron, for he is a true prince of the Davidic House.

There was an indescribable charm about the man. His knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures and his deep insight into them ; his keen discernment of the exquisite shades of meaning by which the original words differed and were distinguished, and the perfect familiarity he exhibited with both the original Word of God and all the light which the Jewish customs, manners, and religious and national life cast upon that Word, together with a peculiar unction which qualified his whole manner all these peculiarities contributed to render his services doubly interesting and helpful. After the Conferences closed, there were still at the hotels and boarding-houses a large number of visitors who clamoured for a continuance of the feast ; and Mr. Baron gave daily Readings in the Parlour of the large " Northfield," or in the Congregational church. At my earnest entreaty, Mr. Baron wrote out one of his best Bible addresses for publication, and it is herewith put into printed form. It lacks only the personal presence of its author to make it a perfect reproduction of one of the most charming and effective addresses I ever heard. It is not too much to say that, to understand this address and to grasp its great expository argument, is to get the key to all Scriptures pertaining to the past, present, or future, of God’s ancient people. This little brochure is called the "Jewish Problem" ; it deserves to be called the "Problem Solved" for it is the solution of the historic and prophetic enigma.

I commend it to every candid student of the Word of God, and especially to all who pray for the restoration of Israel. David Baron has himself gone to Jerusalem.[1] May he in the City of the Great King witness the gathering of the scattered tribes, and their penitent and believing acceptance of the Messiah.

ARTHUR T. PIERSON.

*Mr. Baron how now returned to England. See Appendix.

3.01.I. The Jewish Problem

I. The Jewish Problem Jeremiah 30:1-17 THE word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD God of Israel, saying, Write thee all the words that I have spoken unto thee in a book. For, lo, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the LORD: and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it. And these are the words that the LORD spake concerning Israel and concerning Judah. For thus saith the LORD;

We have heard a voice of trembling, Of fear, and not of peace.

Ask ye now, and see Whether a man doth travail with child?

Wherefore do I see every man With his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, And all faces are turned into paleness?

Alas! for that day is great, So that none is like it:

It is even the time of Jacob's trouble; But he shall be saved out of it. For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD of hosts, That I will break his yoke from off thy neck, And will burst thy bonds, And strangers shall no more serve themselves of him: But they shall serve the LORD their God, And David their king, whom I will raise up unto them.

Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the LORD;

Neither be dismayed, O Israel:

For, lo, I will save thee from afar, And thy seed from the land of their captivity; And Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, And none shall make him afraid. For I am with thee, saith the LORD, to save thee:

Though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, Yet will I not make a full end of thee: But I will correct thee in measure, And will not leave thee altogether unpunished. For thus saith the LORD, Thy bruise is incurable, And thy wound is grievous.

There is none to plead thy cause, that thou mayest be bound up:

Thou hast no healing medicines.

All thy lovers have forgotten thee;

They seek thee not; For I have wounded thee with the wound of an enemy, With the chastisement of a cruel one, For the multitude of thine iniquity;

Because thy sins were increased.

Why criest thou for thine affliction?

Thy sorrow is incurable for the multitude of thine iniquity:

Because thy sins were increased, I have done these things unto thee.

Therefore all they that devour thee shall be devoured; And all thine adversaries, every one of them, shall go into captivity; And they that spoil thee shall be a spoil, And all that prey upon thee will I give for a prey. For I will restore health unto thee, And I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith the LORD;

Because they called thee an Outcast, saying, This is Zion, whom no man seeketh after. Is there a yet Future Restoration?

UNTIL all the writings of the prophet were compiled in one book as we now have it, Jeremiah 30, 31 formed a distinct prophecy, and was doubtless in circulation amongst the people in a separate prophetic book; and in Jeremiah 30:2 we read that it is a "book" dictated by God Himself. The subject, then, with which it deals must be one concerning which He is especially anxious to reveal His thoughts. Whatever man may think of it, He considers this matter of immense importance, so that every word must be preserved.

"Write thee all the words that I have spoken unto thee in a book." This book, dictated by God Himself, is a very remarkable one; for though it concerns Israel, it is addressed chiefly to the Gentile nations. For thus saith the LORD Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations: publish ye, praise ye, and say, O LORD, save thy people, the remnant of Israel. . . . Hear the word of the LORD, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock. (Jeremiah 31:7; Jeremiah 31:10).

It is a testimony, then, not so much to Israel as to the Gentile nations about Israel. Just as, in the epistle to the Romans, we find, as it were, an epistle within an epistle; three chapters— Romans 9-11 —expressly indited by the Spirit of God, for the purpose of enlightening Gentile Christians with regard to God’s purposes in Israel. The apostle is most impressed with the importance of the Church having correct views on this subject; and feels that he cannot leave them ignorant of this mystery, lest, through the erroneous notion that God hath cast away His people Israel which He foreknew, and that the special promises and privileges reserved to Israel nationally in the Word of God have been transferred to the Church, they should fall into the danger of self-conceit.[Romans 11:25.">1] So here, through the prophet Jeremiah, there is a definite message, a proclamation, a warning, to the chief of the Gentile nations, and to the isles afar off, to the same purport, viz., that God is not yet done with Israel—that "He that scattereth Israel will gather him and keep him as a shepherd doth his flock." In this special book, written at the express dictation of God, we have the only true solution of the apparently more and more difficult Jewish question. Apart from God’s revelation, the Jew is an enigma, a problem beyond the vain attempts of man to solve; and attempts of the kind, if not based upon the Word of God, are futile and impious. The future of Israel is one of those subjects concerning which the great God has deigned to speak; and however difficult or improbable to man that future may appear, it behoves us to believe and receive, and not to speculate or rebel.

"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith Jehovah."

Let us examine this special proclamation addressed to the Gentile nations with regard to Israel. It contains, I believe, a programme of events drawn up in chronological order, with regard to the future of that people, so wonderful and "terrible from their beginning hitherto."[Isaiah 18:2.">2] The first item in that programme is Restoration.

"For lo, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will bring again the captivity of My people Israel and Judah, saith Jehovah; and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it" (Jeremiah 30:3).

Note the frequent reiteration of the august and glorious name JEHOVAH in this, as in the other verses of this prophecy; as if to give credibility to the announcements made, and to test our faith in the accomplishment of those things for which the eternal, unchangeable name, Jehovah, stands pledged.

Now, what are we to do with this and other prophecies of a Restoration of the people of Israel to the land of their fathers?

There are several methods of interpretation which seem alike unsatisfactory, and are perhaps responsible for a great deal of Jewish and Gentile unbelief. There is, first of all, the old-fashioned way of so-called spiritualizing the prophecies making Israel and Zion to mean the Church, and The Land to signify heaven; but I confess this system of interpretation has no consistency about it, and makes the Word of God the most meaningless and unintelligible book in the world. For instance, we read here:

"I will bring again the captivity of My people Israel and Judah; . . . and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers."

If Israel be the Church, who is Judah? If Judah be the Church, who is Israel? What is the "captivity" the Church has endured ? and where is "the land" from which the Church has been driven out, and to which it will return? At the end of the prophecy we read:

"Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that the city shall be built to the Lord from the tower of Hananeel unto the gate of the corner. And the measuring line shall yet go forth over against it upon the hill Gareb, and shall compass about to Goath. And the whole valley of the dead bodies, and of the ashes, and all the fields unto the brook of Kedron, unto the corner of the horse-gate toward the east, shall be holy unto the Lord; it shall not be plucked up, nor thrown down any more for ever" (Jeremiah 31:38-40). In what particular locality in heaven are the tower of Hananeel and the corner gate? And what will our allegorical interpretations make of the hill Gareb, and Goath, and the brook Kedron? All these are known to me in the environs of the literal Jerusalem in Canaan; but I confess some difficulty in locating them in heavenly places. If Israel does not mean Israel, and "the land God gave to the fathers" does not mean Palestine, then I do not know what is meant. The announcement is: "He that scattereth Israel will gather him." Now, when it comes to scattering—of course, this is allowed to refer to literal Israel, to the Jews, "scattered and peeled"; but when, in the same sentence, a gathering of the same people is mentioned oh, this is the gathering of the spiritual Israel. What consistency or honesty, I pray, is there in such interpretations!

"To what may we attribute the loose system of interpreting the language of the Psalms and prophets, and the extravagant expectations of the universal conversion of the world by the preaching of the gospel, which may be observed in many Christian writers?

"To nothing so much, I believe, as to the habit of inaccurately interpreting the word 'Israel,' and the consequent application of promises to the Gentile churches, with which they have nothing to do. The least errors in theology always bear fruit. Never does man take up an incorrect principle of interpreting Scripture without that principle entailing awkward consequences, and colouring the whole tone of his religion.

"I do not deny that Israel was a peculiar typical people, and that God's relations to Israel were meant to be a type of relations to His believing people all over the world. I do not forget that it is written, 'As face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man';[Proverbs 27:19.">3] and that whatever spiritual truths are taught in prophecy concerning Israelitish hearts, are applicable to the hearts of Gentiles. I would have it most distinctly understood that God's dealings with individual Jews and Gentiles are precisely one and the same. Without repentance, faith in Christ, and holiness of heart, no individual Jew or Gentile shall ever be saved. What I protest against is, the habit of allegorizing plain sayings of the Word of God concerning the future history of the nation Israel, and explaining away the fulness of their contents in order to accommodate them to the Gentile Church. I believe the habit to be unwarranted by anything in Scripture, and to draw after it a long train of evil consequences."[4]

Like thousands more, the writer has in the infinite grace of God been brought out of the darkness of Rabbinical Judaism into the marvellous light and liberty of the glorious gospel of Christ. He accepted Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah of Israel and Saviour of the world, on the ground of a literal interpretation of the prophecies concerning Him; and he cannot consistently, without doing outrage to his convictions, accept one principle of interpretation for one set of prophecies which have already been fulfilled, and another principle of interpretation for another set of prophecies not yet fulfilled. Rather, he honestly believes that the manner of fulfilment of those prophecies which are now history, supplies the only sound basis for the interpretation of those prophecies with regard to Israel and the kingdom which yet await their fulfilment. "Though He tarry, wait for Him"; and when the fulness of time is come, it will be seen that though man's systems and principles of interpretation be diverse, God's manner of fulfilling His promises is one.

Another way of dealing with these prophecies of a Restoration is to make them refer to the gathering of the Jews into the Church. But this position also is untenable. The Jews will not be nationally gathered into the Church; for even in the New Testament we have the Jews, as well as the Gentiles, as nations, running parallel with, and continuing separate from, the Church throughout all the period of its history on earth;[1 Corinthians 10:32.">5] and in Romans 11:25, the inspired apostle is commissioned to announce to the Gentile believers the fact that all Israel will not be saved; that the "hardness in part" which has befallen that nation will continue until after the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

"He that scattered Israel": From whence? from the Church, or gospel blessings? No, no; but from Palestine. "Will gather him:" Where to? why, surely, to the land which He gave to their fathers, from which Israel, on account of disobedience, was banished and scattered. But perhaps the most plausible way of explaining such predictions is to represent them as having had their fulfilment at

the restoration from Babylon, since they were given before the Babylonish captivity. To this I reply that this and other pre- dictions are in terms of which we vainly seek an adequate fulfilment at that period. It may be as well to give here a few reasons in justification of the position that there is a future Restoration of the literal Israel to the land which by unconditional promise and covenant was given to them as an everlasting possession.[Genesis 15:7-21;_Genesis 17:7-8;_Genesis 17:19;_Genesis 17:21.">6] I. The Restoration promised here is a complete one:

"I will bring again the captivity of My people Israel and Judah;" and the number who will return shall be "a great company,"[Jeremiah 31:8.">7] so that even the whole of the promised land will not be large enough for them.[Zechariah 10:10;_Isaiah 49:19-20.">8] The same appears in that remarkable prophecy of Isaiah 11, which, on whatever system of interpretation we adopt, is admittedly future in its application, where "the outcasts of Israel" and "the dispersed of Judah" are to be gathered together. The same appears again in Ezekiel 37 :, where there is a future announced for the whole twelve tribes reunited in one kingdom. Many more passages might be cited which speak of a complete Restoration of the entire nation in terms most unequivocal and minute; which certainly could not be said to have received their fulfilment in the—comparatively speaking—mere handful who returned from Babylon.

II. After the Restoration predicted in this and other prophecies, Israel is to enjoy at least national independence, if not supremacy.

"For it shall come to pass in that day, saith Jehovah of Hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him" (Jeremiah 30:8).

Backsliding Israel, because he served not Jehovah with joyfulness and with gladness of heart for the abundance of all things, was to be taught a lesson by comparison; and was given over by God to be in servitude for a time to the Gentiles.

"Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies, which Jehovah shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in want of all things; and He shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck" (Deuteronomy 28:47-48). But this iron yoke of Gentile oppression was not to last for ever. This is clear even from the solemn words of the Lord Jesus, when, after announcing the fact that Israel "shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations,"[Luke 21:24.">9] He suspends in the midst of the darkness of threatened judgment the bright star of hope which ultimately shall banish the darkness, and cause judgment to be forgotten in the abundance of mercy; inasmuch as He announces a limit to the time of Israel’s servitude to Gentile oppression:

"Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." And when they be fulfilled, the yoke will be broken, and Israel will once more not only be free and independent, but nationally supreme among the nations.[Isaiah 60:9-16.">10] But has this ever yet taken place? Let those who point to the restoration from Babylon as an exhaustive fulfilment of these prophecies compare, for instance, such a passage as Isaiah 14:1-3, where we read that after

"Jehovah will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land: and the strangers shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob. And the people shall take them, and bring them to their place: and the house of Israel shall possess them

in the land of Jehovah for servants and handmaids: and they shall take them captives whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors."

Let them compare this with Nehemiah 9:36-37. which describes the actual condition of the people after their restoration:

"Behold, we are servants this day, and for the land that Thou gavest unto our fathers to eat the fruit thereof and the good thereof, behold, we are servants in it; and it yieldeth much increase unto the kings whom Thou hast set over us because of our sins; also they have dominion over our bodies and over our cattle, at their pleasure, and we are in great distress."

III. According to the express declaration of the prophet Isaiah, there is to be a "second" Restoration, which is to be universal in its character.

"And it shall to come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And He shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth" (Isaiah 11:11-12).

Now, there has been no second Restoration as yet; neither could the return from Babylon be said to be a gathering from the "four corners of the earth"; that captivity having been local in its character, and of short duration. Never before the dispersion inaugurated by Titus, could the scattering of the people be said to have been universal; hence they could never before have been gathered from the four corners of the earth.

IV. Israel has never yet in all its fulness possessed the land which God has promised them; and Palestine may still be said to be "the land of promise." Its boundaries are given in Genesis 15:18; Ezekiel 47:13; Ezekiel 48:1. Dr. Alex. Keith, author of "Evidences of Prophecy," has given us the results of his personal investigations and measurements in his book called "The Land of Israel," according to which the extent of the promised land is 300,000 square miles. The infidel Voltaire is said to have scoffingly remarked on Exodus 3:8, where God says that He has come down to deliver Israel from the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land into a "good land and a large," that the God of the Jews must have been a petty God, because He gave them a land not larger in size than Wales, and called it a "large land." But this is only in keeping with the style of infidel scoffers in general, who find it easy to ridicule things about which they know very little. It is only ignorance that could represent the land called in Exodus 3:8, a "large land" as being no larger in size than Wales. Why, it is twice and a half as large as Great Britain and Ireland. And yet Christians who do not believe in a future possession by Israel of the whole land which God has promised them, really give occasion to the enemies of God to blaspheme; for if there be no future occupation of the land by Israel, the solemn word of God, on which His oath is staked, would fail of fulfilment.[Genesis 15:8-18.">11]

What though generations may pass, and instead of the fathers may be the children: "heaven and earth shall pass away," but God’s oath and promise cannot fail.

It is very remarkable that when we come to the future re-division of the land in the last chapters of Ezekiel, it is no longer merely from Dan to Beersheba with which the prophet deals; but faith and

inspiration combine to claim all the promised land contained within the boundaries of the original covenant in Genesis 15 : This, by the way, is a sufficient answer to those who ask whether there is room enough in Palestine for the 12,000,000 Jews at present in the world. Note also that according to these same last chapters of Ezekiel, there is to be a different location of the twelve tribes at the re-division of the land. What can we make of this, if there be no future Restoration of Israel to the promised land?

V. Leaving out for the moment the brief ordeal and baptism of suffering which awaits Israel immediately on their return to their land, with which we shall deal presently, the Restoration announced in this and other prophecies is to be followed by a National Conversion (Jeremiah 30:8-10). Israel nationally is then to enter into the blessing of the New Covenant announced in this very prophecy;[Jeremiah 31:31-34.">12] which the election of individuals from all nations now enjoy, as it were, by anticipation. The same is clearly announced in Ezekiel 36:24-28 :

"For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be My people, and I will be your God." And by the same prophet in the following chapter Ezekiel 37:21-23; and many other passages of Scripture. Now, such a national conversion has surely never yet taken place. The restoration from Babylon was followed by the most appalling and universal national apostasy, which culminated in the rejection of the Son of God, and the consequent dispersion of the people into all the four corners of the earth.

VI. There is to be a gathering of Israel to the land of their fathers, which is to be final This is announced in this very prophecy, where, at the end of chapter 31:, after describing with the greatest minuteness and geographical exactness the rebuilding of the Holy City, it closes with the declaration "it shall not be plucked up nor thrown down any more for ever." The same is again emphatically proclaimed by the prophet Amos:

"I will bring again the captivity of My people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God" (Amos 9:14-15).

Now, supposing that since these inspired announcements by Amos and Jeremiah there had already taken place a hundred dispersions and a hundred restorations, we would still be justified in believing in yet another gathering, after which there should be no more scattering.

Endnotes Romans 11:25." id="1._Romans 11:25."> 1. Romans 11:25.Isaiah 18:2." id="2._Isaiah 18:2."> 2. Isaiah 18:2.Proverbs 27:19." id="3._Proverbs 27:19."> 3. Proverbs 27:19.

4. "Scattered and Gathered" by John Charles Ryle, D.D., Bishop of Liverpool.1 Corinthians 10:32." id="5._1 Corinthians 10:32.">

5. 1 Corinthians 10:32.Genesis 15:7-21;_Genesis 17:7-8;_Genesis 17:19;_Genesis 17:21." id="6._Genesis 15:7-21;_Genesis 17:7-8;_Genesis 17:19;_Genesis 17:21."> 6. Genesis 15:7-21; Genesis 17:7-8; Genesis 17:19; Genesis 17:21.Jeremiah 31:8." id="7._Jeremiah 31:8."> 7. Jeremiah 31:8.Zechariah 10:10;_Isaiah 49:19-20." id="8._Zechariah 10:10;_Isaiah 49:19-20."> 8. Zechariah 10:10; Isaiah 49:19-20.Luke 21:24." id="9._Luke 21:24."> 9. Luke 21:24.Isaiah 60:9-16." id="10._Isaiah 60:9-16."> 10. Isaiah 60:9-16.Genesis 15:8-18." id="11._Genesis 15:8-18."> 11. Genesis 15:8-18.Jeremiah 31:31-34." id="12._Jeremiah 31:31-34."> 12. Jeremiah 31:31-34.

3.02.II. "The Time of Israel's Trouble"

II. "The Time of Israel’s Trouble" THE second item in the Divine programme of the future of Israel, as given in this divinely dictated "book," is, to use the language of inspiration, the "time of Jacob’s trouble." And these are the words that the LORD spake concerning Israel and concerning Judah. For thus saith the LORD; We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob’s trouble; but he shall be saved out of it. (Jeremiah 30:4-7).

"What!" you say, "will not all the sufferings of Israel through all these centuries suffice? Is there a yet future baptism of fire, through which they must pass? "Yes, this is clear from this prophecy, as well as from many others. Listen to this declaration of the prophet Ezekiel:

"And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying: Son of man, the house of Israel is to Me become dross; all they are brass, and tin, and iron, and lead, in the midst of the furnace; they are even the dross of silver. Therefore thus saith the Lord God: Because ye are all become dross, behold therefore, I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem. As they gather silver, and brass, and iron, and lead, and tin, into the midst of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it, to melt it; so will I gather you in Mine anger and in My fury, and I will leave you there, and melt you. Yea, I will gather you, and blow upon you in the fire of My wrath, and ye shall be melted in the midst thereof. As silver is melted in the midst of the furnace, so shall ye be melted in the midst thereof; and ye shall know that I the Lord have poured out My fury upon you" (Ezekiel 22:17-22).

Here, too, the terrible fiery furnace immediately succeeds the gathering into the midst of Jerusalem. But may not this "time of Jacob’s trouble" refer to the awful calamity which befell the nation at the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, which was repeated with perhaps still greater severity about sixty-five years later in the time of Bar Cochba and Hadrian? No! The ordeal announced here through which Israel is to pass is terribly sharp, but brief in its duration, as suggested by the very figure employed—which is that of a woman in travail; and it ends in their salvation: while the sufferings at the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus only inaugurated a long series of dispersions, massacres, spoliations, and oppressions, which has already continued for more than eighteen centuries. Of course, it is not denied that these long-enduring sufferings were predicted in the Word of God, and have their place and relation to Israel’s apostasy and future glory; and, in one sense, "the time of Jacob’s trouble" may be only a summing up, a culmination, of all that has preceded: but it is clear that there is a time of purging by fiery judgment awaiting Israel after the return to their land, which will immediately precede their national conversion and the revelation to them of the Messiah, whom, as a nation, they have so long rejected.

What have we in the last chapters of Zechariah?—Israel in their land; not necessarily the entire nation, but the bulk of it, evidently restored in a state of unbelief. Then comes this awful announcement:

"Behold, the day of Jehovah cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried. They shall call on My name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is My people; and they shall say, Jehovah is my God" (Zechariah 14:1-2; Zechariah 13:8-9).

"This is the immediate prospect after restoration to Palestine of the people who rebelled against the Most High, and rejected His Son, and always resisted the Holy Spirit—a furnace seven times heated, and anguish as acute as are the pangs of a woman in travail. Alas! poor Israel, who desire the day of the Lord, to what end is it for you? Shall not the day of the Lord be darkness and not light, even very dark and no brightness in it?[Amos 5:18;_Amos 5:20.">1] But, blessed be God, His anger will not endure for ever; 'though weeping may endure for a night, joy will come in the morning.' And even when Israel sits in darkness—a deeper darkness than they have ever been in yet—'the Lord shall be a light unto them;'[Micah 7:8.">2] and, although their tribulation and anguish shall be so great that there has been none like it, in the midst of wrath God will remember mercy; and, according to His promise, He will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob.[Amos 9:8.">3]

"Suddenly, when the cloud will be thickest, and the anguish most acute; when even the small remnant that shall be left of Israel shall despair of hope, and Israel's enemies be most certain in their own minds of accomplishing their purpose of utterly exterminating that people whom they will think has been given over to them as a prey; when the proud spirit of the haughty Jew shall be broken, and humility and penitence take the place of stubbornness and pride; when the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, saying, 'Spare Thy people, O Lord, and give not Thine heritage to reproach'; and when the whole people, brought to such extremities that they will be willing to receive help from whatsoever quarter it may come, cry' Oh that Thou wouldest rend the heavens, that Thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at Thy presence ! Be not wroth very sore, O Lord, neither remember iniquity for ever: behold, see, we beseech Thee, we are all Thy people!'[4]—then, suddenly, with the speed of lightning, and attended by all His saints and hosts of angels, shall the same Jesus, who ascended bodily and visibly on a cloud from the Mount of Olivet, so and in like manner, be revealed again; but this time in a special and peculiar manner, as Israel's King and Deliverer.

'And His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east,' and from thence He shall 'go forth and fight against those nations (Israel's enemies) as in the day of battle.'[Zechariah 14:3-4.">5] 'And the Lord shall utter His voice before His army' and He will go forth

'with fire and with His chariots like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by His sword will the Lord plead with all flesh; and the slain of the Lord shall be many' (Joel 2:11; Isaiah 66:15-16).

"Just as that shepherd of Bethlehem himself one of the most perfect and beautiful types of Him who is his great Son, as well as Lord 'slew both the lion and the bear,' and saved from their jaws

the lamb which was taken possession of by them as their prey: so will the Shepherd of Israel 'save' the remnant of His people from the hands and jaws of those who are stronger than they; and slay them who devoured, broke in pieces, and stamped with their feet, His chosen, with a fierceness exceeding even that of the bear and the lion."[6]

Endnotes Amos 5:18;_Amos 5:20." id="1._Amos 5:18;_Amos 5:20."> 1. Amos 5:18; Amos 5:20.Micah 7:8." id="2._Micah 7:8."> 2. Micah 7:8.Amos 9:8." id="3._Amos 9:8.">

3. Amos 9:8.

4. Isaiah 64:1, Isaiah 64:9.Zechariah 14:3-4." id="5._Zechariah 14:3-4."> 5. Zechariah 14:3-4.

6. "Rays of Messiah's Glory," by David Baron.

3.03.III. Israel's Conversion

III. Israel’s Conversion THE third item with regard to Israel’s future, as given in this chapter, is Israel’s Conversion and the establishment of the throne of David.

"I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him; but they shall serve Jehovah their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them."

It is unnecessary to prove that by "David their King," is here meant their Messiah. Even the Talmud says, " David their King, whom I will raise up unto them"; and not "whom I have raised up unto them"—showing that it is not king David, who reigned in Jerusalem some four hundred years before, who is meant, but the Messiah who is to be "of David’s seed."[Jeremiah 23:5-6.">1] In truth, He is the true David, the Beloved; the King after God’s own heart, in whom the promises of God centre.

There are a number of passages where the name David is applied to the King Messiah in the Old Testament; but two are especially remarkable. In Hosea 3 :, after that wonderful prophecy delivered nearly eight hundred years before Christ, and which answers exactly to the present state of Israel, it is stated, "afterward"—that is, when their present condition of banishment from their land and apostasy from God shall come to an end—

"shall the children of Israel return, and seek Jehovah their God, and David their king, and shall fear Jehovah and His goodness in the latter days."

"They shall seek Jehovah their God, and David their King." "They shall serve Jehovah their God, and David their King": so that there is neither true seeking nor true serving of Jehovah God, if we do not also seek and serve David (Messiah) the King, notwithstanding all that poor Israel now thinks to the contrary. And note the more than human character and dignity of this great David. He claims equal allegiance with God; for whatever is implied by "they shall serve Jehovah their God," must be meant also in the words "and they shall serve David their King." But there is a glorious truth wrapped up in these two passages, which must not be overlooked. In foretelling their state during the time when Israel shall neither serve God nor yet fall into idolatry, the prophet says that "the children of Israel shall abide many days"—the Hebrew idiomatic expression meaning a long, indefinite period—"without a king and without a prince." How wonderfully true has this proved; and with what wonderful accuracy has the inspired announcement been fulfilled!

Just about the time of Zedekiah, the last prince who ever sat on the throne of David, the prophet Ezekiel came with this startling announcement : " Remove the mitre and take off the crown ; it shall not be (or, this is no more it): exalt the low, abase the high (or, let anarchy and usurpation of the throne of David continue). I will overturn, overturn, overturn it; this shall be no more until He come whose right it is; to Him it shall be given."[2] And so it has proved. For all those centuries before Christ, and for all these nearly nineteen centuries since Christ—a fact which only inspiration could have foreseen—in spite of every effort and Jewish ambition, there has been no re-establishment

of the throne of David.

It is true that in the second century b.c. a kingdom existed for a short time in Judea; but the kings were not of the house of David, nor even of the tribe of Judah, and are not recognised as kings by God, who by oath appointed David and his seed to be the only legitimate kings in Zion.

"Until He come, whose right it is: to Him it shall be given." Who is this but Jesus of Nazareth?—"the King of the Jews," concerning whom it was announced at His birth: "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto Him 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." According to the commonly-received view, there is indeed no importance in the title "Son of David" as belonging to Christ; except, perhaps, as proving that He descended from David, and enabling us to trace His genealogy. But it is evident that the announcement of the angel attaches to it far greater importance than this, inasmuch as it asserts for Him, as Son of David, "the throne of His father David." "And what throne is that? Not the throne of heaven, nor yet the throne of God's spiritual kingdom; for neither of these was, or could have been, occupied by David, or could be inherited by Christ as ' Son of David.' The throne intended, then, must be the throne of the kingdom of Israel, and that it is so, the words of the angel testify; for having said, 'The Lord God shall give to Him the throne of His father David,' he adds: 'And He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever.'" The idea now generally entertained is that the throne on which Christ now sits at the right hand of the Majesty on high is that meant by the angel in this announcement to Mary; but this view is. not based on a comprehensive and mature study of the Word of God. Take, for instance, Revelation 3:21 :

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne."

Here the Lord Himself tells us that the throne over which He now sits is not His, but the Father's, who invited Him to share it with Him as a token of His perfect satisfaction with the finished work of His beloved Son; and that He only occupies this place until He takes possession of His own throne, on which He will grant the privilege of sitting with Him to all those who have been faithful to Him in this rebellious world. When Christ appeared for the first time, had Israel but known the day of His visitation, the kingdom might have at that time been restored to them; but "His own received Him not." They rejected Him, and sent a messenger after Him, saying: "We will not have this man to reign over us." But did Israel's unbelief and rejection of their King frustrate the purposes of God? Did it for ever rob Christ of that to which He has a right as the Son of David, and which is pre-eminently the reward of His humiliation and pouring out His soul unto death? "Yet have I anointed My king on the holy hill of Zion." Man's unbelief and disobedience may defer, to his own hurt, the accomplishment of the purposes of God; but man's unbelief and the very gates of hell cannot frustrate them.

"There is an old saying which Bengel was very fond of: 'Deus habet horas et moras'—God has His own times and ways. There are pauses in history; but during those pauses, which are occasioned by the unbelief, the ignorance, and the disobedience of His own people, and are made subservient to the wisdom of God, the great Musician does not forget the melody, and at the proper time it is continued."[3] The King whom Israel insulted and delivered over to the cross, departed for a season with the awful words:

"Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see Me henceforth till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Matthew 23:38-39).

Or, as we have it in Hosea 5:15 :

"I will go and return unto My place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek My face; in their affliction they shall seek Me early."

Meanwhile, another underlying parallel purpose of God, even the mystery of the Church, has been revealed, which more than ever makes manifest the manifold wisdom of God. But what about the "Tabernacle of David"? What about Christ's relation to Israel? Did He renounce? Did He say to Israel, "I have done with you? Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, ye shall not see Me henceforth—and for ever." Oh, no! Behold here too the glorious star of hope suspended right in the midst of the gloom of impending judgment and desolation. The King's departure, however long its duration, is but for a limited time: "Until ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." Till they acknowledge their offence and seek My face; and then, corresponding with what was said above, it is added: "In their affliction—in the time of Jacob's trouble (the same word in the original being used in both places)—they shall seek Me early." And when once they seek Him, that face, which "in a little wrath has been hid from them for a moment,"[Isaiah 54:8.">4] I will be lifted upon them in full splendour. "I will return and build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen down, and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up;"[Amos 9:11-12.">5] "and the Lord shall yet reign in Mount Zion, and before His ancients gloriously."[Isaiah 24:23.">6] Till then, and for these many days, "the children of Israel abide without a king and without a prince."[Hosea 3:4.">7] Note that they are not only without a king, but also without a prince.

Now, compare this with Ezekiel 37 :, and see a most beautiful truth about the Lord Jesus in relation to Israel's future.

"Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land. And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all. Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions; but I will save them out of all their dwelling-places, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them; so shall they be My people, and I will be their God. And David My servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd; they shall also walk in My judgments, and observe My statutes and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob My servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt: and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children for ever: and My servant David shall be their Prince for ever " (Ezekiel 37:21-25).

"And David My servant shall be king over them; . . . and My servant David shall be their prince for ever." Here is both Israel's King and Prince in the same person.

But, you say, do not the two terms substantially mean the same thing? No; the word in the original translated "prince" in this passage, does not mean prince in an hereditary sense of the word. "Nassi," the term used, signifies one exalted, or elected by the free will of the people. What a

glimpse we get here of the change that will come over Israel at the appearing of Jesus Christ! At His first coming, Israel, as a nation, deliberately rejected Him. "Not this man, but Barabbas!" they said: and as to Christ, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" "We will not have this man to reign over us," was their cry. But the national verdict with regard to Jesus of Nazareth will be revoked; the grand mistake of the Jewish people shall yet be acknowledged and repented of Instead of "Crucify Him!" they will cry "Hosanna! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." They will recognise His claims, not only as "the King," the one whose right it is to reign over them; but they will deliberately declare Him their "Nassi," their elected or exalted one. This simply means that Israel will ratify God's choice. David himself, whose name Messiah bears, is a beautiful type of Christ in this as in many other respects. In 1 Samuel 16 : we read of his being chosen and anointed as king over Israel by the command of God. But what followed? Did he at once commence his reign? For fifteen years he was a fugitive; his claims were unrecognised; his home was the Cave of Adullam, or the wilderness of Judah. There was another king, who hated David, and disputed his sovereignty.

Meanwhile, instead of a throne on Mount Zion and the hosts of Israel, his court was outside the camp, and his following consisted of his brethren and all his father's house: "And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented"—a strange, typical lot, not numbering altogether more than about "four hundred men."[1 Samuel 22:1-2.">8] But at last, after those years of rejection, the people's heart turned toward him," and the men of Judah came, and"—as if he had never been anointed king before—"there" (in Hebron) "they anointed David king over the house of Judah."[2 Samuel 2:4.">9] The rest of the tribes of Israel still opposed David, and ranged themselves under the banner of Ishbosheth; until about seven years later the heart of all the people turned toward him, and "all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron, and king David made a league with them in Hebron before Jehovah, and they anointed David king over Israel."[2 Samuel 5:3.">10]

Thus it is with Christ From His incarnation He was designated King of the Jews. Jehovah Himself has anointed Him as His King on the holy hill of Zion; and it was even then announced that "the Lord God shall give unto Him 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." But my people knew not the day of their visitation; and for all these centuries have resolutely, as a nation, refused to acknowledge His claims. Meanwhile, also, the god of this world, "the prince of the power of the air," is permitted in the infinite wisdom of God to usurp Christ's sovereignty over the nations; and the followers of our blessed, glorious Master are a mere handful of individuals from all nations who spiritually are like that motley crowd in the cave of Adullam, "in distress, in debts, and discon- tented, or bitter of soul" because of a sense of sin and sorrow. These are painfully conscious that Jesus Christ is not yet accepted King over the earth; for instead of a crown which will come by and by, we have to take up His cross and follow Him, "without the camp bearing His reproach."[Hebrews 13:13.">11] But as sure as there was a cross planted for Him on that Golgotha, outside the walls of Jerusalem, so surely, if the word and oath of our God stand for anything, is there yet to be a glorious throne for our Redeemer and Master on Mount Zion." The stone which the builders have rejected has become the headstone of the corner"; and, however marvellous and improbable in our eyes, Israel shall yet "serve Jehovah their God, and David their King," and deliberately elect Him, whom during centuries of unbelief they have despised and rejected, as their "Nassi" their freely chosen ruler and prince.

Endnotes Jeremiah 23:5-6." id="1._Jeremiah 23:5-6."> 1. Jeremiah 23:5-6.

2. Lit. Hebrew, Ezekiel 21 :

3. Dr. A. Saphir.Isaiah 54:8." id="4._Isaiah 54:8."> 4. Isaiah 54:8.Amos 9:11-12." id="5._Amos 9:11-12."> 5. Amos 9:11-12.Isaiah 24:23." id="6._Isaiah 24:23."> 6. Isaiah 24:23.Hosea 3:4." id="7._Hosea 3:4."> 7. Hosea 3:4.1 Samuel 22:1-2." id="8._1 Samuel 22:1-2."> 8. 1 Samuel 22:1-2.2 Samuel 2:4." id="9._2 Samuel 2:4."> 9. 2 Samuel 2:4.2 Samuel 5:3." id="10._2 Samuel 5:3."> 10. 2 Samuel 5:3.Hebrews 13:13." id="11._Hebrews 13:13."> 11. Hebrews 13:13.

3.04.IV. The Present Condition of Israel

IV. The Present Condition of Israel

ISRAEL'S present state, and the miracle of their preservation. This is the next item in the divinely dictated message through the prophet Jeremiah.

After proclaiming the fact of their restoration, and describing the glad day when the remnant of Israel, after passing through the purging ordeal, shall "call on the name of Jehovah, to serve Him with one consent,"[Zephaniah 3:9.">1] we read in the tenth verse:

"Therefore fear them not, O My servant Jacob, saith Jehovah; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid."

It is beautiful to note how the people are encouraged to draw consolation and hope in their present desolation and sufferings, from the brightness and glory which is yet to break upon them. "Therefore" in view of the glorious prospect just dilated on "fear thou not, O My servant Jacob."

"I had fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." Gloomy indeed is the prospect of the present state of the Jewish people in its dispersion and unbelief, if viewed apart from the bright morn of promise so clearly foretold in the Word of God; but, in the light of the bright future, even the present darkness and gloom become less intense. How full of consolation is the assurance that "Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid"! The present state of the peculiar people has been foretold with minute exactness in predictions like the following:

"For lo, I will command, and I will sift (lit. toss or shake about) the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is tossed about in a sieve" (Amos 9:9).

Or, in the words of Jeremiah:

"I will even give them up to be tossed to and fro among all the kingdoms of the earth for evil; to be a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse, in all places whither I shall drive them" (Jeremiah 24:9, r.v.).

O ye who doubt the inspiration of the Book of books, compare these prophecies of thousands of years ago with what is going on before your very eyes! How can we account for the repeated dispersions, and the continued, unceasing wanderings and strange restlessness of the Jew, apart from these ancient inspired utterances? That Palestine should be vanquished, and that Israel should be cast out of their own land, or even be dispersed among the nations, was within the range of human possibility, and mayhap within the power of a shrewd observer to forecast; but, that for centuries and centuries, a people, vanquished and scattered out of their own country, instead of becoming absorbed among the nations—as has been the case with other peoples; and instead of taking root and finding rest in the new soil to which they have been transplanted, should

retain a separate existence, everywhere dwelling alone, and not reckoned among the nations, yet in all places kept in a state of unrest, and continually agitated or tossed about: who, but He whose hand has kept up this standing miracle as His witness among the nations could have foreseen or foretold that?

Before even their first settlement in Palestine, Moses predicted that, if Israel sinned, and was disobedient, "Jehovah shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; . . .and among all these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot find rest." And as the mouth of the Lord has spoken, so it has been all these centuries. What is the monkish legend of the "Wandering Jew " but a parable of the whole Jewish nation? The original version of the legend is as follows:

Joseph Cartophilus, a Jew, was door-keeper at the Praetorium of Pontius Pilate when Jesus was led away to be crucified. As Jesus halted upon the threshold of the Praetorium, Cartophilus struck Him on the loins, and said, "Move faster. Why do you stop here?" Jesus turned round to him, and said: "I go, but you will wait till My return." Cartophilus, who was then thirty years old, and who has always returned to that age when he has completed a hundred years, has ever since been awaiting the coming of the Lord and the end of the world. This wretched man, who must exist in spite of his longing for death, and desperate efforts at self-destruction, is further said to be possessed with a spirit of restlessness which makes him ceaselessly wander over the face of the earth. Who cannot see the application of this legend to the whole tribe of the "wandering foot and weary breast"? More than eighteen hundred years ago, when Israel insulted their Messiah, and hastened Him to the cross, Jesus, with a pitiful but disappointed look, turned to them, and said: "The Son of Man goeth as it is written of Him; but this generation shall not pass away until all these things be fulfilled; for I say unto you, ye shall not see Me henceforth till ye shall say: Blessed be He that cometh in the name of the Lord." Forthwith Israel, taken possession of by a spirit of restlessness, had to take staff in hand, and gird his loins, and commence his wanderings amongst the nations.[Hosea 9:17.">2] Still they are on their weary march, which has already extended over a period of nearly two millenniums.

How often has not my people built a nest for itself, and said: "Here let us rest!" But, as often has God put His hand under the nest and said: "Arise and depart, for this is not your resting-place!"

"That which cometh into your mind shall not be at all, that ye say: We will be as the nations, as the families of the countries" (Ezekiel 20:32).

If God had cast away His people which He foreknew, He would have let them alone to go to national destruction and amalgamation, which they courted; but no, even in these repeated dispersions and long-continued wanderings and chastisements, we see God’s faithfulness to His covenants, and love for His people. Israel gives us the picture, on a national scale, of God’s dealings with a backslider. And surely it is in love and mercy that rest and peace are taken from those that wander from God. If the prodigal in the far country had found what his heart desired, he might never have turned his thoughts to his father and his home.

"Thou turnest man to the very dust, and sayest, Turn, O children of men!" (Psalms 90:3, Heb.).

Each stroke, each separate edict of banishment from one country or the other, which has, as it were, been God’s word of command to the nation to resume its long march, each calamity and

wrong which has befallen the dispersed people, has been a call from God: "Turn ye! turn ye! from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?"

"If then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity: then will I remember My covenant with Jacob, and also My covenant with Isaac, and also My covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land" (Leviticus 26:41-42). But the day is not far distant when God will heal their backslidings;[Hosea 14:4.">3] and then at the cross, where they commenced, Israel's wanderings and dispersions will cease. "Jacob shall return, and be in rest, and be quiet; and none shall make him afraid." Meanwhile, though scattered and peeled, tossed about among the nations, and finding no rest for the sole of their feet, Israel's preservation is guaranteed.

"For I am with thee, saith Jehovah, to save thee: for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have scattered thee, but I will not make a full end of thee; but I will correct thee with judgment, and will in no wise leave thee unpunished" (Jeremiah 30:11, r.v.). This agrees with what the same prophet says in another place:

"Thus hath Jehovah said, The whole land shall be desolate, yet will I not make a full end" (Jeremiah 4:27). And again, in giving His mandate to the nations to "go up upon her walls and destroy," He is careful to put in the reservation clause, " but make not a full end."[Jeremiah 5:10.">4] We also read in Amos 9:8 :

"Behold, the eyes of the Lord God are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth; saving that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith Jehovah."

Let the miracle of the continued existence of the Jewish people bear witness to Jehovah's faithfulness to His promises, as well as to His threatenings. By the word of God was this nation first brought into existence; and by the word of God it continues to exist, and nothing can move it.

It surely is not necessary to remind the world that there are no thanks due to the Gentile nations—especially not to professed Christendom—that there is such a being as a Jew now left on the face of the earth. What force or influence is there, which might be supposed to tend to the utter extermination of the people, which has not been brought to bear upon them with terrible severity for many centuries? On whatever else the nations of the earth were divided, they were at one on this point; and, to use the language of Psalm lxxxiii. 4, which will be the war cry of the final great con- federacy of the nations who will assemble against Jerusalem, they have said:

"Come, let us cut them off from being a nation; That the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance."

Popes, councils, bishops, monks, kings, and peoples, seemed equally enraged against them, and equally determined on their extermination. To effect this, every expedient has been tried, but all have equally failed. Let me remind the reader of a few typical actions on the part of the great representatives of the Gentile world, to illustrate their attitude to Israel.

Pharaoh, the head of the Gentile world of his time, conceived the idea of a policy of extermination against the chosen people, and he tried the expedient of water. "Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river," was the stern edict. But what was the result? Israel ultimately passed the water ordeal in safety; not only the River Nile, but also the Red Sea. But note the retributive justice of

God: the very means which he had planned for the extermination of God’s people were chosen for his own destruction. Ptiaraoh and his hosts were drowned!

Once again Israel was in bondage, though for a short period; and the great head of the Gentile world at that time, Nebuchadnezzar—with whom pre-eminently began the "times of the Gentiles"—tried how it would do to destroy these Jews by fire. Three Hebrew youths, because they would not serve his gods, nor worship the golden image which he had set up, were cast into the "burning fiery furnace," heated one seven times more than it was wont; however, the fire had no power over the bodies of these Jewish men, nor was a hair of their head singed, but the flames slew those men who threw them into the furnace.

Darius, another great monarch of the Gentile world, tried the expedient of throwing one Jew, the representative of his people, to wild beasts. But God sent His angel and shut the lions’ mouths, so that they did not hurt him; although these same lions had the mastery of Daniel’s enemies, and brake all their bones in pieces, or ever they came at the bottom of the den. Were these occurrences mere chance? Oh no! they were in fulfilment of that wonderful promise, primarily given to Israel as a nation:

"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee" (Isaiah 43:2).

Coming to more modern times, it may well be said that no weapon that was forged against Israel prospered, and every tongue that rose up against them in judgment was contemned. Whenever there arose a Haman, who planned their destruction, there was an Esther or a Mordecai foreordained. Behold, He that keepeth Israel did neither slumber nor sleep. Hence it comes to pass, that after nearly two thousand years of dispersion, untold and unheard-of sufferings, confiscations, violence, tortures, massacres, banishments, and systematic oppressions, the Jewish nation has proved indestructible; and not only exists, but exists in larger numbers to-day than in the most palmy days of David and Solomon, and shows no symptoms of an exhaustion of the early vigour of their national life.

Note the eloquent appeal of a Jew: "Braving all kinds of torments—the pangs of death, and still more terrible pangs of life—we have withstood the impetuous storm of time, sweeping indiscriminately in its course nations, religions, and countries. What has become of those celebrated empires, whose very name still excites our admiration by the idea of splendid greatness attached to them, and whose power embraced the whole surface of the known globe? They are only remembered as monuments of the vanity of human greatness. Rome and Greece are no more; their descendants, mixed with other nations, have lost even the traces of their origin; while a population of a few millions of men, so often subjugated, stands the test of revolving ages, and the fiery ordeal of eighteen centuries of persecution. We still preserve laws that were given to us in the first days of the world, in the infancy of nature. The last followers of a religion which had embraced the universe have disappeared these eighteen centuries, and our temples are still standing. We alone have been spared by the indiscriminating hand of time, like a column left standing amid the wreck of worlds and the ruins of nature. The history of our people connects present times with the first ages of the world, by the testimony it bears to the existence of those early periods. It begins at the cradle of mankind; it is likely to be preserved to the very day of

universal de- struction."[5]

"Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; the Lord of Hosts is His name: if those ordinances depart from before Me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before Me for ever. Thus saith Jehovah, If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith Jehovah" (Jeremiah 31:35-37).

Endnotes Zephaniah 3:9." id="1._Zephaniah 3:9."> 1. Zephaniah 3:9.Hosea 9:17." id="2._Hosea 9:17."> 2. Hosea 9:17.Hosea 14:4." id="3._Hosea 14:4."> 3. Hosea 14:4.Jeremiah 5:10." id="4._Jeremiah 5:10."> 4. Jeremiah 5:10.

5. Michael Beers, Appeal to the Justice of Kings.

Chapter 44

3.05. V. A Dark Picture: Or, A Contrast Between the Human and Divine Side.....

V. A Dark Picture: Or, A Contrast Between the Human and Divine Side of the Jewish Problem FOR thus saith Jehovah, Thy bruise is incurable, and thy wound is grievous. There is none to plead thy cause that thou mayest be bound up: thou hast no healing medicines. All thy lovers have forgotten thee; they seek thee not; for I have wounded thee with a wound of an enemy, with the chastisement of a cruel one, for the multitude of thine iniquity; because thy sins were increased. Why criest thou for thine affliction? Thy sorrow is incurable for the multitude of thine iniquity: because thy sins were increased, I have done these things unto thee" (Jeremiah 30:12-15).

But, lest the Gentiles should mix themselves in God's controversy with His people, and say, as they have done: "God hath cast them off; come, let us destroy Israel from being a nation," there is put in, as a parenthesis, the warning:

"Therefore, all they that devour thee shall be devoured; and all thine adversaries, every one of them shall go into captivity; and they that spoil thee shall be a spoil, and all they that prey upon thee will I give for a prey. For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith Jehovah; because they called thee an outcast, saying, This is Zion, whom no man seeketh after" (Jeremiah 30:16-17).

What a picture of Israel! Some people are fond of drawing gloomy outlines of the present state of the Jews; and this may suit their tastes, for surely they could not present a darker one than what is here portrayed by God's own hand. The Jew is represented here as in a helpless and hopeless condition. He is helpless. The figure is that of a sick man lying, bruised and wounded, and having no remedy within reach. I say, "a sick man lying," because the words translated, "thou hast no healing medicines," may literally be rendered: "Thou hast no medicines to raise thee up."

Behold this bruised and wounded man, O church of Christ; and may God give you the heart of the Good Samaritan and the compassion of Jesus! Do you realize the present helplessness of poor Israel? We sometimes hear the Jews spoken of by Christians of a certain stamp, after this manner: "After all, they are not so badly off as the heathen. They are a moral, God-fearing people; they have the Old Testament Scriptures in their possession. They are intelligent, clever, influential, and certainly not so low and degraded as the heathen." The answer of God to all this is: "Thou hast no healing medicines." The Jew has the Scriptures; but what if they testify not to him of Jesus Christ, in whom alone, and not in the letter of the Scriptures, is eternal life?

And, think of it, whoever you are, who have some such thoughts as the above in your mind! Is not the Jew a sinner? Has not God said: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die?" Has not Jesus Christ said: "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins?" Must the Son of God come down from heaven to die on the cross in order to save you, and can the Jew be saved by morality? Must you have a Saviour to comfort you in your sorrow and in the hour of death, and can the Jew do without Him?

Out of Christ, it is not a question what a man has; but what he has not. If a sick man were lying in a room fitted up with shelves full of bottles of all sorts of drugs, what avail would it be to him if the only remedy which could alone save him were wanting? "He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son" (be he never so moral, wise, and influential), "hath not life."

You say: "Granted Israel's case is helpless; but have you not just said that it is also hopeless?" Does not God say: "Thy bruise is incurable; thy wound is grievous": and again, in the fifteenth verse: "Thy sorrow is incurable for the multitude of thine iniquity!"

Yes, altogether hopeless, as well as helpless, from the human standpoint; but search and see: you will not find either of these words in the vocabulary of God. Helpless! Hopeless!—"Is the arm of Jehovah shortened at all that it cannot save?" "Behold," says God, through Jeremiah, in relation to this very subject, "I am Jehovah, the God of all flesh; is there anything too hard for Me?"[Jeremiah 32:27.">1] "Call unto Me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty (or "hidden," "fortified," or "inaccessible") things, which thou knowest not."[Jeremiah 33:3.">2] "Thy bruise is incurable, thy wound is grievous," says man. "I will restore health unto thee, and will heal thee of thy wounds," says Jehovah. Is not the Church of Christ guilty in this matter of limiting the "Holy One of Israel"? Has it not been guilty of scepticism and unbelief in the declaration of the inspired Apostle to the Gentiles, that "the gospel is the power of God unto salvation . . to the Jew first"?[Romans 1:16.">3] Who speaks of hopelessness on God's part in the matter of a sinner's salvation? Search and see! Has Christ ever sent away any case because it was beyond His power to cure? There were many hopeless incurables who came to Jesus when He was on earth. There were many such at the Pool of Bethesda. I suppose that poor woman who had an issue of blood for twelve years, and who spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any, was as hopeless a case as you might wish; but she only touched the hem of His garment, and immediately she was healed.

Look again at Israel. In this chapter which we are considering, he is likened to a hopelessly sick man. When you come to Ezekiel 37 :, the sick man has died; and, like Lazarus in the grave, by this time he not only stinketh, but his flesh has rotted away and all there is left of him is a heap of dry bones strewn over the open valley.

"Son of man, can these dry bones live? . . . So I prophesied as He commanded me; and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army."

Look at another figure of unbelieving Israel, in Romans 11 : They are compared to broken-off branches of the brittle olive-tree. Can these broken-off fragments be made once again to live and bear fruit? Yes,—

"God is able to graft them in again. For if thou (Gentile) wert cut out of the olive tree, which is wild by nature, and wert grafted, contrary to nature, into a good olive tree, how much more shall these (Israelites) which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree!" (Romans 11:23-24).

"For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith Jehovah. Because they called thee an outcast, saying, This is Zion, whom no man seeketh after" (Jeremiah 30:17).

Those not acquainted with the original lose very much of the force of this last verse. Some Christians are very fond of the term "Zion" as a name for the Church, and they speak of "our Zion." They may be surprised to learn that "Zion" in the Hebrew means a "desert," "barrenness," or, as it is translated in Isaiah (Isaiah 25:5) "a dry place." Now, note the force of this taunting reproach. "They," (the Gentiles), "called thee Zion"—a barren desert, good for nothing, and which therefore, "no man seeketh after." Now, just because it is so unpromising a plot of ground, God is going to take it in hand, and once again "the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose." Blessed be God, it is just like Him! He always takes the most unpromising materials to accomplish most glorious ends.

Look at Israel in the past. Why did God choose them? Was it because they were more in number than other peoples? Was it because of their goodness or righteousness? No: they were the fewest of all people; and as Moses solemnly testifies to them:

"Understand therefore, that Jehovah thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness; for thou art a stiff-necked people" (Deuteronomy 9:6). But Israel's very stiff-neckedness and barrenness gave occasion for the greater display of God's power and the infinitude of His grace. All the greater glory and credit to the great Husbandman, that the unpromising vine which He brought out of Egypt flourished so wonderfully, that

"She sent out her boughs unto the sea, And her branches unto the river. The hills were covered with the shadow of it; And the boughs thereof were like cedars of God." (Psalms 80:10-11.) Can any good thing come out of Zion? Yes: an Abraham, a Moses, a David, an Isaiah, a Paul—a CHRIST!

Alas! in a moment of God's righteous anger, this garden of the Lord has become withered, as if smitten by some sirocco blast. "The boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast of the field doth devour it." They called thee "an outcast," saying, "This is Zion, whom no man sceketh after; "but the miracle of the past will yet be repeated and intensified. Zion, in God's hand, is yet to be turned into the very "perfection of beauty;"[Psalms 50:2.">4] and the barren fig-tree shall again "bud and blossom, and fill the face of the earth with fruit."

"But," some will say, "Israel's restoration and conversion, according to your own showing, is a work which can only be accomplished by the power of God. What then ought to be the attitude of the Church in relation to this matter? What can we do? "True, Israel's restoration depends not on anything man can do, "He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock." We may well leave this in the hands of Him in whose power alone are the times and seasons, and whose counsels and purposes shall stand for ever, and are independent of all human strength and human means. Although God specially proclaims the fact of Israel's restoration to the Gentile nations, and in the isles afar off,[Jeremiah 31:10.">5] showing that it is most important for them to know it, yet He nowhere commands them to bring it about.

Again, the work of conversion&mdashwhether of individuals or of nations, whether of Jews or of Gentiles—is always a work which only the power of God can accomplish; but that does not mean that the Church of Christ is to fold her hands as she has done for many centuries, and do next to nothing. What your attitude to Israel should be, is plainly shown in the Word of God.

(1) It should be an attitude of prayer. Do you aspire to be one of Jehovah's remembrancers? Then hark to His command:

"Ye that make mention of the Lord [or, ye that are Jehovah's remembrancers] keep not silence, and give Him no rest, till He establish, and till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth" (Isaiah 62:6-7).

Let there be the heart's desire and believing prayer unto God for Israel that they may be saved.[Romans 10:1_:">6] And lest you should not know how to pray about this matter, God Himself has condescended to supply you with a form of prayer for Israel:

"For thus saith Jehovah, Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations; publish ye, praise ye, and say, O Jehovah, save Thy people, the remnant of Israel" (Jeremiah 31:7). Has compassion, has gratitude for the wonderful blessings which you have received through them as the channel, yea, has God's clear word of command, ever made your heart to go out after this manner in the prayer of faith for poor sick Israel?

(2) It should be an attitude of service. When

Ezekiel was made by the Spirit of God to pass through and round about the "dry bones" in the valley of vision, the Lord put the question to him, "Son of man, can these dry bones live?" And the prophet's answer was: "O Lord God, Thou knowest!" as much as to say: "It is certainly beyond the power of man to do anything in such a case. The giving of life, whether physical or spiritual, is Thy prerogative and in Thy power; Thou alone must do it—O Lord God, Thou knowest!" But there followed a command from the great God which must have seemed strange to the prophet. "Yes," said Jehovah, "life is My prerogative, and I am going to bestow it: 'Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, . . and will put My spirit in you, and ye shall live.' But, son of man, there is something which you must do, so that the life which I alone can give may come to these dead bones. 'Prophesy unto these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of Jehovah'"

Now, this is precisely what the Church has neglected to do; and yet it wonders that there has been no noise, no mighty shaking, or many signs of life among the dry bones.

O ye Christians who are fond of speaking of "Jewish unbelief," and have a pious aversion to poor Israel, because he calls not on the name of Christ, "How shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe on Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher"? Know ye not that faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God? And know ye not that for centuries and centuries the gospel of their own Messiah has been withheld from them; and the name of the Blessed Saviour was made to be blasphemed among them by the terrible cruelties which have been perpetrated on them, and the awful caricature of Christ which has been presented to them by those who have professed His name; and that to this day, in spite of a few recent, inadequate, and not always wisely-directed efforts, the great mass of the Jewish nation is left in perfect ignorance of the holy name of Christ, and of the very existence of such a book as the New Testament?

You believe that Gentiles can only be born again by the Spirit of God: yet you do not expect those to whom the gospel has not been preached to believe and call on the name of Christ! Those

among Israel who have heard the glad tidings of salvation through their crucified and risen Messiah have not all disbelieved it; and it is a matter of fact—which, however, those not informed on this subject may be surprised to hear—that, in spite of difficulties and terrible disappointments, there is no modern mission so hopeful, or which has produced such glorious results in conversion, or the converts from which have, by their usefulness and service to the Church universal, so abundantly rewarded all the efforts put forth, as the Jewish field. But how, some may ask, does this advocacy of the evangelization of the Jews tally with what has been shown in an earlier chapter—that Israel, as a nation, will not be converted until after their restoration and the re-appearance of their Messiah upon whom they shall look and mourn?

Why, in the same manner as the evangelization of all the Gentile nations is consistent with the plain teaching of the Word of God: that not one of them, as a nation, will be converted before Christ's return, and the conversion of Israel. Our commission is not to convert any one people or nation, but to evangelize all to "go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature"; and the results of this work of universal evangelization have been already foretold. As far as Israel is concerned, "a remnant according to the election of grace" will be called out to call Jesus "blessed" now; while all Israel shall be saved by and by, when the Redeemer comes out of Zion to turn away ungodliness from Jacob.[Romans 11:5;_Romans 11:26.">7] And, as regards the Gentiles, God has visited them in this dispensation by the preaching of the gospel, "to take out of them a people for His Name"; while "all the Gentiles" are left over to the time when the same Jesus who was taken up into heaven shall so, and in like manner, come back from heaven.

Oh, fellow Christian, time is short! Already there are abundant signs that long scattered and long neglected Israel is hastening back to his land to pass through ere long that fiery ordeal and furnace awaiting him in Zion. Perhaps the most significant fact in this connection, is the formation of the Jewish, almost universal, "Chovevi Zion Association," which seems destined, after centuries of dispersion, to bind all the scattered fragments of the people into one national force, with the ostensible aim of regaining possession of the land of their fathers. The following are the chief objects of the Association, which I copy from their book of "Rules for Members," printed in Hebrew and English: "(a) To foster the national idea in Israel, (b) To promote the Colonisation of Palestine and neighbouring territories by Jews, (c) To diffuse the knowledge of Hebrew as a living language." "The Land" also is now being rapidly opened up, after all these many centuries, during which it was kept locked, and in its desolate condition as a stereotyped Commentary on "The Book." The nations of the earth—buried beneath the loads of vice, ignorance, and superstition—are now opening their gates and doors, and inarticulately, without even the power to express their need, beckon to you to come over and help them. The distant sounds of our Master's chariots are already heard, and Jesus Christ is coming quickly to render to every man according to his work.

"If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; if thou sayest, Behold we knew it not; doth not He that pondereth the heart consider it? and He that keepeth thy soul, doth not He know it? and shall not He render to every man according to his works?" (Proverbs 24:11-12). Who will be up and doing? Who will rise to the Lord's help against the mighty? Who by their prayers and substance will help to carry the gospel message to poor scattered Israel? "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."

"After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which 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" (Acts 15:16-17).

"Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor? Or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of Him and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen." (Romans 11:33-36.)

Endnotes Jeremiah 32:27." id="1._Jeremiah 32:27."> 1. Jeremiah 32:27.Jeremiah 33:3." id="2._Jeremiah 33:3."> 2. Jeremiah 33:3.Romans 1:16." id="3._Romans 1:16."> 3. Romans 1:16.Psalms 50:2." id="4._Psalms 50:2."> 4. Psalms 50:2.Jeremiah 31:10." id="5._Jeremiah 31:10."> 5. Jeremiah 31:10.Romans 10:1_:" id="6._Romans 10:1_:"> 6. Romans 10:1.Romans 11:5;_Romans 11:26." id="7._Romans 11:5;_Romans 11:26."> 7. Romans 11:5; Romans 11:26.

3.06. Appendix: Hebrew Christian Testimony to Israel

Appendix: Hebrew Christian Testimony to Israel

MISSIONARIES DAVID BARON and the Rev. C. A. SCHÖNBERGER assisted by other Hebrew Christian Brethren.

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Contributions will be greatefully received by the Hon. Treasurer, A. BOAKE, Esq., Southwood Lawn, Highgate, N.; by the Rev. C. A. Schönberger, 41, Beresford Road, Canonburg, N.; or by David Baron 23, Grove Road, Highgate Road, N.W.

They may also be sent to the Publishers of "The Christian," 12, Paternoster Buildings, E.C.; or to the Bankers, Parr’s Banking Company, 77, Lombard Street, E.C.; with instructions that it be put into the account of "Hebrew Christian Testimony to Israel." This Mission is under the direction of David Baron and the Rev. C. A. Schönberger, who for many years have been engaged in Mission Work among the Jews in different parts of the world, and are now devoting their time in the same work of preaching the Gospel to the people still "beloved for the fathers’ sakes." They are assisted by other Hebrew Christians, who give proof that they are called of God to this peculiar work. Its Aim Is As the Lord shall enable and supply means, to bear witness for Chist to the Jewish people in all the lands of their dispersion, in order, by the preaching of the Gospel, to call out the

"Remnant according to the election of grace," and to prepare the nation for the time when "The Redeemer shall come out of Zion" and "all Israel shall be saved." Its Head-quarters are in London, where we are endeavouring by means of private visitations, byspecial public leactures on the Missiaship of Christ, and by the post, to bring the Gospel of our Saviour to bear on the better-class of Jews in the city and west of London. In the East-end, among the measses of the poor, we have temporarily hired the Brunswick (formerly Zion) chapel, in the Mile End Road, where meetings are held on the Jewish Sabbath. Many families are visited in their homes, and hundreds are spoken with in the streets. At intervals we visit other towns in the United Kingdom where Jews are to be found, but our hearts are chiefly set on the masses of "The Scattered Nation" in Centeral and Eastern Europe, and, God enabling us, we shall as before, make missionary journeys abroad. Its Character is throughly unsectarian. All who are loyal to the Bible as the Word of God; all who, in these days of failure and declensio, cling to the grand old Protestant evangelical doctrines; all who out of a pure heart and in sincerity call Jesus Lord, and seek to do the will of our Father in heaven, are our brothers and sisters. we know of only one Church, "the general assembly of the first-born ones enrolled in the heavens"; and in the great work of evangelizing Israel in these "latter days," we wish to co-operate with all who abide by the foundation truths of our most holy faith. The Workers and Work depend entirely on the freewill offerings of the Lord’s people. No one is personally appealed to for any money, and any artifice and worldy means for raising funds are avoided, as being unworthy of the cause of our great Master, Jesus Christ. We have resolved to trust only in the living and ever blessed God, whose is the silver and the gold, and in whose hands are the hearts of His own dear children, to incline and dispose them to do that which is well pleasing in His sight.

All Contributions to the Mission are acknowledged by an official numbered recipt; excepting gifts for personal use, when accompanied by special requests that they be so applied, in which case they will be acknowledged by note privately. The Accounts are duly audited at proper intervals, and the statements sent to all contributors.

DAVID BARON. C. A. SCHÖNBERGER.

Chapter 46

4.00. THE VISIONS & PROPHECIES OF ZECHARIAH

THE VISIONS & PROPHECIES OF ZECHARIAH:

“THE PROPHET OF HOPE AND OF GLORY” AN EXPOSITION BY

DAVID BARON

AUTHOR OF "THE ANCIENT SCRIPTURES AND THE MODERN JEW"

"TYPES, PSALMS, AND PROPHECIES;" ETC. ETC.

4.000. FORWARD

FOREWORD BY PREBENDARY H. E. FOX, M.A. THE Bible is an inexhaustible gold mine. Age after age men have been drawing from it priceless treasures. The most successful searchers have not been “the wise and prudent” of this world, but to holy and humble men of heart it has been given to know therein the “secret of the Lord.” Still more when to this spirit is joined both sanctified scholarship and racial intuition. It is for this reason that among the many expositors of latter days we cherish the memory of Adolph Saphir, truly “a scribe instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, bringing forth out of his treasure things new and old.” For the like reason we commend to Bible lovers the exposition which our beloved brother, the author of the following pages, has given of prophetic Scriptures, too little studied at the present time, and yet of increasing importance for all who would learn the purposes of God, perhaps very soon to be fulfilled. Those who have followed the expositions in The Scattered Nation will be thankful to have them in a connected form, and we hope that many who had not seen them in their earlier state will study them carefully, and find faith and hope quickened in each step they take along the prophetic path. The Introduction to the second part will be found especially helpful to those who have been troubled by the difficulties created by the critics, whose shortsightedness is ill fitted to take in the vast perspective of the Divine picture. And other readers will at least learn to say with the Psalmist, “Thy testimonies are wonderful, therefore doth my soul keep them.”

H. E. FOX.

4.0000. PREFACE

PREFACE

MANY into whose hands this volume will come know its history in advance, and the character of its contents, but for the sake of others a few words of explanation are necessary. Being earnestly asked by honoured friends and readers of The Scattered Nation, the Quarterly Record of the Hebrew Christian Testimony to Israel, to write connected expository “Notes on Zechariah,” I undertook to do so, without sufficiently realising—as I must now confess—how formidable the task of a continuous exposition of this particular prophetic book would prove, especially to one whose life is subject to much strain and distraction on account of many other claims and responsibilities in connection with the work of God among scattered Israel. But having once made a start, the conviction deepened within me that it was a task entrusted to me of God, and that such a handling of this great prophecy, which stands in close organic connection with the whole prophetic Scripture, and the last chapters of which deal so vividly with the solemn events of the end of this present age, might, with His blessing, prove of some use to earnest-minded believers and Bible students at this present time. I was also greatly encouraged in the process by the many spoken and written words of approbation and encouragement from esteemed brethren in Christ—Christian ministers, missionaries, and others—who read the expositions in the fragmentary form in which they first appeared. In the pages of the little Quarterly above named, these “Notes,” under the heading of “The Prophet of Hope and of Glory,” extended over a period of nearly eleven years. I have now gone through them again, and made a few slight alterations and corrections, but on the whole they are presented in this volume exactly as they originally appeared in The Scattered Nation—including the introductory remarks in the first chapter, which were written eleven years ago. This will partly account for the style. Did time and strength permit, I might have re-written parts with a view to their abbreviation, but certain circumstances made this impossible. Besides, my object was not to write a “Commentary” in the sense in which the word is usually understood, but to unfold and explain this great Scripture in such a manner as to make it at the same time spiritually profitable to the average intelligent Christian reader. That I am not unacquainted with the various works which already exist on Zechariah, the pages of this book will bear witness. To several scholars in particular—both English and Continental—I have either in the text, or in the footnotes, again and again expressed my indebtedness. I have indeed gleaned what I considered best and helpful for the elucidation of the text from many sources—and even from writers with whose general attitude to the Holy Scriptures and principles of interpretation I am altogether at variance. But almost all the existing works on this prophetic book are in one way or another defective, and some of them even misleading. The older commentaries, though commendable for their reverent spiritual tone and practical teaching, and some of them containing also a good deal of sound philological and historical matter, are more or less vitiated by the allegorising principle of interpretation by means of which all references to a concrete Kingdom of God on earth, a literal national restoration of Israel, and the visible appearing and reign of Messiah, are explained away; while most of the modern writers, biased at the outset by their committal to what is known as the

Higher Criticism, with its attitude of suspicion of the authenticity and genuineness of the sacred text, spend themselves, so to say, on theories of reconstruction, and for the most part uncalled for alterations and emendations, with the result that there is much of criticism in their works, but very little which is worthy of the name of exposition. As to my own effort now embodied in this volume, I am disposed to say little about it, for I am deeply conscious of the greatness and sublimity of the theme, and my inadequacy in handling it, but I may claim this much, that I have tried in constant dependence on the Spirit of God, who first moved holy men of old to utter the Divine oracles, to deal simply and conscientiously with this great Scripture, and that, while I have consulted many sources and “authorities,” my chief guide and final authority has been the Hebrew text itself, viewed in the light of the whole of God’s self-revelation in the Old and New Testaments. The reader will find some parts both in the visions and in the prophecies more thoroughly handled than others, my object being first of all to elucidate as fully as possible the great Messianic prophecies in this book, and secondly to unfold and emphasise the great and solemn prophetic events which centre around the land and the people of Israel—events the rapid fulfilment of which men may now begin to see with their own eyes.

Let me add in conclusion that while the whole Scripture, which in each case stands at the head of the chapter in which it is treated, is now given for convenience sake from the American Standard Edition, which I consider the best of all the English versions, in the exposition itself I have had to do only with the original text, and have sought to bring out shades of meaning which cannot be reproduced in any one translation. The Indexes at the close, prepared by other practised hands, will, I trust, be found helpful for purposes of reference.

DAVID BARON.

NORTHFIELD, CHORLEY WOOD, HERTS.

4.00000. Contents

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4.01. Part 1 - The Visions

PART I The Visions and the Answer to the Deputation from Bethel

1 [Note: Page 2 is blank.]

4.02. Chapter 1 - Introduction and the Prophet's Introductory Address: A Call...

Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION AND THE PROPHET'S INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS A CALL TO REPENTANCE (Zechariah 1:1-6) VISIONS AND PROPHECIES OF ZECHARIAH In the eighth month, in the second year of Darius, came the word of Jehovah unto Zechariah the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo, the prophet, saying, Jehovah was sore displeased with your fathers. Therefore say thou unto them, Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: Return unto Me, saith Jehovah of hosts, and I will return unto you, saith Jehovah of hosts. Be ye not as your fathers, unto whom the former prophets cried, saying, Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, Return ye now from your evil ways, and from your evil doings: but they did not hear nor hearken unto Me, saith Jehovah. Your fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever? But My words and My statutes, which I have commanded My servants the prophets, did they not overtake your fathers? and they turned and said, Like as Jehovah of hosts thought to do unto us, according to our ways, and according to our doings, so hath He dealt with us.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

I AM commencing a somewhat difficult task, in which I am much cast upon God for the help and guidance of His Spirit—the source of light and truth—for it is my desire and prayer that these "notes," though inadequate and unworthy of so great a theme, may yet prove in His hand not only helpful to a right understanding of this most precious part of Holy Scripture, but be made spiritually profitable, and a blessing, especially to "the poor of the flock" (Zec_11:11), who still believe that prophecy came not in olden times by the will of man, but that "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." As I am writing here for Christians, and as these expositions are intended for average intelligent English readers, I shall avoid elaborate introductions, and as much as possible also minute critical points.1

There are some reasons why this portion of Old Testament Scripture should especially be precious to Christians. I will mention only two. First—because of the clear and striking manner in which it testifies of our Lord Jesus. Luther calls Zechariah Ausbund der Propheten—the quintessence of Old Testament prophecy—and this is especially true in reference to Messianic prophecy. Indeed it seems to be the special aim and mission of Zechariah to condense and concentrate in small compass, and in his own peculiar terse style, almost all that has been revealed to the "former

1 An examination of critical points and the theories of "modern" critics against the authenticity of the last chapters will be found in the Introduction to Part II. prophets" about the person and mission of Messiah—about His Divine and yet truly human character, and of His sufferings and of the glory that should follow. His betrayal for thirty pieces of silver (Zec_11:12); the Roman spear with which He was "pierced" by His own nation; the awakened sword of Jehovah's justice which, in love for a

lost world, and for the sin of the guilty, smites the Good Shepherd, “the Man” who is God’s own equal; and the outcome of His sufferings, when He alone shall bear the glory, and “shall sit and rule upon His throne,” and when upon His blessed brow, once crowned with thorns, shall at last be put the crown of glory:—these, as well as other striking details, are brought before us in this prophecy very vividly and in small compass.

“The Messianic prophecies of Zechariah,” says Hengstenburg, “are only second to those of Isaiah in distinctness. In this, the last prophet but one, the prophetic gift once more unfolded all its glory as a proof that it did not sink from exhaustion of age, but was withdrawn according to the deliberate counsel of the Lord.”

Secondly, on account of the light it throws on the events of the last times preceding the great and terrible “Day of the Lord,” which is fast approaching. The presence in Palestine of a representative remnant of the Jewish people in a condition of unbelief; the fiery furnace of suffering into which they are there to be thrown; their great tribulation and anguish occasioned by the final siege of Jerusalem by the confederated Gentile armies under the headship of him in whom both Jewish and Gentile apostasy is to reach its climax; how in the very midst of their final sorrow the spirit of grace and supplication shall be poured upon them, and they shall look upon Him whom they have pierced and mourn; how this blessed One whom they so long rejected shall suddenly appear as their Deliverer, and His feet stand “in that day” on the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east; how God shall again say “Ammi” to the nation which during the long centuries of their unbelief were “Lo-Ammi”—“not My people,” and how Israel shall joyously respond, “Jehovah, my God”; how Israel’s Messiah shall speak peace to the nations, and Israel himself enter at last on his priestly mission to the peoples for which he was originally destined, and Jerusalem become the centre of God’s fear and worship for the whole earth—all these and other solemn events of the time of the end are spoken of in this book with a clearness and distinctness as if they were occurrences of history instead of prophecies of the future. A very few words will suffice on the personality of the prophet.

Zechariah (Zekharyah, “he whom Jehovah remembers”) is the central figure in the group of the three post-exilic prophets, and his voice was the last but one of that unique and wonderful succession of men who were, indeed, the oracles of God, and through whom “in divers portions and in different ways” He Himself “spake unto the fathers,” revealing His eternal counsels to men.

Like Jeremiah and Ezekiel among the “former prophets,” Zechariah was of honourable priestly descent; his grandfather, Iddo, being head of one of the twelve priestly families, or courses, who returned from Babylon with Zerubbabel, and with the high priest Joshua; and at a later period, when Jehoiakim, the son of Joshua, was high priest, Zechariah himself succeeded his grandfather Iddo as head of his priestly course (Neh_12:4-16), from which it is to be inferred that the prophet’s own father, Berechiah, died young, and before he was able to succeed his father Iddo in the priesthood.1 The above facts lead us to infer that when called to the prophetic office Zechariah was still very young. That he was scarcely a full-grown man may be inferred from the fact that in Zec_2:4 he is addressed as ■■■■■, naar—translated in the Authorised Version “young man.” Now naar means “boy,” “lad,” or “youth.” It is, for instance, the word

1 This is probably the reason why, in Ezr_5:1 and Ezr_6:14, Zechariah is called “Bar-Iddo,” “the son of Iddo,” and that his father is passed over. used by Saul as a designation of David in

1Sa_17:33, when he said, “Thou art but a youth,” and, therefore, not fit to go forth to fight with Goliath, who was “a man of war from his youth.”1 By the same word, also, Jeremiah designates himself when, feeling the awful responsibilities of the prophetic office to which he was being called, especially in an age like his, he tried to excuse himself by exclaiming, “Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child.” This fact should be an encouragement to those of any age who have a message from and for God. He can speak to and through men at any and every time of life. He presses into His service the hoary-headed, and sanctifies the experience of years; but He also reveals Himself “by the Word of the Lord” to the child Samuel, and speaks through him His message to the aged high priest: “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”: yea, out of the mouths of babes and sucklings He can ordain strength, and perfect His praise, in order to silence His enemies and to confound the worldly-wise and experienced. Let us despise neither age nor youth in God’s servants. The question to be asked in reference to those who profess to speak in the Name of God is not about age, experience, education, or worldly position; but are they really the Lord’s messengers, and do they, like Haggai, speak “in the Lord’s message”? Zechariah was contemporary and fellow-labourer with Haggai (Ezr_5:1) to this extent, that his first message was uttered in the eighth month of the second year of Darius; while Haggai’s ministry—which, as far as it is known to us, spread over a period of scarcely four months altogether—closed on the 24th day of the ninth month of the same year; that is, scarcely two months after Zechariah

1 Some, indeed, deny that the term ■■■■■, naar, is used of the prophet; but we will enter into this question when we come to the exposition of that passage. See p. 60. commenced. The time and circumstances were, however, the same.

About eighteen years had elapsed since the first year of Cyrus, when a remnant of those who were carried into captivity—both of Judah and of Israel—returned under the leadership of Zerubbabel and Joshua the high priest. The first zeal of the returned exiles was most beautiful. In the seventh month of the very year of their return they already rebuilt the altar of burnt-offering, and thus restored the sacrificial ritual which was suspended during the seventy years of captivity; and in the second month of the second year they solemnly set themselves to the task of rebuilding the Temple amid circumstances of great national joy—not unmixed with tears and sorrow on the part of those who remembered the Temple “in its first glory.”

Soon, however, owing to causes into which I cannot enter here,1 carelessness and indifference took possession of their hearts, and the holy task of building the House which served as the visible symbol of fellowship between Jehovah and His covenant people was neglected. Then was raised up Haggai, the first of the great trio of post-exilic prophets, who, by scathing denunciations, blended with glorious promises of present help, and announcements of a special and “greater glory,” which should be manifested in this “latter House,” succeeded in rousing the nation zealously to resume the work of building the Temple. It was then, right in the midst of the movement inaugurated by Haggai, that Zechariah was commissioned by God with further messages. The difference between the two prophets seems to be this, that while Haggai’s task was chiefly to rouse the people to the outward task of building the Temple, Zechariah took up the prophetic labours just where Haggai had left it, and sought to lead the people to a complete spiritual change, one of the fruits of which would of necessity be increased zeal in the building of

God’s House, the completion of which he witnessed four years later. In structure Zechariah’s prophecy has this in common 1 See Haggai’s Prophecy—a Voice to the Present Time. with Haggai’s, that they both consist of only four addresses of unequal length. The four divisions in Zechariah are these:

I. The introductory address, which is a call to repentance (Zec_1:1-6).

II. A series of eight visions, followed by a striking symbolical transaction, all shown to the prophet in one night, mainly of a consolatory character, and though, having an historical foreground, lead up to the “last days,” and to the finale of God’s dealings with Israel and the nations (Zec_1:6 to Zec_6:15).

III. An address in the fourth year of Darius—two years after his first message, in answer to a question on the observance of the national fasts put by a deputation from Bethel (Zec_7:1-14 and Zec_8:19).

IV. A prophecy delivered at a later period, which, starting from the standpoint of a more immediate future, brings us up to the very climax of things when “the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with Thee”; and when, as a result, “Jehovah shall be King over all the earth, and there shall be but one Lord, and His name One.” THE PROPHET’S INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS The prophet’s first words were startling enough to rivet their attention:

“With great displeasure was Jehovah displeased against your fathers.”1 That this was a fact, those to whom the prophet spoke could not deny. They had seen the proofs of it with their own eyes in the desolations of the land, and in the seventy years’ captivity of the people. But although Jehovah was angry against them on account of their long-continued apostasies and provocations,

1 Literally, “Jehovah was indeed angry with your fathers,” or, “wroth was Jehovah against your fathers with wrath”: the verb ■■■■■, qatsaph, has as its object the noun ■■■■■, qatseph, to give it greater force. It expresses vehement displeasure almost to the extent of abhorrence. His anger was now turned away, and He was ready to comfort them if they would but turn from the evils which had brought those calamities on their fathers, and return to God with all their hearts. To such a turning the prophet, in the Name of God, now most solemnly invites them:

“Return unto Me, saith Jehovah of hosts, and I will (or ‘that I may’) return unto you, saith Jehovah of hosts”—the repetition of the august Name of Jehovah being meant to emphasise the Divine authority and sanction of the call, and the certainty of the blessed result which would follow from obedience to it; since He who invites them to come back is none other than “Jehovah of hosts,” who, while Lord of all things, at whose call all created forces must marshal themselves as if for war, is at the same time the Covenant God of the history of Redemption, whose very Name is as “a strong tower” for the righteous, and who is only “waiting to be gracious,” and would therefore most certainly return unto them. The gracious invitation and assurance is followed by a warning lest, following in the footsteps of their fathers’ disobedience, they would incur the like displeasure of God and experience the like punishment:

“Be not ye like to your fathers, to whom the former prophets cried, saying, Turn, we beseech you, from your evil ways, and from your evil doings: but they heard not, neither did they hearken unto Me, saith Jehovah.”

We have here incidentally given us a kind of inspired résumé of one great part of the work “of the former prophets” and its result. The mission of the prophets was comprehensive and many-sided; they spoke to all times, making known to the children of men the counsels of the Eternal. They spoke from the mouth of the Omniscient God, foretelling things to come; but to the current generations in which they lived they were chiefly preachers of righteousness, and their constant cry was, “Repent.”

They saw Israel—and in this respect Israel is but a type of man—wandering ever further from God, and they cried, “Turn ye, turn ye”; for why will ye wander from the source of life and blessedness, and die, O House of Israel? That repentance was the keynote in the preaching of all “the former prophets” will be seen at a glance if I quote here only a few of their chief utterances.

Taking the books as they are now arranged in the Old Testament Canon, without strict regard to chronology and beginning with Isaiah—his chief message to the generation in which he lived, after denouncing their sins, may be summed up in the proclamation found in Isa_55:6-7—

“Seek ye Jehovah while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto Jehovah, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.”

Jeremiah was again and again sent with the gracious message:

“Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith Jehovah; and I will not cause My face to fall upon you in anger: for I am the gracious One, saith Jehovah, and I will not retain anger for ever. Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against Jehovah thy God” (Jer_3:12-13).

Ezekiel’s touching appeal to the people in the Name of God, who solemnly bids the prophet proclaim that He has no pleasure in the death of the sinner, I have already quoted. It was repeated again and again in the course of his ministry. Hark, for instance, to his cry in Eze_18:30-31—

“Repent, and be turned from your transgressions whereby ye have transgressed, and iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions; and make you (or ‘get you’) a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?” And these were but the continuance and repetition of the still earlier voice of Hosea, Joel, Amos, and Zephaniah, who cried:

“O Israel, return unto Jehovah thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity” (Hos_14:1). “Turn ye, even to Me, with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: and rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto Jehovah your God; for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth Him of the evil” (Joe_2:12-13). “Seek ye Jehovah, and ye shall live” (Amo_5:4-6). “Before the decree bring forth, before the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of Jehovah come upon you, before the day of the Lord’s anger come upon you, . . . seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord’s anger” (Zep_2:2-3).

But, alas! to all these cries Israel lent but a deaf ear. The result of all the ministry of the former prophets, as far as the nation was concerned, is summed up in the words: “But they did not hear nor hearken unto Me, saith Jehovah.” On the last page of pre-exilic history are written the following solemn words: “Moreover, all the chiefs of the priests, and the people, transgressed very much after the abominations of the nations; and polluted the house of the Lord which He had hallowed in

Jerusalem. And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by His messengers, rising up betimes and sending; because He had compassion on His people, and on His dwelling place: but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised His words, and misused His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, till there was no remedy" (2Ch_36:14-16). They then went to Babylon, which inaugurated the period called in the New Testament "The times of the Gentiles," which are still running; and when at the end of the seventy years a remnant was in the grace and faithfulness of God brought back, the tone and substance of the old message did not change. The cry was taken up by Haggai and Zechariah; and with the proclamation, "Return unto Me, and I will return unto you, saith Jehovah" (Mal_3:7), the voice of Old Testament prophecy finally dies away. For the sake of showing that the preaching of repentance is still the distinguishing mark of God's true messengers, let us note how this old cry is carried over, also, into the pages of New Testament history. After Malachi a pause of four long centuries intervened, during which there was no voice nor vision nor answer of God; but when the long silence was broken, the first words that fell on Israel's ear from the mouth of the Baptist were, "Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"; and when at last the Greatest and last of the prophets, who was Himself to inaugurate "the kingdom of heaven" on earth, stood in their midst, His first public utterance, too, was the same old familiar cry, "Repent!" (Mat_4:17). Oh, that Israel had known the day of His visitation, and hearkened at last to this gracious invitation—at least when uttered by the lips of the Son of God Himself! But they knew not, nor did they understand. The proud Pharisees and scribes, like so many of their fathers before, did not think they needed to repent. Did they not cry, "We are the Temple of the Lord"? Were there not the many voices of the false prophets who cried, "Peace, peace"? "Have we not Abraham to our father?" "We are God's favoured nation; no evil will befall us." And so again they showed themselves the successors of those who killed the prophets, and stoned them that were sent unto them and cried—as they did of all the prophets before Him—"Away with this disturber of our peace, He is no friend of our nation; it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not."

Christ died and rose again, according to the Scriptures; but before His ascension He entrusted His disciples with a message for the world, and in that last commission (Luk_24:46-49) "repentance" still finds a prominent place. And the keynote in the Apostolic preaching—whether in Jerusalem or in Athens, whether to Jew or to Greek—was, "God commandeth all men everywhere to repent." "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the time of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord" (Act_3:19, Act_17:30). And we may pause and ask, Is there less need for this kind of preaching now than there was in Jeremiah's or in Paul's time? Is man's attitude and tendency more God-ward and heaven-ward now than it was then? Is man all right, or is he radically wrong? Does man's natural course lead to life, or does the end of it lead to death? Upon the answer to these questions depends the answer as to who are the true prophets and genuine friends of man; whether those who cry, "Turn ye, turn ye; for why will ye die?" or those who speak of "the world's progress," and tell corrupt, sinful men that they are themselves potentially Christs, who need only develop "the good that is in them," and who still cry, "Peace, peace," although there is no peace. We may be forgiven for digressing somewhat beyond the limits of the passage before us; but we believe that this question of repentance touches the very heart of man's relationship to God. It shows us, as we have seen, man's condition as apostate from God, with his face turned away from the fountain of light and life. It tells us that man's great need is to forsake not only his outward ways, but also his thoughts, and to return to

the Lord; and it reveals to us the grace and love of God, who has no pleasure in the death of the sinner, but yearns for his return, “because He delighteth in mercy,” and has, at the cost of the sacrifice of His own Son, devised a means for reconciliation, “that His banished be not expelled from Him” (2Sa_14:14).

Let us return, therefore, unto the Lord, and He, according to His promise, will “return unto us”—we with our sins, He with His grace and forgiveness; we with our poverty and need, He with His exceeding “riches” and infinite fulness; we with our wretchedness and fears, He with His “everlasting consolation and good hope”—yea, with His peace, which passeth all understanding, and with His joy, which is unspeakable and full of glory. And if we find no power of ourselves to come to Him, let us pray, as Israel will by and by: “Turn Thou us unto Thee, O Lord, and we shall be turned.” “Cause Thy face to shine, and we shall be saved” (Lam_5:21; Psa_80:3).

We now come to the last two verses of Zechariah’s preparatory address, which may be summarised as a warning against disobedience, illustrated and enforced by the sad experiences of their fathers. “Your fathers, where are they?” “They did not hear nor hearken”; they disbelieved and disobeyed My word; but what was the consequence? What good did they gain? what success did they experience in resisting Me? “Where are they?” Did they not for that very reason spend their days in wretchedness, and pine away in captivity? “And the prophets, do they live for ever?”

Probably we have here the record of a dialogue between the prophet, speaking in the Name of God, and the people; at least so some of the leading Jewish commentators understand it—namely, that when the prophet pointed them to their fathers, saying, “Where are they?” the people impudently answered, “And the prophets, do they live for ever?”—have they, too, not shared in the sorrows of the nation and passed away like our fathers?1 And then the prophet replies, “Yes; the prophets, though God’s mouth piece, were but men, and are gone, “but My words and My statutes, which I commanded My servants the prophets, did they not overtake your fathers, so that they had to return and say, that as Jehovah of hosts hath thought (or “determined”) to

1 Kimchi, in his commentary on Zeckariah, says, “Our Rabbis, of blessed memory, have interpreted the words, ‘The prophets, where are they?’ as the answer of the people. They say that the congregation of Israel gave a controversial reply to the prophet. He said to them: ‘Return in true repentance, for your fathers sinned; and where are they?’ The people answered him: ‘And the prophets who did not sin, where are they?’ But they afterwards repented and made confession to him.” The place in the Talmud to which he refers is Bab. Sanhedrin, 105.

Among Christian interpreters, we are glad to see Keil adopting this view. In Lowe’s Hebrew Student’s Commentary on Zechariah, there is the following note:

“Another interpretation is that Zechariah’s words are equivalent to this: The light of prophecy is dying out; while ye have the light, walk as children of the light. But to us it appears that to put the words, ‘Do (or “did”) the prophets live for ever?’ into the mouth of Zechariah, is to destroy utterly his argument.” do unto us, according to our ways, and according to our doings, even so hath He dealt with us?”

Oh, that men would learn to distinguish between the frailty and weakness of the best of God’s messengers and the eternal character and unfailing veracity of His message! The prophets are no

more, but the words which those holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost are still with us, verifying themselves, and in spite of man's unbelief accomplishing, whether in judgment or in mercy, that whereunto they were sent.

Oh, that men would take warning from the past history of Israel, and note the faithfulness of God in carrying out His threatenings as well as His promises!

Oh, that you would be wise and "give glory to Jehovah your God before He cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and while ye look for light He turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness" (Jer_13:15-17).

Chapter 52

4.03. Chapter 2 - The First Vision: The Angel of Jehovah Among the Myrtle Trees

CHAPTER II THE FIRST VISION THE ANGEL OF JEHOVAH AMONG THE

MYRTLE TREES (Zechariah 1:7-17)

Upon the four and twentieth day of the eleventh month, which is the month Shebat, in the second year of Darius, came the word of Jehovah unto Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo, the prophet, saying, I saw in the night, and behold a man riding upon a red horse, and he stood among the myrtle trees that were in the bottom; and behind him there were horses, red, sorrel, and white. Then said I, O my lord, what are these? And the angel that talked with me said unto me, I will show thee what these are. And the man that stood among the myrtle trees answered and said, These are they whom Jehovah hath sent to walk to and fro through the earth. And they answered the angel of Jehovah that stood among the myrtle trees, and said, We have walked to and fro through the earth, and, behold, all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest. Then the angel of Jehovah answered and said, O Jehovah of hosts, how long wilt Thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against which Thou hast had indignation these threescore and ten years? And Jehovah answered the angel that talked with me with good words, even comfortable words. So the angel that talked with me said unto me, Cry thou, saying, Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy. And I am very sore displeased with the nations that are at ease; for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction. Therefore thus saith Jehovah: I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies; my house shall be built in it, saith Jehovah of hosts, and a line shall be stretched over Jerusalem. Cry yet again, saying, Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: My cities shall yet overflow with prosperity; and Jehovah shall yet comfort Zion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem.

CHAPTER II

ABOUT three months after the introductory address1 which, as we have seen, was mainly a call to repentance, the series of eight visions, followed by the very significant symbolical transaction of the crowning of the high priest Joshua, the son of Josedech, was given to the prophet. In this case the exact day of the month is indicated, most probably because it was a day of special significance and of sacred association to the restored remnant. It was “in the twenty and fourth day of the eleventh month, that is, in the month Shebat, in the second year of Darius.” On that very day just five months before, the spirit of Zerubbabel and of Joshua, and “of all the rest of the people,” being stirred up by God through the preaching of Haggai, commenced to work again in the rebuilding of the Temple (Hag_1:14-15). On the same day also just three months later—that is, a month after Zechariah’s introductory address—the same prophet delivered his last two stirring messages, the first ending with the promise, “From this day will I bless you,” and the second containing the announcement that God would shake the heavens and the earth, and overthrow the thrones and kingdoms of the nations all with a view to the restoration and exaltation of the Davidic House,

which was then represented by Zerubbabel (Hag_2:10-23);2 so

1 The exact day of the month is not given to the introductory address, but the omission is probably meant to imply that it was on the first day, or on the Feast of the New Moon, that it was delivered.

2 It was also on the 24th of the month that Daniel, after having previously fasted and mourned for three full weeks, had received the vision of the things noted in the Scripture of truth (Dan_10:4-21). that there is probability in the suggestion that it is on account of its sacred connection with Haggai's ministry, and especially on account of it being the day on which they earnestly took in hand the work of rebuilding the Temple, that it was chosen as a day for further Divine revelations. This 24th day of the eleventh month was, as already stated, exactly two months after the last promise issued through Haggai to the people that the Lord would hence forth bless His nation, and would glorify it in the future.

"To set forth in symbol and imagery this blessing and glorification, and to exhibit the leading features of the future conformation of the Kingdom of God, was the object of these revelations."1

These visions, which addressed themselves more to the prophet's mental and spiritual sight than to his ears, are called debhar Yehovah—"the word of Jehovah"—because the pictures seen in the spirit, together with their interpretation, had the significance of verbal revelations, and through them the will and purposes of Jehovah were communicated to him.

Divinely communicated visions were one of the "divers manners" in which God spake in times past in the prophets to the fathers, even as we read in Num_12:6, "If there be a prophet among you, I, Jehovah, will make Myself known to him in a vision; I will speak with him (literally, 'in him') in a dream." The whole series of visions which were granted to the prophet, probably in rapid succession one after the other with only short pauses between, in one night, though distinct and in a sense each one complete in itself—"form (as we shall see) a substantially connected picture of the future of Israel linked on to the then existing time, and closing with the prospect of the ultimate completion of the Kingdom of God." The general plan in all these visions is first to present the symbol, and then, on a question being put, to supply the interpretation.

1 Keil.

What the Prophet saw In the dead of night—not in a dream, but in an ecstatic condition, in which his mental and spiritual faculties were altogether awake and attuned to God, so that he could fully respond to the operations and promptings of the Spirit, and pictures of divine objects could be reflected on his soul—he saw "a man" riding upon a red horse, standing among myrtles "in the bottom," or, more literally, "in" (or "by") the "deep," and behind him, at his command, were horses (most probably with riders upon them), red, speckled (or "sorrel," or "bay"), and white.

Now, before passing from this verse we must consider:

(a) Who is "the man"? (b) What is represented by the myrtles? and (c) the significance of the colour of the horses.

I. The "man," as we are told in Zec_1:11, was the Malakh Yehovah—the Angel of Jehovah, who is none other than the "Angel of His face," the Divine "Angel of the Covenant," the second person in the Blessed Trinity, whose early manifestations to the patriarch and prophets, as the "Angel" or

Messenger of Jehovah in the form of man, were anticipations of His incarnation and of that incomprehensible humiliation to which He would afterwards condescend for our salvation. Some commentators (among them Keil and Dr. C. H. H. Wright1) do indeed distinguish between the two, but without sufficient reason. The chief ground of their objection to the identification of “the man” in the Zec_1:8 with the Angel of Jehovah in Zec_1:11, is that if the Angel of Jehovah was really identified with the rider on the red horse, that rider would have been represented as standing opposite to the other horseman (when giving in their report to him in Zec_1:11), and they would not have been spoken of as standing behind him.2 To which surely it is sufficient to reply that it is 1 “Zechariah and his Prophecies,” being the Bampton Lectures for 1878.

2 Dr. Wright further adds: “Moreover, though the rider on the red horse was the leader and chief of the band of angelic riders, he was also a member of one not stated that they were behind him (or, as is more literal), “after him,” when giving in their report; and that there is no necessity to suppose that their captain and leader could not have turned his face toward them while they were speaking. Certainly, if the Angel of Jehovah is not identical with “the man,” and there were two prominent commanding figures standing among the myrtles, apart from the cohort of angelic riders, it would have been not “the man” (who in that case would have been an inferior being), but the Angel of Jehovah, who would have attracted the attention of the prophet most, and who would have been mentioned first.

II. It is pretty generally agreed that the myrtles symbolise Israel, and it is not without significance that this particular symbol is chosen. Not the proud cedar, not the lofty, far-spreading oak—the symbols of the great world-powers—but the lowly, fragrant myrtle, growing for the most part in the shady valley out of the world’s gaze,1 is chosen to represent the covenant people. Yes, it is with of the subdivisions of which that band was composed, inasmuch as he was mounted upon a steed of a red colour, and not of a colour distinct from the rest”: but he overlooks the fact that in answer to the prophet’s question, “What are these, my lord?” “The man,” standing among the myrtles, answers, “These are they,” etc., not “We are they,” showing that though he was the Captain of the Lord’s host, he was not to be confounded with them. That he was mounted on a steed of a red colour, and not a colour distinct from all the rest, is sufficiently accounted for by the fact that this colour symbolised what was now the chief characteristic of his attitude to the nations who were oppressing Israel, namely, judgment and vengeance.

1 Hadassah (Myrtle) became a favourite female name. Esther bore it, perhaps on account of the humility and modesty of her demeanour. In Kimchi’s comment on this verse will be found the following curious passage: “We have found in the words of our Rabbis, of blessed memory, the following exposition” (it will be found in Talmud Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 93, col. 1): “I saw in the night that the Holy One—blessed be He!—sought to turn the whole world into night; and, behold! a man riding. This man is no other than the Holy One—blessed be He!—for it is said, ‘The Lord is a man of war’ ” (a remarkable testimony this from the Talmud, that He who appeared as the Angel of Jehovah in the form of man was the God of Israel). “ ‘Upon a red horse.’ The Holy One—blessed be He!—sought to turn the whole world into blood, but when He looked upon Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, His anger was cooled, for it is said, ‘And he stood among the myrtle trees.’ The Hadassim can mean nothing else but the righteous, for it is said, He brought up Hadassah,’ ” i.e., Esther. the lowly, with those of a contrite and humble spirit, that the High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity, ever dwells and identifies Himself (Isa_57:15, Isa_66:2). The myrtles among

which the Angel of Jehovah is seen standing are represented as growing “in the bottom,” as the Authorised Version has it; but the word is metsulah, from tsul—the verb tsollal being used of sinking in the water (Exo_15:10). The margin in the Revised Version suggests the rendering of “shady place,” and various other translations as the basis of different interpretations have been given by Jewish and Christian commentators. The Jewish Targum and the Talmud, followed by Kimchi and some Christian interpreters, translate “valley,” and say that it represents Babylon, where the Jews had been banished on account of their sin; and some, like Hengstenberg, think that the metsulah was symbolical of the Kingdom of God in its then outwardly depressed condition, but still under the gracious protection of the Angel of Jehovah. But ■■■■■■■■■, bammetsullah, should, we think, be certainly rendered “in” or “by” “the deep.” It is at least rightly so rendered in two passages in the Psalms. The first is Psa_88:6, “Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in the dark places in the deeps (bimetsoloth)” the next verse (Psa_88:7) showing that it is in the deeps of the sea, since the writer goes on to say: “Thou hast afflicted me with all Thy waves.” And the second passage in Psa_107:23-24, where we read that “they that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters—these see the works of Jehovah and His wonders in the deep (bimetsulah).”

It might thus be a suitable figure of the unfortunate condition of Israel over whom the waves of troubles and oppression were rolling in their captivity among the Gentiles; but where dogmatic certainty is out of the question, we would venture to suggest what to us seems the most likely meaning of this symbol, namely, that “the deep” of “the great sea” represents the great Gentile world-power at that time, with whom commenced “the times of the Gentiles”—“the abyss-like power of the kingdom of the world,” as Baumgarten expresses it. By the side or in the very midst of the great deep, or ocean of humanity, as if threatened to be swallowed up by it, stands the group or thicket of lowly myrtles; but the Angel of Jehovah—the second Person in the Blessed Trinity, who, in His love and in His pity redeemed and bore and carried them of old (Isa_63:9)—is among them, in fulfilment of His word, “When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee, and the rivers they shall not overflow thee.”

How rich in consolation to the prophet’s own heart, and to the people to whom he was to make known what he saw, was this single item in the comforting vision! In the very midst of that remnant of His oppressed and afflicted people—though their eyes may be holden so that they cannot see Him—afflicted in all their afflictions, is ever Israel’s Redeemer, “the Angel of Jehovah,” who “encampeth,” with an invisible host, round about them that fear Him, to deliver them.

Note, dear reader, governmental power and even national independence had already been taken from Israel. “The times of the Gentiles” had already commenced some seventy years before, with Nebuchadnezzar; but that did not mean Israel being, as a people, altogether cast off by God. No; behold Him, not in the midst of the great world-powers, into whose hands the sceptre of governmental rule was parenthetically put, but identified with the comparative handful of people who, for their sins, were under His severe chastisement, and given over for a time into the hands of their enemies. And the same is true of scattered, storm-tossed Israel in the present day. Sometimes to the eye of man it would almost appear true as Zion in her distress says of herself, “Jehovah hath forsaken me; my Lord hath forgotten me.” And many Christian commentators even start with the presupposition that, because the Jewish people is banished and scattered, therefore it is also cast off; but hear the faithful covenant-keeping God: “For I am with thee, saith Jehovah, to

save thee; for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have scattered thee, but I will not make a full end of thee; but I will correct thee with judgment, and will by no means hold thee guiltless." "And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them to destroy them utterly, and to break My covenant with them; for I am Jehovah their God" (Jer_30:11; Lev_26:44).

III. Lastly, before passing on from Zec_1:8, just a few words on the significance of the colours of the horses. That they symbolise the mission on which these angelic hosts are about to be sent forth, there can, I think, be no doubt, in spite of Dr. Wright's confident statement that "any attempt to assign any grounds for the employment of the special colours is futile." The red is significant of judgment, blood, vengeance. It is to an angelic rider on a horse of this colour that a great sword is given, in Rev_6:4, to take peace from earth, so that men—the enemies of God and of His Christ—should slay one another; and in Isa_63:1 &c. it is in garments dyed red that the Messiah goes forth in the day of vengeance to tread the nations in His anger, and to trample them in His fury. In our vision it doubtless signifies the same thing—namely, the readiness of the Angel of Jehovah to go forth with His angelic cohorts to execute swift judgment on Israel's oppressors. The exact colour to be understood by the word seruqqim, translated in the A.V. "speckled," or "bay," as in the margin, or "sorrel," as in the R.V., cannot be fixed with certainty.1 I might fill several pages with the guesses and suggestions and disputations on this word by the learned, but it most probably is meant to describe a mixed colour—a combination of the first and last mentioned in the passage—and would signify that those mounted on these horses were to be sent forth on a mission of a mixed character—namely, of judgment and mercy; while the white is the symbol of victory, triumph, and glory 1 The word does not occur elsewhere in the Hebrew as an adjective of colour.

(Rev_6:2), which shall be to God's people after their great champion rides forth "conquering and to conquer," and executing vengeance on their enemies. And the vision of the legions of angels mounted and ready to obey the command of their great Captain was doubtless intended to convey to the prophet the message which he was to impress on the people, that "the chariots of God are twenty thousand, even myriads of angels"; that with Him was all the requisite power and resources for the deliverance of His people, and the destruction of their foes. It was not because His hand had become shortened and His ear heavy, or that there was a lack either of might or willingness to save on His part, that they had become subject to the power of the Gentiles; but because their sins had for a time separated them from their God, and their iniquities had caused His protecting and guiding power to be withdrawn from them. But we proceed to Zec_1:9.

"Then said I, O my lord, what are these? And the angel that talked with me said unto me, I will show thee what these be."

Now, here we are introduced for the first time to this malakh haddobher bi—the angel that talked with me, or, literally, "in me"—and the question to decide is whether this angel who interprets is the same as the Malakh Yehovah—the Angel of Jehovah—whom the prophet saw standing among the myrtles, as some contend, or is he another being, simply angelic? The arguments advanced for the identity of the two are these:

(1) In the verse under our examination the prophet addresses this angel as "my lord" (adoni), and as no other person has been previously mentioned it would appear that it was the Angel of

Jehovah he was speaking to. But this is by no means conclusive, for in the prophecies, and especially in the visions, on account of their dramatic character, persons are frequently introduced either as speaking, or as being addressed by others, without having been previously mentioned. Note the striking fact that the prophet does not address this angel as Adonai, “my Lord”—a Divine title addressed to the Angel of Jehovah, as, for instance, in Gen_18:3—but adoni, “my lord,” which may be addressed to man, or any created being.

(2) This angel promises to show or explain to the prophet the meaning of the vision. Now, in the next verse the explanation is given by the Angel of Jehovah, therefore it is urged by some that they are the same. But the word arekha, translated “I will show thee,” literally means, “I will make thee see,” that is, “give thee an understanding heart and mind to understand the visions and explanations which follow.” Indeed, the very designation of this Angel as the One “that talked in me”1 seems meant, as Pusey well points out, to convey the thought of an inward speaking, “whereby the words should be borne directly into the soul without the intervention of the ordinary outward organs.” An example as to how the interpreting Angel prepared the heart and mind of the prophet to behold and to understand the visions, we have in Zec_4:1, namely, by waking him out of his ordinary condition into a spiritually ecstatic one, and preparing his heart and mind subjectively for the objects presented to him in the visions, and for the explanations which should be given.

(3) In Zec_1:12 the Malakh Yehovah offers a supplication to God on behalf of Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, and in the next verse the answer is given to the interpreting angel; therefore, it is argued, they must be the same. But to this it may be replied that the answer is addressed to this angel because the Angel of Jehovah asked the question, “How long?” not for himself, but that the consolation contained in the answer may through the interpreting angel be communicated to the prophet, and through the prophet to the people.

1 In the same manner the Lord says to Moses, in Num_12:6-9, “If there is a prophet among you, I, Jehovah, will make Myself known to him in a vision; I will speak, not ‘to him,’ as in the A.V., but in him, in a dream. My servant Moses is not so. In him will I speak mouth to mouth”; and Hab_2:1 speaks of the same inward teaching: “I will watch to see what He will speak in me.” On the other hand, here are several reasons which seem to us unanswerable why the interpreting angel must not be confounded with the Angel of Jehovah.

(a) The title Malakh haddobher bi is quite different from the Angel of Jehovah. That it is a title there can be no doubt, for the prophet uses it eleven times (Zec_1:9, Zec_1:13, Zec_1:14, Zec_1:19, Zec_2:3, Zec_4:1, Zec_4:4-5, Zec_5:5, Zec_5:10, Zec_6:4) without any variation, and that not always after, or when conversation of any kind takes place, as, for instance, in Zec_1:9., and in Zec_2:3. The variation in the Authorised Version, “The angel that communed with me,” introduced in Zec_1:14, is unjustifiable.

(b) In Zec_2:1-4 the prophet sees in vision “a man” engaged in measuring the site of Jerusalem. The interpreting angel who stood beside him leaves him to go forward, perhaps to ask the meaning of the vision, but before reaching his destination he is met by another angel, who comes forward with the command: “Run, speak to this young man” (the prophet). Now, assuming that the interpreter is the same as the Angel of Jehovah, directions would [margin: not] have been given him, and that too in word of command, by an inferior angel—a proceeding altogether irreconcilable

with the Divine dignity ascribed by the prophet to the Malakh Yehovah.

Moreover, “the man” with the measuring line in his hand, in Zec_2:1 &c.., is, as we shall see, in all probability the same “man” whom the prophet saw in his first vision (comp. Zec_1:8, Zec_1:11), who, as we saw, was no other than the Angel of Jehovah himself; and as the interpreting angel was standing by the prophet and going forward toward “the man” with the measuring line, it proves that they are two, and not one.

(c) To “the angel that talked with (or ‘in’) me” there is no Divine work ascribed, and no Divine name given at all.1 Remarkable in this connection is the form of the

1 This precludes the idea suggested by some that the interpreting angel was the Holy Spirit, though the work of this angel resembles one aspect of the mission of the blessed Paraclete. prophet’s address to him, which, as pointed out above, is not Adonai, my Lord, but adoni, my lord. Nothing higher is ascribed to this angel than the explanation of visions. Sometimes (as in Zec_1:9, Zec_2:3-4) not even that, but the preparation of the prophet’s mind to understand the explanation which is given by the Lord Himself.

(d) To the same conclusion also we are led by the analogy of other apocalyptic places in the Old Testament Scriptures. In Dan_8:16 and Dan_10:5-18, for instance, two heavenly beings are seen by the prophet, which stand in exactly the same relation as “the angel that talked with me” stands to “the Angel of Jehovah” in the visions of Zechariah; and in the last apocalyptic book of the New Testament we have another parallelism in our Lord Jesus Christ: “The Angel of Jehovah” of Old Testament revelation, sending by the hand of an angel, to signify “unto His servant John,” for him in his turn to make known to the Seven Churches the Revelation which the Father first gave to Him.

We see, then, that “the angel that talked with me” is not the same as the Divine Angel of Jehovah—the Messenger of the Covenant—but an attendant angel whose mission it was to be God’s expositor to the prophet of the meaning of the visions. The answer to the prophet’s question, “What are these?” in Zec_1:9, is given by “the man” that stood among the myrtles, in Zec_1:10, “These are they whom Jehovah hath sent to walk to and fro through the earth.” How full of consolation for God’s people is a statement like this! Satan, when appearing as the accuser of Job in the presence of God, said that he came “from going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.” And what the aim and object of his restless activity in the earth is, we are told by the Apostle Peter in his earnest warning, “Be sober, be watchful, for your adversary the devil (full of hatred and fiendish cunning, as his names imply, and ever ready with fresh traps and snares for our destruction)—as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour.” If left to ourselves and his devices for one day, where should we be? But, blessed be God, “the Angel of Jehovah encampeth (as with a great invisible host) round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them”; and if there are evil, malignant spirits (ever restlessly walking to and fro in the whole earth on their mischievous intent of hindering, if they cannot frustrate, the gracious purposes of God and the manifestation of His Kingdom on the earth), God also has His messengers who walk to and fro to counteract and frustrate Satan’s designs, and to succour and shield, and in many more ways than we know, to be ministering spirits to them who shall be heirs of salvation. In our vision, however, the swift messengers were in the first instance only sent out to reconnoitre the earth and the state of the nations in their relation to the land and people of Israel; for, as far as God’s

governmental dealings with the nations are concerned, all things must be viewed in their relation to that people in whom are bound up the purposes of God for all mankind. In “answer” probably to the unexpressed inquiry of the Angel of Jehovah, these angelic messengers give in their report: “We have walked to and fro through the earth, and, behold, all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest.”1 This description of the Gentile world was intended by contrast to bring more strikingly to light the mournful condition of Israel. All the nations lived in undisturbed

1 The words yoshebheth veshoqateth denote the peaceful and secure condition of a land and its inhabitants undisturbed by any foe. Pusey points out that the last of the two words is used in the Book of Judges of the rest given to the land under the judges, until its fresh departure from God (Jdg_3:11, Jdg_3:30, Jdg_5:31, Jdg_8:28); of the undisturbed life of the people of Laish (Jdg_18:7, Jdg_18:27); in Jos_11:23, where we read “the land had rest from war”; and in a number of other places, in later history, all describing a condition of profound peace. Keil and Dr. Wright regard the report of the angelic messengers as having reference to the prophecy of Hag_2:7-8, Hag_2:22-23. “God had then announced that He would shake heaven and earth, the whole world and all nations, with a view to the overthrow of all kingdoms and powers hostile to the welfare of Israel”; but instead of any such general commotion being apparent, the report which the angelic riders bring is that the whole world is quiet and at rest. peace and prosperity. In short, all were at rest except the “tribes of the wandering foot and weary breast”; who, though a remnant of them had returned, were ground down under the yoke of the Gentiles, while Judea was still, for the most part, lying waste, and Jerusalem was still without walls—exposed in a most defenceless manner to all the insults of Israel’s enemies.1 The nations had scattered God’s people and had taken possession of their land, and were now in undisturbed enjoyment of it. No one cared for the afflictions of Zion, or troubled himself for the sorrows of Israel.

“Then the Angel of Jehovah answered (i.e., ‘the implied longing’ which was in his heart) and said, O Jehovah of hosts, how long wilt Thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against which Thou hast had indignation these threescore and ten years?”2

If the very fact of the presence amongst them of the Angel of Jehovah, who in ancient times led His people and brought them into the promised land, and smote all their enemies before them, was intended, as we saw when dealing with Zec_1:8, to be in itself a message of comfort to the now oppressed and depressed Israel, how much more full of consolation must have been the fact of His appearing as the Advocate and Intercessor on their behalf? And He who here cries, “How long, Jehovah of hosts, wilt Thou not have compassion on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah?” has not changed in His attitude of longing and concern for His own nation. When in the fulness of time He permanently took upon Himself our human form, and became real man, we still read of Him as being moved with compassion on beholding Israel’s weary

1 This was the lament of even the restored remnant in the land: “Behold, we are servants this day, and as for the land that Thou gavest unto our fathers to eat the fruit thereof and the good thereof, behold, we are servants in it” (Neh_9:36).

2 “The fact that the Angel of Jehovah addresses an intercessory prayer on behalf of Judah is no more a disproof of his essential unity with Jehovah, than the intercessory prayer of Christ in John 17. is a disproof of His divinity.”—Keil. multitudes, who were as sheep having no shepherd, and as weeping over Jerusalem; and we may be sure, also, that in those whole nights of prayer and

intercession before the Father, the people which are “His own,” and the city which was to be the seat of His throne, had a large and central place. Even on the cross He prayed, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do”; and when He rose and ascended to the right hand of God as the great High Priest of His people, Israel is still a subject of His intercessions. “For Zion’s sake He doth not hold His peace; for Jerusalem’s sake He doth not rest until her righteousness go forth as brightness, and her salvation as a lamp that burneth.”

We will not enter into the chronological points which might be raised in connection with the words, “against which Thou hast had indignation these seventy years,” and would merely point out in passing that there are different starting-points from which the period roughly spoken of as “the seventy years’ captivity” in Babylon may be reckoned. But as these visions of Zechariah were granted to the prophet in the 2nd year of Darius Hystaspes, in B.C. 519, the “seventy years” foretold by Jeremiah had already expired, even if we calculate from the latest of the possible starting-points.1 The Divine Advocate might well there-

1 The definite prophecy of Jeremiah was that the inhabitants of Palestine and neighbouring lands “shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.” This began in the 3rd year of Jehoiakim, which was the 1st year of Nebuchadnezzar, i.e., in B.C. 606, or before the 1st of Nisan (April) 605. Starting with this definite date the “seventy years” were brought to an end by the decree of Cyrus in the 1st year of his reign, in B.C. 536 (Dan_1:1; Jer_24:1, Jer_24:9-11; Ezr_1:1-3).

Another starting-point may be made with Jehoiachin’s captivity in the 8th year of Nebuchadnezzar, i.e., in B.C. 597 (598), when the city was taken and “all Jerusalem and all the princes and all the mighty men of valour, even 10,000 captives, and all the craftsmen and the smiths,” together with the king and his mother and his wives, and the vessels of the Temple and the treasures of the palace were carried to Babylon (2Ki_24:10-17). From this date the “seventy years” came to an end in B.C. 528.

Then, finally, in the 17th year of Nebuchadnezzar and 9th of Zedekiah’s reign, in B.C. 589 (588), commenced the final terrible siege of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans which lasted about a year and a half, and ended with the destruction fore express “the reverent wonder” that the seventy years being accomplished, the complete restoration was not yet brought to pass, and that though a remnant had returned, “Jerusalem and the cities of Judah” were still practically desolate. This pitiable condition of things moves the Angel of Jehovah to intercession on their behalf. The answer to the intercession of the Angel of Jehovah, given in Zec_1:14, is addressed to the interpreting angel that he might make them sink in, so to say, into the prophet’s heart and mind, so that he might be able to proclaim them to the people. What these “debharim tobhim, debharim nichummim” (literally, “words good ones, words comforting ones”) were, we see in the last four verses: (1) Jehovah is jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy—and He is very sore displeased (or, literally, “with great anger am I angered”) against the nations that are at ease, “for I was but a little displeased,” He says, “and they helped forward the affliction” (or, as it may also be rendered, “they helped for evil”). It is as if while a father was reluctantly punishing his froward but still beloved child with a stick, a stranger were to come and begin to smite him with an iron rod. No wonder that the father’s jealousy is stirred, and that a quarrel ensues between him and the intermeddling stranger who dared to mix himself up in the controversy, and increase his child’s sufferings. This is ever God’s attitude to the oppressors of Israel. That the nations from the

very commencement of “the times of the Gentiles” have been guilty of helping forward the affliction, let the history of Israel, written for the most of the city and Temple and the carrying away of the remnant of the people into captivity. With this date very probably begins more particularly the seventy years of “Indignation” referred to in this passage in Zechariah. Reckoning from this starting-point, the seventy years came to an end in the 2nd year of Darius Hystaspes, in B.C. 519—the year in which Zechariah saw these visions. A distinction is made by some between “the Captivity” and “the Desolations”; but the first has special reference to the condition of the people, and the other to the land during the same period. In post-Biblical Jewish literature the whole period of the subjection to Babylon is spoken of as the ■■■■■, “captivity,” and loosely, as “the seventy years.” part in their blood, testify. God scattered Israel (Jer_31:10); but the nations among whom they have come trampled upon them, and put a yoke of iron upon their necks, and made them “to howl” all the day long (Isa_52:5), because of their oppressions. God gave them over to punishment, but, at the same time, warned the nations, saying, “Make not a full end” (Jer_5:10); but they have tried, if possible, to destroy them, and to cut off their very remembrance from the earth. God gave over for a time “the dearly beloved of His soul into the hand of her enemies” (Jer_12:7), “I was wroth with My people,” He says, addressing Babylon, the first, and also in many Scriptures the great, representative of all Gentile world-powers: “I polluted mine inheritance and gave them into thine hand, and thou didst show them no mercy” (Isa_47:6). And this was not merely the attitude of the great nations of antiquity who have now for the most part perished from off the face of the earth—Israel’s lot in the midst of Christendom has been even worse.

“Where shall we begin,” writes an American brother, “in treating the awful truth which is put here in such simple language? Where shall we find words earnest enough to picture the terrible facts in connection with it, and sound a warning for our times? Some time ago a person said, ‘The Jews are to-day more stiff-necked and blinder than ever before.’ Who has made them thus? Surely judicial blindness and hardness of heart: ears which do not hear, are given by God; but, alas! the nations, or so-called Christendom, have helped forward their affliction; they have made matters worse a thousand times: and Satan, who hates Israel, has been the author of all things calculated to increase the affliction of this downtrodden nation. Surely the cause of the increased stiff-neckedness and the increased blindness of the Jewish people is one which is traceable to the nations. Every reader knows something of the history of the Jews, what it has been since they were driven from their land—a long, long tale of suffering, tears, and blood.

Most unjust outrages have been committed against them: torture upon torture, the stake, and worse than that—and all in the name of Jesus. It is a shameful history. Many a time Jews, after hearing the Word preached, have stood up and opened in answer this awful book of history with its blood-stained pages, asking the question, ‘Can He be our Redeemer whose followers have treated us thus in His name?’ And not a few can tell us of their own sufferings in being banished from foreign lands. Hardly a month passes without some new outrage upon this people. Cruelty, injustice, wickedness, and crime are practised against them, and thus their affliction has been increased.” And all this the Gentile nations have done to Israel out of cruel, selfish motives, and not out of regard for God at all. We are sometimes asked, “But have not the sufferings of Israel all been minutely foretold by Moses and the prophets in advance?” Yes, certainly they have all been foretold; but have not the sufferings of Christ been even more minutely foretold and described also? And yet we read that it was “with wicked hands” that they took and crucified Him, and Israel

was held responsible for their conduct and dealings in relation to Him. Prophecy, my dear reader, is given to us, not that it may be fulfilled, but because the omniscient God, who sees the end from the beginning, knows that it will be fulfilled, and man is left a free and responsible agent; and the nations who know not that the great God is overruling all things, even their wicked actions, to the fulfilment of His predetermined counsel, are held accountable for their deeds. And that the jealousy and hot displeasure of Jehovah against the nations because of their attitude to Israel are to be dreaded, history also testifies. Where are the great nations of antiquity who have lifted up their hands against the Jewish people? And in modern times the ancient word which He spoke to Abraham is still verifying itself in the experience of nations as of individuals: “I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse.” But not only is the prophet to proclaim the negative comfort that Jehovah is very angry with the nations at ease who help forward the affliction, but He has wonderful purposes of grace concerning His people to announce: “Therefore, thus saith Jehovah, I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies”—which, on account of its certainty, is expressed in the present or perfect tense. This, which has been already symbolically set forth to the prophet by the standing of the Angel of Jehovah in the midst of the myrtles, is the very heart and substance of “the good words and comforting words” which are the message of this vision. It was the hiding of His face—the withdrawal of Himself—that occasioned all these calamities in their night of darkness. So long as Jehovah was with them, neither Assyria nor Babylon, nor all the forces of the universe, could have prevailed against them; but when His glory was withdrawn, then they became a prey to the Gentiles—“the boar out of the wood” came and wasted it; the “wild beast of the field” came and devoured it. But not for ever has Jehovah forsaken His people and the land which He has chosen as the centre of the unfolding of His purposes of mercy to all mankind. “I will go,” He says, “and return to My place till they acknowledge their offence” (or literally, “till they declare themselves guilty”), “and seek My face; in their affliction” (literally, “in their tribulation”) “they shall seek Me early” (or earnestly), and then He will return unto them with mercies; and “His going forth is sure as the morning, and He shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter rain that watereth the earth” (Hos_5:15, Hos_6:1-3). In its fulness this promise will only be fulfilled when “this same Jesus,” whom at His first coming they handed over to the Gentiles to be crucified, and who, after His resurrection, ascended back into heaven into the glory which He had with the Father before the world was, shall “return” in the manner and under the circumstances described by this same prophet in the last three chapters of this prophecy. Then, in the once marred face, and in the wounded hands and feet of Him whom they once pierced, shall they fully learn the fulness and manifoldness of God’s “mercies.”

Two or three particular instances and outward signs of “that all-containing mercy” of His restored presence in their midst, are specially named: (a) “My house shall be built in it, saith Jehovah of hosts” as the visible sign and pledge of the restored fellowship between Him and His people; (b) And “a line shall be stretched forth over Jerusalem,” to mark off the space it is to occupy in its restored condition, and the plan upon which it is to be arranged. (c) And not only shall His house be rebuilt and Jerusalem be restored on a grander scale than before, but all the land is to feel the blessed effect of the restored relations between Jehovah and His people. “Cry yet again, saying, Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: MY cities”—yes, they are peculiarly His, as is the case with no other land and no other cities, even as the people which shall inhabit it is peculiarly His, above all other nations of the earth—“through prosperity shall yet be spread abroad”—or “overflow,” the word being used of the “gushing forth of a fountain” in Pro_5:16, i.e., they shall overflow, not only with

spiritual prosperity, but with houses filled with citizens, and with abundance and plenty, (d) Finally, both as the ground and climax of all, come the last of the “good words.” “And Jehovah shall yet comfort Zion,” after her long night of sorrow, and however contrary to all appearance and human probability, “shall yet choose Jerusalem,” or, by the above enumerated and many other acts of loving-kindness toward her, demonstrate in the sight of the whole world the fact and the immutability of His original choice of her—this last sentence being the first of a threefold inspired repetition by Zechariah1 of the words of Isa_14:1, where we read, “For Jehovah will have compassion on Jacob, and yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land: and the stranger shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob.”

1 Here and in Zec_2:12 and Zec_3:2.

Now, there was no doubt a message in this vision and in the plain words of comfort with which it closes to the generation to which the prophet spoke, and in a very partial manner there was a fulfilment of these promises in the then immediate future. Thus God’s “House,” as applied to the Temple which they were then building, was completed about four years later, in the 6th year of Darius (Ezr_6:15); and some time later Nehemiah succeeded also in rebuilding the city wall.

There is some truth also in the contention of those commentators who argue that there was a fulfilment of the good and comforting words about Jehovah’s returning to Zion with mercies in the first advent of our Saviour. Thus, to quote one of them: “What is the highest good? what the sweetest of solace in life? what the subject of joys? what the oblivion of past sorrow? That which the Son of God brought upon earth when He illumined Jerusalem with the brightness of His light and heavenly discipline. For to that end was the city restored, that in it by the ordinance of Christ, for calamity, should abound bliss; for desolation, fulness; for sorrow, joy; for want, affluence of heavenly goods”—all which is beautiful and true; but to deny that in its fulness it will yet find an exhaustive fulfilment in the Jewish people, which for nearly two thousand years has been in much greater bondage than they were during the seventy years in Babylon, is to misapprehend and misinterpret the scope of this as of all the other visions. No; these words which Zechariah is here commanded to “cry,” or proclaim, are a summary and divine reiteration of the permanent and irrevocable “good words” of Jehovah through the former prophets in reference to Israel’s future, and will assuredly be fulfilled, as already shown above, when, “after these things,” our Lord Jesus shall return and will “build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen; and will build again the ruins thereof, and will set it up, that the residue of men may seek after the Lord and all the Gentiles upon whom My name is called” (Acts 15:14-18).

“For Jehovah shall comfort Zion; He will comfort all her waste places, and He will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of Jehovah; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving and the voice of melody” (Isa_51:3).

4.04. Chapter 3 - The Horns and the "Carpenters"

CHAPTER III THE SECOND VISION THE HORNS AND THE “CARPENTERS”

(Zechariah 1:18-21 Hebrews 2:1-4) And I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and behold four horns. And I said unto the angel that talked with me, What are these? And he answered me, These are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem. And Jehovah showed me four smiths. Then said I, What come these to do? And he spake, saying, These are the horns which scattered Judah, so that no man did lift up his head: but these are come to terrify them, to cast down the horns of the nations, which lifted up their horn against the land of Judah to scatter it.

CHAPTER III THIS second short vision is in a sense a continuation of the comforting message contained in the first, for it shows how the Gentile nations against whom Jehovah is “very sore displeased,” because they have each in turn “helped forward the affliction” by scattering Israel and treading down Jerusalem, shall themselves be broken and dissipated. The prophet had probably been absorbed in thought and meditation on what he saw and heard in the first vision; but being directed, perhaps, by the interpreting angel to look up again, he beheld—not only with the outer eye, but with the eyes of his soul and whole inner being, which had been prepared for the reception of these Divine revelations—“four horns” and on his appealing to his angelic teacher, who stood by his side, for the meaning of these, the brief answer is given: “These are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem.” The “Horns”

Let us briefly ponder over the symbolism of these two verses before proceeding to the second part of the vision.

“Horns” are used in Scripture as emblematic of power and pride of conscious strength (Amo_6:13; Psa_75:4-5, Psa_92:10), and are sometimes explained by the sacred writers themselves as representing the ruling powers of the world (Dan_8:1 &c.; Rev_17:3-12). The number “four” may also, but in a secondary sense, stand, as some contend, for the four directions of heaven, or the four “corners” of the earth, and be designed to indicate the universality of the enmity which is directed against Israel. In that case, to use the language of a learned commentator who thinks only of the past, the four horns would “represent the enemies of Israel on every side: Edom and Egypt in the south; the Philistines in the west; the Ammonites and Moabites in the east; and from the north the Syrians, Assyrians, and especially the Chaldeans.” Or, according to another commentator who views this prophecy in relation to the then present, “the number ‘four’ refers to the four cardinal points of the horizon, indicating that wherever God’s people turned there were enemies to encounter.” But there can be no doubt, according to our judgment, especially if we remember the fact that it is the characteristic of Zechariah’s visions and prophecies, that the Divine messages contained in them are generally based on revelations already granted to the former prophets, that in this vision of the four horns there is a direct reference to the four great world-powers, differently represented by the four metals in the great image, and four great beasts in chaps. 2. and 7. of Daniel’s prophecies—the only four empires which were, or are, to rise till the kingdom of Messiah, the fifth of Daniel’s visions, overthrows and absorbs all others in its universal

dominion. This was the view of the most authoritative of Jewish commentators. Thus Kimchi says, “These are the four monarchies—and they are the Babylonian monarchy, the Persian monarchy, and the Grecian monarchy, and so the Targum of Jonathan has it (instead of four horns), the four monarchies.”1 Some commentators have raised an objection to this

1 He does not name the fourth. Abarbanel’s explanation is to the same effect. The following passage is from Hengstenberg: “If we inquire more particularly what four empires are referred to, the first must be the Babylonian, which was not yet completely humbled, as the third vision shows, although it had received a fatal wound from the Persian smith (or ‘carpenter’). The second is the Persian. That the Grecian must have been recognised by the prophet as the third, is evident from the expression in Zec_9:13, ‘I stir up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Javan.’ The fourth is not named. The connection with Daniel is apparent here also, for in his prophecy the approaching dominion of Greece is expressly and amply referred to; whilst the fourth monarchy, on the other hand, is left without a name,” view on the ground that the power which overthrew the Israel of the northern kingdom was Assyria, and that other powers besides, such as Egypt, etc., have had their share in breaking up the two Israelitish states, and have argued from the use of the perfect, or preterite zeru (“have scattered”), that the dispersion was presented to the prophet as an already accomplished fact by powers which had already then been in existence; but to this objection it is sufficient to answer that, though it is true that other powers beside had had a share in afflicting and scattering Israel, and that the northern kingdom had been overthrown by Assyria, the prophetic Scriptures, and especially the prophecies of Daniel, upon which this vision of Zechariah is based, deal with a definite and particular period as preeminently the one during which Israel is “scattered” and Jerusalem “trodden down,” and that these “times of the Gentiles” begin, not with Shalmaneser, nor with Sennacherib, but with Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, “the head of gold” of the great image which he himself beheld in a dream (Dan_2:1).

It is true that Israel, as far as the northern kingdom of the ten tribes is concerned, had been overthrown and a considerable number transported into Assyria; but it was not till a hundred and thirty years later, when the sceptre was finally plucked out of the hands of the last king of the House of David who reigned in Jerusalem, by Nebuchadnezzar, that the united dispersion of Judah and Israel commenced, and the special period of their national woes and humiliations which were to extend during the whole course of these four great Gentile world-empires, was inaugurated. As for the use of the perfect or preterite, and the fact that the prophet sees the four horns together, we have to remember that it is the tense of prophetic vision to which everything appears present. In the same way the prophets, for instance, described the sufferings and death of Messiah—the perfect Servant of Jehovah who was to appear centuries after their day—as already past, and speak of the future glory of Israel as already come. And thus, also, these four powers, though successive in time, are exhibited to Zechariah together, and their antagonism and cruelty to God’s people as already past and gone, “as each would be at the last, having put forth his passing might and perishing.” But the question may be asked, What consolation could the prophet derive or communicate to the people from a vision of four powers, two of whom at least had not yet arisen, who would in turn take up the work of scattering Israel? And the answer, dear reader, is, that though it may have been intended as an indication to the prophet, and a forecast that the final deliverance of Israel and the overthrow of Israel’s foes, was, from the prophet’s point of time, yet remote, the wonderful and consoling fact set forth in the vision remains; that in spite of all the great

Gentile powers, who would each in turn take up the work of scattering and afflicting Israel, Israel would not be wholly swallowed up nor be overwhelmed, but would remain when all those powers should have disappeared, and would triumph in God's deliverance when the memory of their mighty enemies should be buried in shame and oblivion. To us, looking back upon a period—the length of which was unforeseen even by prophets, embracing some two and a half millenniums—during which this comparative handful of people have been "scattered" and "tossed" about, by and among the nations, without being destroyed from off the earth, and without losing its national characteristics and identity, the marvel of Israel's continued preservation must appear much greater than to any one living in the time of Zechariah or Daniel, and can only be accounted for by the special providences and interpositions of Him who swore that so long as the sun and the ordinances of the moon and the stars continue, so long should Israel continue a nation before Him "for ever"; and who said in advance, even before the course of these four great Gentile world-powers, who would be permitted to scatter Israel, commenced: "For I am with thee, saith Jehovah, to save thee: for I will make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee; but I will not make a full end of thee, but I will correct thee in measure (or 'with judgment'), and will in no wise leave thee unpunished" (Jer_30:11). Well might the inspired writer of Ps. 129., looking back, not only on the particular period embraced in the prophetic "times of the Gentiles," but on the whole course of Gentile oppression, exclaim in the name of the remnant of Israel:

"Many a time (or, more literally, 'greatly') have they afflicted me from my youth; yet they have not prevailed against me."

"Israel's national youth, or childhood," to borrow words of our own from elsewhere, "was in Egypt, even as we find in Hos_11:1, which literally reads, 'When Israel was yet a child' (the word being the same as 'youth' in Psalms 129:1-8), I loved him, and from the time that he was in Egypt I called him my son"—that is, from the very beginning of their history, when God began to love Israel, the nations began to hate them; and from the very time when God first called them "His son, His first-born" (Exo_4:22-23), the nations began "to afflict them" (Exo_1:12), and to lay plans for their extermination. Yes, from the very commencement of their history have the plowers mercilessly "Plowed upon his back;

"They made long and deep their furrows" (Psa_129:3). And "yet," in spite of it all, "they have not prevailed against him." This is Israel's final shout of triumph, even as in a sense it has been their national song and their defiant answer to the nations all through the ages. To commence with Israel's "youth"—deep and terrible was the pain and laceration when Egypt plowed upon his back; but who came off worst in the end? Egypt was plagued; Pharaoh and his host were drowned; but of Israel we read, "The more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew." Truly Egypt, with all its world-power, did "not prevail against him."

Then—not to mention Canaanites, Philistines, Midianites, and other small powers—there came Syria, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome, each of whom in turn afflicted Israel much, and made deep and long their furrows; but where are all these powers? They have crumbled away and died, but Israel lives, and they have "not prevailed over him."

Then came the centuries of dispersion, when it might be supposed that a comparative handful of men, scattered on the great ocean of humanity, would soon be swallowed up of the multitude. As a matter of fact, every force was brought to bear against them with terrible severity. Their enemies

were united, and seemed confident of success. The Crusaders went from west to east with the cry “Hierosolyma est perdita!”1 and perpetrated wholesale massacres of the Jews as a commencement of their “holy” wars. Again and again apostate Christendom in the dark ages showed its zeal for the Jewish Messiah, who teaches His followers to love even their enemies, by burning whole communities of Jews, numbering sometimes thousands of souls, on one huge scaffold; but in spite of it all Israel lives—“they have not prevailed over him”; for there are more Jews in the world after all the centuries of banishments, massacres, and untold sufferings, than there have been at any previous point of the world’s history; and the Jews at the present day, as is proved from official statistics, in some parts of the world increase in proportion to their Gentile neighbours at the ratio of three and four to one.

Alas! the sufferings of Israel are not ended, and even in this twentieth century we read almost daily of Jewish massacres and atrocities worse than any which disgrace the annals of the dark ages; but Czardom2 and the corrupt bureaucracy of that unhappy empire will pass away, while Israel will still sing, “Yet they have not prevailed against me.”

1 Or, “Hep! Hep!” which is an abbreviation formed from the three initial letters of this Latin phrase; the English corruption of it is “Hip! Hip!”

2 This was written in 1908. And there is yet a future, or final, culminating “affliction,” “trouble,” or “tribulation,” as the same Hebrew word is elsewhere rendered, awaiting Israel after a large remnant of them are returned to their land in a condition of unbelief, when all nations will be gathered in a final siege of Jerusalem (Zec_13:1 &c., Zec_14:1 &c.); but even then, when the nations cry, “Come, let us destroy them from being a nation, that the name of Israel be no more held in remembrance” (Psa_83:4)—one more blow, and the Jewish nation will be no more—the answer of the saved remnant, who are delivered by the sudden appearance of their Messiah, will be: “I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of Jehovah”—Yet they have not prevailed against me.

Israel is indestructible. The bush may burn, but it cannot be consumed, because God has said: “Though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee.” But to come to the other points in this vision which need explanation. The peculiar structure of the sentence and the unusual designation of the chosen people as “Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem,” in Zec_1:19, has given ground to many, and some of them very fanciful interpretations, but there can be no doubt that it is an all-inclusive term for the whole nation which for a time, as a punishment on the House of David, had been rent asunder and divided, so long as the northern kingdom continued, into “Judah” and “Israel,” but which after “Jerusalem” (which was the metropolis and religious centre of those who feared Jehovah in both kingdoms, and is therefore mentioned separately) was overthrown, were together sharing the same destiny of being “scattered” by the horns of the Gentiles, even as they are included in the same common and united hope of restoration and blessing, no longer as two separate kingdoms, but as one, under the true Son of David. The “Carpenters” or Smiths

Apart from the final and total overthrow of confederated Gentile world-power at the time of the end, the prophet is also made to see what we may describe as the gradual process of the decay and overthrow of the four great empires in turn.

“And Jehovah showed me four ‘carpenters?’ ” literally, “workmen,” or “smiths,” as the R.V. renders the word. The Hebrew ■■■■■, ■harash, designates a cunning workman or artificer in either wood, stone, or metal. And as the prophet evidently sees them coming on the stage of his prophetic vision in readiness for work, with, perhaps, the tools or implements of their trade in their hands, he asks: “What come these to do?” And the answer, evidently of the Lord Himself, though it may have been through the interpreting angel, is: “These (are) the horns which have scattered Judah.” This first sentence in the reply is a repetition of the statement in the preceding verse, but words are added which are meant to emphasise the greatness of Israel’s sorrow and affliction during the period of their being tossed about by these “horns”; for their sufferings have been such (literally, “according to the measure,” i.e., in such a manner) “that no man did lift up his head” so heavily did oppression weigh upon them, but these (the ■harashim, or “workmen”) are come to fray (literally, “to terrify”) “them, and to cast down the horns of the nations which are lifting up their horn against the land of Judah to scatter it” (i.e., the inhabitants or population of it). Who are these workmen, or smiths? “Symbols of Divine judgment” in a general way, says one learned commentator. “Symbols of the instruments of the Divine Omnipotence by which the imperial power in its historical forms is overthrown,” says another. But while it is true that this part of the vision is designed to show to the people of God in a general way, “that every hostile power of the world which has risen up against it, or shall rise up, is to be judged and destroyed,” the number four standing over against the four horns does not only suggest that “for every enemy of God’s people God has provided a counter acting power adequate to destroy it,”1 but points to four powers also successive, though in the vision, like the four horns, presented together. And, if I am asked to state more definitely which four powers, I answer the first was the Medo-Persian, which by the hand of Cyrus broke down the horn of Babylon; the second was the Grecian, which by the hand of Alexander terrified and humbled the power of Persia; the third was Rome, which in its turn prostrated and trod down the power of Greece.2 This last, the most terrible of all, not only acted as one of the “workmen” or “smiths” to terrify and break down the great world-power which immediately preceded it, but, in relation to the Jewish people and the Church of God, still exists as the last of the four horns; and in its revived form, under the leadership of the Satan-possessed head of the final confederacy of apostate Gentile world-powers, will bring about the climax of all the sorrows and the sufferings of Israel in the last “great tribulation, such as hath not

1 Lange.

2 The following curious passage about the four carpenters or “smiths” is from Kimchi’s Commentary:

“And the Lord showed me four workmen, . . . in order to cut off the horns—that is to say, each kingdom shall be a carpenter, to cut off the kingdom that preceded it, for the Babylonian monarchy fell by the hand of the Persians, and the Persian by the hand of the Greek, etc. Or, the carpenters may signify in a parable the angels—the supernatural princes who are appointed over the kingdoms; and our Rabbis of blessed memory have interpreted the verse of the days of the Messiah, saying, ‘Who are the four carpenters? R. Simon Chasida says they are Messiah the Son of David, the Messiah the Son of Joseph, and Elias, and the righteous priest.’ This passage, quoted by Kimchi, is found in the Talmud, Succah, fol. 52, col. 2, where Rashi says, in his commentary on the authority of Bereshith Rabba, that ‘the righteous priest’ means Shem the son of Noah, who is there supposed to be identical with Melchizedek. The legend about the angels is

thus given in the Pirke Eleazar: ‘The Holy One, blessed be He, descended with the seventy angels who surrounded the throne of His glory,’ and confounded their language into seventy nations and seventy languages, each nation with its own writing and language, and over each nation He appointed an angel, but Israel fell to His portion and lot, and therefore it is said, ‘The Lord’s portion is His people.’ ”been from the beginning of the world until now, no, nor ever shall be.” It is to that time that the 7th chapter of Daniel refers: “After this I saw in the night vision, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible and strong exceedingly, and it had great iron teeth; it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet, and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns” (explained in Dan_7:24 as signifying “ten kings” or “kingdoms”). “I considered the horns, and behold there came up among them another, a little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots, and behold in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things” (Dan_7:6-8). But it is just then—when the strength and pride and ruthless cruelty and blasphemy of apostate world-power summed up in its head reaches its climax, that “the horn of the Gentiles” shall finally and for ever be broken and cast out; for then the last “workman” or “smith” who, though seen by the prophet with the other three, is altogether diverse from them, and is only included in the vision with the others in order to present a full and complete view of the overthrow of all the four horns, shall suddenly appear to accomplish His terrible work of judgment. “I saw in the night visions, and, behold, there came with the clouds of heaven one like unto a Son of Man, and He came even to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him (to be invested formally with the Kingdom immediately before He comes in the clouds of heaven to take possession of it); and there was given Him dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion,” and His kingdom “shall never be destroyed, nor shall the sovereignty thereof be left to another people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.” (Dan_7:13-14, Dan_2:44-45, R.V.).

4.05. Chapter 4 - The Man with the Measuring Line

CHAPTER IV THE THIRD VISION THE MAN WITH THE MEASURING LINE (Zechariah 2:1-13 Hebrews 2:5-17) And I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and, behold, a man with a measuring line in his hand. Then said I, Whither goest thou? And he said unto me, To measure Jerusalem, to see what is the breadth thereof, and what is the length thereof. And, behold, the angel that talked with me went forth, and another angel went out to meet him, and said unto him, Run, speak to this young man, saying, Jerusalem shall be inhabited as villages without walls, by reason of the multitude of men and cattle therein. For I, saith Jehovah, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and I will be the glory in the midst of her. Ho, ho, flee from the land of the north, saith Jehovah; for I have spread you abroad as the four winds of the heavens, saith Jehovah. Ho Zion, escape, thou that dwellest with the daughter of Babylon. For thus saith Jehovah of hosts: After glory hath he sent me unto the nations which plundered you; for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of His eye. For, behold, I will shake my hand over them, and they shall be a spoil to those that served them; and ye shall know that Jehovah of hosts hath sent Me. Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion; for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith Jehovah. And many nations shall join themselves to Jehovah in that day, and shall be My people; and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that Jehovah of hosts has sent Me unto thee. And Jehovah shall inherit Judah as his portion in the holy land, and shall yet choose Jerusalem. Be silent, all flesh, before Jehovah; for He is waked up out of his holy habitation.

CHAPTER IV THE second and third visions stand in closest possible connection with the first. “The good words and comfortable words” (Zec_1:13), which were God’s answer to the intercession of the Angel of Jehovah on behalf of “Jerusalem and the cities of Judah,” contained a twofold message: First, that Jehovah is jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy, and is sore displeased (or “very angry”) with the nations who are at ease, who helped forward the affliction of Israel (Zec_1:14-15). Secondly, that He would “return to Jerusalem with mercies,” the outward proofs of which would be (a) that His house would again be built in it, as the visible sign and pledge of the restored communion between Him and His people. (b) And “a line shall be stretched forth over Jerusalem,” i.e., as already explained in my notes on that vision, “to mark the space it is to occupy in its restored condition, and the plan on which it is to be arranged.” And not only should Jerusalem itself be rebuilt, but the whole land should feel the blessed effects of Jehovah’s return to His people with mercies; and its cities, which He calls “My cities,” should “through prosperity yet be spread abroad,” or “yet overflow with prosperity” (Zec_1:16-17).

Now, just as the second vision of the “horns,” and “carpenters,” or “workmen,” is a continuation and sequel to the first part of the consoling message—for it shows how the Gentile nations, who “have helped forward the affliction” by scattering Israel and treading down Jerusalem, shall themselves be broken up and finally over-thrown—so the third vision of the man with the measuring line is an amplification and realistic unfolding of the other “comfortable words” in the second part of the consoling message in reference to the future of the city, and the land, and the people, when Jehovah, in the Person of Messiah, shall “return to Jerusalem with mercies.” The

Vision

Lifting up his eyes, the prophet sees a man with a measuring line in his hand, and on asking, “Whither goest thou?” the answer is, “To measure Jerusalem, to see what (or ‘how great’) is the breadth thereof and what (or ‘how great’) is the length thereof.” While “the man” is thus actually engaged, the interpreting angel “goes out,” or forward, from the prophet by whose side he had been standing, evidently in the direction of the measuring which was going on, to inquire the meaning of the symbolism, so as to communicate it to the prophet; but is met on the way by “another angel,” evidently sent forth by “the man” with the measuring line, who commands him to run and tell “this young man” from whose side he had just come, saying, “Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns (or ‘villages’) without walls, by reason of the multitude of men and cattle therein. For I, saith Jehovah, will be unto her a wall of fire, and will be the glory in the midst of her.” The Interpretation In the above summary we have already indicated the character of the dramatis personœ in this prophetic vision, but it is necessary also to explain it in detail. First, who is “the man” with the measuring line?

Some interpreters have confused him with the interpreting angel, though in the text itself this angel is clearly distinguished from “the man,” since he does not “go out” till the latter had already gone to measure Jerusalem. Others, again, have regarded this “man” as “a mere figure in the vision”; while still others have confused him with the “young man” in Zec_2:4. Thus Dr. Wright says, rather dogmatically, “The man with the measuring line is not to be regarded as an angel; he was sent forth on no mission from above. He appears as a mere figure in the vision, and one represented as acting unwisely. He may have been, as Neumann imagines, termed ‘this young man’ by the angel, in allusion to his simplicity.” But the suggestion of a “mere figure” in the vision is altogether out of keeping with the character of the whole series of these prophetic dramas in which every actor is of significance, and there is nothing whatever in the text of the vision to justify the above statement that this “man” was sent “on no mission from above,” and is represented as acting “unwisely” or in “his simplicity.” In opposition to the above, it seems to me very clear that “the man” is none other than the One whom the prophet beheld in the first vision riding upon the red horse, and standing among the myrtles “in the bottom” or “by the deep” (Zec_1:8), who in Zec_1:11 is identified with the Malakh Yehovah—the Angel of Jehovah—who, as we have seen, is the same as “the Angel of His Face,” the Divine “Messenger of the Covenant,” the Second Person in the Blessed Trinity. Nor are these the only places where the Angel of Jehovah is called “the man” in these series of visions, for in the symbolical transaction which follows the visions in Zec_6:12, which is an indisputably Messianic passage, we read: “Behold the Man, whose name is the Branch, and He shall grow up out of His place, and He shall build the temple of Jehovah.” Now, He who in that scripture is represented as the builder of the true Temple of Jehovah, as the ultimate fulfilment of the “comfortable words” of promise in the first vision, “My house shall be built in it,” is “the man” who in this third vision is represented as the Author of that future restoration and enlargement of the city expressed in the words which immediately follow in that first comprehensive message of consolation: “And a line shall be stretched over Jerusalem” (Zec_1:16).1

Some (as Neumann, Lange, and others) identity the “other angel,” in Zec_2:3, with the Angel of Jehovah; but in that case it is difficult to see why he should not have been called simply by the title Malakh Yehovah, if he were that Divine Being, instead of by an indefinite designation which suggests in itself the idea that he was an angel of inferior dignity. Besides, the expression, “went

out," in Zec_2:3, which is the same as "went forth," as used of the interpreting angel, seems to me to indicate that just as the latter "went out" from the side of the prophet by whom he was standing, so this "other angel" was by the side and in attendance on the man with the measuring line, by whom he was sent to meet the interpreting angel with the message with which the latter, in his turn, was to run to the prophet. The "young man," therefore, is neither "the man" with the measuring line, nor any other angelic being, as some have supposed; for, apart from the fact that such an interpretation confuses the whole vision, the term naar, as Pusey well observes, "Common as our English term 'youth' in regard to man, is inapplicable and unapplied to angels, who have not our human variations of age, but exist as they were created."2 The probable reason why

1 The word translated a "line," in Zec_1:16, is not the same as the one rendered "a measuring line" in Zec_2:1 &c., but there can be no doubt in our judgment that the idea expressed in that part of the consoling message of the first vision is taken up in this third vision, and the fulfilment realistically set forth by the symbolical act of the actual measuring. It is, moreover, very probable that there is a reference in this second chapter of Zechariah to Ezekiel's vision in Ezekiel 40:1-49, Ezekiel 43:1-27., where "the man whose appearance was like the appearance of brass," who was going forth "with a line of flax in his hand and a measuring reed" on the same errand, namely, to measure the site of the Jerusalem that is to be restored, is also the Angel of Jehovah. In Rev_21:15-27 the same symbolism is used in reference to the Jerusalem which is above—the city which hath foundations, "whose builder and maker," in a very special sense, is God in Christ.

2 The term in Hebrew denotes a male from infancy, as Moses was in the ark of bulrushes, to the prime of life; and is occasionally used for "minister" or "servant," without reference to age. the prophet is thus styled, and the practical lessons which we may learn from this fact, I have already pointed out in my introductory remarks on the personality of Zechariah, in at the commencement of these expositions. The Message The joyful tidings in explanation of the symbolical act of the measuring of the city, with which the interpreting angel is to "run," that he may quickly communicate them to the prophet, that he also in his turn may communicate them to the people, contain a twofold message.

I. Jerusalem shall not only be restored but greatly enlarged, extending much beyond the boundaries of its ancient walls, "by reason of the multitude of men and cattle therein," it will "dwell" or "be inhabited" as perazoth, rendered in the A.V. "towns without walls," and in the R.V. "villages." But the word strictly describes "plains," or an open country in which there is nothing to circumscribe the inhabitants, or to prevent them from spreading as themselves abroad: thus in Eze_38:11 it is used of the land where people dwell in peace and prosperity, "without walls, bolts, and gates," in contrast to those in walled cities; and in Est_9:19 the inhabitants of the perazoth (the unprotected towns and villages) are distinguished from those living in the fortified capital, Susa. It denotes also a condition of confidence and safety, since in danger men resort to strong cities and fortified towns. This again is in accord with the words of the former prophets in reference to the marvellous increase of the people, and the extended boundaries of the city and the land after the restoration: thus, for instance, we read in Isa_49:19-20, "For as for thy waste places and thy desolate places, and thy land that hath been destroyed, surely now shalt thou be too strait for the inhabitants, and they that swallowed thee up shall be far away. The children of thy bereavement" ("the children that thou shalt have instead of those of which thou hast been

bereaved”—it is addressed to Jerusalem) “shall yet say in thine ears, The place is too strait for me; give place to me” (“make room”) “that I may dwell,” so that the limits of the city and the land shall be ever wider extended, and Jerusalem shall resemble a succession of “villages” on the open plains.

II. But a promise much greater than mere outward enlargement and material prosperity follows in the Zec_2:5, “For I, saith Jehovah, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory (or ‘for glory’) in the midst of her.” This is one of the most beautiful and comprehensive promises in the Old Testament. It contains an assurance of protection—though inhabited as “villages” in an open plain, without visible walls or fortifications, it shall be “a strong city” and perfectly safe from all attacks and danger; for not only will Jehovah in that day “appoint salvation for walls and bulwarks” (Isa_26:1), but He; Himself (the “I ” in Zec_2:5 being very emphatic) will be a wall of fire—“as an inner circle” of perfect defence to those within, but for sure destruction to enemies who shall dare to approach from without. And as He shall be her protection from without, so shall He be her glory from within, for “Jehovah shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory” (Isa_60:19); and what is said of the heavenly Jerusalem shall, in a degree, be true also in that day of the restored earthly city, “The glory of the Lord shall lighten it, and the Lamb shall be the lamp thereof” (Rev_21:23). But it might be as well, before proceeding further, to pause and inquire if there is any truth in the assertion that this promise has already been fulfilled, and to make quite sure that it is of the literal Jerusalem that these beautiful words are primarily spoken; for there are some interpreters who even deny this. Thus Pusey (whose otherwise devout and scholarly work on the Minor Prophets is vitiated by the so-called spiritualising method which seeks persistently to explain away even the plainest prophecies about Jerusalem, and applies every promise to “the Church,” while it carefully leaves the curses to the Jews), after explaining the words, “Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls,” exclaims: “Clearly, then, it is no earthly city. To be inhabited as villages would be weakness, not strength; a peril, not a blessing. The earthly Jerusalem, as long as she remained unwalled, was in continual fear and weakness. God put it into the heart of His servant (Nehemiah) to desire to restore her; her wall was built, and she prospered. . . . This prophecy, then, looks on directly to the time of Christ. Wonderfully does it picture the gradual expansion of the Kingdom of Christ without bound or limit. . . . It should dwell as villages, peacefully and gently expanding itself to the right and to the left, through its own inherent power of multiplying itself, as a city to which no bounds were assigned, but which was to fill the earth.” And another,1 who, in an able and elaborate work, which, however, is chiefly a summary of the explanations and speculations of German commentators who, with very rare exceptions, have no place at all in their theological and exegetical schemes for any future for Israel—admitting that it is of the earthly Jerusalem that the words were spoken—tells us coolly that: “There is no need to suppose that the prophecy refers to a still future period, as Von Hoffmann imagines. The prophecy was fulfilled by the restoration of the city of Jerusalem under the protection of God even in troublous days.

“Though surrounded indeed by walls, Jerusalem grew so fast that a considerable number dwelt in villages outside the walls. Its population continually increased—the city was noted for its splendid appearance in the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus. . . . In the troublous times which intervened between the days of Zechariah and those of our Lord, notwithstanding the disasters which occasionally fell upon the holy city, abundant proof was given that the Lord was not forgetful of His

promises, specially to shield and to protect it. The promises," he proceeds, "would 1 Dr. C. H. II. Wright, "Zechariah and his Prophecies," Bampton Lectures for 1878. have been fully accomplished if the people had kept the covenant committed to them, and they were accomplished in a great measure, notwithstanding their many sins." A good deal is made of a letter of Aristeas, an Egyptian Jew, to Philocrates, which is referred to by Josephus in the 12th book of his Jewish Antiquities, in which a description of Jerusalem after the restoration is given; also of a fragment of Hecatæus, who lived in the time of Alexander the Great, and who describes the Jews at the time as possessing "many fortresses and towns, moreover one fortified city, by name Jerusalem, fifty stadia in circumference and inhabited by 120,000 men"; and of Josephus statement (see his Jewish Wars, 5. 4. 2) that at the time of Herod Agrippa, "as the city grew more populous it gradually crept beyond its old limits, and those parts of it that stood northwards of the temple and joined that hill to the city made it considerably larger, and occasioned that hill, which is in number the fourth, and is called 'Bezetha,' to be inhabited also." All of which, according to these interpreters, show that the glorious prophecy in Zec_2:1 &c. has been fulfilled, and has no more reference to a future period. But first, in reference to those who explain away the application to the literal Jerusalem altogether, we would say that this method of interpretation does not "spiritualise" but phantomise Scripture, for it does not really bring out the meaning and true application of the Spirit, which alone makes the Word of God "spiritual" and profitable to the reader, but substitutes an unnatural and shadowy meaning for what is plain and obvious, and thereby throws a vagueness and uncertainty over all the prophetic oracles. Surely the fact that the Jerusalem whose greatly extended future site is here measured is to overflow not only with men, but with "cattle," who are to dwell therein, ought to be sufficient proof that it is an earthly and not a heavenly city that is spoken about. Was the "Jerusalem," against which Jehovah had indignation "these threescore years and ten" of the captivity, for which the Angel of Jehovah intercedes in the first vision "the Kingdom of Christ"? And is not the third vision, as already shown, the expansion and sequel of the good and comfortable words which are God's answer to that intercession?

It is beside the mark to argue that it can be no earthly city, because "to be inhabited as villages would be weakness, not strength—a peril, not a blessing." So it would in ordinary circumstances, but surely the words which immediately follow make all the difference: "For I, saith Jehovah, will be unto her a wall of fire round about"; and this is more than all visible walls and literal bulwarks.

It is true that at the time this prophecy was uttered, and all along till now, "so long as Jerusalem remained unwalled it was in continual fear and weakness," because it was encompassed by enemies on every side, and its inhabitants had not yet learned that it was Jehovah who was in truth their refuge and strength, and that "Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman watcheth but in vain"; but prophecy points to a time when, after "Jehovah will have mercy on Jacob and choose Israel again, and set them in their own land," their enemies shall no more be permitted to afflict or molest them, and they shall have rest from their sorrow and their fear, and from the hard bondage wherein they were made to serve (Isa_14:1-3). Then also Jehovah, in the Person of their Messiah Jesus, shall, from Jerusalem as the centre, "judge among the nations, and rebuke many peoples: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more"; and it will be quite safe for even the earthly Jerusalem, with "the King," "the Lord of hosts," in its midst, to be inhabited as villages in an open plain, without visible walls or fortifications.

Then, secondly, in reference to those who tell us that there is no need to suppose that there is any reference in this prophecy to a future period, I would repeat my remarks at the close of the exposition of the first chapter, that though there was doubtless a message in this vision to the generation to which the prophet was first commissioned to relate it, and there was a very partial and shadowy fulfilment of the promise of the rebuilding of the house and the city in the work accomplished by Zerubbabel and Joshua the son of Jehozadak, and by Ezra and Nehemiah, yet to limit this glorious prophecy to any period of Jerusalem's history while it is still being "trodden down of the Gentiles," which has never ceased to be the case from the time of the Babylonian Captivity to this day, is to misapprehend and misinterpret the scope of this as well as of all prophecy.

But, in truth, these beautiful words, "For I, saith Jehovah, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and the glory in the midst of her," are really an announcement of the return of the Glory of the Personal Presence of Jehovah to Jerusalem, and an amplification of the words in the first vision, "I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies." I have elsewhere tried to show the full significance of Ezekiel's vision of the departure of the Glory of Jehovah from Jerusalem, which synchronised with the removal of governmental power from Judah,1 and the special characteristics of the present "Ichabod" period of Israel's history.

It was the withdrawal of Himself from their midst which has been the cause of all the helplessness and the sorrow and the darkness of the Jewish nation since the commencement of "the times of the Gentiles"; and that this period did not terminate with the first advent of our Lord is clear from Christ's own prophetic forecast of future events, in which He says: "And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." It is true that if Israel's eyes had been opened to see the true character and divine majesty of that royal Babe born in Bethlehem and of the "mysterious man of Nazareth" (as a Jewish Rabbi has recently styled Him),

1 See the chapter, "The Ichabod Period and the Return of the Glory of Jehovah," in The Ancient Scriptures and the Modern Jew. they would have seen in Him a glory greater than that which dwelt in the symbolic cloud which led our fathers in the wilderness and which dwelt between the cherubim, and the promises of the return of the Personal Presence of Jehovah, no more to depart from their midst, might have been fulfilled; but Israel's eyes were holden then, and only a few Jewish disciples there were who saw the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ and could joyfully exclaim: "We beheld His Glory, the Glory of the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." The nation as a whole saw "no form nor comeliness" to desire Him, so they "despised and esteemed Him not." In the end, after He had for three and a half years with outstretched arms continued to call Israel to Himself, but without response—that which was symbolised by the departure of the Glory from the Mount of Olives, depicted by Ezekiel, received a second personal and more striking fulfilment, when Jesus also, slowly and reluctantly, after shedding tears of sorrow for Jerusalem, and from the same spot whence the prophet saw the Glory depart, finally (after His atoning death and glorious resurrection) ascended out of sight. But has the purpose of God been frustrated by Israel's unbelief, and will the exceeding great and precious promises in reference to the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom on this earth, with Jerusalem as its centre, fail for evermore because (as the writer quoted above asserts) the Jewish people have not "kept the covenant committed to them"? Oh no; man's unbelief and disobedience may, in accord with the foreknowledge and infinite wisdom of God, cause the delay and postponement of God's

predetermined counsel, which in this particular instance has been the occasion of salvation and blessing to untold millions of Gentiles (Rom_11:11-15), but it can never frustrate it.

Jesus Christ came as a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God (not to annul or transfer), but to confirm the promises made unto the fathers (Rom_15:8); and since their ratification in His own precious blood, all the promises of God in relation to the people and the land of Israel, as well as in relation to the “mercy” which He purposed from the beginning to show unto the Gentiles, have been made doubly sure.

Both the New Testament as well as the Old teach us to expect and look for the revelation of the Glory of Jehovah, when “all flesh shall see it together”; and then, when the Malakh Yehovah, with whom the symbolic cloud of glory was associated from the very first mention of it in the Scriptures (comp. Exo_13:21-22 with Exo_14:12, Exodus 14:20), shall appear in His glory, not only in the form of man, but as “the same Jesus,” visibly to establish God’s rule over this earth, and to sit upon the throne of His father David—these visions and prophecies of the return of the Glory of Jehovah shall be fulfilled: “And Jehovah will create over the whole habitation of Mount Zion, and over her assemblies, a cloud of smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for over all the Glory shall be as a (marriage) canopy. And there shall be a pavilion for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a refuge and for a covert from storm and from rain.”1 But though not in the form of visibility, as shall be the case in restored Jerusalem by and by, the precious promise of outward protection and inward illumination, contained in the words, “For I, saith the Lord, will be a wall of fire round about, and the glory in the midst of her,” is true to every one of you also, dear readers, who know experimentally the truth of the Apostle’s words, “Whom, having not seen ye love, in whom though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.” The Angel of Jehovah even now “encampeth” (with an invisible host) round about them that fear Him and delivereth them (Psa_34:7); and because He Himself is a wall of fire round about us, and our life is hid with Christ in God, therefore “when the wicked, even mine enemies and foes” (whether visible or invisible, whether evil men or “wicked spirit”), “come upon me” (full of determination and fury) “to eat up my flesh, it is they” (the “they” is very

1 Isa_4:5-6. emphatic) “who stumble and fall,” and we can confidently say:

“Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; Though war should rise against me, even then will I be confident.” Psa_27:2-3. And as He is our protection from without, so He is our light and our salvation within; for even now the word is true to those who walk with Him, “Jehovah shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory.” But to return to the exposition. Because Jehovah hath spoken well concerning Zion, and hath such purposes of grace concerning Jerusalem, while the nations which were then “at ease,” and in apparently undisturbed peace, were about to be visited with judgment, those still in the lands of the exile are exhorted to hasten back to their home.

“Ho, ho, flee from the land of the north, saith Jehovah; for I have spread you abroad as the four winds of heaven, saith Jehovah. Ho Zion, escape, thou that dwellest with the daughter of Babylon.” The Hebrew ■■■, ho or hoi, which has not always the same meaning, is here used simply as a particle of exhortation, and for calling attention.

“The land of the north” is the same as Babylon in the next verse, which, though really more an eastern, or south eastern, power in relation to Palestine, is so called because, like Assyria before, it always invaded the Holy Land from the north, and the great caravan route entered the country from the same quarter. The whole passage seems to be made up of inspired echoes of similar utterances in the “former prophets”; as, for instance, Isa_48:20, “Go ye forth of Babylon, flee ye from the Chaldeans; with a voice of singing declare ye, tell ye this, utter it even to the end of the earth: say ye, Jehovah hath redeemed His servant Jacob.” And again in Isa_52:11, “Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of Jehovah.” It is almost an exact reiteration also of the solemn words of Jeremiah: “Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and save every man his life: be not cut off in her iniquity. . . . My people, go ye out of the midst of her, and save yourselves every man from the fierce anger of Jehovah” (Jer_51:6, Jer_51:45). This also had a primary, though only a partial, reference to the time in which the prophet wrote his visions. Though a remnant had returned, by far the greater number were still in the land to which they had been exiled. Some of them had grown rich and prosperous in the strange land. Their love for Jerusalem and all that it stood for had cooled down, and they were content to become dwellers “with the daughter of Babylon.” They were reluctant to leave their comfortable homes and vineyards (which they had indeed been encouraged to build and to plant, but only as temporary possessions during the seventy years of the Captivity, Jer_29:1 &c.) for the rough journey and hard life in the desolated land. And so they are exhorted to flee out of Babylon, not only because of the goodness of the Lord which is to be shown to His people in their own land, but because of the evil which was about to overtake the country of their sojourn, and the calamities which would come on its people, occasioned probably by the two great rebellions in Babylonia, and the two captures of the city of Babylon—one by Darius in person, and the other by one of his generals—which had just taken place when the prophet wrote his visions.1 At the same time, this call to come out of the Babylon

1 An account of these events is given in the great inscription of Darius cut into the rock at Behistun, which was discovered by Sir H. Rawlinson, and supposed by him to have been made in the fifth year of the reign of Darius, i.e., about three years before Zechariah’s visions. The first of these rebellions was that of Nadinta-belus, or Nidantabel, as it is in the Median text. He pretended to be Nebuchadnezzar, raised a powerful army and fought a pitched battle, in which he was utterly routed and slain after the capture of Babylon. The second rebellion was that of Aracus (Arakua), who also became King of Babylon on the same pretence (of being Nebuchadnezzar); but who was afterwards defeated by Nitaphernes and crucified. Sir H. Rawlinson’s translations of the Behistun inscription will be found in Records of the Past, vol. 1.; and the translation of the Median text by Dr. Oppert, in Records of the Past, vol. ii. of that time, which met with only a very partial response, was also a foreshadowing of the future, when Jehovah shall lift up His hand again a second time to recover the remnant of His people which shall be left from Assyria and from Egypt, and from Pathros and from Cush, and from Elam and from Shinar, and from Hamath and from the islands of the sea: “And when they shall no more say, Jehovah liveth which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt, but Jehovah liveth which brought up and which led the seed of the House of Israel from the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land.” This is evident from the fact that this passage in Zechariah is based on those prophecies in Isaiah and Jeremiah which are quoted above, and which link the last great judgment of Babylon with the final deliverance and salvation of Israel, as may be seen from a

study of the context, and also from the expression: “For I have spread you abroad as the four winds of heaven”; which in the passage we are considering immediately follows a call to come out of Babylon, and which, therefore, as it seems to me, looks on to a return subsequent to the time when the scattering shall have been universal, which was not the case till the second stage in the dispersion was inaugurated with the destruction of the second temple.1 The verses which follow are among the most important

1 Keil, Hitzig, Kliefoth, Lange, etc., and among English interpreters, Dr. Wright, W. H. Lowe, and others, in order to get over the apparent difficulty—why the exiles should be especially exhorted to return from the north if they had been “scattered to all the four winds of heaven” (as Hitzig expresses it), treat the word perasti as a prophetic perfect, and translate it in a good sense of the future, that is, “I shall spread you abroad,” or “greatly multiply you as the four winds of heaven”; but the verb is nowhere used of multiplying or diffusing, but generally “of spreading out what remained coherent—as hands, wings, a garment, tent, veil, cloud, letter, and light.” In Eze_17:21 we have the same word and almost exactly the same phrase, and there it means certainly not to multiply or spread out, but to scatter towards every wind. It is probable that this expression in Ezekiel was in Zechariah’s mind when he wrote this vision. Besides, this is not the only place where the north country in relation to Israel’s scattering and gathering stands connected with the other lands of their dispersion—it is so in the passage quoted from Jeremiah. in the Old Testament in reference to Messiah’s character, and they sum up that part of His mission, in relation to Israel and the nations, which in the prophetic scriptures is always connected with His yet future glorious appearing.

“For thus saith Jehovah of hosts: After glory hath He sent Me unto the nations which spoiled you; for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of His eye.

“For, behold, I will shake Mine hand over them, and they shall be a spoil to those that served them; and ye shall know that the Lord of hosts hath sent Me.

“Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion; for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord.

“And many nations shall join themselves to the Lord in that day, and shall be My people, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent Me unto thee.

“And the Lord shall inherit Judah as His portion in the holy land, and shall yet choose Jerusalem.”

First, about His character. The One who speaks is a Divine being, for it is He who lifts up His hand in judgment over the nations and makes them a spoil to those who formerly served them; it is He who, as “Jehovah,” comes to dwell in the midst of His people, in fulfilment of the many promises of the reign of God on Mount Zion, and before His ancients gloriously, and who shall receive the many nations in that day as “His people”; and yet He, who in the whole series of promises in this chapter affirms of Himself what belongs to Almighty God only, shall in that day be known as the One whom Jehovah of hosts hath sent unto them.

Mystery of mysteries—here is Jehovah, yet sent by Jehovah! but it is the mystery of light and not of darkness to those who have learned to know the blessed Triune God of Israel as He is self-revealed in the Scriptures, and whose eyes have been opened to see in Him Who, in that

synagogue of Nazareth, applied to Himself the words from the ancient Hebrew scroll: “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me; because Jehovah hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent Me to bind up the broken-hearted,” etc.—none other than “Jehovah Tzidkenu”—the “Wonderful Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace,” whose goings forth are from of old, even “from the days of eternity”—who as the Malakh Yehovah, the Divine Messenger of the Covenant, appeared of old to patriarchs and prophets, and in the fulness of time became incarnate, and was “sent” of God with the message of peace and salvation to man, and to be the Apostle and High Priest of our profession. But it is no wonder that to modern Jews, who have lost the knowledge of the living, personal God of their fathers, and substituted for the scriptural faith of the unity of God the dogma of an abstract unicity, such a scripture is an enigma and insoluble mystery.

Secondly, the mission which He is to accomplish is described in the words, Achar kabhod shela■hani, “After glory hath He sent Me”—a sentence which has been very variously interpreted by different writers, but which most probably means to vindicate and to display the glory of God, first in the judgments which He is to inflict on the nations who have oppressed Israel, and then in the exhibition of His grace in the deliverance and salvation of His own people, and also in the blessing which is to come to the Gentile nations after Israel is restored, and Mount Zion becomes not only the seat of Messiah’s governmental rule over the nations, but the centre of the true worship of God on the earth. This is further explained by the words which follow: “For, behold, I will shake Mine hand over them”—even as in Isaiah 11:15 and Isaiah 19:16, where the same Hebrew word is used, God promised of old to do against Israel’s enemies.1 “And they shall become a spoil to those that served them,” which is also an inspired echo of Isaiah 14:1 &c., where we

1 The figure also includes the almighty power of this Divine champion of His people’s cause. He has only to shake (literally “wave”) His hand, and the enemies of God and of His people, however formidable they may seem, become as women (Isa_19:16). read that, after Jehovah shall have had compassion on Jacob, and have chosen Israel again, and set them in their own land, that “the stranger shall join himself with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob; . . . and the house of Jacob shall possess them in the land of the Lord for servants and for handmaidens, and they shall take them captive whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors.” And the reason—“the subjective motive” of His lifting up His hand in judgment over the nations—is expressed in a phrase which gives us a glimpse of God’s tender love for His people: “For he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of His eye”—the word literally is “the gate,” the opening in which the eye is placed, but it is generally, and most probably correctly, understood to mean the pupil of the eye: “The aperture through which rays pass to the retina is the tenderest part of the eye—the member which we so carefully guard as the most precious of our members, the one which feels acutely the slightest injury, and the loss of which is irreparable.” This is how God felt about Israel at the beginning; for already, in Deu_32:1 &c., Moses, in summing up their high privileges and God’s great lovingkindness to them as a nation, says: “He found him in a desert land, and in the waste, howling wilderness. He compassed him about, He cared for him, He kept him as the apple of His eye.” Many and terrible have been Israel’s sins and apostasies since, but He has never ceased to care and yearn for them.

Zion in her desolation may indeed sometimes say to herself, “Jehovah hath forsaken me, and the Lord hath forgotten me”; but God’s answer comes: “Can a woman forget her sucking child, that

she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands; thy walls are continually before Me." And even while "the dearly beloved of His soul" is in the hand of her enemies, He jealously watches the conduct of the nations toward her, and wishes it to be proclaimed that he that toucheth her toucheth the apple of His eye, and is accounted as His enemy. And in this tender love and faithfulness of Jehovah to His unworthy Israel, you may see a picture of His unchangeable love and faithfulness to you also, dear reader; for if you have learned to put your trust under the shadow of His wings, and in Christ have been brought into covenant relationship with Him, then you are loved of Him with the same love with which He loves His only-begotten Son, and are as dear and indispensable to Him as the dearest member of your body can be to you. You may therefore apply this figure also to yourself individually, and pray with David—

"Keep me as the apple of Thine eye;

Hide me under the shadow of Thy wings." But the greatest promise in this vision and prophecy is that expressed in the words, "Lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord" (Zec_2:10); which not only formed the ground and object of the expectations of the godly remnant of Israel in ancient times, but is still "the Blessed Hope" in the New Testament. The speaker is still the Malakh Yehovah, the blessed, Divine Angel, in and through whom is fully manifested God's name (Exo_23:21), "the Angel of His Face," because he that seeth Him hath seen the Father. It is the same who speaks in the 40th Psalm: "Lo, I come; in the scroll of the book it is written of Me," on which Luther well observes: "There is but one Person, and that is the Messiah; and there is but one Book, and that is the Bible—in the whole of which it is written of Him." And it is no wonder that in the glorious anticipation of His Advent, and the blessed consequences which are to follow, "the daughter of Zion" is called upon to "sing (or 'shout for joy') and rejoice"; which again (as is characteristic of the whole of Zechariah) is a terse summary of the joyful exclamations of the former prophets, whose hearts also glowed with joy and yearning whenever (though as yet from afar) they caught a glimpse of the King in His beauty, and their mouths were opened to announce His near approach. Thus Isaiah, at the close of the Book of Immanuel,1 after describing the Glorious Person, and blessed reign of Him whose Name is "Wonderful," calls out, "Cry aloud and shout, thou inhabitress of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee" (Isaiah 12:6); which again is repeated by Zephaniah, who exclaims: "Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem; . . . the King, even Jehovah, is in the midst of thee; thou shalt not fear evil any more" (Zep_3:14-15). But there is a necessity, perhaps, once again to point out that the "Lo, I come," of these passages in Isaiah, Zechariah, and Zephaniah, are not the same as the "Lo, I come," of Psalms 40:1-17; for though in Old Testament prophecy the principle of perspective is not observed, and events of the most distant future are sometimes linked on to those which are near, or nearer, the prophet's own time, yet the great fact of the two separate advents of the Messiah—once in humiliation to suffer and die; and a second time in glory to dwell in the midst of Zion and to rule over the nations—stand out clear and distinct enough on the prophetic page, and to confound them is to throw the whole plan of God as revealed in the Scriptures into confusion. The ancient Rabbis, puzzled by the two apparently contradictory series of prophecies in reference to Messiah's Person and mission—those which described Him as a Babe born in Bethlehem, and as a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief, who is stricken for the transgressions of His people, and in the end pours out His soul unto death;

and those which depict Him descending as a full-grown “Son of Man” in the clouds of heaven, in great power and glory, to build again the tabernacle of David, and to establish His kingdom—have formulated the belief in two Messiahs: a Messiah ben Joseph, who should suffer and die; and a Messiah ben David, who should come to conquer and reign. But we know that there are not two persons, but only two 1 Consisting of Isa. 7. to 12. advents, and that it is “this same Jesus” who was born of a Jewish virgin, and who minutely fulfilled the things written in the scroll of the book, in reference to Messiah’s sufferings and atoning death, who shall “so and in like manner” come again—that is, literally, visibly, bodily—to the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and in the clouds of heaven, even as the disciples saw Him go up into heaven. And this is the hope, not only of the Church, which is His body, consisting of the whole blessed company of the redeemed,—whether those who through the ages have fallen asleep in Him, or those who shall be alive and remain till the day of His appearing, who shall only be perfected together “in that day,”—but of Israel and the nations; for then Israel’s long night of weeping shall end—the true “King,” even Jehovah Jesus, shall be “in the midst of them,” and the many great and precious promises in reference to Messiah’s reign, and the time of peace and blessedness for this earth, shall be fulfilled.

One great and blessed consequence of His judgments which shall then be abroad in the earth, and of His coming to dwell in the midst of Zion, is that the original purpose of God in the call and election of Abraham and his seed—namely, that in them all the families of the earth shall be blessed—shall be fulfilled: “And many nations shall join themselves unto Jehovah in that day, and shall be My people; and I will dwell in the midst of thee; and thou shalt know that Jehovah of hosts hath sent Me unto thee.” Yes, when the Lord in His mercy shall rebuild Zion, and appear in His glory, “then the nations shall fear the name of Jehovah, and all the kings of the earth His glory” (Psa_102:13-22). And not only shall they fear Him, but they shall willingly “join themselves unto Him”—the word being the same as that used of the “son of the stranger” who shall “join himself” to the Lord “to serve Him, and to love the name of Jehovah” (Isa_56:3-6); and of Israel themselves, who in that day “shall join themselves to Jehovah in a perpetual covenant which shall not be forgotten” (Jer_50:4-5).

During the present Dispensation, through Israel’s temporary “fall,” salvation has come to the Gentiles, and the “diminishing of them” has been overruled of God to “the riches of the Gentiles.” But this “salvation” and “riches” extend only to individuals. God hath visited the “Gentiles” to “take out of them a people for His Name.” It is only ignorance of God’s plan, and self-delusion, which can boast of the gradual conversion of the world and of “Christian nations” in this present age. And even the partial blessing now experienced by the Gentiles has been brought to them, not only indirectly and passively (through Israel’s unbelief), but directly and actively through those “who were, of faith” in the chosen nation.

Through individual Jews whose hearts were set on fire with love and devotion to Jesus of Nazareth whom their nation despised and rejected, who went forth into the world, taking their lives in their hands, to preach Him among the Gentiles; and through the inspired writings of Jewish apostles and evangelists—individuals from all nations—a multitude which no man can number have been, and are being, brought into the knowledge and fellowship of their Messiah. What might have been if the nation, as a nation, instead of rejecting, had accepted Christ, we can only guess and speculate about.

“Judging from the work accomplished by one Jew, Paul,” says a Hebrew Christian brother in a recent ably-written work, “we can imagine what might have been achieved if the intellectual acumen and great learning of the scribes and Pharisees, together with the enthusiasm of the young patriotic zealots, had been enlisted in the cause of spreading Messiah’s Kingdom in the world. If, instead of one Paul, there were thousands of Pauls. If the great learning, industry, and spiritual zeal which for centuries has been employed in rearing that great monument of wasted human industry, the immense literature of the Talmud, were used rather in the living work of propagating the gospel of Christ! If Jerusalem, instead of Rome, had remained the capital of Christendom, and the Jew, instead of the Greek and Roman, the guiding spirit in the councils of the Church!”1 But our human “if” does not reach deep enough to fathom God’s inscrutable purposes, nor is it high and broad enough to unravel all the thoughts and hidden counsels of the Infinite and Eternal One. This, however, we do know, that while Israel is held responsible for its rejection and present attitude to Christ and the gospel, that unto God all things were known from the beginning of the world, and that it was clearly forecast on the prophetic page that so it would be; it is only “after these things,” when Messiah returns to build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen, and builds again the ruins thereof, and sets it up, “that the residue of men shall seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom His name shall then be called” (Act_15:13-18).

Then, when “all Israel shall be saved”; when the miracle of a whole nation being born in a day shall first be witnessed on the earth in the case of the Jews; when the full significance of the precious Name “Immanuel” shall be realised in Jesus “dwelling in the midst” of His own people, so that the name of Jerusalem from that day shall be “Jehovah Shammah” (Eze_48:35); when there shall at last be not only “thousands of Pauls,” but a whole nation who shall burn with the same love and zeal for the glorious Person of their Messiah, and for the extension of His Kingdom, which characterised the blessed apostle to the Gentiles, who in so many respects is the type of His nation,—then nations, as nations, “shall join themselves unto Jehovah,” and the day of which prophets and psalmists sang, and for which they yearned, the day of universal peace and righteousness, when God’s way shall be known in all the world, and His saving health among all nations, shall at last break on this earth. But even when all nations of the earth shall walk in the light of Jehovah, the special position of Israel, as God’s peculiar people on the earth, shall still be made manifest.

1 The Jewish Question and the Key to its Solution, by Dr. Max Green.

“And Jehovah shall inherit Judah His portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again”: which reminds us of Isa_19:25, where we read that even after the blessing comes to the saved of the nations whom Jehovah of hosts shall bless, saying: “Blessed be Egypt, My people, and Assyria, the work of My hands,” He will still say of Israel, “Mine inheritance,” for the Lord’s inalienable “portion” from among all the other nations of the earth “is His people, Jacob is the lot of His inheritance” (Deu_32:9); in which respect, again, Israel nationally is the type and counterpart of the Church, which, made up of saved individuals from among all men, is “the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints” (Ephesians 1:18). The expression ‘al admath haqodesh—“in the holy land”—is very beautiful, and reminds us of the fact that the land also which has been defiled and polluted, perhaps, above all others, shall then be cleansed of its defilement, and hallowed and sanctified by the presence of Immanuel, to correspond with the people who are to inhabit it; who

throughout their future existence on the earth shall be known and called by all other nations as “the holy people” (Isa_62:12), on whose persons and homes and possessions, down to the very “bells of the horses,” shall be written “qodesh layehovah”—“Holiness (or ‘holy’) to the Lord.” The words, “and shall yet choose Jerusalem again,” so to say, “round off” the glorious promises in this chapter, and are the second of a threefold reiteration by Zechariah of Isa_15:1. The meaning, as already explained in my notes on the First Vision, is, that Jehovah shall then, by the various acts of lovingkindness to His people and to the land, which are enumerated in this prophecy, demonstrate in the sight of the whole world the fact and the immutability of His original choice of them. The first cycle of these wonderful “visions” ends with the most solemn announcement of the great fact which forms the climax of all prophecy, namely, the visible appearing of Almighty God in the person of the Messiah as the Judge and Redeemer of men: “Be silent, all flesh, before Jehovah; for He is waked up out of His holy habitation.” The word ■■■, has, is almost equivalent to the English “hush,” only that there is more of solemnity and power expressed in the Hebrew. “Kal basar”—“all flesh”—is not only a universal term for all mankind, but is meant to express the weakness and impotence of man in presence of Almighty God. Neor, which is the Niphal of ur, is “to wake up,” “to rise up,” from rest or sleep, and is, so to say, a response to the many cries of His waiting, oppressed people. “Awake, why sleepest Thou, O Lord? Arise, cast us not off for ever!” (Psalms 44:23).

Mimme’on qadsho—“His holy habitation,” or, literally, “the habitation of His holiness,” an expression found also in Psa_68:6; Jer_25:30; and Deu_26:15—is “heaven,” the special and permanent dwelling-place of His glory. There are two somewhat parallel passages in the prophetic Scriptures—one in Hab_2:20, “But Jehovah is in His holy temple; be silent before Him, all the earth”; and the other in Zep_1:7, “Hold thy peace” (has, the same word as “be silent” in the other passages) “at the presence of the Lord God.” The present Dispensation is the period of God’s long-continued silence. How wonderful, how long, how deep, how mysterious, is this silence of God ever since the sound of the last words of Christ, “Surely I come quickly,” and the inspired echo and response, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus,” died away on the barren rock of Patmos nineteen centuries ago! How often have the hearts of God’s people grown impatient under the strain! How often has not the Church cried, “How long, O Lord, how long?” But there has been neither audible voice, nor sound, nor any visible interposition on the part of God. Moreover, while God has remained “silent,” man has taken the opportunity of “speaking,” and his words are becoming ever more foolish, arrogant, and blasphemous against the Most High; but “our God cometh and shall not keep silent,” and then it will not only be the turn of “all flesh” to keep silent, but to stand in solemn awe while “out of his own mouth” man shall be judged, and all his thoughts and words which spell out his own condemnation are set in order before him.1 But not only the ungodly and the sinners who have spoken “hard things” against God and His Anointed, but men in general, are called in a spirit of reverence and godly fear to await the solemn event announced; for the coming and visible interposition of God on this earth, while it will mean judgment to some, will mean the consummation of grace and fulness of blessedness to others; and when prophecy and vision is at last fulfilled, and “our God shall arise and His enemies are scattered, and they also that hate Him shall flee before His face”—then, also, “the righteous shall be glad, they shall exult before the face of God, yea, they shall rejoice exceedingly.”2 The last practical word on this Scripture to you, dear Christian reader, is, “Abide in Him,” that when He shall appear (when He shall be manifested) we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.

1 See the chapter, “The Silence of God: how it shall be Broken,” in The Ancient Scriptures and the Modern Jew.

2 See the Hebrew of Psa_18:1-3.

4.06. Chapter 5 - Joshua Before the Angel of Jehovah

CHAPTER V THE FOURTH VISION JOSHUA BEFORE THE ANGEL OF JEHOVAH

(CHAPTER III) And he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of Jehovah, and Satan standing at his right hand to be his adversary. And Jehovah said unto Satan, Jehovah rebuke thee, O Satan; yea, Jehovah that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and was standing before the Angel. And He answered and spake unto those that stood before Him, saying, Take the filthy garments from off him. And unto him He said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with rich apparel. And I said, Let them set a clean mitre upon his head. So they set a clean mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments; and the Angel of Jehovah was standing by. And the Angel of Jehovah protested unto Joshua, saying, Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: If thou wilt walk in My ways, and if thou wilt keep My charge, then thou also shalt judge My house, and shalt also keep My courts, and I will give thee a place of access among these that stand by. Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou and thy fellows that sit before thee; for they are men that are a sign: for, behold, I will bring forth My servant the Branch. For, behold, the stone that I have set before Joshua; upon one stone are seven eyes: behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, saith Jehovah of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day. In that day, saith Jehovah of hosts, shall ye invite every man his neighbour under the vine and under the fig-tree.

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85 JOSHUA BEFORE THE ANGEL OF JEHOVAH

CHAPTER V THE fourth and fifth visions form a new chapter in this series of symbolic prophecies, which, though in a sense standing by themselves, are in the true psychological order, and in the closest possible relation with the wonderful things which had already been unfolded before the prophet’s spiritual sight. “The good words, and comfortable words” (Zec_1:13), which formed the message in the first three visions, contained the promises, not only of the overthrow of the Gentile world-powers “who lift up their horn to scatter Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem” (Zec_1:18-21); not only of the restoration of the still-dispersed people to Palestine, and of the future enlargement and prosperity of the Promised Land, and of the Holy City, which shall then be inhabited as villages in an open plain “for the multitude of men and cattle therein” (Zec_2:4); but of the restored spiritual relationship between God and His people, and of the return of the glory of the personal Presence of Jehovah in the Person of Messiah, for evermore to dwell in their midst, the result of which would be that “many nations shall be joined to Jehovah in that day” and be His people, and the whole earth be made to know the immutable fact and gracious purpose in His election of Judah and Jerusalem as His peculiar “portion” (Zec_2:5, Zec_2:10-11). But the question might well have suggested itself to the prophet’s mind, How can these things be? Has not Israel by his grievous sins and moral defilement for ever forfeited his place and made himself unfit to be again Jehovah’s sanctuary and appointed minister of blessing to the nations? As if in answer to this probable

inward questioning, this fourth vision is shown to the prophet, from which he might learn for himself and communicate to the people (1st) the blessed fact that the fulfilment of the exceeding great and precious promises in reference to Israel's future, rests, not on their own merits or worthiness, but on the immutable purpose of Jehovah, who in His sovereign grace hath "chosen Jerusalem"; and (2nd) how the moral problem will be solved, and the sinful, defiled people be yet made, not only fit to be the sanctuary of the Holy One, but to be "the priests of Jehovah" and "the ministers of our God" in relation to the other nations, in accordance with His original purpose in their call and election: "Ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests and an holy nation" (Exo_19:6; Isa_61:6). In brief, this vision depicts in a symbolic but very graphic manner the inner salvation of Israel from sin and moral defilement, answering to their outward deliverance from captivity and oppression set forth in the preceding three visions. A somewhat similar thought is expressed in Jer_3:1 &c., where, after a series of sublime promises of the restoration and conversion of "backsliding Israel," and how "at that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of Jehovah, and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of Jehovah to Jerusalem," the question is asked: "But I said, How shall I put thee among the children (who art so unchildlike) and give thee a pleasant (or 'delightsome') land, the goodliest heritage of the nations?" (who hast forfeited all claims on God's favour). Then there follows the answer: "And I said, Ye shall call Me 'my Father,' and shall not turn away from following Me." "I said . . . ye shall": for what in His eternal counsels He has purposed, that His grace and power shall yet accomplish in His people, and Israel shall yet, not only be blessed, but be fitted to be the instrument in God's hand to spread abroad the blessings of their Messiah's gospel throughout the earth. But now to come to the exposition of the fourth vision:

"And he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of Jehovah, and Satan standing at his right hand to be his adversary."

It cannot be decided with certainty whether the subject of the verb "showed" was Jehovah, or the interpreting angel, but most probably it was the Lord Himself, as the office of the interpreter was not to introduce but to explain the visions. "Joshua" was, of course, the high priest who returned with Zerubbabel at the head of the first colony of 49,697 exiles from the Captivity some sixteen years before.

He was standing before the Malakh Yehovah, whose divine character shines out in this vision in a most striking manner, and whose identity with the "Angel of His Face," the Second Person in the blessed Trinity, who in a special sense is the Sent One of the Father, we have already seen. The words 'omed liphnei,' "standing before," whether in relation to man or God, express attendance upon,1 and when used of the priests, and especially of the high priest, is almost a technical term for their priestly ministry and service. Thus we read that the tribe of Levi was separated "to stand before Jehovah, to minister unto Him, and to bless in His Name." But it is important at the outset to note that it is not in his individual or personal capacity that Zechariah beholds the high priest "standing" thus before the Angel of Jehovah—an erroneous supposition which has led some commentators into absurd and fanciful guesses as to the nature of the guilt of which Joshua stood accused2—but as the type and representative of the nation.

1 Thus, for instance, it is used of Joseph before Pharaoh (Gen_41:46), of Joshua before Moses (Deu_1:38), of David before Saul (1Sa_16:21), of Abishag the Shunammite before David (1Ki_1:2-4), and many other instances. Of standing to minister before God, the expression is used

of the tribe of Levi in Deu_10:8; of the high priest in Jdg_20:28; of Elijah, 1Ki_17:1; of Elisha, 2Ki_3:14-16; and other instances. It is used also of “standing” to intercede with God, Gen_18:22; Jer_7:10. It is used also as an attitude of worship.

2 Thus Ewald has invented a theory (which has for its support nothing but his own fancy, based on a misinterpretation of this sublime Scripture) that Joshua This is brought out first by the emphasis on his official title, ha-kohen ha-gadol, the high priest; secondly, from the fact that the plea of the great Advocate, and His answer to Satan’s accusations in Zec_3:2, is made, not on behalf of Joshua, but for “Jerusalem” which, as in so many places, stands not only for the city but for the people; and thirdly, from a comparison of Zec_3:4 with Zec_3:9, from which we see that the words addressed to Joshua, “I have caused thine iniquity to pass,” are meant to set forth the blessed fact that God “will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.”

Standing thus as the high priest and mediator of the people, it is the nation of Israel which is on its trial. If he is rejected, they are rejected; if he is justified, they are accepted. The scene, then, to make free use of words of another writer, may be imagined as follows: “The high priest is in the sanctuary, the building of which had already commenced, and is engaged in some part of his priestly duty or prayer for mercy (on behalf of the people). The ‘Angel of Jehovah’ comes down and condescends to appear in the Temple, as a proof of His favour, attended by a company of angels (Zec_3:7). Satan, the sworn enemy of the Church of God, looks on with jealous eyes, . . . and prepares to interrupt by his accusations.” But, while this is in the main true, the fact that Satan was there to accuse invests the symbolic transaction, which is here presented to the prophet’s spiritual sight, with a judicial character, and the “was actually accused at the time, or was then dreading an accusation at the Persian Court,” and that this accusation formed the superstructure on which the vision is based. “Zechariah, with peculiar sympathy, depicts the high priest as suffering under grievous accusations, and promises him a glorious acquittal. The garments of the high priest are represented as dirty because robes of that character were usually worn by accused persons as indications of mourning” (which, by the way, though a Roman custom, was not at all the case among the Jews). According to this father among German critics, “the ardent hopes of the prophet were soon to be justified by the event. On receipt of the Governor’s report, which presented an impartial statement of facts, an inquiry was instituted by authority into the case, the accusation was repelled, and the decree of Cyrus, which had given permission for the rebuilding of the Temple, was duly confirmed and ordered to be carried into execution”; for all which, as already observed, there is not even a shadow of historic ground. high priest may be regarded also as “standing” on his trial before the Angel of Jehovah as Judge.1

Ha-Satan, which, with or without the definite article, is a proper name for the Evil One, is the same who in the New Testament is described as our “adversary” the devil, the Hebrew term having etymologically the sense of “enemy,” or “adversary,” and the Greek that of “accuser.”

He is represented as standing at Joshua’s “right hand,” which is supposed by many to have been the usual position of the accuser in judicial procedure, the ground of the conjecture (for there is no positive proof of such a custom among the ancient Jews) being Psa_109:6, where we read, “Set a wicked man over him, and let an adversary (‘Satan’) stand at his right hand.” Another suggestion is that Satan took the place usually taken by the protector (Psa_16:8, Psa_109:31, Psa_121:5), “to show that Joshua, or those he represented, had none to save them, and that he himself was

victorious." The passage itself, however, tells us clearly that he stood there "l'sitno"—to act as adversary, or "be Satan," to him—"that he," as an old writer observes, "who is called Satan, might thus fill up the measure of his name."

Here we are brought face to face with one of those mysteries of revelation which must be classed among the things which "we know not now," nor can as yet fully understand—namely, the position of Satan in God's economy in general, and his relation to the moral government of this world, and to man in particular.

How and why, we may not yet fully know, but the fact is clearly brought before us in Scripture that the great adversary of God and man is permitted to appear before God, not only in His earthly courts of the Temple, as in this vision, but in heaven, as "the accuser of the brethren." And it is especially in his role as the accuser that the

1 "To stand before" is used also in a judicial sense both of the plaintiff and the defendant in Num_27:2, Num_35:12; Deu_19:17; Jos_20:6; 1Ki_3:16; so that Hengstenberg's statement, that this expression is never used of the appearance of a defendant before a judge, but always of a servant before his lord, is not quite accurate. fiendish nature of the "old serpent" is brought out. It was he who brought sin into the world; it is he who deceives men and nations, and spurs them on to sin and rebellion against God; and yet, when the seduction is accomplished, he turns round and becomes their accuser—this truly is like himself. But it is not merely his malice against Israel which brings him here as their accuser before God in the person of their high priest. Oh no; it is first and foremost his hatred of God, and his desire, if possible, to frustrate the accomplishment of God's purposes of mercy for this world, which, as he so well knows, are bound up with Israel. It was for this same reason that he sought all through the centuries to rouse the fury of the nations against them, with a view, if possible, to bring about their extermination. The actual words of Satan's accusations are not given, but their nature may be inferred from Zec_3:3, where we read: "Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the Angel." The word ■■■■■■, tsoyim, which is found only here as an adjective, is the strongest expression in the Hebrew language for filth of the most loathsome character, and the garments so defiled denote the sins of the people as viewed by the Holy One, in which the high priest as their representative stood, so to say, clad in His presence. Satan, therefore, might well have sought the rejection of Israel as the priestly nation, or to impugn the holiness of God's character in receiving the worship and services of those so morally defiled.

But, blessed be God, the adversary may accuse, but it is not in his power to condemn. He that sitteth as Judge, to justify or condemn, is the Lord. And note, it is the Divine Angel Himself, who in Zec_3:2 is expressly called "Jehovah," who pleads the cause of His people. Well might the remnant of Israel say, therefore: "He is near that justifieth; who will contend with me? Let us stand together; who is mine adversary? Let him come near to me. Behold, the Lord God will help me; who is he that shall condemn me? Behold, they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up" (Isa_50:8-9)—a challenge which is thrown down still more triumphantly in the New Testament in the words, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God; who also maketh intercession for us" (Rom_8:33-34). Satan's malice and hatred against the Church and the individual believer in Christ is as great as it is

against Israel. And he still appears as “the accuser of the brethren,” before God and before our own conscience; but with such an “Advocate with the Father” as “Jesus Christ the Righteous,” who has Himself become “the propitiation for our sins” (1Jn_2:1-2), we need fear neither his fury nor his malicious accusations. Is Satan’s hatred of us great? The love of Jesus is greater. Is Satan ever on the watch and restlessly walking about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour? Behold, He that keepeth Israel doth neither slumber nor sleep, and His eyes run to and fro throughout the earth to prove Himself strong on behalf of those whose hearts are perfect towards Him, and His myriads of blessed angels are sent forth specially to guard and to be ministering spirits to them who shall be heirs of salvation. Therefore we may continue the Apostle’s song of triumph: “Who shall separate us from the love of God? . . . for I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” But to return to the context. The great Advocate bases His plea on Israel’s behalf, first on the ground of Jehovah’s immutable choice. “Jehovah rebuke thee, O Satan.” The verb yig■ar, from ga■ar (“to rebuke,” “to reprove”), “when applied to God, who accomplishes all things by His own power, includes the idea of actual suppression”; and in this case it “involved a withering rejection of the blasted spirit and his accusations, as when Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit and he departed out of his victim.”1 The reason follows, “Yea, Jehovah that hath chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee,” as much as to say, “Shall God cast away His people which He hath foreknown?” (Rom_11:1). And this is the best answer that can ever be given to the accusations of man or devil, directed either against Israel, or the Church, or the individual Christian. It is the answer which Paul gives in that section of his Epistle to the Romans which was indicted for the express purpose of instructing Gentile believers in God’s mystery with Israel: “I say, then, hath God cast away His people?” He shudders at the very thought, as inconsistent with the character of God, Who must abide true though all may prove liars, and whose gifts and calling of His people are without repentance (or “change of mind”) on His part—“By no means,” or “God forbid,” he exclaims.

Yes, if Israel’s position as the Lord’s peculiar people depended on their own faithfulness, then there would have been an end of them long ago; but Israel’s hope and safety rest on the immutable character and faithfulness of the Everlasting, Unchangeable God, and that makes all the difference. Why did God choose Israel in the first instance? Was it because of their righteousness or their lovableness above all other peoples? Oh no! “Jehovah did not set His love upon you, nor choose you,” He tells them through Moses, “because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people.” “Not for thy righteousness or the uprightness of thine heart, but because Jehovah loved you, and because He would keep

1 The following passages collected by Pusey show that “the rebuke of God must be with power”: “Thou hast rebuked the nations, Thou hast destroyed the ungodly” (Psa_9:5); “Thou hast rebuked the proud accursed” (Psa_119:21); “They perish at the rebuke of Thy countenance ” (Psa_80:16); “God shall rebuke him, and he fleeth far off, and shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind” (Isa_17:13); “The foundations of the world were discovered at Thy rebuke, O Lord” (Psa_18:15; Nah_1:4; see also Psa_106:9 and Mal_2:3, R.V.). the oath which He hath sworn unto your fathers.” A truly wonderful and God-like reason. “He chose you because He loved you; and He loved you because He loved you” = the sole ground and motive being in His own

heart of love, and in the sovereign purpose of grace which He hath formed in and through them. And having known and foreknown them—yea, with all their many and grievous sins and backslidings, and purposed in His heart to exhibit in and through them, not only His holy severity (as now in their unbelief), but even in a more wonderful way His infinite grace and goodness, and all the attributes of His character for the blessing of all the nations of the earth, He can never wholly cast them off.

Some of my readers may have visited the Wartburg and had pointed out to them the black spot on one of the walls of the room which Luther occupied during his benevolently intended imprisonment. The legend connected with it is this. One night during this mournful solitude, when suffering from great depression, because, as he himself expresses it in a letter to Melanchthon, dated May 24, 1521, “I do see myself insensible and hardened, a slave to sloth, rarely, alas! praying—unable even to utter a groan for the Church, while my untamed flesh burns with devouring flame”1—the great Reformer dreamt that Satan appeared to him with a long scroll, in which were carefully written the many sins and transgressions of which he was guilty from his birth, and which the evil one proceeded to read out, mocking the while that such a sinner as he should ever think of being called to do service for God, or even of escaping himself from hell. As the long list was being read, Luther’s terrors grew, and his agonies of soul increased. At last, however, rousing himself, he jumped up and exclaimed: “It is all true, Satan, and many more sins which I have committed in my life which are known

1 See The Life of Luther, by M. Michelet. Based almost entirely on his own letters and table talk, 2nd edition, translated by W. Hazlitt, pp. 101, 102. to God only; but write at the bottom of your list, ‘The blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, cleanseth us from all sin,’” and grasping the inkstand on his table he threw it at the devil, who soon fled, the memorial of it being left in the ink-splash on the wall.

We are always reminded of this story when reading anti-Semitic literature, or listening to accusations and disparagements of the Jewish people. No too-black a picture can ever be drawn of Israel’s backslidings and apostasies; no human lips can ever sufficiently describe the heinousness of Israel’s sins and transgressions. All that can therefore be said against their past or their present is true. But when you have read through your long indictment against Israel, write at the bottom of your list words such as these: “Thus saith Jehovah, If heaven above can be measured, and the foundation of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel, for all that they have done, saith Jehovah” (Jer_31:37); or words taken from the very chapter which foretells in advance Israel’s many sins and apostasies, and the terrible calamities which should come upon them in consequence: “And yet, for all that, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break My covenant with them, for I am Jehovah, their God” (Lev_26:44). No, “Jehovah will not forsake His people, for His great Name’s sake, because it hath pleased Jehovah to make you His people”—in which faithfulness of the God of Israel to the nation which He has chosen for His own inheritance, in spite of all its unworthiness, you may see a picture, dear reader, of His faithfulness to you, and a pledge of your eternal safety in Christ.

Secondly, the Angel of Jehovah bases his answer to Satan’s accusations on the ground of the sufferings in punishment of their sins which Israel has already endured. “Is not this a brand

plucked out of the fire?" This same figure, with one slight variation, is found in Amos 4:11, and is used (as Hengstenberg well explains) to "denote the occurrence of great misfortune, which, however, is prevented by the mercy of God from issuing in utter destruction."

It need scarcely be pointed out, after what has already been stated, that these words also must not be taken as applying to Joshua as an individual, but as the high priest, the type and representative of his people. The fire out of which Joshua had been rescued as a brand was neither the evil which had come upon him through neglecting the building of the Temple (as some German expositors explain), nor the guilt of allowing his sons to marry foreign wives (which the Jewish Targum, followed by Rashi and Kimchi, oblivious of the anachronism, assert); for, as Keil well observes, in the former case the accusation would have come too late, since the building of the Temple had been resumed five months before (Hag_1:14 compared with Zec_1:7); and in the latter case it would have been much too early, since these mésalliances did not take place till fifty years afterwards. No; the words are used by the Great Advocate of the whole people, against whom, as we have already seen, the adversary's accusations were really directed, and their general sense has been well given by one of the earliest Church Fathers—namely, "As if He should say, Israel confessedly has sinned, and is liable to these charges; yet it has suffered no slight punishment; it has endured sufferings, and has scarce been snatched out of them, as a half-burned brand out of the fire. For not yet had it shaken off the dust of the harms from the captivity; only just now, and scarcely, had it escaped the flame of that most intolerable calamity. Cease, then, imputing sin to them on whom God has had mercy."1 But though primarily the figure refers to "the fire" of the Babylonian Captivity from which the restored remnant at the time had been plucked as a "brand," the words are designed also to remind us of a deeper and more general truth in connection with Jewish history. Israel may be said to be always in the fire, yet God never permits them to be wholly consumed. Like the burning bush, the symbol of this indestructible people—it may burn, and must suffer by very reason of its being in a special sense

1 Cyril. the dwelling-place of the Holy One, until all its dross shall have been consumed; but it cannot be destroyed. When God first made His covenant with Abraham, the symbols of His presence, which were meant to foreshadow His whole future dealings with them, were "a smoking furnace and burning lamp," or "flaming torch" (Gen_15:17). Already in Egypt they found themselves in an "iron furnace" (Deu_4:20), and from the human point of view there was every reason to believe that they would be wholly consumed; but along with and in the midst of the furnace of the four hundred years' "affliction," there was suspended the flaming torch of promise that God would ultimately interpose on their behalf, and judge the nation who was oppressing them, and bring them out "with great substance" (Gen_15:13-14).

Babylon was another such furnace, and though a remnant had, according to God's promise, after the seventy years, been plucked out "as a brand from the fire," we have to remember that the Babylonian Captivity, in a very important sense, still lasts, for it inaugurated the prophetic period called "the times of the Gentiles" which will only be brought to a close when the kingdom is restored, and governmental power over the earth is centred in Mount Zion. But in this longer captivity also, in this more fiery "furnace of affliction" (Isa_48:10), God has not left His people without the burning lamp of promise that they shall never be wholly consumed; that He will never forget the Covenant which He made with their fathers; but that He would be with them even when they walk through the fires (Isa_43:2); and in the end, when their sufferings reach their climax in

the great tribulation, when the filth of the daughter of Zion shall finally have been purged away “by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning,” He would save them as “a brand from the fire,” and cause them to multiply and to be a blessing to all the world.

If we may digress for a moment from the interpretation of this familiar figure, and its primary significance in relation to Israel, and make an application of it to the individual believer in Christ, we would remind the reader, first, that we have a picture here of what, and where, we were in our natural condition. It is true, as Keil contends, that “fire is a symbol of punishment, not of sin,” but in a very real and terrible sense sin is its own punishment; and apart from “the everlasting burnings” (Isa_33:14) which await the impenitent in that place where “the fire is never quenched,” wickedness (already in this life) burneth as a fire (Isa_9:18). And this, whether we have been conscious of it or not, has been the case with us all. We were in the fire which indwells our nature, and, but for the mercy of God, we should have ultimately been altogether consumed by it.

But, secondly, the figure also reminds us of the love and compassion of our Redeemer, Who, when there was no eye to pity, at the cost of infinite suffering to Himself, plucked us “as brands from the fire,” and delivered us, not only from the punishment of sin in the future, but from the power and dominion of sin in the present. But to proceed with the exposition. As already indicated, “the filthy garments” in which Joshua was clad symbolised the sin with which the nation as a whole was defiled, and which he, as high priest, represented in his official capacity. This was already clearly perceived by the Church Father whom I have already quoted, who observes: “The high priest having been thus taken to represent the whole people, the filthy garments would be no unclear symbol of the wickedness of the people; for clad, as it were, with their sins, with the ill-effaceable spot of ungodliness, they abode in captivity subject to retribution, paying the penalty of their unholy deeds.”1 The figure of the filthy garments as emblematic of moral pollution is also carried over into the visions of Zechariah from the former prophets. Thus in the confession of the remnant of Israel in Isa_64:6 we read: “For we are all become as one that is unclean, and all our righteousnesses are as a polluted garment; and we all do fade

1 Cyril. as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.” This is a true picture of Israel’s moral condition before God. But in contrast to the past and the present there are other pictures painted for us by the prophets of Israel’s future, based on the fact of God’s election of this nation to be a peculiar people unto Himself, and on the exceeding great and precious promises given to the fathers. The Lord shall wash away “the filth of the daughter of Zion,” and cleanse her from all her defilements, “and it shall come to pass that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem” (Isa_4:3-4; Eze_36:16-32). Then, in contrast to the “polluted garment,”1 the same prophet sings: “I will greatly rejoice in Jehovah, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decked himself with ornaments (or, ‘with his priestly head-dress’ or ‘turban’), and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels” (Isa_61:10).

Now this same glorious truth, so clearly announced in verbal prophecy, is here realistically set forth to Zechariah in symbol. The symbol, however, is immediately interpreted by the Angel of Jehovah Himself, who, after commanding the attendant angels “who stood by,” saying, “Take away the filthy garments from him,” addresses the comforting words to Joshua himself: “Behold I

have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee” (which, as already pointed out, answers to the glorious promise in Zec_3:9, “I will remove the iniquity of the land in one day”), “and I will clothe thee with rich apparel”; which, in brief, answers to the garments of salvation and pure robe of Messiah’s own perfect righteousness, in which Israel shall then be attired. But the word ■■■■■■■■■■, machalatsoth, which is in the plural, translated in the Authorised Version “change of raiment,” and in the Revised “rich apparel”—and which is 1 Not “filthy rags,” as rendered in the A.V. of Isa_64:6. f0und elsewhere only in Isa_3:22, where it is used of the “changeable suits of apparel” which the haughty daughters of Zion of that time reserved to be worn on great occasions—probably stands here for the specifically priestly or high priest’s outfit; and these being put upon Joshua as the representative of Israel would indicate, not only pardon and justification before the Lord, on the ground of the righteousness which He Himself provides for His people, but their reinstatement and reconsecration to their priestly calling as a nation. And this, it seems to me, is brought out still more clearly in Zec_3:5. The prophet has hitherto been a silent but eager spectator of the wonderful scene which he was made to witness, but as he beholds the transformation which had taken place in the high priest’s outfit, after the filthy garments were taken from him, and as the symbolical character of the transaction becomes clear to him in its very process (since he does not in this vision ask for any explanation of its meaning, nor is there one given to him by the interpreting angel), he bursts out in the prayer that the gracious work may be completed: “And I said, Let them set a fair (or ‘clean’) mitre upon his head”—which prayer, being in accordance with the good pleasure of Jehovah, and that for which it asked having apparently been omitted only in order to leave something, and that the completion of all, to be done at the intercession of the prophet, it is also immediately answered, “So they set a fair mitre (literally, ‘the mitre, the clean or fair one’) upon his head.”

Now the word tsaniph (rendered “mitre”) is not “a turban such as might be worn by anybody” (as Koehler and other commentators assert), but is, as Keil rightly explains, “the head-dress of princely persons and kings,” and is here used as a synonym for mitsnepheth, which is the technical word for the tiara prescribed for the high priest in the law. And this mitre, or turban, was the glory and complement of the high priest’s sacred and symbolical attire—the portion of his dress “ in which he carried his office, so to speak, upon his forehead”;1 for to it was attached the plate of pure gold with the words ■■■■■■■ ■■■■■—qodesh layehovah! “Holy to Jehovah,” engraven on it. “It shall be always upon his forehead,” we read, “that he may bear the iniquity of the holy things which the children of Israel shall hallow, . . . that they may be accepted before the Lord” (Exo_28:36-38). The answer, therefore, of the prophet’s prayer, and the putting of the fair mitre upon Joshua’s head, signified in his own case his full equipment and fitness for his high-priestly functions; and in relation to the people, the removal of their guilt, and an assurance of their acceptance before the Lord. But we have also to remember that the Aaronic priesthood, summed up as it was in the person of the high priest, while appointed to meet Israel’s felt need of a Mediator between them and God, was at the same time designed not only to foreshadow some of the aspects of the everlasting priesthood of Him Who ever liveth to make intercession for us, but to be also a continual reminder of God’s purpose with the nation as a whole, and, symbolically at least, ever to keep before them the significance of priesthood, which is to be “chosen”; to be “His,” in a peculiar sense; to be “holy,” and to “draw near” unto Him in priestly service and intercession (Num_16:5). To the ultimate realisation of God’s original purpose in the election and call of His people, that they should be unto Him “a kingdom of priests and an holy nation” (Exo_19:5-6), the

prophetic Scriptures bear unanimous testimony; and the wonderful transformation which Zechariah is permitted to witness in this vision, in the case of Joshua, symbolically sets forth the same great truth, and describes the change which will come over Israel as a nation, and their equipment in that day when they shall be named throughout the earth “the priests of Jehovah,” and when men everywhere shall call them “the ministers of our God” (Isa_61:6).

1 Keil. And the process which the prophet witnesses in the case of Joshua as the representative of the Jewish nation, answers also to the experience of each individual believer. By nature, dear reader, “we are all”—whether we be Jew or Gentile—“as one that is unclean” in God’s sight, and “all our righteousness”—the very best moral outfit which we can manufacture for ourselves—is, “as a polluted garment” (Isa_64:6), not only of no avail, but, together with our sins, must be “taken away.”

Man, in his own name, and on the ground of his own merits, has no approach and no standing in the presence of God—he must find his moral fitness outside of himself if he desires to “ascend into the hill of the Lord, and to stand in His holy place.”

There must first be a stripping of self. Like the great and blessed Apostle, we must each one be brought to say: “What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea verily, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for Whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is of God through faith” (Php_3:7-9). From the very beginning of the history of redemption we have the same truth set forth under the same figure. Already in the garden of Eden, as soon as sin entered into the world, and man, losing the consciousness of God, became self-conscious, we read of the man and the woman that “they sewed fig-leaves together, and made themselves aprons.” These “aprons” or “girdles” which men continue to sew or “weave” for themselves (Isa_59:6) are of no avail to hide their shame or to cover their misery. But already then, God in His infinite compassion began to preach the gospel to man by direct promise, and to set it forth also by type. He not only announced the coming of “the Seed of the woman,” who should bruise the serpent’s head and destroy the devil and his works (Gen_3:15), but Jehovah God, we read, also “made for Adam and his wife coats of skins (from animals which He probably first commanded the man to slay) and clothed them” (Gen_3:21). And these two “garments”—the one symbolic of the meetness for fellowship with God, which man tries to work out for himself, and the other of the beautiful robe of Messiah’s own righteousness which is provided for all who, conscious of their own utter unworthiness to appear in His presence on the ground of anything in themselves, look for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life (Jud_1:21)—are contrasted throughout Scripture until the day when the “wedding feast” which the Great King made for His Son, to which men are now invited, merges into the “marriage of the Lamb” and “the great supper of God.” Then there shall be a final scrutiny and separation between those arrayed in “fine linen, bright and pure” and clothed in “festal attire,” and those who refused to put on the wedding robe provided by the King, because they deceived themselves, or made belief to think that their own “polluted garment” was good enough: these shall then be bound hand and foot and cast into outer darkness, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Mat_22:1-14; Rev_19:6-18). And this “robe of righteousness,” which is ours first of all by faith, and which is the only ground of our standing before God, becomes also a blessed subjective experimental reality to the Christian.

In this world men walk in a vain show, and there is often no inward correspondence between their actual character and the robe of office which they wear. There are kings who are not kingly, princes who are by no means princely, and priests who are far from being priestly; but it can never be so in the kingdom of God—in it there are no deceiving appearances. As many as are justified in Messiah's righteousness are also being regenerated and sanctified by His blessed Spirit, and there is not one arrayed in the beautiful robe of His perfection who does not also make it the aim of his life to perfect holiness in the fear of God now, and who shall not in the end be conformed to His image, and be actually and fully like Him in character. And what Israel shall be nationally in the day when, stripped of their own filthy garments, they are clothed in machalatsoth (the new priestly outfit), and, with the fair mitre with qodesh layehovah on their foreheads, go forth as "the priests of Jehovah" and as "the ministers of our God" among the nations—that also all believers in Christ are already now as individuals. We, too, are "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession," and are sent forth into the world, not only with our lips, but also in our lives and conduct, "to show forth the praises (the excellences) of Him Who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light." But let us now proceed to the second half of this chapter. The symbolical transaction of the removal of the filthy garments from Israel's high priest, and his being fitted out in machalatsoth, or "rich apparel," with the "clean mitre" on his head, is followed by a solemn charge and most glorious promises.

"And the Angel of Jehovah protested unto Joshua, saying, Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: If thou wilt walk in My ways, and if thou wilt keep My charge, then thou also shalt judge My house, and shalt also keep My courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by." The word va-ya-■ad ("protested") means solemnly to protest, or "testify." Etymologically it signifies "to call God to witness." It occurs, for instance, in the words of Solomon to Shimei, "Did I not make thee swear by Jehovah, and protested unto thee," etc. (1 Kings 2:21)—and is intended to express the solemnity and importance of the charge about to be made. The expressions "Walk in My ways" and "Keep My charge" (mishmarti thishmor) are frequently used in the Pentateuch for "holding on in the way of life, well-pleasing to God, and for keeping the charge given by God."1 It was the injunction of the dying David to Solomon: "Keep the charge of the Lord thy God to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes." The first part of the charge, "If thou wilt walk in My ways," refers particularly to Joshua's personal attitude towards the Lord—to fidelity in his personal relations to God; and the second, "If thou wilt keep My charge," to the faithful performance of his official duties as high priest. And the reward of his thus (in his personal and official capacity) studying to present himself approved unto God, will be (a) "Then thou also shalt judge My house." "My house" may be used metaphorically of the people, as in Num_12:7, "My servant Moses, . . . who is faithful in all My house," and the judging of the house would in that case refer to the high priest's function as the representative of God in all matters of controversy, to give the sentence of judgment (Deu_17:8-10); or Hengstenberg, Keil, and Pusey may be right in limiting it to the high priest's administration of the literal House or Temple—to the decisions, namely, which devolved upon him in all matters of the sanctuary. Probability is added to this more limited meaning of the expression by the next parallel clause, which certainly is to be understood in a literal sense as referring to the Temple, namely, (b) "And shalt also keep My courts"—as a faithful watchman or porter, not only "to keep away everything of an idolatrous nature from the House of God," but to see to it that nothing that is unclean or which defileth shall enter into it (2Ch_23:19). (c) But the climax of promise in this verse is reached in the last clause, "And I will give thee places to walk among these

that stand by." The Hebrew word ■■■■■■■■■■, mah■lekhim, translated "places to walk," and which the Revised Version renders "a place of access," has been variously translated and interpreted by different commentators. Thus Gesenius, Hengstenberg, Hoffmann, etc., have rendered the sentence, "I will give thee leaders among those that stand by." But

1 Pusey. the rendering in the Authorised Version, which is supported by almost all modern scholars, is doubtless the true one.

"These that stand by"—as we see by comparing the expression with Zec_3:4—are the angels, who were in attendance on the Angel of Jehovah, and who "stood before Him" ready to carry out His behests. The promise is usually limited by Christian commentators to signify that God would yet give to Joshua, and to the priesthood generally, fuller and nearer access to Him than they possessed hitherto, or than was possible in the old dispensation; but the Jewish Targum is, I believe, nearer the truth when it paraphrases the words, "In the resurrection of the dead I will revive thee, and give thee feet walking among these seraphim." Thus applied to the future, the sense of the whole verse would be this: "If thou wilt walk in My ways and keep My charge, thou shalt not only have the honour of judging My house and keeping My courts, but when thy work on earth is done thou shalt be transplanted to higher service in heaven, and 'have places to walk' among these pure angelic beings who stand by Me, hearkening unto the voice of My word" (Psa_103:20-21). Note the "if's" in this verse, my dear reader, and lay to heart the fact that, while pardon and justification are the free gifts of God to all that are of faith, having their source wholly in His infinite and sovereign grace, and quite apart from work or merit on the part of man, the honour and privilege of acceptable service and future reward are conditional on our obedience and faithfulness: therefore seek by His grace and in the power of His Spirit to "walk in His ways and to keep His charge," and in all things, even if thine be the lot of a "porter" or "doorkeeper" in the House of God, to present thyself approved unto Him, in remembrance of the day when "we must all be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2Co_5:10). But there are still greater and more wonderful promises following, in Zec_3:8-10; and to rouse Joshua, and us also through him, to a sense of their significance and importance, his attention is again attracted by the words, "Hear now, O Joshua"—not only with the outer ear, but with the ears of the heart, namely, hearken and consider. The words ha kohen ha-gadol—the high priest—which are added, are intended once more to remind us that it is not in his private personal capacity, but as the head of his order and official representative of the people, that he is thus addressed. This is made clear by the words which immediately follow: "Thou and thy fellows which sit before thee, for they are men which are a sign."

"Thy fellows" (or "companions") which sit before, are the ordinary priests who, in meetings of the order for the purpose of discussing or deciding matters connected with their office, "sat before" the high priest, who was the president of the assembly1—not that they were there and then sitting before Joshua. The words anshei mopheth, rendered in the Authorised Version "men wondered at," and in the Revised Version "men that are a sign," are men who attract attention to themselves by something striking, and are types of what is to come. Thus Isaiah's sons, with their prophetic names, Shear Jashub ("a remnant shall return"), Maher-shalal-hash-baz ("Haste spoil speed prey"), were, with his own name "Isaiah," which signifies "the salvation of Jehovah," for signs and moph■thim—portents and types to the people of what was going to take place in the nation

(Isa_8:18; see also Isa_20:3; Eze_12:6-11). And if we ask wherein were Joshua and the whole order of Aaronic priesthood portents or types of things which were then yet to come, the answer is that in their persons they were imperfect images of the true Priest after the order of Melchizedek, “who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless

1 We find the expression in 2Ki_4:38 and in 2Ki_6:1, used of the sons of the prophets as “sitting before” their master Elisha; and in Ezekiel it is used again and again of the elders of Judah who came and “sat before” the prophet, professing the desire to be taught by him the Word of God (Eze_8:1, Eze_14:1, and Eze_20:1). Thus also in later times the Rabbinical students “sat before” and “at the feet of ” their Rabbis, in the yeshibahs or Talmudic seats of learning. life,” and whose priesthood is therefore “unchangeable”; and in their ministry, the essential part of which was “to make atonement”—but which in the old economy could never be perfectly accomplished, since “it was impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins”—they typified the great redeeming work of Him who, through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot unto God, and thus once and for ever “put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.” But Kliefoth, Keil, Dr. C. H. H. Wright, and Pusey may be right in considering that the words that Joshua and the other priests are anshei mopheth—men who are a portent or type—have a reference also to the previous incidents of the vision. “The vision had pictured to the eye of the priest-prophet the manner in which the priesthood of Israel, represented by Joshua, though defiled with iniquity, had been cleansed by Divine grace, and rendered acceptable to God. By that grace priest and people had been snatched like half-burnt brands from the fire of a well-deserved punishment. That deliverance was, however, typical of a greater salvation, which the angel was now about to reveal. Hence Joshua and his fellows were typical men.”1 “For this miracle of grace which has been wrought for them points beyond itself to an incomparable, greater, and better act of the sin-absolving grace of God which is still in the future.”2 The key and explanation of the enigmatic words addressed to Joshua, and to his fellow priests “that sat before him,” are contained in the last sentence of Zec_3:8, “For, behold, I will bring forth My servant the Branch.” This and the words which immediately follow in Zec_3:9 form one of the richest and most beautiful Messianic passages in the Old Testament; and again, on careful examination, we find it to be (as is the manner of Zechariah) a terse summary of glorious announcements concerning the coming Redeemer in the “former prophets.” Thus, “My Servant” is the title of Messiah in the second

1 Wright.

2 Keil. half of the Book of Isaiah, and our minds are taken back to such passages as, “Behold My servant, whom I uphold; Mine Elect, in whom My soul delighteth. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He shall bring forth judgment unto the Gentiles. . . . It is a light thing that thou shouldest be My servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light of the Gentiles, that thou mayest be My salvation unto the end of the earth.”1 But it is perhaps particularly to Isa_53:1 &c.—“the crown of all Old Testament prophecy,” as it has been well called—that our thoughts are directed by the introduction of this title of Messiah in our prophecy—to the innocent and absolutely holy One who is wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, who pours out His soul unto death as an atonement for sin—to the “Righteous Servant” through the knowledge of whom the many are justified, or “made righteous,” and in whose redeeming work Zechariah, like Isaiah himself and all the other prophets, saw the solution of the great moral problem, how those morally defiled, as Joshua was represented to be in

his filthy garments, can be acquitted and justified by a holy God, and how “the iniquity of the land shall be removed” in one day. But the designation, “My Servant” stands here in combination with another well-known Messianic title, which in the visions of Zechariah is turned into a proper name of the promised Deliverer—“My Servant the Branch”2 1 Isa_43:1-6, Isa_49:6.

2 Kimchi’s comment on the words “My Servant the Branch” is: “This is Zerubbabel”; but the interpretation thus proposed is (as shown in a note by Dr. Alexander McCaul in his translation of Kimchi’s Commentary) untenable. “Kimchi here follows Rashi in interpreting ‘My servant the Branch’ of Zerubbabel. Their reason for this probably was that if they acknowledged the person thus designated in this chapter to be the Messiah, they must have made the same admission in the parallel passage, Zec_6:12; and by so doing they would have admitted that Messiah was to be a priest as well as a king.

“Perhaps they also saw some polemical danger in this chapter, in connecting the promise of the Messiah with the promise occurring in the next verse, ‘To remove the iniquity of that land in one day,’ which would seem to favour the Christian doctrine that the Messiah ‘by one offering perfected for ever them that are sanctified’ (Heb_10:14). But, however that be, the interpretation which In the former prophets we find Tsemach first used as a title of Messiah by Isaiah in Isa_4:2, where, too, it stands in connection with the prophecy of the washing away of “the filth of the daughter of Zion” and the purging of the blood of Jerusalem “from the midst of her,” so that all that shall be left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, “even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem.” Then Jeremiah, in Jer_23:5 and Jer_33:15, uses the term Tsemakh Tsaddik, “the Branch of Righteousness,” or “Righteous Branch,” as a designation of the Divine King who should spring out of David’s line, in whose days Judah shall be saved, and Israel dwell safely, and whose name shall be called Jehovah Tsidkenu.

Including, therefore, the prophecies of Zechariah, we find the Messiah brought before us in the Old Testament Scriptures by this title of Tsemach in four different aspects of His character:

(1) As the ideal King who shall reign in righteousness—the Branch of David in whom shall be fulfilled all the promises made to the Davidic house (Jer_23:5-6, Jer_33:15-16).

(2) As “My Servant the Branch” (Zec_3:8).

(3) As “The Man whose name is the Branch” (Zec_6:12). they propose is not tenable: 1st, Because it departs from the old received interpretation of the Jewish Church. Both Kimchi and Rashi admit that there was an interpretation referring this passage to the Messiah; and Jonathan, in his Targum interprets both these passages of the Messiah; 2nd, Because it contradicts the analogy of the prophetic language. Messiah is elsewhere called ‘The Branch,’ as in Isa_4:2 and Jer_23:5, in both of which passages Kimchi himself freely admits that Branch means the Messiah, 3rd, Because the words do not agree with the circumstances of Zerubbabel. God says, ‘I will bring My Servant the Branch.’ But, as Abarbanel remarks, Zerubbabel had come long before, and was already a prince among them. Kimchi felt this difficulty, and therefore tries to twist the words to mean ‘that his dignity should increase still more, and his greatness should grow as a branch,’ etc. But Abarbanel remarks again that God does not say that He will make him great, but that He will bring him; and adds, that ‘after this prophecy Zerubbabel attained to neither royalty, dominion, or other dignity more than be already possessed’ ” (see Abarbanel, Comment. in loc.).

(4) As “The Branch of Jehovah” who in that day shall be “for beauty and for glory, . . . for excellency and comeliness to them that should be of the escaped in Israel” (Isa_4:2). The promised King—the Servant—the Man—the Branch, or Son of God. And this fourfold prophetic picture of Messiah on the pages of the Old Testament, as I have elsewhere shown many years ago,1 answers to the fourfold portraiture which the Holy Spirit has given us in the four different Gospels of the Christ of history. One probable reason why the Divine artist has seen fit to sketch the person and character of Messiah for us in four Gospels instead of one, has been well expressed by the late Professor Godet, who says: “Just as a gifted painter, who wished to immortalize for a family the complete likeness of the father who had been its glory, would avoid any attempt at combining in a single portrait the insignia of all the various offices he had filled; at representing him in the same picture as general and as magistrate; as man of science and as father of a family; but would prefer to paint four distinct portraits, each of which should represent him in one of these characters. So has the Holy Spirit, in order to preserve for mankind the perfect likeness of Him who was its chosen Representative, God in man, used means to impress upon the minds of the writers, whom He has made His organs, four different images.” And these “four different images” in the historic narrative correspond in a striking manner, as already stated, with the fourfold outline of Messiah’s character as delineated on the page of prophecy. Although the same blessed features of our Redeemer are easily recognisable in all the Gospels, there is a special aspect of His character brought out in each. (1) In Matthew, which is primarily “the Jewish Gospel,” and was very probably in the first instance written in Hebrew or Aramaic (though afterwards rewritten by the same evangelist in Greek), we have the promised 1 In Rays of Messiah’s Glory, 2nd edition, published in 1886, now out of print.

Malkha Meshicha—the theocratic “King Messiah”—presented to us, and the fulfilment of the prophecy, “Behold, I will raise unto David a Righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth,” gradually unfolded before us. In keeping with its primary design is its very style. The keynote throughout is “that it might be fulfilled.” For this reason also is Christ presented to us in this Gospel, more than in any of the others, as the Prophet like unto Moses, the great lawgiver of the Old Covenant, and yet above Moses and the whole prophetic order, not only in the new unfolding and application of the law in the so-called “Sermon on the Mount,” but in His four other great discourses, to which the narrative portion supplied by Matthew forms the framework. For the same reason also the genealogy in this Gospel traces back Christ’s earthly descent only as far as Abraham, for the aim of the Evangelist is to unfold the thesis laid down in Mat_1:1, which is in itself a summary and fulfilment of all the Messianic hope of the Old Testament: “The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.”

(2) But if “Behold thy King” (Zec_9:9) is the key note of the Gospel of Matthew, the inscription written by the Spirit of God on the Gospel of Mark is, “Behold My Servant.” This, the shortest of the four Gospels, which, though written by the pen of John Mark, has most probably “come to us from the lips of Peter”—and was apparently designed in the providence of God primarily for the practical, busy Roman world—is a graphic and living sketch of that Blessed One Who spoke of Himself in the Spirit long before His advent—“Lo I am come: in the scroll of the book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will, O My God, yea, Thy law is within My heart.” It is a record, not so much of the words of Jesus as of His acts. It is composed of two sections only—the ministry in Galilee

and the death on Calvary.

“His ministry moves in widening circles—first in the synagogue, then in the open field, to the interested groups who gathered round Him, afterwards to the teeming multitudes.”1

Characteristic of this Gospel is the rapidity of its movements, and the promptness of the obedience to the Father’s will and to the impulses of the Spirit, expressed in the word rendered “straightway,” “immediately” (Mar_1:10-12).

Mark gives no genealogy, because a servant needs not such recommendation, he being judged by his work alone.

(3) But, if Matthew is the Gospel of the King and the Kingdom, and Mark that of the perfect Servant, the prominent feature of our Lord in the Gospel of Luke, which probably was primarily intended for the cultured Greek world, is that of “the Son of Man.” In it Christ is portrayed as the Man par excellence—the true Man, who is both the ideal and the representative of the race; the second Adam, who, in contrast to the first, who brought sin and ruin to the race, is the Saviour of men. The chief characteristic of this Gospel is its universality. The Christ depicted on its orderly pages is indeed the Messiah of Israel, “who is sent in fulfilment of the promises made to our fathers,” and of the oath which God sware “to our father Abraham” (Luk_1:67-80); and Who, even after His rejection by Israel, commands that, in the proclamation of His gospel among all nations, His disciples should “begin at Jerusalem” (Luk_24:47)—but He is shown as caring also for all who are sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death. Already in the narrative of the infancy there are hints of the Light which is to enlighten all nations; in the parable of the Good Samaritan and the recital of the mission of the seventy, there is the promise of the advancing outreach of the Divine mercy to men of every nation and tongue; and in the call of Zacchæus, the parable of the Pharisee and the publican, and the salvation of the penitent robber, we have tokens of a grace which reaches out to the uttermost. The author does not aim at being a theologian;

1 See the chapter, “The Fourfold Portrait,” in The Spirit in the Word, by D. M. McIntyre. The subject is also fully and beautifully unfolded in Bernard’s Progress of Doctrine in the New Testament, Lecture 2. he is an evangelist, and his message is, “The Son of Man came to seek and save that which was lost.”1

It is for this reason also that this evangelist took upon himself the laborious task of tracing the genealogy of Jesus right back to Adam, in order to show His relation as the promised “Seed of the woman,” not only with Israel, as does Matthew, but with men of all nations and kindreds, and peoples and tongues, who are thus traced back to one common stock.

(4) And the picture of our Lord in the Gospel of John is undoubtedly that of “the Branch of Jehovah”; for though it is true that “no other evangelist so sounds the depths of our Lord’s humiliation, nor rises with such adequacy to the exaltation of His glorified manhood, as John, the son of Zebedee, the eagle of the Church,” and it would not be true to say that in the Fourth Gospel the emphasis rests entirely on the deity of Christ and ignores His perfect humanity; yet the light that shines most transcendently through this most sublime narrative is His Divine Sonship—that glory which He had with the Father from all eternity. Hence we have no genealogy in this Gospel tracing back His relations to Abraham, for He of Whom it speaks was “before Abraham” (Joh_8:58); nor yet, as in Luke, to Adam, for by Him were all things made (Joh_1:3), and Adam

himself was created in His image. No, John traces not His human, but His divine pedigree, and shows us that, although the Word “became flesh and dwelt among us,” He that tabernacled with the children of men was none other than the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, Who in the very “beginning” was with God, and Himself was God. But just as in each of the Gospels, though one feature of our Lord’s character is brought more prominently to the fore, His twofold nature is always steadily kept in view; so it is also in each of the four different prophecies to which we have referred. Jeremiah speaks of Him as the “Branch of David,” thus dwelling more particularly on His human nature, but he proceeds to add: “And this is the name 1 The Spirit in the Word, by D. M. McIntyre. whereby He shall be called, Jehovah our Righteousness” by which he proclaims Him to be Divine. Isaiah introduces Him as the Tsemach Yehovah (Branch of Jehovah), but he also designates Him Ph■ri ha-arets (“Fruit of the earth”), which, as the construction demands, must be regarded as another title of the Tsemach, and which brings before us more particularly His human nature, and His relation to our earth.

He is “the Servant” in Zechariah, and is pointed to as the One who will bring in a perfect righteousness, on the ground of which Israel shall be justified and the iniquity of the land be removed “in one day”; but it is the Servant, “the Branch” and by Zechariah’s time the title Tsemach had already become a proper name for the Messiah, and carries with it all that the former prophets had spoken of His divinity, as well as of His humanity.

Lastly, in Zechariah 4:1-14, we are told to “behold the Man”; but this chapter proceeds to tell us that this Man shall not only rule and be Counsellor of Peace, but that He shall be a “Priest upon His throne”—the true Melchizedek, the King of Peace, and King of Righteousness, Who unites in His one person different functions which were formerly vested, not only in different persons, but in different tribes. The climax of the Messianic references in this great prophecy is reached in Zec_3:9, “For behold, the stone that I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone are seven eyes: behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, and I will remove the iniquity of the land in one day.”

Many fanciful explanations have been given of this beautiful scripture, overlooking the fact that here again (as I have so frequently pointed out to be the case in these visions of Zechariah) we have a terse summary of well-known predictions in the former prophets, in the light of which we must interpret the passage.1 “Behold the stone

1 Baumgarten thinks the stone laid before Joshua represented the jewels belonging to the high priest’s breastplate (the Urim and Thummim, which, by the way, never existed in the Second Temple), or even some single precious stone which supplied the place of the jewels that were lost. which I have laid” carries our minds back to Isaiah 28:16, “Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation; he that believeth shall not make haste”; and to Psa_118:22, “The stone which the builders refused (or ‘despised’) is become the headstone of the corner.”

There may have been some allusion to the foundation-stone of the Second Temple—the eben shetiyah, as it was afterwards called—“the very foundation as well as the centre of the world,” about which there are many traditions, true and false, absurd and beautiful, in the Talmud and in later Jewish Midrashim; but if so, it is because the literal foundation was a type of Him who is the “precious corner-stone” and unshakable foundation of the spiritual temple, into which believers also are built as living stones, and which through eternity shall be for the habitation of God through

the Spirit.

Upon this one stone “are seven eyes.”

If, according to Jewish commentators, we are to understand the words that the eyes are directed toward this stone, then they are “the seven eyes of Jehovah” (Zec_4:10), which have rested from before the foundation of the world upon this precious corner-stone; and the figure would in that case express, not only the assurance of His watchful care and protection over it, but the Father’s complacency and delight in His only-begotten Son. Or the sacred and covenant number “seven” may be taken in a

Keil says: “The stone is the symbol of the Kingdom of God.” Hengstenberg explains it as “the Kingdom or people of God, outwardly insignificant when compared with the great mountain (Zec_4:7) which symbolises the power of the world”; and Kohler regards the stone as signifying Israel, “which nation was entrusted to the care of the high priest Joshua, that, by the due discharge of his high priestly office, the purity and freedom from iniquity required by God should be attained by the people.”

Many interpret it simply of the foundation of the Temple, while Von Hoffmann and others say that “the stone here represents the entire collection of materials required for the erection of the (second) Temple.” All of which interpretations are more or less fanciful and beside the mark, since (as shown above) “the Stone” which Joshua was to behold, like “the Servant, the Branch,” in the previous verse, are well-known titles of Messiah carried over in these visions of Zechariah from “the former prophets.” more general sense as meaning “all eyes,” that is, the eyes of God, and of the holy angels, and of men, all directed toward Him thus symbolised by the Foundation Stone, as the object of love and of admiration, of yearning desire and hope. But it seems to me that the view adopted by most of the modern scholars, namely, that there were actually seven eyes carved, or engraven, on this stone of vision, is most probably the correct one, in which case the thing signified by the symbol would be the manifold intelligence or omniscience of this “Living Stone”—the seven reminding us of the sevenfold plenitude of the One Spirit of Jehovah, “the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Jehovah,” which should rest upon Him, and which was so wonderfully fulfilled in Him whom the New Testament seer beheld as the Lamb which had been slain “having seven horns (all power) and seven eyes (omniscience), which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth” (Rev_5:6).

“For this stone to have seven eyes,” says one of the Fathers, “is to retain in operation the whole virtue of the Spirit of sevenfold grace. For, according to the distribution of the Holy Spirit, one receives prophecy, another knowledge, another miracles, another kinds of tongues, another interpretation of words; but no one attaineth to have all the gifts of that same Spirit. But our Creator taketh on Him our infirmities, because through the power of His Divinity He showed that He had at once in Him all the virtues of the Holy Spirit, uniting beyond doubt the bright gleams of the sevenfold constellation.”1 The next sentence in this verse, hineni mephateach pituchah—“Behold I will grave the graving thereof”—is probably not unconnected with the words which we have just considered, and denotes, as it seems to me, that what the prophet had seen on the stone of vision, God Himself would accomplish in the day of fulfilment.

1 St. Gregory, quoted by Pusey.

What the graving will be is not stated, but those are far from the mark who conjecture some kind of an inscription. Rather is it that which makes this Living Stone the precious corner-stone (or, “the corner-stone of preciousness” as it is literally), namely, the perfect equipment of the Messiah by the Father for His Messianic office and mediatorial work of redemption—the spiritual glory and beauty which God would bestow upon Him when He shall have anointed Him with all the fulness of the Spirit; which indeed had already in symbol been set forth by the “seven eyes” which the prophet saw traced on the stone.

According to the Talmud, the Eben Shetiyah—the foundation-stone of the Second Temple, which was some inches higher than the level of the Holy of Holies—had the sacred Tetragrammaton (the four Hebrew letters making up the ineffable name “Jehovah”) graven upon it; and although in later times all sorts of absurd legends gathered around this tradition, there is no reason to doubt the fact itself, and the words used in reference to the Everlasting Foundation of the spiritual temple, “Behold, I will engrave the graving thereof” may be an allusion to it. On Messiah, too, the ineffable name was graven. Of the Divine Angel of Jehovah we read already in the Old Testament, “My Name” (which stands for all the attributes of God’s character, for all the perfections of His glorious Being) “is in Him.” And, when in the fulness of time, He who of old so often appeared as the Angel of the Covenant in the form of man, became real man, and “tabernacled among us,” then this sacred mystical “graving” became more and more clear and legible. Then “the Name” became fully manifested, and men saw “the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” But the most glorious display of all the attributes belonging to that “holy Name” was when on the cross of shame He laid down His life a ransom for us; hence those early Fathers, and some also of the modern interpreters, are not far wrong when they say that the “graving” of the stone took place when, “through the providence and will of God He caused Him to be wounded by the nails of the cross and the soldier’s lance.” “For what even in the body of the Lord can be lovelier or more lightful,” says a Catholic writer, “than those five wounds, which He willed to retain in His immortal Being, lest the blessed work should be deprived of that splendour surpassing far the light of sun and stars”; to which I would add the words of yet another, namely: “Beautiful were the gifts and graces which Christ received as man; but beautiful beyond all beauty must be those glorious scars with which He allowed His whole body to be riven, that throughout the whole frame His love might be engraven.” The last sentence of Zec_3:9, “And I will remove the iniquity of this land in one day” may in a sense be regarded as the key to the whole vision, for it demonstrates (1) the fact we have so frequently emphasised in the course of the exposition, namely, that it is to Israel as a nation that the vision primarily refers, and that what the prophet beheld as happening to Joshua was meant typically to set forth the experience of the whole people, which, in his official capacity as high priest, he represented; and (2) that the removal of Israel’s iniquity, and their acceptance and reinstatement as Jehovah’s priestly nation, are yet to take place in the future. For which is this yom echad—“one day”—of which the prophet speaks? The Jewish answer is expressed in the words of their most popular commentator,1 who says, “One day; I know not what that day is.” Christian commentators all substantially agree in saying, “It is the day of Golgotha,” which is true, but yet does not express the whole truth.

What is here predicted will assuredly be fulfilled only on the ground and as a blessed consequence of “the day of Golgotha,” when Christ through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot unto

God, and thus once and for all put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself; but the “one day” on which the iniquity of this land and people

1 Rashi. shall be removed is none other than the “that day” of the last chapters of this same Book of Zechariah—the “day,” namely, of Israel’s national repentance and great Day of Atonement, when the spirit of grace and supplication shall be poured out upon them, and they shall look upon Him whom they have pierced.

“In that day,” we read, “there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem: . . . every family apart and their wives apart. In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the House of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness” (Zec_12:10-14 and Zec_13:1).

“But, again we may be asked, how can this be reconciled with the statement that the true Day of Atonement is the Day of Calvary; and was not the ‘fountain for sin and uncleanness’ opened when our Saviour was nailed to the cross, and when the soldier with the spear pierced His side, and forthwith there came out blood and water?” Yes, but to the sinner actually and experimentally the Day of Calvary is the day when his eyes are opened to the true meaning to himself of the great redeeming work there accomplished, and when the Spirit of God applies Jesus’ blood and righteousness and high-priestly intercessions to his own need. Thus, “in that day” it will be with Israel nationally.1 A simple illustration from the experience of Hagar in the wilderness of Beer-sheba may help us to understand this. When the water in her bottle was spent, and she put down the lad, as she thought to die, she herself went to a distance, and in the anguish of her spirit lifted up her voice and wept. But God heard not only her voice, but the voice of the lad, and had pity on them. “And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water.” The well was most probably there all the time, but her eyes, dimmed by her very sorrow and tears, could not see it; and it was to her, as she was filling her skin bottle, as if the well had just

1 This section about the future prophetic significance of the Day of Atonement is quoted from the chapter, “The Sacred Calendar of the History of Redemption,” in Types, Psalms, and Prophecies, to which I would refer the reader. sprung up. So it will be with Israel. The fountain for sin and for uncleanness has been opened in the wounds of their Messiah nineteen centuries ago, but “in that day,” when the Spirit of grace and of supplications is poured out upon them as a nation, “the eyes of the blind shall be opened” (Isa_35:1 &c.), and the Spirit of God will apply to their hearts and consciences as a people the great redeeming work accomplished on Calvary, and the words used in connection with the Day of Atonement shall receive a fulfilment as never before: “For on this day He shall atone for you to cleanse you from all your sins; before Jehovah ye shall be clean” (Lev_16:30, Heb.). On that day the high priest, as I have fully described in another place,1 entered twice within the veil—first, with the blood of the sin-offering for himself and his house, and then a second time with the blood of the goat of the people’s sin-offering on which the lot fell “la-yehovah”; and it was not till he came forth a second time, and the remaining part of the ceremonial was gone through, that the people could rejoice in the knowledge that atonement was fully accomplished, the whole of which, in this sense also, may be regarded as a figure of the work of Christ in relation to the Church and to Israel. For Himself, the Holy One needed not as the Aaronic priests to offer sacrifice, but for those who in this interval, and in a special sense, constitute His redeemed family, atonement is fully accomplished, not only as an objective fact, but as a blessed subjective reality; and in proof that it is not only “finished,” but accepted, the Great

High Priest, after His Resurrection, showed Himself again, “but not to all the people” (Act_10:41), but only to His own family of faith. But in relation to Israel the High Priest may still be regarded as inside the veil, or in the Holy Place, and the people as “waiting without,” marvelling that he tarries so long (Luk_1:10, Luk_1:21). But soon He will come forth again, in the hour of their deepest sorrow and humiliation, to cleanse them before Jehovah, so that they shall be known 1 See the exposition of Psalms 32:1-11, in Types, Psalms, and Prophecies.

(and called in all the earth) as “the holy people, the Redeemed of the Lord,” that He may be glorified (Isa_62:12).

Finally, “when the high priest came forth from the sanctuary and appeared again unto the people, he first dispatched the scapegoat bearing all their iniquities into the wilderness, and then united with them in offering the burnt-offering unto the Lord. And such shall be the result of the Second Advent of our Saviour. Then shall sin be completely put away, and every trace of it removed for ever. In one sense sin is already put away—it is no more imputed unto them who believe in Jesus; but sin itself remaineth, yea, and will remain, until He comes again. But then it shall be for ever banished, and all its consequences shall be removed for ever. Then there shall be no more sin, nothing of it shall remain but the blessed consciousness that we are redeemed from its power and its curse. And then, too, shall Jesus and His people unite to offer the burnt-offering unto God. Then, in the midst of His redeemed, He shall head up all their pure and holy service; and blessed and consecrated by the presence of incarnate Godhead, the untiring energies of the redeemed people shall be for ever consuming, yet unconsumed, upon the altar of eternal love.”

It was on the evening also of the Day of Atonement, after the complete cycle of seven sevens of years were fulfilled, that the “Jubilee” was proclaimed (Leviticus 25:9-10), which was the signal of liberty, not only to the people but for the land itself, which that year was neither to be ploughed, sown, nor reaped, the typical significance of which was already discerned by the prophets in the Old Testament, who rejoiced in spirit, and by faith greeted from afar the time when, after Israel’s iniquity shall have been purged, Messiah will not only “proclaim liberty to the captives,”1 but when the earth itself shall at last enjoy her rest, and the whole creation, which has been groaning 1 The very words used in Isa_61:1 are taken from the command in reference to the Jubilee in Lev_25:9-10. and travailing in pain together until now, shall at last be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. And when once Israel’s sin and guilt shall be removed, their sorrows and suffering, too, shall end. The vision closes, therefore, with the beautiful picture of tranquillity and happy contentment depicted in the last verse, “In that day, saith Jehovah of hosts, ye shall call every man his neighbour under the vine and under the fig-tree.”

I close with the following quotation: “We are told in the Talmud (Yoma, 4. 4) that, when, on the great Day of Atonement, the high priest had performed the various duties of that solemn day, he was escorted home in a festive manner, and was accustomed to give a festal entertainment to his friends. The maidens and youths of the people went forth to their gardens and vineyards with songs and dances; social entertainments took place on all sides, and universal gladness closed the festival of that solemn day.” And thus, in the last verse of this chapter, a picture is given of a day of similar gladness and joy of heart, when, on account of sin pardoned, free access to God’s throne granted, and the Deliverer having come anointed with the plentitude of the Spirit and sealed by God the Father, each true Israelite would invite his friends as joyful guests to partake of festal

cheer under his own vine and fig-tree. The days of peace once more are seen. The glorious era of the earthly Solomon has indeed returned in greater splendour under the reign of the Prince of Peace. “Paradise lost” has become “Paradise regained.”

“THE BODY OF MOSES”

NOTE TO CHAPTER III

It has been a point much disputed whether the reference in the Epistle of Jude to Michael’s contention with the devil about “the body of Moses,” where the same formula (“the Lord rebuke thee”) is used by the Archangel in silencing Satan as by the Angel of Jehovah in this chapter, does, or does not, refer back to this vision. Origen, and some of the other Church Fathers, state that the quotation in Jude is from an apocryphal book, the title of which is “The Ascension,” or “Assumption of Moses”; but, in the fragments of that legendary apocalyptic writing which have come down to us—either in Latin, Hebrew, or Arabic (in which elements belonging to various dates as far apart as the first or second and the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries after Christ are discernible)—no such tradition as a strife between Michael and the Evil One over the body of Moses is to be found, nor is there anything to prove that it ever existed in those parts of this apocryphal book which are missing—the confused allusions in the Fathers being probably to legends in the Talmud and Midrashim to a contest between Samael, the Angel of Death, and Michael, which had reference, not to the body of Moses after his death, but to his soul while he was still living. There are also different legendary accounts of contests between Moses himself and the Angel of Death, whom he put to flight when he came to take his soul by striking him with his rod, on which the ineffable name Jehovah was inscribed. In the end (so one legend proceeds) God Himself, accompanied by Gabriel, Michael, and Zagziel (the former teacher of Moses), descended to take Moses’ soul. “Gabriel arranged the couch, Michael spread a silken cover over it, and Zagziel put a silken pillow under Moses’ head. At God’s command Moses crossed his hands over his breast and closed his eyes, and God took his soul away with a kiss.” On the other hand, there is just a possibility that the expression “the body of Moses,” in Jude, is used in an allegorical sense of the Jewish people; in which case the reference would certainly be to this vision.

“It is true that no instance can be cited in which the ‘body of Moses,’ or any similar expression, is used of the people of Israel; but it is possible that the phrase might have been employed by Jude in that signification in imitation of the expression ‘the body of Christ,’ which is used in reference to the Church of Christ in the Epistles of St. Paul, and in view of the fact that the Jewish Church in the writer’s day had become bitterly opposed to the Church of Christ, while it looked back to Moses as its teacher—a claim which might well be admitted as true in the most real sense of the Jewish Church in the days of Zechariah” (C. H. H. Wright).

I must refer those who are desirous to enter more fully into this question to Baumgarten’s Die Nachtgeschichte Sacharias; Dr. C. H. H. Wright’s Zechariah and his Prophecies; and to Dean Alford’s note on the passage in Jude, where they will find the subject fully discussed. For my own part, while not committing myself to the allegorical interpretation of the passage in Jude, which may have reference to a very early tradition about a dispute about the literal body of Moses not recorded in any writing now extant, there can be no doubt that the incidents and the words of the vision we are considering were in the Apostle’s mind when he wrote his short epistle. This is

proved not only by his use of the formula, “The Lord rebuke thee,” but by two other undoubted allusions to this vision in Jud_1:23—namely, the “pulling out of the fire,” which is an echo of “the brand plucked from the fire” (Zec_3:2), and “the garment spotted by the flesh,” which is an allusion to the “filthy garments” in which Joshua was at first seen standing before the Lord.

4.07. Chapter 6 - The Candlestick

CHAPTER VI THE FIFTH VISION THE CANDLESTICK

(CHAPTER IV) And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep. And he said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have seen, and behold, a candlestick all of gold, with its bowl upon the top of it, and its seven lamps thereon; there are seven pipes to each of the lamps, which are upon the top thereon; and two olive trees by it, one on the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof; and I answered and spake to the angel that talked with me, saying, What are these, my lord? Then the angel that talked with me answered and said unto me, Knowest thou not what these are? And I said, No, my lord. Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of Jehovah unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith Jehovah of hosts. Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shall become a plain: and he shall bring forth the top-stone with shoutings of Grace, grace unto it. Moreover the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that Jehovah of hosts hath sent me unto you. For who hath despised the day of small things? for these seven shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hands of Zerubbabel; these are the eyes of Jehovah, which run to and fro through the whole earth. Then answered I, and said unto him, What are these two olive trees upon the right side of the candlestick and upon the left side thereof? And I answered the second time, and said unto him, What are these two olive branches, which are beside the two golden spouts, that empty the golden oil out of themselves? And he answered me and said, Knowest thou not what these are? And I said, No, my lord. Then said he, These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.

CHAPTER VI

INTRODUCTORY1 AS stated in the introduction to Zec_3:1 &c., the fourth and fifth visions form a new chapter in this series of symbolic prophecies, which, “though in a sense standing by themselves, are in true psychological order, and in the closest possible relation with the wonderful things which had already been unfolded before the prophet’s spiritual sight.” We there saw that the fourth vision depicts in a symbolic but very graphic manner the inner salvation of Israel from sin and defilement, answering to their outward deliverance from captivity and oppression set forth in the preceding three visions.

We feel it, however, necessary, even at the risk of being guilty of repetition, to cast once more a brief retrospective glance at the progressive unfolding of God’s counsel in relation to Israel, and the establishment of Messiah’s Kingdom, in the series of visions which we have already considered. The first three visions were meant to convey to the prophet, and through the prophet to the people, the “good and comfortable” assurance that God had neither cast off nor forsaken the people which He hath foreknown; that, though they found themselves under the oppressive yoke of Gentile world-power (which was true of the remnant which had returned as well as of the bulk of the nation which was

1 The exposition of this chapter was originally written out and read as “a paper” at a meeting of the “Prophecy Investigation Society,” by whom it was also privately circulated among the members. This will account for its being slightly different in form and style from the rest of the exposition. still in the far land of the Captivity), the Angel of the Covenant was in their midst, identified with them, and pleading their cause (Zec_1:8-12). Jehovah Himself, far from being indifferent to their sorrows and sufferings, is very angry with the nations who are helping forward the affliction (Zec_1:14-15), and wishes it to be proclaimed that he that toucheth them “toucheth the apple of His eye” (Zec_2:8). These Gentile world-powers “who lift up their horn” to scatter and oppress “Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem,” would be broken and cast out (Zec_1:18-21); the beloved city should be rebuilt on a much grander scale, and according to plans and measurements devised by God Himself, Who would henceforth be her Light and her Defence—“a wall of fire round about, and the glory in the midst of her” (Zec_2:1-5). And not only Jerusalem, but the whole land, shall experience the blessed effects of Jehovah’s “return to His people with mercies,” and its cities shall spread abroad and overflow with material prosperity and with the multitude of men and cattle which shall be found therein (Zec_2:4). “The name of the city from that day shall be Jehovah Shammah;” and thus the first cycle in this series of visions ends with the joyous proclamation: “Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord” (Zec_2:10). And the blessed consequence of Israel’s return to the land, and of the return to the glory of Jehovah, for evermore to dwell in the midst of His people, will be that the original purpose of God in the call and election of Abraham and his seed—namely, that in and through them all the families of the earth should be blessed—shall be fulfilled. “And many nations shall join themselves to the Lord in that day, and shall be My people, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that Jehovah of hosts hath sent Me unto thee” (Zec_2:11). But (as shown in the exposition on Zec_3:1 &c.) the question might have suggested itself to the prophet: How can these things be? Has not Israel, by his grievous sins and moral defilement, for ever forfeited his place, and made self unfit to be again Jehovah’s sanctuary and appointed minister of blessing to the nations? As if in answer to this question, the vision in Zec_3:1 &c. is shown to the prophet, from which he is to learn (1) that the fulfilment of “the good words and comfortable words” of promise, rests, not on Israel’s merits or worthiness, but on the immutable purpose of Jehovah, Who, in His free sovereign grace, hath “chosen Jerusalem,” and Whose gifts and calling are without repentance.

(2) The solution of the moral problem, how the Holy One can dwell in the midst, and accept and use the ministry of those who are defiled by sin, is realistically presented to the prophet in the transformation which he witnesses as taking place in the case of Joshua, who stands before the Angel of Jehovah, not in his private capacity, but as the high priest and representative of the people.

Like the filthy garments in which their representative had been clothed, so shall the Lord remove the moral filth of the daughter of Zion, and cause her iniquity to pass away in that “one day” when her eyes shall be opened to behold the glorious Person and atoning work of her Messiah, who, in allusion to the prophecies in the second half of Isaiah (especially Isa_53:1 &c.), is called “My Servant,” and also by the well-known Messianic title, “The Branch” (Zec_3:8).

Thus, clothed in the righteousness of Him, Who “by His knowledge makes the many righteous,” and arrayed in the “rich apparel,” or festal attire of priestly garments, with the high-priestly mitre, to which was fastened the plate of gold with Qodesh la-Yehovah on his head, Israel shall be fitted,

not only for fellowship with Jehovah, but to go forth on the mission for which he was originally chosen and destined, namely, to disseminate the truth and the blessings of Jehovah among the nations. Now, in beautiful order of sequence we have the vision in Zec_4:1 &c., which presents to us Israel as the Light of the world. The Fifth Vision We shall now give an explanation, first, of the symbolism of this vision; and, secondly, of the message.

I. The Symbolism (Zec_4:1-5) A brief pause had intervened, during which the prophet was lying probably in a state of ecstatic slumber still contemplating the wonderful things he saw and heard in the last vision; or Hengstenberg may be right in regarding the prophet's "sleep" as a return to his ordinary conditions of life in comparison to the spiritually wakeful state in which he was when receiving the visions. If so, then we have here, as he suggests, "the deepest insight into the state in which the prophets were, during their prophecies, as compared with their ordinary condition. The two bear the same relation to each other as sleeping and waking. A man's ordinary state, in which he is under the control of the senses, and unable to raise his spiritual eye to the contemplation of Divine objects, is one of spiritual sleep; but an ecstatic condition, in which the senses with the whole lower life are quiescent, and only pictures of Divine objects are reflected in the soul, as in a pure and untarnished mirror, is one of spiritual waking." Being thus wakened by the interpreting angel, and his powers of spiritual vision stimulated by the question, "What seest thou?" he looks, and beholds a candlestick, all (of it) of gold, with a bowl, or oil vessel, "at the top of it" (indicating that it is designated as a fountain of supply for the candlestick), with seven ■■■■■■■ (mutsaqoth) "pipes," or little canals (literally "pourers"), connecting this vessel with each of the seven lamps on the candlestick.1 On either side (i.e., one on the right and one on the left of the bowl) were two olive trees, each with a specially fruitful bough, or branch, which, as Kimchi puts it, "were

1 For it is in the distributive sense that the expression Shibh'ah v' Shibh'ah must doubtless be understood. full of olives, as ears are full of grain," and are therefore called Shibalei haz■thim—"ears of olives"—which poured golden oil from themselves, by means of two "spouts" or channels, into the vessel, for the supply of the candlestick. On the prophet's asking, "What are these, my lord?" the Interpreter answers, "Knowest thou not what these be?" as much as to imply that the symbolism of this vision was such that the prophet might himself have been able to interpret had he understood the symbolism of the Tabernacle and Temple. As a matter of fact, neither the Interpreter nor the Angel of Jehovah explain the symbolism of this vision, but only indicate the message which it conveyed to Zerubbabel at that time, and to the people of God generally in all time. The candlestick itself—the central object in this vision—is doubtless a figurative representation of the seven-branched candlestick in the Temple. There it stood in the Holy Place (the figure of heavenly places not made with hands), not only as the emblem and representation of what the whole redeemed family shall finally be "when in union with their risen, glorified Lord they shall for ever shine in the sanctuary of God," but also as typifying Israel's high calling in relation to the other nations. In his midst a great light had shone—the light of the self-revelation of the glory of Jehovah—not only for his own illumination, but that he might be the candlestick, the light-bearer, and light-diffuser all around.

It is for this reason that "when the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the children of men, He set the bounds of the peoples according to the number of the children of Israel" (Deu_32:8).

We know how terribly and sadly Israel failed to respond to God's purpose concerning Him. "Thus saith the Lord God"—through His prophet, Eze_5:1 &c., his prophecy—"This is Jerusalem: I have set her in the midst of the nations, and countries are round about her"—that she may shine as a light in their midst, so that these nations and countries may see of her good works and glorify God, BUT "she hath changed My judgments into wickedness more than the nations, and My statutes more than the countries that are round about her: for they have rejected My judgments, and as for My statutes, they have not walked in them."

Often did God in effect threaten Israel through the prophets to remove his candlestick; but in His long-suffering for a long time, even after the sceptre, the emblem of governmental power, had been removed, the candlestick—which is the emblem of Israel's religious or ecclesiastical position as witness for God in His corporate capacity—was not taken away till the cup of his national iniquity was filled up in the rejection of Him who is the "Light of light," for the diffusion of which this very candlestick was formed, and in their final resistance of the Holy Spirit. Then the Kingdom of God was taken from them and "given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." On the disappearance of the candlestick from Israel, the seven golden candlesticks come into view as representing the new people of God, the Church of this dispensation planted on the earth, that during the period of Israel's blindness and darkness it might fulfil Israel's mission of shining before the Lord in His sanctuary, and letting its light stream out into the night of the world's darkness: the seven as representing the Church, instead of the one as representing Israel, is not without significance. The seven Christian ecclesiai selected by the Lord out of the many Christian assemblies which already then existed even in that one pro-consular province of Asia, to be symbolised by the seven golden "luchniai" (lampstands), are meant to represent the one Church of Christ through all time, and in all places, during the present dispensation. It has not, like Israel, one earthly centre, and cannot be presented as an absolute unity. The seven are all mutually independent as to external order and government, yet were they meant to be one in the unity of the Spirit, under the one headship of Christ. But not only in relation to the Lord and to one another, but also in relation to the world outside, did the Church of Christ, as originally constituted, possess both a local and a catholic unity. "The first," to quote a great master now with the Lord, "was symbolised by each of the candlesticks regarded individually; the second by all the seven collectively. At Ephesus, for example, all the saints who dwelt in that city were gathered into visible communion with each other. All light was with them; everything else in Ephesus was darkness; and therefore one candlestick fitly represented their condition. There was one point of concentrated light. But what each Church was in its own locality, that all the Churches unitedly were to the world around them. They were together separated; had a common calling and service; were alike one to the other; were ordered and nourished by the same hand. This was catholic unity, symbolised by the seven candlesticks standing together with the Lord in their midst. The proper unity of the Church is gone if either of these be wanting."1 How glorious was the Apostolic Church in its original purity and lustre! How brightly did it shine! And how rapidly did it disseminate its light! Thus the Apostle Paul, for instance, writing to the Thessalonians only such a very brief while after the Church in that city was founded by him, could say: "From you hath sounded forth the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place your faith to Godward is gone forth, so that we need not to speak anything" (1Th_1:8). But how long did this beautiful condition of things continue? Already in the lifetime of the Apostles, germs of corruption began to manifest themselves, and they have continued ever since to develop; and though the

long-suffering of God manifested in His dealings with Christendom has been as great, and even greater, than in His dealings with Israel, He has had, nevertheless, to remove from His sanctuary, one by one, the candlesticks of Gentile Christianity, and to disown them in their corporate capacity from being witnesses for the truth and representatives of Christ on the earth.

1 Thoughts on the Apocalypse, B. W. Newton. The history of corporate Gentile Christianity is not as the shining light that “shineth more and more unto the perfect day,” as some who boast in the supposed progress and speak of the conversion of the world before the glorious appearing of Christ ignorantly suppose, but rather that of a bright dawn, developing into an increasingly dark and cloudy day, and ending in blackness of darkness. And there is no hope for Christendom which continued not in the goodness of God when once it is “cut off”; nor is there any promise of the restoration and relighting of its candlestick when once its light has been quenched in anti-Christian apostasy. But it is different with Israel. There is always hope in his end. Not only shall the sceptre of governmental rule and the kingdom come back to the daughter of Jerusalem, after the long centuries of subjugation and oppression, but her candlestick, too, shall be restored after the long period of Israel’s spiritual darkness and blindness, to shine in more resplendent glory than even in the past. This is the meaning of Zechariah’s fifth vision, and it sets forth in symbol the great truth proclaimed by the former prophets in relation to Israel’s future glory as the centre of light and blessing to all the nations of the earth, as, for instance, in Isa_60:1-3, “Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of Jehovah is risen upon thee. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the peoples: but Jehovah shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee. And nations shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising”; and Isa_62:1-2, “For Zions sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest, until her righteousness go forth as brightness, and her salvation as a lamp that burneth. And the nations shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory; and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of Jehovah shall name.” That the light of Israel’s restored candlestick will shine on throughout the millennial period in undiminished purity, and in greater—yea, in sevenfold brilliancy as compared the past—is, I think, indicated by the additions to the candlestick in this vision as compared with the original in Exodus. In the Tabernacle, in keeping with the Mosaic dispensation, the continuity of its light depended on the offerings of the people, who were commanded to bring “pure olive oil, beaten for the light; to cause a lamp to burn (lit., to ascend) continually”; and on the ministry of Aaron and his sons, who had to fill, and trim, and order, and light them every morning and evening (Exo_27:20-21, Exo_30:7-8); but in our vision no attendant priests are necessary, nor offerings of oil from the people. The lamps are fed spontaneously from the gullah, or oil vessel, above the candlestick, the plentifulness of the flow of oil (emblematic of the abundant outpouring of the Holy Spirit) being set forth by the seven pipes (or “pourers”), which carried the supply to each.

There is yet one item in the symbolism of the candlestick which requires our attention—namely, the two olive trees (Zec_4:3), or “sons of oil” (Zec_4:14), which, by means of the two tsanteroth, or spouts, empty golden oil out of themselves into the gullah, or bowl.

Many fanciful interpretations have been given of this part of the vision, which, for lack of time and space, we will not stop to examine, but it is most in harmony with the scope of these visions (one of the great objects of which was to encourage the two heads, or leaders, of the restored remnant of the nation in their task of rebuilding the Temple) to regard the olive trees as representing

Joshua the high priest, and Zerubbabel the prince. These were the two persons by whom the whole covenant people was then represented, and through whom it, in a very important sense, received the grace and the promises of God. The words, “These are the two that stand before the Lord of the whole earth” must also lead us to the same conclusion. In the previous vision (Zec_3:1), which is so closely connected with that we are considering, Joshua is thus represented as “standing” before the Angel of Jehovah; and in Zec_4:1 &c. it is Zerubbabel who is specially mentioned by name. It is fitting, therefore, that in the end the two who are so often mentioned together by Haggai and Zechariah should again be represented together in their united ministry. Though differently occupied, the one in more particularly “religious,” and the other in civil duties, they both stand (intent on their ministry) before the Lord of the whole earth.

But, while in relation to the remnant of Israel at that time, and to the Temple then in building, we are to understand by these two “sons of oil” the actual persons of Joshua and Zerubbabel, it is certain that these two, considered merely as individuals, do not exhaust the symbol, for the simple reason that the supply of oil for the candle stick in a vision designed to describe the abiding, and especially the future position and mission of the congregation of Israel, could not be represented as dependent on the lives of two mortal men. They must therefore be viewed standing here as the types or representatives of the kingly and priestly offices to which they respectively belonged—the only two orders (with the one other exception of the prophetic) which could properly be designated by the term “sons of oil,” because of their being originally consecrated for their office by the ceremony of anointing (with oil), by which act they were, so to say, appointed as the media through whom “the spiritual and gracious gifts of God” were to be conveyed to His Church. And both these divinely-appointed offices and functions in Israel, we must remember, were from the beginning designed to shadow forth what should ultimately be united in Him who, as set forth by Zechariah himself (Zec_4:13), would be “a Priest upon His throne”—the true and everlasting great High Priest, of whom Joshua and the whole order of the Aaronic priesthood were “men that were a sign” (Zec_3:8); and the just and ideal King (Zec_9:9), of whom the kingly function in Israel was also a type and prophecy. It is in His light, and by means of the golden oil of His Spirit, which shall then be shed upon them abundantly, that Israel’s candlestick shall yet shine with a sevenfold brilliancy for the illumination of all the nations of the earth.

II. The Message (Zec_4:6-10) The contemplation of God’s determinate counsel and the glimpse of Israel’s future glory are to serve as a stimulus and encouragement to the leaders and people in the then present. The prophet having with humility confessed his ignorance of the true import of the symbolism, the interpreting angel answered and said: “This (vision in as far as it embodies a prophecy) is the word of Jehovah unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith Jehovah of hosts.” The word ■■■■■, ■hayil (“might”), which also means an “army,” or “host,” probably stands for the strength of many; while ■■■■, ko’ach, stands for that of one man. The two might be taken to express human strength and power of every description—physical, mental, and moral—individual, or the combined strength of the multitude. All of themselves can neither advance nor retard the accomplishment of His purpose. The real motive power by which Israel’s mission, as set forth by the candlestick, shall eventually be fulfilled, namely, “My Spirit, saith Jehovah,” must be the only resource also of Zerubbabel in the prosecution of the task of rebuilding the Temple which shall be the visible proof and symbol of the restored fellowship between Jehovah and His people, and hence an indispensable preparation for

the accomplishment of Israel's mission as the light of the nations.

Now this Almighty Spirit of Jehovah "of Ts'bhaoth" was now present, dwelling in the midst of the returned remnant of the people; for, in effect this message through Zechariah is but an amplified reiteration of the word of Jehovah to Zerubbabel and his companion by the mouth of Haggai about four months before: "Be strong; for I am with you, saith Jehovah of hosts, according to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so My Spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not" (Hag_2:4-5), which again (as is characteristic of all the notable utterances of the post-exilic prophets) is based on a great word of Jehovah through one of the former prophets, namely, Isa_59:21, "As for Me, this is My covenant with them, saith Jehovah: My Spirit that is upon thee, and My words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith Jehovah, from henceforth and for ever."

Relying only on God's Spirit, "the great mountain"—whether we understand it as a figurative expression for "the colossal difficulties, which rose up mountain high," and of the hindrances which were then in the way before the building could be completed; or, with the Jewish Targum and Kimchi, and some eminent Christian interpreters, as the symbol of Gentile world-power, which is the real obstacle to the restoration of the theocratic kingdom, before Zerubbabel, as the instrument of God's Almighty Spirit—shall be turned into "a plain"; and he, who some fifteen years before was permitted amid great demonstrations of joy, not unmixed with sobs and tears, to lay the foundation (Ezr_3:8, Ezr_3:13), shall yet bring forth the "headstone," accompanied by shoutings of joy and admiration, "Grace, grace (is) unto it!" In Zec_4:8-10 we have, so to say, a corroborative message from the mouth of the Malakh Yehovah, of the explanation given to the prophet by the angelic interpreter:

"Moreover the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it"; which, so far as the Temple which they were then building was concerned, was, as we know, fulfilled about four years after the prophesying of Haggai and Zechariah, namely, "on the third day of the month Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king" (Ezr_6:14-15); but the words, "And thou shalt know that Jehovah of Ts'bhaoth hath sent me unto you" (which, as appears clear from a comparison with Zec_2:9, must be ascribed, not to the angelus interpres, but to the Malakh Yehovah), show that the promise was not exhausted then, but that the work on which Zerubbabel was engaged is regarded as a type and pledge of the sure fulfilment of that which was set forth by the symbolism. The last words of the message sound a special note of encouragement to the dispirited remnant.

Toward so great a consummation the work they were then engaged upon might seem insignificant. Indeed this feeling had been one of the chief causes of the slow progress made in the work of building the House, and disposed them only too readily to yield to the opposition of their enemies, and for a time to desist from their task altogether, till Haggai and Zechariah were raised up "to prophesy to them in the Name of the God of Israel" (Ezr_5:1-2). When its foundation was laid, in the midst of the great joy which accompanied it, "many of the priests, and Levites, and chief of the fathers, which were ancient men," when they saw the modest dimensions, and remembered the very limited resources at their command, "wept with a loud voice, . . . so that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people"

(Ezr_3:10-13).

Even in comparison with the glory of the first House which had been destroyed, the one that was then building “was as nothing in their eyes” (Hag_2:3); but particularly in relation to the greater glory of their restoration and of the future House predicted by the former prophets, which should become the centre from which the light of Jehovah should stream forth to all the nations, the actual circumstances in which they then found themselves must have seemed indeed “a day of small things.” Yet from God’s point of view the task of the rebuilding on which they were then engaged was—because of its being a necessary step toward the fulfilment of His purpose as set forth in the symbolism of the candlestick—the greatest and most important thing in the world, and formed the centre and motive of His providential dealings on the earth at that time. Not on the great world-movements, but on the little “stone of lead” or “plummet” in the hand of Zerubbabel, who is thus indicated as superintending the work of building, do the seven eyes of God’s special providence rest with complacency and joy; and as those eyes run to and fro through the whole earth, and nothing is hid from His omniscience, He will see to it that nothing from without shall now prevent the work being brought to a happy completion. This is “the word of Jehovah unto Zerubbabel”; but as we look more closely at the message we seem to see the lineaments of Zerubbabel melt away into the features of the true Prince of the House of David, and the task on which he was then engaged merge into the building of the true “Temple of Jehovah” by “the Man whose name is The Branch,” as set forth by the prophet in Zechariah 6:1 &c. Messiah, the true Son of David, shall not only be the real builder of the future literal Temple, which through the millennial period shall be the centre of the true worship of Jehovah on this earth, and the House of Prayer for all nations; but also of the much more glorious mystical Building, which through eternity shall be for the habitation of God through the Spirit. Of this spiritual Temple He is Himself the “sure Foundation,” the precious Corner-stone and Headstone of the Corner, as well as the Master Builder.

Nineteen centuries ago, in His life of suffering, death of atonement, and glorious resurrection, the foundation of that Temple was laid. Since then living stones, both Jewish and Gentile, from all parts of the earth are being gathered by His Spirit, and “the building fitly framed together” is growing toward completion; but the exceeding magnificence and the spiritual glory of this mystical Temple will not be manifested until, at the glorious appearing of our Lord Jesus, the Headstone is, so to say, brought forth, and Christ is for ever joined with His Church.

Then, when covered with the beauty of her Lord, and made perfect in the comeliness which He shall put upon her, there shall be shouting of joy and admiration, not only by men, but by the hosts of heaven, ■■■ ■■■ ■■■ “Grace, beauty, loveliness (is) unto it!” ■Hen, ■Hen, lah!

4.08. Chapter 7 - The Flying Roll

CHAPTER VII THE SIXTH VISION THE FLYING ROLL (Zechariah 5:1-4)

Then again I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and behold, a flying roll. And he said unto me, What seest thou? And I answered, I see a flying roll; the length thereof is twenty cubits, and the breadth ten cubits. Then said he unto me, This is the curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole land: for every one that stealeth shall be cut off on the one side according to it; and every one that sweareth shall be cut off on the other side according to it. I will cause it to go forth, saith Jehovah of hosts, and it shall enter into the house of the thief, and into the house of him that sweareth falsely by My name: and it shall abide in the midst of his house, and shall consume it with the timber thereof and the stones thereof.

CHAPTER VII

INTRODUCTORY THE first five visions are indeed prophecies “of Hope and of Glory.” They abound, as we have seen, in most glorious promises of restoration and enlargement, of temporal and spiritual prosperity and blessing—promises which, in their full and exhaustive sense, are yet to be fulfilled, when “Jehovah shall arise and have mercy upon Zion,” and yet again “choose Israel.” But before that longed-for day of blessing can at last come; before the beautiful symbolism of the fifth vision shall at last be realised, and Israel’s restored candlestick shall once again, and in greater splendour and purity than ever before, shed abroad the light of Jehovah throughout the millennial earth—both the land and people must be cleansed from everything that defileth, or worketh abomination, or maketh a lie. This is the import of the dark episode unfolded in the two visions in Zec_5:1 &c., which we are now to consider. The God of Israel has two methods in dealing with sin and removing iniquity, both of which are in perfect accord with the absolute holiness of His character. One of these methods—the one He delights in—is the method of grace. This is beautifully unfolded in Zec_3:1 &c., where we are shown how that, on the ground of His sovereign immutable “choice” (Zec_3:2), and because of the full atonement and perfect righteousness accomplished by His Righteous Servant, “The Branch,” the iniquity of that land shall be removed “in one day,” and repentant Israel (upon whom the Spirit of grace and supplication shall in that day be poured) shall be cleansed from all defilement (as signified by the removal of the “filthy garments”) and clothed in “rich apparel,” and with the “fair,” or “clean,” mitre on his head, on which the words Qodesh la-Yehovah—“Holy to Jehovah”—are graven, shall be fitted to go forth among the nations as the priests of Jehovah and the ministers of our God. But what about those who persist in their wickedness, and, in spite of the marvellous display of God’s grace, “will not learn righteousness,” but continue even “in the land of uprightness” (as Immanuel’s land shall then be called) “to deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of Jehovah” (Isa_36:10)? With them God’s method is that of judgment. Sin must be purged away, iniquity must be stamped out in the city of God; and when the sinner is so wedded to his sin that he is no longer separable from it, he becomes the object of God’s curse, and must be “cleansed away” from the earth. In short, then, the two visions in Zec_5:1 &c. give us the reverse side of the truth unfolded in the first four

chapters.

They show us that if there is grace and forgiveness with God, it is not in order to encourage men to think lightly of sin, but that “He might be feared” (Psa_130:4). They also take us, so to say, a step backward, and show us that, before the glorious things symbolically set forth in the first five visions will finally be fulfilled, a period of moral darkness and corruption, and of almost universal apostasy, was yet to intervene. The Flying Roll But now for a brief exposition of the sixth vision. The prophet having for a season been absorbed in meditation on the wonderful things which had been presented to him in the last vision, “turns” himself, his attention being very probably called anew by the interpreting angel—and, lifting up his eyes, sees a roll twenty cubits in length and ten cubits in breadth flying in the air. On addressing a silent look of inquiry to his angelic instructor as to the meaning of this strange sight he is told, “This is the curse that goeth forth over the whole land,” etc. The ■■■■■■■, megillah, “roll” or “scroll,” as the emblem of a message or pronouncement of solemn import from God to man, is used in other scriptures. Thus, in Eze_2:9-10 we find a strikingly parallel passage: “And I looked, and behold an hand was put forth unto me; and, lo, a roll of a book (megillath sepher) was therein; and he spread it before me, and it was written within and without: and there was written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe.” The megillah which Zechariah beheld was also “spread” out, or open, else its dimensions could not have been seen; and it also was written “within and without,” as may be gathered from the words “on this side and on the other side, according to it,” which I take to be the most satisfactory rendering of the Hebrew mizzeh kamoah, which is twice repeated in Zec_5:3. The same was true of the tables of the law, of which the same words are used to describe the fact that “they were written on both sides: on the one side and on the other (■■■■■■ ■■■■■, mizzeh-u-mizzeh) were they written” (Exo_32:15).

What was written on this roll may be gathered from the words, “This is the curse” ha-alah (answering to the “lamentations and mourning and woe” of Ezekiel’s megillah)—which might refer to the awful catalogue of curses which Moses foretold would come upon Israel in case of their disobedience, recorded in Deu_28:15-68, and which in Deuteronomy 30:1 of the same book are spoken of in the singular as “the curse.” But it seems to me more satisfactory to regard the word as describing in a more general way the curse which the law as a whole contains within itself—the sequel, so to say, to the breaking its commands expressed in a solemn sentence: “Cursed be he that confirmeth not the words of this law to do them.”

It is true that only two transgressions are here specified for which their perpetrators are to be pursued and over taken by the curse—namely, perjury and theft; but these two are most probably mentioned as samples and summaries of the whole. For the expression “everyone that sweareth” must be understood as explained in the Zec_5:4, as “swearing falsely by the Name of Jehovah” and is thus a violation of the Third Command, which is found in the first table of the law which summarises man’s duty to God; and “everyone that stealeth” breaks the Eighth Commandment, which is found on the second table, which summarises man’s duty to his neighbour.1 So that Baumgarten and Hengstenberg are not far wrong when they write that one side of the roll contained the judgments of God against the transgressors of the Command, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might”; and on the other the judgments against the transgressors of the Command, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”

Against all such the megillah, with its awful contents, “goeth forth” being set in motion (as we see from the Zec_5:4) by “Jehovah of hosts”; and is therefore seen “flying”—that is, travelling rapidly over the whole land,2 and 1 Baumgarten points out that the prophet selects the middle Command from each of the tables.

2 ■■■, eretz, means earth as well as land, and several commentators have defended the rendering in the A.V., “over the face of the whole earth.” But the translation adopted in the R.V. is doubtless the correct one—first, because, as Pusey points out, those upon whom the curse was to fall were those who swore falsely by the Name of Jehovah, which was true of Judah only; secondly, as Keil observes, in the vision of the Ephah, which is closely connected with that of the Flying Roll, “the land” is contrasted with “the land of Shinar.” The reference to the two tables of the law also confines the vision primarily to those who were under the law. Yet it is true also that “since the moral law abides under the gospel there is an ultimate application in these two visions in Zec_5:1 &c. also to Christendom, which was to spread over the whole earth.” Remember, dear reader, whatever the primary application of this vision, that God’s curse will finally overtake all workers of iniquity, and that He will “render to every man according to his works: to them that by patience in well doing seek for glory and honour and incorruption, eternal life; but to them that are factious, and obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that worketh evil— signifying the swiftness with which the judgments of God shall finally overtake the wicked. The special dimensions of the roll, which the prophet so carefully notes, are also not without significance. It was twenty cubits long and ten cubits broad, which corresponds both with the porch of Solomon’s Temple (1Ki_6:3) and with the Holy Place of the Tabernacle. This is certainly not accidental. Hengstenberg, who, together with Kimchi and other Jewish commentators, considers the reference to be to the Temple, says: “The porch, the uttermost portion of the actual Temple, was the spot from which God was supposed to hold intercourse with His people” (1Ki_7:7). Hence the altar of burnt-offering stood before the porch in the forecourt of the priests, and when any great calamity fell upon the land the priests approached still nearer to the porch to offer their prayers, that they might, as it were, embrace the feet of their angry Father (Joe_2:17). By giving to the flying roll (the symbol of the Divine judgments upon the covenant nation) the same dimensions as those of the porch, the prophet appears to intimate that these judgments were a direct result of the theocracy, and originate in the very fact of Israel’s relationship to God, in accordance with His Word through the prophet Amos: “You only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore will I visit on you all your iniquities”(Amo_3:2), for which reason also judgment begins first at the house of God. But there is a greater probability in the suggestion of Keil, Kliefoth, and others, that the dimensions are taken, not from the porch of the Temple, but from the Holy Place of the Tabernacle, just as the symbolic candlestick in the preceding vision is also the Mosaic candlestick of the Tabernacle, and not of the Temple. And the true reason why the dimensions of the roll containing God’s curse against the breakers of His law are taken from the of the Jew first, and also of the Greek; but glory and honour and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek: for there is no respect of persons with God” (Rom_2:6-11). sanctuary is probably that suggested by Kliefoth, who says: “The fact that the writing which brings the curse upon sinners has the same dimensions as the Tabernacle signifies that the measure will be meted out according to the Holy Place”; or, in the words of an English theologian: “Men are not to be judged as to sin by their own measures, or weighed in their own false balances—the measure of the sanctuary is that by which man’s actions

are to be weighed" (1Sa_2:3).1 And the judgment which is to fall on the unrepentant, unpardoned transgressor will not only be "according to the measure of the sanctuary," but in strict correspondence with the majesty and holiness of the law which has been broken: "For every one that stealeth shall be purged out" (literally, cleansed away, "as something defiled and defiling which has to be cleared away as offensive") "on (or 'from') this side according to it" (namely, as already explained, according to the writing on the one side of it); "and every one that sweareth shall be cleansed away according to" (the writing) "on the other side of it."2 1 Dr. C. H. H. Wright.

2 The verb ■■■■■ (niqqah) is here the Niphal. The Piel is alike in form. The probable meaning of the root is to carve out, to hollow, then to be empty, to be pure, free from fault. Hence the Niphal is used in the sense of to be pure, free from fault, followed by ■■ (min, "from," "out of"). Luther has taken it here in this meaning, translating "for all thieves shall according to this letter be pronounced pious" (denn alle Diebe werden nach diesem Briefe fromm gesprochen). That is, it is a curse upon the land that theft and perjury are regarded no more as crying evils, nor as deserving of punishment. Similarly the Syriac. But this is evidently not the meaning. Modern scholars rightly render it shall be cleared, or cleansed away. "The verb is used of a city being emptied of inhabitants, i.e., laid waste and ruined (Isa_3:26). Here the verb may be employed in the sense of being rendered solitary, emptied of society, driven out of communion (Fürst), or as signifying extirpated (Gesenius). It has probably the signification of cleaning away, as the Greek καθαρ■ζω in Mar_7:19, as Pusey suggests, or as ■κκαθα■ρω in 1Co_5:7, as Pressel has given." The late Rev. D. Edwards, for many years an honoured missionary to the Jews in connection with the Free Church of Scotland, wrote some thirty-five years ago a striking pamphlet, which is not now in my possession, on the two visions of Zec_6:1 &c., in which he gave expression to the view that the Flying Roll symbolised the false, counterfeit law, namely, the Talmud, and doctrines of modern Judaism, which (in contrast to the holy law of God) justified, or "declared innocent," all manner of transgressors.

Zec_5:4 &c. is one of the most solemn in the whole Bible, as showing what an awful thing it is to come under God's curse against sin. "And I will cause it to go forth"—that is, the curse, with its doom of judgment, which God keeps, so to say, in His storehouse, against the day of vengeance—"and it shall enter into the house of the thief, and into the house of him that sweareth falsely by My Name."

(a) "I will bring it forth, and it shall enter."

Here we see the certainty with which God's judgments shall finally overtake the wicked. Man may avoid detection of his sins and punishment at the hands of his fellow-man, but he cannot escape God. "Be sure your sin will find you out"; and so will its inevitable punishment.

"It shall enter into the house"—the place where the transgressor may think that he can hide himself, where he may think himself most secure; but he shall find that God's avenging justice cannot be kept out, even by strong walls or iron gates.

(b) "And it shall abide in the midst of his house."1 Here we see the continuance, or permanency of God's judgment against the wicked. The word for "abide," or "remain," as in the A.V., is ■■■■■, laneh, from ■■■, lun, "to lodge," "to spend the night in"; the idea being that the curse will not only pay him a passing visit, but shall "lodge" there—that is, abide by night as well as by day, until it

accomplish that for which it was sent, its utter destruction.2

Among Jewish commentators Rashi interprets ■■■■■ (niqqah) in the sense of being freed, or justified—the same as adopted by Luther and Mr. Edwards; but Kimchi says the meaning of ■■■■■ is “shall be cut off.” And this, or rather “shall be cleansed away” i.e., extirpated, is here doubtless the true meaning of the verb, as shown above.

1 The same verb is found in Psa_91:1, but there it is used to describe the blessed privilege of the righteous, who, “dwelling in the secret place of the Most High” (by day), shall also “abide,” literally “lodge” (i.e., at night), under the shadow of the Almighty.

2 Pusey.—Dr. Wright, in a note, quotes by way of illustration the classical instance recorded by Herodotus (Book 6. 86), which shows that the moral law of God was not only revealed to Israel and graven on the tables of stone, but was originally also written by His finger on the conscience of man, who still retains a shadowy tracing of it, so to say, in his consciousness. It is the story And the punishment which these transgressions often bring down upon man, even in this life, must be regarded as “mere premonitory droppings of the tempest of wrath which will one day overwhelm the ungodly.”

(c) But there is yet a climax in the train of calamities which the curse will bring to the house of the wicked. It shall not only “dwell” there, but it “shall consume it with the timber thereof, and the stones thereof.” Here we see the terribleness of the punishment which sin brings down upon itself. It shall be utterly “cleansed away,” or “consumed” from the midst of God’s congregation, together with those sinners who are no longer separable from it. The terms in the last sentence are almost identical with those used of the house stricken with leprosy in Lev_14:45, which, too, had to be destroyed, “both the stones thereof and the timber thereof”; and this undoubted allusion supplies another hint of the fact that already in the Old Testament leprosy was regarded as a type of sin, and that what that terrible and loathsome disease did for men’s bodies and their earthly habitations, sin does for men’s souls, not only in relation to the life that now is, but also in relation to that which is to come. There is only one way by which we can escape the curse of a broken law, and that is, instead of being “cleansed away” with our sins by God’s wrath into perdition, to be cleansed from our sins in that fountain which God has opened in the pierced side of Messiah for sin and uncleanness, and which makes the about Glaucus. The name of this man was held in high repute for integrity, and hence a Milesian came to him to deposit a sum of money on trust. The deposit was accepted by Glaucus. But when the money was required by the sons of the depositor, who presented the tallies in support of their claim, Glaucus hesitated to restore it. He consulted the oracle of Delphi whether he might perjure himself and appropriate the money. The priestess told him that it was best for the present to do as he desired, because death was the common lot of the honest and the dishonest. “Yet oath has a son, nameless, handless, footless, but swift; he pursues until he seize and destroy the whole race and house.” On hearing this, Glaucus begged to be pardoned for his question; but the priestess replied that it was as bad to have tempted the god as to have done the deed. Glaucus ultimately restored the money to its owners. Yet it was noted that his whole family became extinct, which was considered as a punishment for consulting the oracle whether he might perjure himself. vilest “whiter than snow.” Yes, blessed be God! for as many as can say with the Apostle, “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is he that hangeth on a tree” (Gal_3:13).

Yet one word more in conclusion in reference to the yet unfulfilled prophetic element in this vision. The more immediate application may have been to the remnant which returned from Babylon, to whom Zechariah spoke; and there may be some truth in the suggestion of Dr. Fausset that the “theft” and “false swearing” specially referred to in this vision has a reference to the sacrilege of which the Jews then were guilty in withholding the portions due from them for the Levites (Neh_13:10), and in holding back the due tithes and offerings from the Lord (Mal_3:8).

Thus “they robbed God by neglecting to give Him His due in building His house, whilst they built their own houses foreswearing their obligations to Him.”

There is also, as we have seen, a general application of the solemn truth contained in this vision to all who make any profession of the name of God at all times; yet the full and manifest fulfilment of this symbolic prophecy will not take place till the time of the end, when, in the final stage of both Jewish and anti-Christian apostasy, iniquity shall reach its climax, and the majority of those who profess to be the Lord’s people shall join in “transgressing and lying against Jehovah, and in departing away from their God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood” (Isa_59:13). Then the final separation shall take place, and the wicked be “cut off” from the congregation of the Lord, and all sin and iniquity be finally cleansed away from the “holy land” (Zec_2:12), and from “off the face of the whole earth.”

4.09. Chapter 8 - Ephah

CHAPTER VIII THE SEVENTH VISION THE EPHAH (Zechariah 5:5-11)

Then the angel that talked with me went forth, and said unto me, Lift up now thine eyes, and see what is this that goeth forth. And I said, What is it? And he said, This is the ephah that goeth forth. He said moreover, This is their appearance in all the land (and behold, there was lifted up a talent of lead); and this is the woman sitting, in the midst of the ephah. And he said unto me, This is wickedness; and he cast her down into the midst of the ephah: and he cast the weight of lead upon the mouth thereof. Then lifted I up mine eyes and saw, and, behold, there came forth two women, and the wind was in their wings; now they had wings like the wings of a stork; and they lifted up the ephah between earth and heaven. Then said I to the angel that talked with me, Whither do these bear the ephah? And he said unto me, To build her a house in the land of Shinar: and when it is prepared, she shall be set there in her own place.

CHAPTER VIII

WE now come to the second of the two visions contained Zec_5:1 &c., which, together, set forth the full and final removal, not only of the guilt of sin, but of sin itself (especially in its final and yet future form of “wickedness” or lawlessness)—and that by means of judgment—from off the “holy land,” and from the very presence of His redeemed and purified people.

What the Prophet saw

After instructing the prophet as to the meaning of the preceding vision, the Interpreting Angel had again withdrawn for awhile, and the prophet was left to himself to meditate on the solemn significance of the Flying Roll. Then the angel “went forth” (probably from the choirs of angels among whom he had retired in the interval, as Pusey suggests), and telling the prophet once more to lift up his eyes, he beholds another object, which the Angel tells him is “the ephah which goeth forth” and adds the enigmatical words: “This is their resemblance (lit., ‘their eye’) in all the land.” As the prophet looks, the cover, consisting of a circular mass, or “talent,” of lead, was lifted up, and he beheld a woman (lit., “one woman”) sitting in the midst of the ephah, of whom the angel said, pointing to her: “This is the Wickedness.” As there is evidently an attempt on the part of the woman to get out, or escape, the angel casts her down into the midst of the ephah: “And he cast the weight (lit., ‘stone’) of lead upon the mouth thereof.”

Then the prophet saw two women with wings like the wings of a stork “coming forth” from the invisible, and the wind was in their wings, and they lifted up the ephah between the earth and the heaven. On his inquiring of the angel: “Whither do these bear the ephah?” the answer was: “To build her an house in the land of Shinar: and when (or ‘if’) it be prepared (or ‘established’) it shall be set there upon her own base.” The Significance of the Symbolism Let me now try very simply to explain the various items in this vision in the order in which they occur in the text.

(a) The ephah, the same as bath, was the largest measure for dry goods in use among the Jews,1 though there is still some difference of opinion as to its exact size and capacity. The most general interpretation of this symbol—the one which I myself have previously held—is that it signified the (full) measure of Israel's sins, beyond which there is to be no more forgiveness, but a carrying away, or banishing from the land, or (as some interpreters will have it) from "the earth." Thus, already one of the Church Fathers, quoting the solemn words of our Lord, "Fill ye up the measure of your fathers" says: "The measure, then, which the prophet saw pointed to the filling-up of the measure of the transgression against Himself";2 and another says: "The angel bids him behold the sins of the people Israel heaped together in a perfect measure, and the transgression of all fulfilled, that the sins which escaped notice one by one, might, when collected together, be laid open to the eyes of all, and Israel might go forth from its place, and it might be shown to all what she was in her own land."3 A somewhat similar interpretation is given by Kliefoth (who is followed by Keil and others), who says: "Just as

1 The 'omer, which contained ten ephahs, appears, as Keil points out, to have had only an ideal existence, namely, for the purpose of calculation.

2 Cyril.

3 Jerome. in a bushel the separate grains are all collected together, so will the individual sinners over the whole earth be brought into a heap when the curse of the end (contained in the Flying Roll) goes forth over the whole earth."1

But, though it is a solemn truth that God allows evil fully to develop itself, and iniquity to fill up its full measure of guilt before He finally interposes in judgment, the usual interpretations quoted above overlook the fact that the ephah instead of being represented as the measure into which the people pile up their iniquities, is spoken of as itself "going forth" (■■■■■■■■, the same expression as is used of the Flying Roll in Zec_5:3) to pervade the people with its influence, and to stamp upon it, so to say, its own characteristic features, so that "this shall be their appearance ('their aspect,' or 'resemblance') in all the land."2

If we ask ourselves what was this new power, or principle, which exercised such a mighty formative influence over the Jewish people ever since the Babylonian Captivity, and which is gradually also bringing all the other nations of the earth under its sway, the answer is trade or commerce, of which the ephah is the natural emblem. With their banishment to Babylon and subsequent dispersion and peculiar position among the nations, there not only began an altogether new period of Jewish history, but there commenced also the processes by which the bulk of the nation became gradually transformed from an agricultural and pastoral people into a nation of merchant-men,3 and the new occupations into which they were forced

1 So also Bredenkamp, in his Prophet Sacharja, in almost exactly the same words: "Wie in einem Scheffel die einzelnen Körner gesammelt werden, so werden alle Gottlose in diesem epha gesammelt, so dass sie ein Weib ausmachen."

2 The LXX have either had another MS reading, namely, ■■■■■■ (avonam), "their iniquity," instead of the present Hebrew text of ■■■■■■ ('■nam), "eye," or appearance, or have simply blundered in their translation, for they render the sentence, "this is their iniquity in all the earth," a reading which has been adopted by several of the German commentators. But there is no reason

to doubt the correctness of the Masoretic text.

3 This is the explanation given in the Targum and by Rashi. Kimchi, who quite unjustifiably applies this vision to the Ten Tribes, gives the following far-fetched interpretation: “He showed him an ephah, which is a measure, to by the altered circumstances tended in a peculiar sense to develop the two transgressions (namely, theft and perjury) which are specified in the preceding vision of the Flying Roll, with which this vision of the Ephah stands very closely related. Idolatry, into which they were so liable to fall, was for ever left behind in Babylon; but a godless commercialism, with its temptations “to make the ephah small and the shekel great, and to deal falsely with balances of deceit” (Amos 8:5), eventually becomes not less hateful to God—not only because it has too often been supported by theft and perjury, which, as we have seen, are transgressions of the central commands of both tables of the Law, but because it was destined to develop a new system in which all iniquity would finally be summed up.

(b) In conjunction with the ephah we have the ■■■■■, kikar, which the English Version renders “talent.” The Hebrew word literally means “a circle,” and thus kikar signify that God had measured out to them measure for measure; for, according as they had done by continuing many days in their wickedness, from the day that the kingdom was divided until the day that they were led away captive; and as they had not had one out of all their kings who turned them to good, but, on the contrary, they all walked in an evil way: according, I say, as they had continued long in evil, so they shall be many days in captivity—this is measure for measure; therefore the prophet saw an ephah which is a measure.”

Among German commentators, Pressel, in his Commentar zu Haggai, Sacharja, und Maleachi, is the only one who, as far as I know, has caught what, on mature consideration, seems to me the true significance of the ephah, and he is followed by Dr. C. H. H. Wright.

Lange, in his Bibelwerk, refers somewhat contemptuously to Pressel’s view, his great objection being expressed in the words: “Wie wenn etwa von einem heutigen judenviertel die Rede wäre, und nicht von der Geheiligten Colonie zu Jerusalem” (“as if the subject dealt with was a modern Jewish quarter instead of the sanctified colony in Jerusalem”). But the answer to this objection is that the present state of the Jewish people as seen “im heutigen judenviertel” cannot be dissociated from Israel’s past or future. That the beginning of the new power of commercialism as associated with the Jewish people can be traced back to the dispersion, and began already to assert itself in Zechariah’s time, is a matter of history. Beside this, these two visions in Zec_5:1 &c. do not set forth the “sanctified colony in Jerusalem,” but rather show how transgressors shall be “cut off” (or “cleansed away”), and how the evil which is the very embodiment of “wickedness,” or “lawlessness,” shall finally be banished from the “holy land,” so that those who remain after the purifying judgment shall “be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem” (Isaiah 4:3). le■hem, “a circle of bread,” is used to denote a round loaf.1 The word, as Dr. Wright points out, is not elsewhere found in the signification of a cover, though that is a possible sense. “It is constantly used of a fixed weight, by which gold, silver, and other things are weighed and measured, and is naturally spoken of in such a meaning here in connection with the Ephah, as the latter was the usual measure of capacity. The talent was the largest measure of quantity, and the weight was made of lead as the most common heavy metal, and was used in all commercial transactions for weighing out money.” That a “talent,” the other chief emblem and

instrument of trade, should have been seen by the prophet as forming the cover of the ephah, is of solemn significance, as will be shown further on.

(c) The “talent,” or circular mass of lead, being lifted,2 the prophet beheld a woman3 sitting in the midst of the ephah.

“And he said ” (i.e., the Angel, as if to call anew the prophet’s special attention), “this is the Wickedness”—the very embodiment of iniquity, rendered in the Septuagint ■νομ■α, lawlessness.

1 Exo_29:23; 1Sa_2:36.

2 According to Pressel and Dr. Wright the woman was sitting (as it were, enthroned) in the ephah carrying the kikar, or talent of lead (the emblem of the means by which her traffic is carried on), in her lap. They render Zec_5:7 thus: “And behold a talent of lead was being lifted up (i.e. carried), and I saw, and this was one woman sitting (or ‘as she sat’) in the middle of the ephah.” But, though this is a possible though somewhat forced rendering of the verb ■■■■■■ (which is the Niphal participle fem. of ■■■■■), it seems to me clear from Zechariah 5:8 that the “talent” formed the cover. The impression left on the mind by reading the narrative of the vision in the original is certainly that there is an attempted escape on the part of the woman from the ephah, and that the Angel casts the talent on the mouth of the ephah with a view to secure her, that she may be safely carried to the land of Shinar. It is for this reason, I suppose, that it may serve as a cover, or circular lid—apart from its emblematic significance as the instrument of trade—that a talent of lead, consisting of a large, circular, undefined mass, is seen in the vision, instead of one of gold, or of silver, which in size would be very much smaller.

3 Isshah achath—literally, “one woman.” The words, “and this is one woman,” are those of the Interpreting Angel, who proceeds in the next verse to describe her character. The woman is usually taken by commentators to symbolise the Jewish people, which, when the measure of sin shall have become full, would be carried away into captivity. But the seventy years’ captivity in Babylon was now at an end, and the idea of a retrospective significance of the symbolism of this vision, which Jerome and Rosenmüller adopt, seems to me untenable. All the other visions of Zechariah relate to the future—as Hengstenberg well observes, why should this be the sole exception? In the judgment of the Flying Roll a coming judgment is foretold. Why should this one of the Ephah be referred to the past?

Neither can it be properly referred to the subsequent captivity, as Hengstenberg and others attempt to do. There was, indeed, another dispersion of the Jewish people after the restoration from Babylon, but that could not well be represented in any special sense as a carrying away “into the land of Shinar.” Besides, as I have tried to show in the introductory remarks to the exposition of the preceding vision of the Flying Roll, the scope and purport of the two visions in Zec_5:1 &c. are not the punishment of the nation, but the cleansing of the restored people and land, and the stamping out and banishment from their midst not only of the guilt of sin, but of iniquity or “wickedness” itself.

We regard, therefore, the woman in this vision, not as a personification of the Jewish people, nor as a collective representation of individual sinners who are finally gathered into one heap in the ephah, but as delineating the (then as yet hidden) moral system of which the ephah is the emblem. And it is not inappropriate that the system engendered by the ephah, which in its essence is the

worship of Mammon, should be represented by a woman, “because of the power it displays as a temptress, whereby it exercises such an enticing and dangerous influence over the souls of men.” Or, as Grotius observed: This form of wickedness is here described as a woman “because she is the mother of thefts and perjuries, and of all crimes.” But though this vision, like all the rest, has primary reference to the land and the people—and the purport of its message is that the system which is characterised as the Wickedness (and is altogether alien and opposed to the principles of the redeemed and sanctified community in the land in which the King of Righteousness shall have His seat) shall be banished to the place, or sphere, to which it originally belongs—it is a solemn truth that this same evil power of the ephah, with its all-pervading controlling influence, is “going forth” also in the whole world; so that of all the civilised nations in particular it must be said: “This is their aspect, or resemblance, in all the earth.”1

It is a striking and noteworthy fact, which no intelligent man can fail to observe, that commerce is more and more bringing the nations under its sway.

It now sets up the governments and dictates the policies of the nations. It is for it that the mighty armaments are being built and that wars are being made. In all the earth and among all nations that which is symbolised by the ephah is becoming the great controlling centre of society. “The producing power of manufacture, the distributing skill of the merchant, the controlling power of those who trade in money and command the circulating medium of commerce—these and similar interests, when combined, are able to speak with a voice which no government can refuse to hear. Their will is potent. Legislation and government accommodate themselves to their demands.”

That, for instance, “which is most distinctive in the present condition of England is her commercial system. Commerce, or the wealth and influence thence arising, has become the mainspring of England’s energies—the chief bulwark of her social institutions, the pillar of her government. When ecclesiastical power fell, and the feudal aristocracy became gradually enfeebled, and when the steady advance of the people seemed to make democracy (perhaps revolutionary democracy) the sure end of the

1 ■■■■■ eretz as already explained means both “land” and “earth,” though its primary use in this vision is of the “land.” social movement, there was gradually being formed in this country a new aristocracy, more potent than any, whether ecclesiastical or hereditary, that had preceded—the aristocracy of wealth. The expressions ‘commercial interest,’ ‘manufacturing interest’ ‘moneyed interest,’ ‘Indian interest,’ and the like, suggest sufficiently intelligible ideas to English minds. The ramifications of these interests are so various and so extended that the mass of society is effectually reached and controlled by their influence; and thus a power has been consolidated the like to which has never before existed. In England this power is learning to work in harmony with the State. Indeed, the State has virtually become its organ. Plutocracy is a comprehensive, not an exclusive system. Its elasticity is great. It can adapt itself to the changing circumstances of the hour, and receiving within its circle both the aristocrat and the democrat, it provides a place of honour and influence for both.

“In its relations to ancient systems, it seeks, not to annihilate, but rather to modify, adapt, harmonise, and employ. It possesses, therefore, not only its own intrinsic weight, but is acquiring also all the weight which govern mental authority can give. No other interest, whether royal or ecclesiastic, aristocratic or popular, is allowed to throw any effectual impediment in its course.

Virtually, its will is paramount. The appropriate device of England would not be either the crown or the mitre, the coronet or the sword, but some emblem of commerce. An ‘ephah’ should be emblazoned on her banners. Our Government is a commercial Government, not because England happens to be a mercantile country, but because manufacturing and trading interests supremely sway her councils, and all other interests are being made subordinate. Such are the features which characteristically mark the period during which the powers of civilisation have been renovated in this Western corner of the Roman world.

“The abasement of ecclesiastical supremacy, the establishment of constitutional monarchy, and the rise of commerce into sovereign influence, may be regarded as accomplished facts. They distinctively characterise England; and finally they will equally characterise every other kingdom that falls within the Roman world. The success of England naturally causes her to be imitated. Her influence, which is great, is exerted, as might be expected, for the propagation of her principles, and the circumstances of the hour favour these principles. We cannot marvel at this, for the Scriptures plainly declare that such shall be the principles of the closing period of our dispensation. Whatever opinion may be formed as to the particular city indicated in the 18th of the Revelation (Rev_18:1 &c.), this at least is evident, that that chapter describes a closing scene in the world’s present history, and speaks of ‘merchants being the great men of the earth,’ and of a commercial city being ‘queen of the nations.’

“But it may be asked, Why should this be regretted? Is an ephah the symbol of evil? In other words, Is commerce necessarily sinful? We reply, No; commerce is not necessarily sinful. Commerce may be the mere exchange on just and righteous principles of the productions of various regions, or of various labourers. The effecting such exchange may involve no course of conduct that militates against the principles of God, or sacrifices His truth. But it may be otherwise. If commerce comes into such supremacy as to make her merchants the great men of the earth, the influences that governmentally order the nations would in that case fall into her hand. The world—educationally, politically, religiously, socially—would be virtually under her control. How blessed if her principles were the principles of God! But if the arrangements which are to characterise the nations as the latter day draws nigh are as evil as the Scriptures declare them to be, then they who by means of their commercial greatness control or sustain these arrangements must be the very pillars of the last great system of evil, and the commercial period of the world’s history becomes the period of its systematised transgression.”1 1 Babylon and Egypt, by B. W. Newton.

It is most probably, then, because of the part this system is to play in connection with the final apostasy, that it is characterised by the Angel with such emphasis as ■■■■■■■■—“the wickedness,” or “the lawlessness.” But to return to the Scriptures immediately before us. The Angel’s action in throwing the woman back into the ephah, and casting the circular mass of lead “upon the mouth thereof,” is meant, I believe, to set forth, not only the fact that the instruments of sin become the instruments of her punishment, but the still more solemn truth that men and nations who sell themselves to sin are, after a time, kept down and tied to that particular sin; or, to use the language of Pro_5:22, “His own iniquities shall take the wicked, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sin.” Not only in relation to the future eternal destiny of the individual (of which the words are primarily used), but already also in the earthly history of men and nations, there comes a time when the solemn judicial sentence goes forth from the mouth of God: “He that is

unrighteous, let him do unrighteousness still: and he that is filthy, let him be made filthy still" (Rev_22:11, R.V.).

Thus, when the woman attempts to escape, she is thrown back into the ephah, which becomes, so to say, the chariot in which she is carried away as something which is defiled and defiling, from the land in which God shall dwell; and the talent with which she carries on her unrighteous trade becomes the heavy weight by which she is held down till she is landed safely "in her own place," where, after a season of lawless liberty in which she will allure men to their own destruction by her seductive attractiveness and luxury, she will be judged and destroyed, together with him who is pre-eminently styled "The Wicked One," by the brightness of the Lord's parousia (2Th_2:8).

(d) We come now to the last act in the drama of this vision, which, as already said, is primarily intended to set forth the removal of "wickedness" from the holy land without occupying itself with its final destiny in the land to which, by the aid of evil powers, it was for a time to be transplanted. That every item in the description of the actors in Zec_5:9 is of symbolical significance (as is the case with all the details in the other visions), and not merely picturesque figures of speech with a view "to give distinctness to the picture" (as Keil, Hengstenberg, Bredenkamp, and others assert), there can be no doubt; but it is impossible to speak with absolute positiveness as to what each particular is intended to signify.1 In a general way I agree on this point with those writers who regard these women as typifying instruments or systems of evil, who for a time deliver the woman in the ephah from the vengeance which was about to destroy her. "By reason of the curse described (in the previous vision) as overtaking all who followed in her wicked ways," observes Dr. Wright, "no place is left for her any longer in the land of righteousness, among a people whose trangressions are forgiven and who are sanctified to bring forth fruit unto holiness. The winged women, therefore, bear off the evil one to the land of Shinar, there to build for her a home and a house."2

1 Keil, whose remarks are repeated almost verbally by Bredenkamp and others, easily passes over this verse with the following remarks: "Women carry it because there is a woman inside; and two women because two persons are required to carry so large and heavy a burden, that they may lay hold of it on both sides. These women have wings because it passes through the air; and a stork's wings because these birds have broad pinions," etc.

2 It may be remarked that the final cleansing of the land and people of Israel does not, in point of time, take place until after the full development of "Wickedness," and the manifestation of the "Wicked One," who shall be destroyed by the "brightness" (or "shining forth") of Christ at His coming (2Th_2:8). Not until the King of Righteousness reigns over Mount Zion, will Palestine be "the land of righteousness," and the nation of Israel "a people whose transgressions are forgiven, and who are sanctified to bring forth fruits unto holiness." But we are not to expect in these visions, or indeed in Old Testament prophecy generally, a clear setting forth of eschatological events in their true chronological order. The fact is clearly, though symbolically, set forth, that among a people, and in a land whence "iniquity has been removed" (Zec_3:9), and which should thenceforth be known as the "holy land" (Zec_2:12), and the holy people, the system of "wickedness" outwardly symbolised by the ephah, can have no place.

Incidentally, it also sets forth the fact that for a time this system will find a place in the land and sphere to which it, so to say, belongs. And if we are asked what two evil systems, helped and

impelled by evil spirits (as may be gathered from the fact that they had the wings of a stork, which is an unclean bird, and that “the wind,” or “spirit,” certainly not of God, “was in their wings”), would thus eventually unite in finding a home for the ephah and the woman, which for a season would be permitted to dominate the nations through its power, we can only suggest that it may be apostate Christianity united in the last days to apostate Judaism, and both given over to the worship of Mammon, on which the power of the ephah is based; or, as in these series of visions, the civil and ecclesiastical powers, as represented by Zerubbabel and Joshua, are frequently brought before us; and in the fifth vision (Zechariah 4:14) are probably “the two” who are represented “as standing before the Lord.” The two women here may, perhaps, be meant to signify civil government broken loose, even outwardly, from every acknowledgment of God (and, therefore, an instrument in the hand of lawlessness), and a corrupt anti-Christian and anti-theistic priesthood—both Jewish and Gentile—ready to unite as sponsors and protectors to a system which, though as yet not so regarded, even by the elect, is characterised by God as “the Wickedness.”

(e) There is yet one more point that we must briefly touch on before taking our leave of this vision—namely, what are we to understand by “the land of Shinar,” which, according to the words of the Interpreting Angel, is to be the destination to which the two women bear the ephah, there for a time to establish it on its own base? According to the commentators, the name “Shinar” is not to be taken geographically here, as an epithet applied to Mesopotamia, but “is a national, or real, definition, which affirms that the ungodliness carried away out of the sphere of the people of God will have its permanent settlement in the sphere of the imperial power that is hostile to God.”1 Or, as another explains it: “The name Shinar, though strictly Babylonia, carries us back to an older power than the world-empire of

1 Keil.

Babylon, which now was destroyed. In the land of Shinar was the first attempt made, ere mankind was yet dispersed, to array a world-empire against God. And so it is the apter symbol of the anti-theistic or anti-Christian world, which, by violence, and falsehood, and sophistry, wars against the truth.”1 But while there is truth in the words of yet another writer that Shinar was the land of unholiness, and stands here contrasted with Palestine, which shall be “the holy land” (Zec_2:12), and that the chief point in the vision is the renewal of the special form of “wickedness” which is symbolised by the ephah from the land of Israel to find its resting-place “in the land of world-power which is antagonistic to God,” we cannot altogether agree that “the picture is an ideal one,” and that “the land of Shinar is an ideal land contrasted with the land of Israel.”2

Without any spirit of dogmatism, and without entering at this place into the question of the identity and significance of the Babylon in the Revelation—whether mystical or actual—we would express our conviction that there are Scriptures which cannot, according to our judgment, be satisfactorily explained except on the supposition of a revival and yet future judgment of literal Babylon, which for a time will be the centre and embodiment of all the elements of our godless Western “civilisation,” and which especially will become the chief entrepôt of commerce in the world, in which will be gathered “merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stone, and pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet; and all thyine wood, and every vessel of

1 Pusey.

2 Dr. C. H. H. Wright. According to Hengstenberg, who, as I believe erroneously, regards the woman in the ephah as symbolising the Jewish people, who, when the measure of their sin became full, was to be banished again from the land and carried away into captivity, Shinar stands for the lands of their present dispersion: that is, “the future dwelling-place of the Jews, who were to be banished from their country, is called by the name of the land in which they were captives before.” And he finds in it a “striking example of the custom which the prophets adopted of representing future events by images drawn from the past, and at the same time transferring to the former the names which belong to the latter.” ivory, and every vessel made of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble; and cinnamon, and spice, and incense, and ointment, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and cattle, and sheep; and merchandise of horses and chariots and bodies; and souls of men”1 until it shall finally and for ever be overturned by one terrible act of judgment from God. To this conviction we are led chiefly by the fact that there are prophecies in the Old Testament concerning the literal Babylon which have never in the past been exhaustively fulfilled, and that Scripture usually connects the final overthrow of Babylon with the yet future restoration and blessing of Israel. And it is very striking to the close observer of the signs of the times how things at the present day are rapidly developing on the very lines which are forecast in the prophetic Scriptures. “The fears and hopes of the world—political, commercial, and religious,” writes one in a monthly journal which lies before me, “are at the present day being increasingly centred upon the home of the human race—Mesopotamia. . . . As the country from which the father of the Jewish nation emigrated to the land of promise, it is also occupying the thoughts and aspirations of the Jews.”

Whatever may be the outcome of the negotiations which have been carried on recently with the Turkish Government by the Jewish Territorialists “for the establishment of a Jewish autonomous State” in this very region, in which many Zionists and other Jews were ready to join, there is so much truth in the words of another writer that when once a considerable number of such a commercial people as the Jews are re-established in Palestine, “the Euphrates would be to them as necessary as the Thames to London or the Rhine to Germany. It would be Israel’s great channel of communication with the Indian seas, not to speak of the commerce which would flow towards the Tigris and Euphrates from the central and northern districts of Asia! It would be strange, therefore, if no city should

1 Rev_18:12-13. arise on its banks of which it might be said that her merchants were the great men of the earth.”

“Noteworthy in this connection,” observes another writer, “is the watchful eye of the German Imperial Government upon the railway in course of construction from Konia (the biblical Iconium) to Bagdad. Some six hundred miles of the Anatolian, or Euphratean, line have already been opened to traffic.” In short, there is a general impression that this region, the highway between Asia and Europe, and contiguous to Africa, is about to become a great “commercial centre of gravity.” The new Turkish Government (in contrast to the old régime) is very keen on the development of the resources1 of that ancient and naturally fertile region, and alive to the very important aid which Jewish capital and energy could render in that direction. Very recently, therefore, they engaged the services of a distinguished English hydraulic engineer, Sir William Willcocks, K.C.M.G., to survey the district and report on the establishment and development of irrigation works. He returned full of enthusiasm, declaring that his “future hopes, ambitions, and

work are bound up with the re-creation of Chaldea." A very interesting paper which he read at a meeting of the Royal Geographical Society last November is published in The Geographical Journal for January 1910. The following are his concluding remarks: "In her long history of many thousands of years, Babylonia has again and again been submerged, but she has always risen with an energy and thoroughness rivalling the very completeness and suddenness of her fall. She has never failed to respond to those who have striven to raise her. Again, it seems that the time has come for this land, long wasted with misery, to rise from the very dust and take her place by the side of her ancient rival, the land of Egypt.

"The works we are proposing are drawn on sure and truthful lines, and the day they are carried out the two great rivers will hasten to respond, and Babylon will yet 1 All this was written in 1910. once again see her waste places becoming inhabited, and the desert blossoming as the rose."1

All this may be regarded by some as a long digression from the subject before us; but it is not altogether so, for it shows from actual facts and events which are before us the very strong probability that "the land of Shinar"—which in the past was so "prominent in connection with the manifestation of evil on the part of man, and of judgment on the part of God, that it stands peculiarly as a memorial of proud ungodliness met by the visitation of righteous vengeance from above"—will yet, as Scripture forecasts, play a very important part in the consummation of human "wickedness" in the final anti-Christian apostasy, in which a godless Judaism and a corrupt, unbelieving Christianity will be united for the sake of the false peace, and pomp, and luxury, and a humanitarianism dissociated from God and the truth, which the system, outwardly symbolised by the ephah, will for a time minister to them, but which, as Scripture also warns us, will end in the most terrible judgment which has yet befallen man upon the earth.

1 The following paragraph forms the concluding remarks of an article in the London Standard for August 30, 1910, in which the beginnings of the great irrigation works proposed by Sir William Willcocks are described:

"These gigantic schemes cannot be carried out in their entirety without the co-operation of great capitalists; but an experiment might well be made with a limited area, when the feasibility of the whole would be apparent. Nowhere in the world do the natural conditions and the possibilities of hydraulic science offer a greater field to the agricultural capitalist. One hears from time to time of one or other scheme of Jewish colonisation on a vast scale. If Baron Hirsch's committee, who have, apparently, ransacked the world for a suitable locality, would give the scheme the attention it deserves, it might mean great things for the Jewish race. Here, in the very cradle of their race, in the land so intimately and so sadly associated with their subsequent history, a new Psalmist may arise, converting the sadness of the 'Super flumina' into joy; the old-time captivity may yet be turned, 'as the rivers in the South.' Here is the land, and here is the water; it only needs money, intelligently applied, to convert a wilderness into another Garden of Eden.

"One cannot take leave of this subject without reference to the certain advent of the railway, possibly of more railways than one. It will, indeed, be a wonderful revival. Ur of the Chaldees as the centre of an important trade and railway system, must appeal to the dullest imagination; yet such it assuredly will be in the not very distant future. Such great possibilities as here exist cannot, at this stage of the world's history, be allowed to lie dormant for ever."

4.10. Chapter 9 - The Four Chariots

CHAPTER IX THE EIGHTH VISION THE FOUR CHARIOTS (Zechariah 6:1-8) And again I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and behold, there came four chariots out from between two mountains; and the mountains were mountains of brass. In the first chariot were red horses; and in the second chariot black horses; and in the third chariot white horses; and in the fourth chariot grisled strong horses. Then I answered and said unto the angel that talked with me, What are these, my lord? And the angel answered and said unto me, These are the four winds of heaven, which go forth from standing before the Lord of all the earth. The chariot wherein are the black horses goeth forth toward the north country; and the white went forth after them; and the grisled went forth toward the south country. And the strong went forth, and sought to go that they might walk to and fro through the earth: and He said, Get you hence, walk to and fro through the earth. So they walked to and fro through the earth. Then cried He to me, and spake unto me, saying, Behold, they that go toward the north country have quieted My spirit in the north country.

CHAPTER IX

WE come to the eighth, or last vision, in which the prophet's eyes are opened to see the invisible chariots of God which are being sent forth for the overthrow of Gentile world-power, and to prepare the way for the Kingdom of Messiah, which "shall never be destroyed."

What the Prophet saw

Probably directed again by the interpreting angel to do so, the prophet lifts up his eyes and beholds four chariots coming forth from between two mountains of brass.1 These chariots were drawn by horses of various colours. In the first were red horses, in the second black, in the third white, and in the fourth grisled, or speckled, horses, to which also are applied the epithet ■■■■■■■■ (amutsim, "strong").1 The Significance of the Symbolism

I. The two mountains, which in the Hebrew have the definite article, indicating that they are well known, and which, as we may gather from Zec_6:5, are associated with the "presence," or special dwelling-place, of "the Lord of the whole earth," are very probably Mount Zion and Mount Olivet, "viewed as ideal mountains, and as the place whence God's judgments go forth over the world."

1 The Rabbis understood a chariot as signifying a team of four horses. Their reason is a curious one. In 1 Kings 10:29 it is said: "And a chariot came up and went out of Egypt for six hundred shekels, and a horse for a hundred and fifty." The price of a chariot is here four times that of a horse. Thus, therefore, Kimchi says, "A chariot is a team of four horses." This is the more likely true explanation, since the Valley of Jehoshaphat (the meaning of which is "Jehovah shall judge"), which lies between these two "mountains," or "hills," is associated in the prophetic Scriptures with God's judgments upon the nations (Joel 3:2).1 At any rate, this much is clear (as Dr. Wright points out), that the chariots are represented as going forth from a place situate between "north" and "south"—i.e., from Palestine, and from that place in the Holy Land where Jehovah was wont to display His gracious presence. From this spot, which God has chosen as His earthly

dwelling-place, and as the centre of His governmental dealings with the nations, blessing goes forth in all the world, and from it also judgments proceed.

They are spoken of as mountains of “brass,” or, more literally, “copper,” to indicate the strength and inaccessibleness of God’s dwelling-place. He can, and does, send forth His chariots to build up, or to pull down and destroy, but no one can penetrate into His presence. Or, as Pusey observes, “the mountains of brass may signify the height of the Divine wisdom (in all His plans and purposes concerning the nations), and the sublimity of the power which putteth them in operation. As the Psalmist says: ‘Thy righteousness is like the mountains of God.’ ”

1 All sorts of fanciful explanations have been given by interpreters of these two mountains. Hengstenberg regards them as merely emblematic of the power of God, which shields and protects His people. Baumgarten says that they represent the east and west as the two central points of the world-power. But these in Zechariah’s visions, as Dr. Wright properly points out, are rather the north and south. Hitzig would, it seems, locate them in heaven, and regards the chariots as having been seen coming forth from the dwelling-place of the Most High

Von Hoffmann, Pressel, and others have explained them to be the mountains of Zion and Moriah, “for from these two mountains in Messianic days the Kingdom of God should be spread abroad” (Pressel); “and they will be the mountains whence God should send forth His last judgments upon the world.” The opinion of Jasper Svedberg, the father of the renowned Swedenborg, may be mentioned as a curiosity of exposition. According to him, the prophet, when speaking of mountains of brass or copper, evidently alluded to the country of Dalarne, in Sweden, which, he thought, was destined to be of great importance in the latter days!

II. The Chariots. If, with the prophet, we ask, What are these? the answer of the Interpreting Angel in Zechariah 6:3 is: “These are the four winds of heaven, which go forth from standing before the Lord of the whole earth.” We must therefore regard them either as ideal appearances, personifying the forces and providential acts which God often uses in carrying out His judgments on the earth, or, what seems to me the simplest and most natural explanation, angelic beings, or heavenly powers—those invisible “messengers” of His “who excel in strength, and who ever stand in His presence, hearkening unto the voice of His word,” and then go forth in willing obedience, as swift as the “winds,” to carry out His behests (Psa_103:20-21, Psa_104:4).

These, no doubt, are also meant by “the chariots of God, which are twenty thousand, even thousands upon thousands,” of which we read in Psalms 68:17, though the word “angel” (used in the Authorised Version) is not found in the original of that verse. Indeed, there is a striking connection between the first and the last visions. In the first vision (Zec_1:7-17), at the beginning of this, to the prophet, memorable night, he saw the angelic riders with the Angel of the Lord, Himself mounted on a red horse at their head, appearing in the presence of the Lord, to bring in, as it were, their report after “walking to and fro through the earth” as to the condition of the Gentile nations and their attitude to the people and the land. And now, toward morning, as the visions were about to be brought to an end, he sees the same angelic hosts, now turned into God’s war chariots, actually being sent forth (no longer to report) but to carry out the judgments of God upon those nations with whom He is “very sore displeased,” because “they helped forward the affliction” of His own people, whom, even in the time of their banishment and scattering, He has never cast off.

III. We now come to the difficult point of the number of the chariots and the significance of the colours of the horses. The number, four, clearly brings to our mind again the four great Gentile world-powers, whose successive course makes up “the times of the Gentiles,” and whose final over throw must precede the restoration and blessing of Israel, and the visible establishment of the Messianic kingdom. In this connection it is again interesting to observe that these four “chariots” are explained to be the “four winds.” Now, in Dan_7:1-3 we read of the four winds of heaven “striving,” or “breaking,” upon “the great sea,” which caused the four great Beasts, “diverse one from the other” (symbolical of the four great Gentile world-powers), to arise; and here we see the “four winds” sent forth to break up these same empires; from which we may surely learn that it is by the will and power of God, and by His direct interposition, either by visible, natural, or by angelic agency, that empires rise and fall.

There is a certain parallelism to be observed also between this vision and the second act of the historical prophetic drama unfolded in the vision of the four horns and four carpenters (Zec_1:18-21)—only here we have the great fact still more clearly brought out, that behind visible phenomena and all human motives and actions there is the eternal purpose and power of God, and the invisible active agency of His angelic hosts. But there is a difficulty in connection with the number of the chariots, and in the description of the colours of the horses, which we must face before proceeding further. The difficulty, briefly stated, is this: In the vision itself (Zec_6:2-3) the prophet beholds four chariots, in the first of which were red horses, in the second black, in the third white, and in the fourth grisled horses, to which last is also added the epithet ■■■■■■■■ (amutsim, “strong”); but in the interpretation by the interpreting angel (Zec_6:5-7) the first with the red horses is passed over. The black and the white are explained as going forth into the north country, the grisled into the south, and then we read of the amutsim (“strong”), which in Zec_6:3 are the same as the “grisled,” wanting to go forth on a separate, or yet another mission. The explanations of this difficulty which have been given by interpreters both Jewish and Christian, ancient and modern, are many, but for the most part are far-fetched and unsatisfactory. Some get over the difficulty lightly by the very simple method of correcting the text and substituting ■■■■■■■■ (adummim, “the red”) in Zec_6:7 for ■■■■■■■■ (amutsim, “the strong”), which they regard as a scribal error. This, I might mention, had been done already by the translators of the ancient Syriac version. But this solution of the difficulty, apart from other objections, does not explain why the description “the strong” should be used as an additional epithet of the “grisled” in Zec_6:3, nor why the red, which in the vision was seen first, should in the Angel’s interpretation be spoken of as going forth last.

Another explanation already adopted in the Septuagint version, the Targum, Kimchi, etc., and by some Christian interpreters, including Calvin and Koehler, is that amutsim does not here mean “strong,” but denotes a colour. They regard ■■■■■ (amots) as a softened form of ■■■■■ (■hamuts), a word found in Isa_63:1, and there signifying “red.”1 But apart from the fact that it is impossible (as Keil observes) to see why so unusual a word should have been chosen by the prophet in Zec_6:7 to describe the colour “red,” instead of the intelligible word adummim, which he had already used in Zec_6:3, there is no satisfactory ground for identifying amots with ■hamuts.

Hengstenberg attempts to solve the difficulty in the following manner: According to him there can be no doubt as to the meaning of the word amutsim; it can only 1 This conjecture is the basis of the rendering “bay” in the Authorised and Revised Versions. signify “powerful,” or “strong,” but he

argues that this predicate, although only formally connected with the horses in the fourth chariot, at the end of Zec_6:3, “cannot apply to them in contrast with those of the other three chariots, but must, in fact, belong equally to all the four.” The “strong” horses therefore, seen to go forth last, in Zec_6:7, are in reality the “red” of the first chariot. He lays emphasis on the article, “the strong ones,” in Zec_6:7, and says, “the strong ones, that is, those in comparison with which the others were to be regarded as weak, although in themselves they were really strong; . . . in other words, the strongest among them. They are mentioned last because in the consciousness of their strength they were not content like the rest with one particular portion of the globe, but asked permission of the Lord to go through the whole earth.” But, excepting on the supposition that a word in Zec_6:3 has dropped out, Hengstenberg’s exposition is, as is now pretty generally agreed, on grammatical reasons “impossible.”1 . . . . . .

Let us now give what appears to be the most likely and satisfactory solution of the difficulty. We have already observed that though these four chariots, which with their horses are interpreted by the angel to be “the four winds,” or “spirits,” of the heavens, cannot be identified with the four Gentile world-powers of Dan_2:1 &c. and Dan_7:1 &c., on which Zechariah’s second vision, that of the horns and carpenters, is, as we have seen, based—they are closely connected, and

1 If ■■■■■■■■ (amutsim, “strong”), in Zec_6:3, were intended to be referred to the horses in all the chariots, the phrase would have been expressed by ■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■, amutsim kulam—“all of them strong.” As to Hengstenberg’s argument that the article before amutsim (the strong), Zec_6:7, is to be regarded as emphatic, it must not be forgotten that all the adjectives used in reference to the horses when first mentioned naturally occur without the article; but when spoken of by the interpreting angel are all used most naturally with the article. “The use of the article with the adjective in Zec_6:7 can no more be regarded as emphatic than when used with the black, the white, and speckled (or ‘grisled’) horses. Amutsim is similarly used at first without the article; but when mentioned the second time it takes the article just as the other adjectives.” primarily refer to those empires whose united successive course make up the “times of the Gentiles.”

These four are the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, the Grecian (or Graeco-Macedonian), and the Roman. “These are the horns (or Gentile powers) which have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem” (Zec_1:19), and it is the overthrow and judgment of these, by means of invisible heavenly powers appointed of God as a necessary precursor to the establishment of Messiah’s kingdom, and the blessing of Israel, which is symbolically set forth to the prophet in this last vision. But these powers, though in vision and prophecy seen together, are, as a matter of fact, successive in time.

Now, when these visions were shown to Zechariah, Babylon had already been overthrown, and its world-empire taken away, visibly and apparently, by the Medo-Persians, behind whom, however (as the prophet beholds), there was the invisible chariot of God, with its red horses of blood and vengeance. This act of judgment on the first great Gentile world-power which had oppressed Israel and laid waste his land being already an accomplished fact (though in Zec_6:3, for completeness’ sake, all the four are shown to the prophet together, as is the case in the vision of the four horns, one of which had also been already overthrown), this first chariot is passed over by the Angel in the interpretation, and is not seen among those who “go forth” in Zec_6:6—its mission, as far as

the Babylonian Empire is concerned, having already been fulfilled. The black horses, significant probably of sorrow and mourning in consequence of sore judgments to be inflicted, go forth toward the north country, and “after them,” going forth in the same direction, are the white, symbolical of victory, triumph, and glory over Gentile world-power—for both the Medo-Persian and Græco-Macedonian Empires, being each in turn successors of the great Babylonian Empire, were the great hostile northern powers in relation to Palestine, In contrast to these who went forth to the north country, the beruddim (“grisled,” or “speckled” horses)—the exact colour of which it is difficult to give with certainty, but which probably answers to the seruqqim (“speckled”) in Zec_1:8—go forth to the south country.

Now, the south country is Egypt, the other direction from which hostile world-power came into contact with Israel and Palestine; and “the king of the south,” as, for instance, in Dan_11:1 &c., is the king of Egypt. But there it was that the fourth great world-empire came into collision with the declining Macedonian power, and that it was first brought into direct contact with the Jewish nation. It is most probable, therefore, that the fourth chariot, appointed for the overthrow and destruction of the fourth great world-empire, is seen to go forth, first to the south, as if to encounter this fresh hostile power at the point at which it first came into contact with Israel. But the Spirit of God, foreseeing that the fourth empire, unlike its predecessors, would spread itself, not only to the north, and south, and east, but westward also, and practically embrace the whole known world; and that it would, in the different stages of its existence, endure for a considerably longer period than its predecessors—the horses of this same chariot are represented as desiring also, after having accomplished their mission in the south, to go forth to walk to and fro through the earth. “And He” (that is, the Lord of the whole earth, before whom they were all seen “standing” in the first instance) “said, Get you hence, walk to and fro through the earth,” in order to meet this power in every place where it shall establish itself, to hold it in check, and to counteract its evil plans, until the signal shall be given for its final overthrow.

If we are asked why the horses in this last chariot are seen first going forth as the “grisled” or “speckled,” and then, in Zec_6:7, as the “strong” (which, be it noted, was the additional epithet applied to them already in Zec_6:3), the true answer is probably that suggested by Bredenkamp, who says that “speckled strong horses” are such as, regarded from the point of view of their colour, are “speckle” (gefleckte), but from the point of view of their special characteristic, are “strong.”

Viewed as going forth like the other chariots into a particular direction, and as encountering a particular power, they are described, like the previous ones, by their colour, which is in itself symbolical; but when the fact is brought into view that this particular power which these horses are to encounter is unlike its predecessors, but will assert its dominion over the whole earth, then their special characteristic as “the strong ones” is emphasised. To this we may add the striking fact that strength was to be an outstanding feature of the fourth great world-empire, even as we read in Dan_7:7, “After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, terrible and powerful, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth; it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet: and it was diverse from all the beasts which were before it; and it had ten horns.”

Now, over against the might of man, and of all the powers of darkness which assert themselves in this last great world-power, there is the might of God; and we are reminded in this vision that His invisible hosts are a match for the mightiest, and that God is ever stronger than His foes.

We now come to Zec_6:8.

“And He cried unto me, and spake unto me, saying, Behold, those which go toward the north country have quieted (‘caused to rest’) My spirit in the north country.” The idiom, “to cause to rest upon” a person, or, as in this case, upon a land, involves, as Pusey rightly observes, that that person (or land) is the object on whom it abides, not that the spirit is quieted in him whose it is, as some interpreters have explained it. The word ■■■■■ (ruach, “spirit”) must, I believe, be understood here as anger, in which sense it is found also in other scriptures.1 The meaning of Zec_6:8, then, is that that company of 1 Jdg_8:3; Ecc_10:4. the invisible host whose mission was toward the north country caused God’s anger to rest on it—i.e., “have carried it thither, and deposited it there (made it to rest upon that people or kingdom) as its abode”; as John says of the unbelieving, “The wrath of God abideth on him.”1 The reason why “the north country” is specially singled out for the region on which God’s anger was already resting, is to be found, perhaps, first of all in the fact that there the first great world-power—namely, the Babylonian—was already overthrown by God’s judgments. Secondly, because it was probably intended as a message of comfort more directly to the restored remnant, to whom the prophet was primarily commissioned to relate the visions—to indicate, namely, that the second great northern world-power, the successor of Babylon, under whose yoke they were then groaning,2 was already the object of God’s anger, and would soon be trodden down under the feet of the horses of God’s war chariot which was being sent forth in that direction.

And, thirdly, as Bredenkamp suggests, God’s wrath is specially spoken of in this last vision as being caused to rest on “the north country,” because not only was it there that the attempt was first made to array a world-empire against God, and where apostasy sought, so to say, to organise and fortify itself; not only did Babylon also, at a later time, become the final antagonist and subduer of God’s people and the destroyer of His Temple, but probably because there, “in the land of Shinar,” the metropolis of world-power, Babylon, the great rival of the city of God—wickedness, as we have seen in the consideration of the last vision, will once again establish itself, and all the forces of evil again for a time be concentrated.

Then God’s judgments shall be fully poured out, and anti-Christian world-power be finally overthrown to make room for the Kingdom of Christ, whom the Father has invested with all power and dominion and glory, “that all nations and languages should serve Him.” His dominion

1 Pusey.

2 Nehemiah 9:36-37.

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is the motive, also, of all God's providential dealings with the nations. "Political changes," as one has expressed it, "are the moving of the shadow on the earth's dial-plate that marks the mighty motions going forward in the heavens"; and however conflicting and confusing to our poor human judgments, they mark but the various stages of a plan and counsel which God formed from eternity. In reference to the four great world-powers, whose successive course was to make up "the times of the Gentiles," we have to note that three of them have already long ago disappeared, in accordance with the clear predictions of Scripture, and the fourth, which (as also foreseen and foretold) was to drag on longest, is now, as is generally agreed by all students of the sure Word of Prophecy, fast approaching its very last phase of existence. We may, therefore, say with confidence that we are on the eve of the most solemn events in the world's history, and are very fast approaching "the day," not only of our own final and complete "redemption" as believers at the manifestation of Christ, but the "set time," when God shall again arise and have mercy upon Zion, and when, through the restoration and blessing of Israel, "the nations shall fear the Name of Jehovah, and all kings of the earth His glory."

4.11. Chapter 10 - The Crowning of Joshua

CHAPTER X THE CLIMAX OF THE VISIONS THE CROWNING OF JOSHUA (Zechariah 6:9-15) The word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Take of them of the captivity, even of Heldai, of Tobijah, and of Jedaiah; and come thou the same day, and go into the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah, whither they are come from Babylon; yea, take of them silver and gold, and make crowns, and set them upon the head of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest; and speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh Jehovah of hosts, saying, Behold, the Man whose name is the Branch: and He shall grow up out of His place; and He shall build the Temple of Jehovah; even He shall build the Temple of Jehovah; and He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne; and He shall be a priest upon His throne; and the counsel of peace shall be between them both. And the crowns shall be to ■■Helem, and to Tobijah, and to Jedaiah, and to ■Hen the son of Zephaniah, for a memorial in the Temple of Jehovah. And they that are far off shall come and build in the Temple of Jehovah; and ye shall know that Jehovah of hosts hath sent Me unto you. And this shall come to pass, if ye will diligently obey the voice of Jehovah your God.

CHAPTER X THE series of eight visions is followed by a very significant symbolical transaction, which must be regarded as the crowning act—the headstone of the rich symbolico-prophetical teaching which was unfolded to the prophet on that memorable night.

It shows us what will follow the banishment of evil from the land, and the overthrow of world-power in the earth, as set forth particularly in the last three visions—namely, the crowning of the true King, the Mediator of Salvation, who shall be “a Priest upon His throne,” and build the true temple of Jehovah, into which not only Israel, but “they that are far off”—the Gentiles—shall have access. To indicate that the visions are now ended, the prophet adopts the usual formula by which the prophets always authenticated that they spake, not of themselves, but as they were moved by the Holy Spirit: “And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying” The whole section divides itself into two parts—the first (Zec_6:9-11) gives the account of the symbolical transaction; and the second (Zec_6:13-15) records the verbal prophecy. The symbolical act was occasioned by the following circumstance: There arrived in Jerusalem, probably on the very morning after the vision, three prominent men as a deputation from the Haggolah, “the Captivity”—that is, from those who were still settled in Babylon, whither they were originally carried “captive”—bringing with them an offering of silver and gold for the Temple, which was then still in building. The sight of these men from “far-off” Babylon, bearing their offering for the Lord’s House, was the occasion of the opening of the prophet’s eyes by the Spirit of God to behold the future glorious Temple, which in Messiah’s time shall be established in Jerusalem as an House of Prayer for all nations, and to which even the Gentile peoples which are “far off” shall flock, bringing their worship and their offerings. The incident recorded in Joh_12:20-33 may in a sense be regarded as parallel to this. There the coming of Andrew and Philip to our Lord with the touching request made in the first instance to the latter of these two disciples by the Greeks who came up to Jerusalem among those who came up to worship at the feast: “Sir, we would see Jesus,” took our Saviour’s mind to the time when “all men,” without distinction of race or nationality, shall be “drawn” unto Him, and to the only possible

way by which this could be brought about. In the temple of His pre-resurrection body, as the Son of David, there was no room for these poor Gentiles. The Son of Man must be lifted up: except the corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. So here the appearance in Jerusalem of these strangers takes the prophet's mind from the Temple they were then building, over the second outer court of which when completed there was the inscription put up in Greek and Latin: "No stranger may enter here on pain of death,"1 to the

1 The interesting discovery in 1871 by Clermont-Ganneau, the learned Oriental archæologist (the same who discovered and translated the inscription of the Moabite Stone), of the block of stone with the Greek version of this inscription, which was actually built into the wall or enclosure of the Second Temple, separating the "Court of the Gentiles" from the "Court of the Women," is now well known. I have myself more than once seen and examined the block with the inscription on it, which, with many other precious archæological treasures, is now in the Constantinople Museum. The actual words of the Greek inscription upon which our Lord Jesus and Paul most probably looked more than once, read, translated, thus: "No stranger born may enter within the circuit of the barrier (τρυφ■κτου) and enclosure (περιβολο■) that is around the sacred court (τ■ ■ερ■ν). And whoever shall be caught there, upon himself be the blame of the death which will consequently follow." Josephus (Antiq. 15. 11. 5), speaking of the enclosures, or Courts of the Temple, which he describes as very spacious and surrounded by cloisters of much grandeur, says: "Thus was the first enclosure. In the midst of which, and not far from it, was the second, to be gone up by a future Temple, which Messiah, the true Prince and Priest, of whom Zerubbabel and Joshua the son of Josedech, were types, would build; which, as already said, shall be an House of Prayer for all nations, and in which those that are "far off"—by which we must understand not only the Jews who were still in the far lands of their "captivity," but the Gentiles, "from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same," as the last post-exilic prophet Malachi predicts—"shall come and build." The symbolical act itself which the prophet is commanded to perform was as follows:

He was to go to the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah, "whither they (i.e., these distinguished strangers) are come from Babylon," as the original words in Zec_6:10 are properly rendered in the Revised Version—Zec_6:14 indicating, as we shall see, that this Josiah, like a true son of Abraham, was a man "given to hospitality," and lodged these strangers in his house as an act of "kindness." Having gone that "same day" to that hospitable house, he was to take some of the silver and gold which they had brought as an offering from those still in Babylon, and make 'ataroth. The word is in the plural, and is rendered in the Authorised Version and in the text of the Revised Version "crowns,"1 some commentators supposing that there were at least two crowns—one made of silver and the other of gold: the first for the high priest, or at any rate as an emblem of the priestly dignity; and the other of royalty. But what follows does not at all agree with this supposition, for the prophet is commanded to put the 'ataroth upon the head of Joshua; and, as Keil and Lange well observe, "You do not put two or more crowns upon the head of one man." Ewald, Hitzig, and others, to few steps; this was encompassed by a stone wall for a partition, with an inscription which forbade any foreigner to go in under pain of death."

How significant, in the light of this fact, are the words of the apostle: "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace who hath made both (i.e., Jew and Gentile) one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition" (Eph_2:13-14).

1 In the margin of the R.V. it is rendered in the singular, “a crown.” meet the supposed difficulty, would interpolate the words “and upon the head of Zerubabbel” in Zechariah 6:11, as if one crown was to be put upon the head of Zerubbabel and the other upon Joshua; but there is no justification whatever for such a free-and-easy method of handling the sacred text, and the interpretation based upon their “reconstruction” only obscures the rich significance and spiritual beauty of the truth set forth in this symbolical transaction.

There is no mention whatever of Zerubbabel in this passage, neither was a silver crown, or indeed any crown, ever worn by the high priest—the priestly mitre being never so designated.1 In fact, the whole significance of the incident lies in the fact that these crowns, or crown, was placed upon the head of Joshua. The plural “’ataroth” is used in Job_31:36 for one crown, and what most probably is meant is a single “splendid royal crown,” consisting of a number of gold and silver twists or circlets woven together. The Verbal Prophecy

Having placed this crown upon the head of Joshua, the prophet was, by the Lord’s command, to deliver to him the following message: “Thus speaketh Jehovah of hosts, saying, Behold the Man whose name is the Branch, and He shall grow up out of His place, and He shall build the Temple of the Lord: even He shall build the Temple of the Lord: and He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne; and He shall be a priest upon His throne; and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.” This is one of the most remarkable and precious Messianic prophecies, and there is no plainer prophetic utterance in the whole Old Testament as to the Person of the promised Redeemer, the offices He was to fill, and the

1 “The silver might have formed a circlet in the crown of gold, as in modern times the iron crown of Lombardy was called iron because it had a plate of iron in its summit, being else of gold and most precious.”—Pusey. In Rev_19:1 &c., our Lord Jesus is spoken of as wearing many crowns (διαδ■ματα πολλ■); but what is probably meant is a diadem composed of, or encircled with, many crowns. mission He was to accomplish. Let us examine the sentence in detail.

■■■■ ■■■■■—■δε ■ ■νθρωπος—Ecce Homo!—“Behold the Man!”—an expression which has become famous and of profound significance, since some five centuries later, in the overruling providence of God, it was used by Pilate on the day when He Who came to bring life into the world was Himself led forth to a death of shame.

Here, however, it is not to the Son of Man in His humiliation, to the “Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief,” that our attention is directed by God Himself, but to the only true Man after God’s own heart—the Man par excellence—the Ideal and Representative of the race, Who, after having for our salvation worn the crown of thorns, shall, as the reward of His sufferings, be “crowned with glory and honour,” and have all things put in subjection under His feet.

“Behold the Man!” “Behold My Servant!” (Isa_42:1, Isa_52:13), “Behold thy King!” (Zec_9:9), “Behold your God!” (Isa_40:9): thus variously, as calling attention to the different aspects of the character of the same blessed Person, is this word “Behold” used by God Himself.

“Behold the Man!”—the words are indeed addressed to Joshua, but by no possibility can they be made to apply to him as the subject, as modern Jews and some rationalistic Christian interpreters seek to do.1

1 Rashi, Aben Ezra, and Kimchi assert that “the Man, the Branch.” is Zerubbabel; but, for obvious controversial reasons, they have departed from the older received interpretation, as is seen from Targum of Jonathan, where the passage (Zec_6:12) is paraphrased thus: “Behold the Man; Messiah is His Name. He will be revealed, and He will become great and build the Temple of God.” The Messianic interpretation is also defended with great force by Abarbanel, who thus decisively refutes the interpretation adopted by the great trio of Jewish commentators, Rashi, Aben Ezra, and Kimchi. He says, “Rashi has written that the words, ‘Behold the Man Whose Name is the Branch,’ have by some been interpreted of the Messiah.” He here means Jonathan, whose interpretation he did not receive, for he adds that the building here spoken of refers altogether to the Second Temple; but I wish that I could ask them, if this prophecy refers to the Second Temple and Zerubabbel, why it said, “The Man Whose Name is the Branch,” “and He shall grow up from beneath Him.” Surely we know that every man grows up to manhood, and even to old age and Joshua himself knew of a certainty that that which was set forth by the symbolical act of his being crowned, and the great prophecy contained in the words which followed, could not refer to himself.

Perhaps if it had been Zerubbabel—who was a prince of the House of David—who had been so crowned, and to whom the words had been addressed, there might have been some shadow of ground for such a mistake; but Joshua, as priest, never could wear a crown, nor sit and rule upon a throne, since as long as the old Dispensation lasted the priesthood and royalty were, by God’s appointment, apportioned to different tribes, and no true prophet would ever think or speak of any one but a son of David as having a right to sit and rule on a throne in Jerusalem. This, in all probability, was the reason why the crown was placed on the head, not of Zerubbabel, but of Joshua. But Zechariah, who was a priest-prophet, and Joshua, to whom the words are addressed, knew well that there were pre-hoary hairs. Rashi, perceiving this objection, has interpreted this to mean that He shall be of the royal seed; but this is not correct, for the word ■■■■■■■■■■ (“from beneath Him”) teaches nothing about the royal family. . . . But, at all events, I should like to ask them, if these words be spoken of Zerubbabel, why does the prophet add that “He shall build the Temple of the Lord: even He shall build the Temple of the Lord.” Why this repetition to express one single event? The commentators have got no answer but this, “It is to confirm the matter.” But, if this be the case, it would be better to repeat the words three or four times, for then the confirmation would have been greater still. I should further ask them how they can interpret of Zerubbabel those words, “He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne”; “for he (Zerubbabel) never ruled in Jerusalem, and never sat upon the throne of the kingdom, but only occupied himself in building the Temple, and afterwards returned to Babylon” (Abarbanel, Comment. in loc.).

Dr. Alexander McCaul says on this passage, “The prophecy promises these particulars: first, ‘He shall be a priest upon His throne’; secondly, ‘He shall build the Temple of the Lord’; thirdly, ‘He shall bear the glory (■■■, the “majesty”), and shall sit and rule upon His throne, and they that are far oft shall come and build the Temple of the Lord.’ ” It is not necessary to point out the well-known passages which prove that these four particulars are all features of Messiah’s character, and in that of no one else. It is also easy to identify these features in the character of Jesus of Nazareth. He is represented in the New Testament as a High Priest, as a King; and it is certain that the Gentiles, who were then afar off, have acknowledged His dignity; and, as for building a Temple, He did this also. (See Joh_2:19; Eph_2:22.) dictions in the former prophets that

in a time to come the Redeemer, whom God promised to raise up in Israel out of the House of David, would combine in His own Person the two great mediatorial offices of Priest and King, and be at the same time the last and greatest Prophet, through Whom God would reveal Himself more fully and perfectly to man. Thus, for instance, in Psalms 110:1 &c., it is predicted of the theocratic King, Who "shall strike through kings in the day of His wrath," and "judge among nations"—

"The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent. Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek."

Now, of this royal Priest, whose priesthood was to be "for ever," Joshua was already told in the Zechariah 3:1 &c., that both he and his "fellows" of the Aaronic family were anshei mopheth—literally, "men that are a sign," i.e., types—so that there could be no shadow of a possibility of his understanding this new and fuller message about the Priest-King in Zechariah 6:1 &c., as referring to himself, beyond the fact that in his official capacity as high priest he (like all the other priests of the House of Aaron) foreshadowed the Person and office of the One who should be the true and only Mediator between God and man. To return for a moment to the symbolical action which preceded the delivery of the verbal message, there is truth in Pusey's observation, that the act of placing the crown on the head of Joshua, the high priest, pictured not only the union of the offices of Priest and King in the person of the Messiah, but that He should be King, being first our High Priest. "Joshua was already high priest; being such, the kingly crown was added to him. It says in act what the Apostle says in plain words, that Christ Jesus, being found in fashion as a man, humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him." But to remove any possibility of mistake or doubt, "the Man" to whom the attention of Joshua is directed away from himself is introduced by the well-known Messianic title, which in the Book of Zechariah is used as a proper name of the promised Deliverer.

"Behold the man Tsemach—The Branch—is His Name."

We have fully entered into this point in the exposition of Zec_3:8, and have there shown also how, under this title, the Messiah is brought before us in the Old Testament prophecy in the four different aspects of His character to which reference has already been made above—namely, as the King (Jer_23:5-6), the Servant (Zec_3:8), the Man (Zec_4:12), and as "the Branch of Jehovah" (Isaiah 4:2): which answer so beautifully to the fourfold portraiture of the Christ of history which the Spirit of God has, through the Evangelists, given us in the four different Gospels. We therefore pass on to the next clause.

"And He shall grow up out of His place"—umitachtav itsmach1—literally, "He shall branch up from under Him"—from His own root or stock.

First, as to the race or nation, He shall be of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Judah, and of the family of David; and, secondly, as to the soil or country, it shall be "Immanuel's Land," and out of Bethlehem Ephratha, that this glorious Branch shall spring up, as foretold by the former prophets. At the same time it is true, as Hengstenberg observes, that the expression presupposes the lowliness from which He will first rise by degrees to glory. "Thus," to quote another writer, "in this one significant sentence the lowly origin of the Messiah on the one hand, and His royal dignity on the other, are both not obscurely referred to."2 From His glorious Person and family, or place of

His origin, as “the Man,” or “Son of David,” our thoughts are next directed to the great work He is to accomplish:

“And He shall build the Temple of Jehovah; even He (or, literally, He Himself) shall build the Temple of Jehovah.”

1 The only other place where “umitachtav” is found in the Old Testament is Exo_10:23, where it means “out of his own place.”

2 Dr. Wright. The repetition and the strong emphasis laid upon the pronoun “He” being intended as an affirmation both of the certainty of the fact, and the greatness of the task to be accomplished by Him. Joshua the priest and Zerubbabel the prince were then engaged in the building of a Temple, and one primary object in the visions and prophecies of Zechariah—even as it was of Haggai—was to encourage them in the task which was now nearing completion. But, perhaps as a reward for his faithfulness, or as an encouragement to those who sorrowed because of the apparent insignificance of the House they were then able to build,1 the prophet is commissioned of God to reveal to Joshua that another, greater than he and his companion, but whom they in their respective offices had the honour to foreshadow—He who would combine in His own Person the dignities of priesthood and royalty—would build the Temple of Jehovah, of which also that they were now engaged in building was a type and pledge.

But, we may ask, what Temple is it which the Messiah, according to this and other predictions, was to build? In answer to this question we would say first of all that we cannot exclude from this prophecy the reference to a literal Temple in Jerusalem, which shall, after Israel’s national conversion, be built under the superintendence of their Messiah-King, and which will, during the millennial period, be “the House of Jehovah” on earth, to which “the nations will flow” and many peoples go, in order that they may be taught His ways, and learn to walk in His paths, and which will be literally “An House of Prayer” and worship “for all nations.”2 But there is something greater and deeper in this prophecy than the reference to a future material Temple on earth, however glorious that may be. The Temple in Jerusalem was the outward visible symbol of communion between God and His people, which in the past has never been perfectly realised. And let us remember, mysterious 1 Ezra 3:10-13; Hag_2:3; Zec_4:10.

2 Isa_2:2-4, Isa_56:6-7; Mic_4:1-7; Ezekiel 40:1-49, Ezekiel 41:1-26, Ezekiel 42:1-20, Ezekiel 43:1-27. and wonderful as it may appear to us, that not only is the blessedness of man created in the image of God conditional on communion with his Maker, but the infinite and ever-blessed God, the Father of spirits, seeks communion with man. Indeed, it might be said that this was the chief object which God had in creating man—that he might be a temple to contain His perfection and fulness; that the mind with which He had endowed him might comprehend and admire His infinite wisdom, and his heart respond to His love. In the Garden of Eden we get a beautiful glimpse of what was intended as the beginning of a fellowship between God and man, which was to go on and unfold through limitless ages. But soon sin—that hateful and accursed thing in God’s universe—entered, and communion between God and man was interrupted. The outward token of this was the banishment of the man from the garden, and the placing of the cherubim with the “flaming sword which turned every way” to bar the way against his re-entering that blessed abode. But the heart of God yearned for man, and in His infinite wisdom and grace He devised a means by which His banished be not for ever an outcast from Him.

He chose Israel, whom He suffered to approach to Him through the sprinkling of blood, which in His mind pointed to the blood of the everlasting covenant which the Messiah, who was to be “led as a lamb to the slaughter,” was to shed as an atonement for sin; and to them His proclamation went forth, “Make Me a tabernacle, that I may dwell among you.” The tabernacle was built, and then the Temple on Mount Moriah; but soon, alas! this Temple, too, was defiled, and sin in its progress made such rapid strides that it penetrated even into the Holy of Holies, and God was obliged entirely to withdraw His manifest presence even from His chosen dwelling-place.

After the destruction of the first Temple by the Chaldeans under Nebuchadnezzar (2Ki_25:1 &c.) the Jews built another one after their restoration from Babylon; but the manifest presence of Jehovah no more returned to it; for Rabbi Samuel Bar Juni, in the Talmud (Yoma, f. 21, c. 2), and Rabbis Solomon and Kimchi, in their comment on Hag_1:8, all agree that five things that were in the first Temple were wanting in the second—i.e., the ark, wherein were the tables of the Covenant, and the cherubim that covered it; the fire that used to come down from heaven to devour the sacrifices; the Shekinah Glory; the gift of prophecy, or the Holy Ghost; and the miraculous Urim and Thummim. But before that Temple was destroyed by the Romans, another Temple, not built by the hands of man, arose, and in it dwelt the fulness of the Godhead bodily (Col_2:9). One came, and in sight of the magnificent structure which had then become more a “den of thieves” than a “house of prayer,” proclaimed, “Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up again; and this He spake of the Temple of His body.” Who was this who thus spoke but the promised Messiah, with whose advent the presence of Jehovah should again return to His people, as is implied in His very name Immanuel, which being interpreted means “God with us.” Behold, “the tabernacle of God is with men” once more, “and He doth dwell with them.” For “the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us; and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” (Joh_1:14).

Behold, therefore, O Christian, in the Person of the Redeemer Himself, the fulfilment of these words, “He shall build the Temple of Jehovah,” for in Him we have the fullest manifestation of the Divine glory, and “in Christ Jesus” is the true meeting-place where communion between God and man is consummated. But there is another Temple of which the Messiah Himself is actually the builder, and in which we may see a fulfilment of this and other prophecies.

“Thou art Peter,” were the words of Jesus on a certain solemn occasion, “and upon this rock (i.e., the confession Peter had just uttered, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God”) I will build My Church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.” And what is the Church but the Temple of the living God, of which the Tabernacle and material Temple in Jerusalem were but types, and in which His fulness and glory shall be eternally manifested? Thus the Apostle Peter, addressing primarily Jewish believers, says: “Ye also as living stones are built up a spiritual House”; and in a yet fuller manner, Paul, addressing Gentile believers, writes: “Ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God, being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the Chief Corner-stone; in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God in the Spirit” (Eph_2:19-22, R.V.). And how glorious is this Temple which “the Man Whose Name is the Branch” is now, by His Spirit through His servants, building! It is He Who, as the Eternal Word, built the material Temple of the Universe, which is filling the minds of men in successive generations more and more with

wonder and astonishment. What a spectacle, for instance, do the starry heavens present to us! The more we contemplate them, the more we are lost in wonder at their immeasurable immensity, and the more do our hearts go up in reverent adoration of the God Whose eternity, glory, power, and wisdom they ceaselessly proclaim in language intelligible to every human heart. But the spiritual Temple which He is now engaged in building, when completed, will astonish even the admiring angels, and will throughout eternity show forth to principalities and powers in heavenly places “the manifold wisdom” as well as the infinite grace of God (Eph_3:10). But to proceed to the next sentence:

“And He shall bear the glory, or regal majesty.”1 1 The word ■■■—h■d—is used in different significations, but it is especially The pronoun is again emphatic: He Himself, and none other, shall build the Temple of Jehovah, and He Himself shall bear the glory, or regal majesty, as none other has borne it. He is peerless in His work and in His reward. His is the glory of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Already, as the result of His sufferings, having by the grace of God tasted death for every man, He is “exalted and extolled, and lifted very high,” “crowned with honour and glory”; but this prophecy speaks especially of the royal majesty which He shall bear when He shall come forth again from the presence of the Father—and, all His enemies having been made a footstool for His feet, He shall sit down upon His own throne as the theocratic King of Israel.

Then, indeed, upon His head there shall be “many crowns”; for, not only will God the Father invest Him with glory and majesty, but men too, especially His own nation, will glorify Him; “and He,” as the true Son of David, the One Whose right it is to reign, “shall be for a throne of glory to His Father’s house: and they shall hang upon Him all the glory of His Father’s house, the offspring and the issue, every small vessel, from the vessels of cups to the vessels of flagons” (Isaiah 22:23-24). We come to the next sentence of the prophecy:

“And He shall sit and rule upon His throne,” i.e., He shall not only possess the honour and dignity of a king; He shall not be “a constitutional” monarch, who reigns but does not rule; but He shall Himself exercise all royal power and authority. Yes, the rule of King-Messiah will be absolute and autocratic, but autocracy will be safe employed to describe royal majesty (Jer_22:18; 1Ch_29:25; Daniel 11:21). Pusey observes: “This word is almost always used of the special glory of God, and then, although seldom, of the majesty of those on whom God confers majesty, as Moses or Joshua (Numbers 27:20), or the glory of the kingdom given to Solomon” (1Ch_29:25). It is used of the glory or majesty to be laid on the ideal King in Psalms 21:5—which the Jews themselves interpreted of the Messiah. and beneficent in the hands of the Holy One, Who is infinite in wisdom, power, and love. The result of His blessed rule will be that—

“In His days shall the righteous flourish; And abundance of peace till the moon be no more.

He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, And from the River unto the ends of the earth.

Yea, all kings shall fall down before Him;

All nations shall serve Him.

He shall judge the poor of the people, He shall save the children of the needy, And shall break in pieces the oppressor; For He shall deliver the needy when he crieth, And the poor that hath no

helper.

He shall redeem their soul from oppression and violence: And precious shall their blood be in His sight. . . . And men shall be blessed in Him:

All nations shall call Him blessed."

(Psalms 72:1-20) The character of His blessed rule is further explained in the next sentence:

"And He shall be a priest upon His throne"

How full of significance is this one sentence of Holy Writ! As is the manner of Zechariah, we have in these four Hebrew words a terse summary of nearly all that the former prophets have spoken of Messiah and His work.

Here is the true Melchizedek, Who is at the same time King of Righteousness, King of Salem, which is King of Peace, and the great High Priest, whose priesthood, unlike the Aaronic, abideth "for ever." "He shall be a Priest upon His throne."

Now He royally exercises His high priestly office as the Advocate with the Father, and only Mediator between God and man, at the right hand of God in heaven. From thence He shall come forth again to take possession of His throne, and to commence His long-promised reign on the earth. But, even when as King he exercises His sovereign rule, He will still be "a Priest upon His throne," who will have compassion upon the ignorant and erring (Heb_5:2), and cause His righteous severity to go forth only against the wilfully froward and rebellious. For our Lord Jesus is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever"; and that which will eternally constitute His chief glory will be, not His power, but His grace, manifested once in His laying down His life—a ransom for many—and since in His priestly mediatorial rule, whether in heaven or on earth.

"And the counsel of peace shall be between them both." The expression atsath shalom, "counsel of peace," means not merely "peace," for if that alone were meant, the simple idiom ■■■■■ ■■■■■■■, vehayah shalom, "there shall be peace between them both," would be used. The word used here signifies a counsel planning or procuring peace for some other than those who counsel. But who are "the twain" who thus devise peace for man between them?

Some commentators consider that the offices of Priest and King are alluded to, but the phraseology naturally constrains us to think of persons, not of things or abstract offices. The explanation advocated by Hengstenberg, and adopted by Koehler, is a probable and reasonable one—namely, that "the reference is to the two offices of Priest and King combined in the Person of Messiah, and that the prophecy speaks of a plan devised by Messiah in His double character, whereby peace and salvation should be secured for the people of God," and on the earth during His reign. "This fact," observes Dr. Wright, "agrees with the New Testament statements in which the angelic choirs are represented announcing 'Peace on earth' as one of the results of Christ's birth; and with our Lord's own words, 'Peace I leave with you—My peace I give unto you,' the full realisation of which is exhibited in the final vision of the Book of Revelation." But I am personally inclined to think that another view, which is held by many scholars, is the right one—namely, that "the two" are Jehovah and the Messiah, or "Jesus and the Father."1 "It is clear, no doubt, that the

1 Pusey. pronoun ‘His’ in the expression ‘His throne’ is used twice in Zec_6:13 in reference to the Messiah, and cannot well be regarded as relating to Jehovah. The royal dignity of the Messiah is specially referred to, inasmuch as the Messiah, as King, would have power to perform the work which He had to do. But the fact that the pronoun in the phrase ‘His throne’ cannot refer to Jehovah, does not prove that Jehovah cannot be one of the two persons referred to at the close of the verse. Two, and only two, persons are referred to in the verse—namely, the Lord and the Lord’s Christ; and many eminent scholars—as Vitringa, Reuss, Pusey, and Jerome—have considered that these are the two Persons to whom reference is made in the clause, ‘the counsel of peace shall be between them both.’

“The prophecy indeed is closely connected with Psalms 110:1 &c., where a ‘counsel’ between the Lord and His Christ is plainly referred to, and where Messiah is predicted as King and Priest. This is the natural meaning, and the way in which the words were no doubt interpreted by the hearers of the prophet Zechariah.”1

“In Christ,” to quote another writer, “all is perfect harmony. There is a counsel of peace between Him and the Father whose Temple He builds. The will of the Father and the Son is one. Both have one will of love toward us, the salvation of the world, bringing forth peace through our redemption. God the Father so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life; and God the Son is our peace, who hath made both one, that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, and came and preached peace to them which were afar off, and to them that were nigh” (Eph_2:14, Eph_2:16-17). In all fulness, however, the blessed fruit of this “counsel of peace,” and the “thoughts of salvation” between the Father and the Son, will only be realised by Israel and the nations of the earth during the period of Messiah’s reign, and by the one Church of the living God through

1 Dr. Wright. the eternity that is to follow. Then—in the limitless ages to come—“He will show the exceeding riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Him unto a dispensation of the fulness of the times, to sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens, and the things upon the earth . . . according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His will” (Eph_1:9-11, Eph_2:7, R.V.).

We now come to Zec_6:14. First let me give a word of explanation in reference to the difference of the names here as compared with Zec_6:10. As to ■■■■■, ■■Helem, it is the same as ■■■■■■■, ■■Heldai, the difference being probably occasioned by a very slight scribal error of running two separate Hebrew letters into one. “■Hen” is not a proper name at all, but an appellative, meaning “the favour,” or “grace,” and is rightly rendered in the margin of the R.V. and by all scholars, “and for the kindness of the son of Zephaniah.” This is very beautiful. The crowns were to be deposited in the Temple of God as a memorial, not only of these three distinguished strangers who had brought their own and their brethren’s offerings for the House of God, but as a memorial also of “the kindness” of this true son of Abraham, who, as stated at the beginning of this exposition, was evidently a man given to hospitality, and received these three strangers into his house. It was apparently a small service rendered to the cause of God, but it was very precious to Him because it was doubtless done for His Name’s sake. And so many a little and apparently insignificant deed done out of love for our Lord Jesus—yea, even the cup of cold water given in

the name of a disciple—is treasured up in His memory, and shall in no wise lose its reward—"For God is not unrighteous to forget your work, and labour of love, which ye have showed toward His Name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister" (Heb_6:10). "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Gal_6:10). But while the crowns were to be thus deposited in the Temple as a memorial of these four men, they were also to serve as a pledge and earnest of the fulfilment of the prophecy, and of the realisation of the symbolical action on which it was based: "And they that are far off shall come and build in the Temple of the Lord."

These words not only refer to those Jews who were still in the far lands of the dispersion, who in Messiah's time would be gathered, and take their share in the building of the future Temple, as some have explained, but are a glorious promise, as I have already stated at the beginning, of the conversion of the Gentiles, and of the time when all nations would walk in the light of Jehovah. "It is probable," as another writer suggests, "that the great Apostle of the Gentiles may have had this prophecy in his view when he reminded his converts in Ephesus that now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off have become nigh through the blood of Christ (Eph_2:13)." On the other hand, Peter probably understood the similar expressions to which he gave utterance as referring (primarily) to the dispersed of Israel. "The promise is to you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Act_2:39). But again, I repeat, that whatever fulfilment of the words we may already see, the full realisation of them will not be until Messiah sits and reigns a "Priest upon His throne" over Israel. Then, when the law shall go forth out of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem, and converted Israel goes forth declaring among the peoples the wonderful works of God, shall the nations which are still "afar off" learn His ways and walk in His paths, and come with their tribute of worship and service to His Temple.

"And ye shall know that Jehovah of hosts has sent Me unto you." The fulfilment, or realisation, of what had here been predicted in symbol and verbal prophecy would be, so to say, the Divine authentication of the Message and Messenger, and "Israel will perceive that the speaker had been sent to them by Jehovah of hosts." Keil, however, from whom I quote the last sentence, contends that it is not the prophet who thus speaks, but the Angel of Jehovah. "For although in what precedes, only the prophet, and not the Angel of Jehovah, has appeared as acting and speaking, we must not change the 'sending' into 'speaking' here, or understand the formula, or expression, used in any other sense here than in Zec_2:8-11 and Zec_4:9. We must therefore assume that just as the words of the prophet pass imperceptibly into words of Jehovah, so here they pass into words of the Angel of Jehovah, who says, concerning Himself, that Jehovah hath sent Him." The final sentence of the prophecy reads: " And this shall come to pass (vehayah: 'this shall be') if (or when) ye diligently obey (lit., 'if hearkening ye shall hearken'—i.e., 'give heed with a view to obey') the voice of Jehovah your God." Not that the fulfilment of the prophecy will be conditional on their obedience—that is, conditional on the will and unchangeable purpose of God alone—but their participation in it depends on their faith and obedience. "Because He had said, 'And ye shall know that Jehovah of hosts hath sent Me unto you,' " observes an old writer. "He warns them that the fruit of that coming will reach to those only who should hear God, and with ardent mind join themselves to His Name. For as many as believed in Him were made sons of God, but the rest were cast into outer darkness." The whole Hebrew phrase, I may point out, is taken bodily from Deu_28:1, where it is rendered: "And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the

voice of the Lord thy God”—then all the blessings promised to them under the old covenant would be enjoyed by them. Under the law, however, though they were very ready to promise, they had no power “diligently to hearken” or to obey the voice of Jehovah their God, and instead of enjoying the blessings they came under the curse of the law. But what was impossible under the law shall be realised under grace. Then, as one great blessing of the New Covenant under which they shall be brought, the law of God shall be put in their inward parts and written in their hearts, or, as we read in Jer_32:38-41, “They shall be My people, and I will be their God; and I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear Me for ever, for the good of them, and their children after them: and I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; and I will put My fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from Me. Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with My whole heart and with My whole soul.” And then, also—after Israel shall yield ready and joyful obedience to the voice of Jehovah their God—“shall come to pass” what is stated in the first part of the last verse of the prophecy which we have been considering, and the Gentile nations “that are afar off shall come and build in the Temple of Jehovah.” “And Jehovah shall be King over all the earth: in that day shall Jehovah be One, and His Name One.”

4.12. Chapter 11. - The Negative Answer

CHAPTER XI ADDRESS TO THE DEPUTATION FROM BETHEL ON THE QUESTION OF THE CONTINUED OBSERVANCE OF THE FASTS (A) THE NEGATIVE ANSWER (Zechariah 7:1-14) And it came to pass in the fourth year of King Darius, that the word of Jehovah came unto Zechariah in the fourth day of the ninth month, even in Chislev. Now they of Bethel had sent Sharezer and Regem-melech, and their men, to entreat the favour of Jehovah, and to speak unto the priests of the house of Jehovah of hosts, and to the prophets, saying, Should I weep in the fifth month, separating myself, as I have done these so many years? Then came the word of Jehovah of hosts unto me, saying, Speak unto all the people of the land, and to the priests, saying, When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and in the seventh month, even these seventy years, did ye at all fast unto Me, even to Me? And when ye eat, and when ye drink, do not ye eat for yourselves, and drink for yourselves? Should ye not hear the words which Jehovah cried by the former prophets, when Jerusalem was inhabited and in prosperity, and the cities thereof round about her, and the South and the lowland were inhabited? And the word of Jehovah came unto Zechariah, saying, Thus hath Jehovah of hosts spoken, saying, Execute true judgment, and show kindness and compassion every man to his brother; and oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the sojourner, nor the poor; and let none of you devise evil against his brother in your heart. But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they might not hear. Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which Jehovah of hosts had sent by His Spirit by the former prophets: therefore there came great wrath from Jehovah of hosts. And it came to pass that, as He cried, and they would not hear, so they shall cry, and I will not hear, saith Jehovah of hosts; but I will scatter them with a whirlwind among all nations which they have not known. Thus the land was desolate after them, so that no man passed through nor returned: for they laid the pleasant land desolate.

CHAPTER XI

NEARLY two years had elapsed since that memorable night on which the series of eight visions were shown to the prophet—in which are unfolded, as in a wonderful panorama, the thoughts and purposes of God concerning Israel and the nations from the beginning to the very end of this age—when the word of Jehovah came again to Zechariah. The day, the month, and the year of this divine oracle are clearly given—it was “in the fourth day of the ninth month, even in Chislev” (answering to December), “in the fourth year of King Darius.”1 The occasion when the prophet was inspired to utter this great and comforting prophecy, which stands separate and complete in itself, though going over in plain, verbal prophecy the same line of thought as unfolded by the visions, is clearly stated in Zec_7:1-3. To understand the circumstances which brought about the very significant incident recorded in these verses, we have to remember that the fourth year of Darius was a time when things seemed to go well, and looked promising to the remnant who had returned to the land. Every hindrance to the completion of the building of the Temple had been removed by the royal decree of Darius, as recorded in Ezr_6:1 &c. Even the city of Jerusalem, in spite of the desolations which still prevailed in some of its quarters, and the ruinous condition of its walls, was

beginning to improve and revive, and contained already some fine private residences, as we may judge from Hag_1:4. The question, therefore, naturally agitated the minds of

1 Compare Zec_1:7. From Ezr_6:15 we learn that it was just about two years before the final completion of the Temple, which they were then building. the people whether, with these signs of apparent prosperity the restored remnant should continue to observe the days of national sorrow and fasting which had been instituted in commemoration of the destruction of the Temple, and the desolation of the land at the commencement of the seventy years' captivity. The initiative in bringing this point to an issue was taken by the inhabitants of Bethel, who sent a deputation of two of their prominent citizens, "with his men"1 (i.e., attendants or retainers of Regem-melech—he being probably a man of importance), "to entreat the favour of Jehovah, and to speak unto the priests of the house of Jehovah of hosts, and to the prophets, saying, Should I (or, 'Shall I continue to') weep in the fifth month, separating myself as I have done these so many years?"

One or two further explanatory notes are necessary on these first verses before we can proceed.

(1) It will be noticed that, together with the Revised Version, and almost all modern scholars, we discard the rendering given of the first line of the 2nd verse in the Authorised Version, namely, "When they sent unto the House of God" Now, Bethel does mean literally "House of God"; but it is never used of the Temple, but only and always of the well-known town of Ephraim, one of the great centres of the Israelitish idolatrous worship set up by Jeroboam the son of Nebat.2 Some commentators, with the Septuagint and some of the Jewish interpreters, have taken Bethel in the accusative, and have rendered the words, "When they (the Jews) sent to Bethel"; but no reason can be assigned for such a deputation being sent to Bethel, since the "priests of the House of Jehovah of Hosts," which all agree must mean the Temple, "and the prophets," whom the deputation was to consult, most

1 The rendering "their men" in the Authorised and Revised Versions is not accurate according to the Massoretic text.

2 ■■■■■■ ■■■■ ("Beth Jehovah") is used altogether about two hundred and fifty-nine times, and ■■■■■■■■ ■■■■ ("Beth Elohim"), or ■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■ ("Beth ha-Elohim"), about fifty times in the Hebrew Scriptures of the Temple; but ■■■ ■■■■ ("Bethel") not once. certainly lived in and about Jerusalem. Besides, considering its previous history as a centre of Israelitish idolatry, the Jews were not in the least likely to have gone, or sent there, "to entreat the face of Jehovah." On the other hand, it is not only in accord with Bible history, but there is a special significance in a deputation coming from Bethel to Jerusalem. According to the original division of the land by Joshua, Bethel fell to Benjamin (Jos_18:11-13); but at the great schism from the House of David under Jeroboam it went with that part of Benjamin which fell away with the northern tribes, and became the chief centre, as already stated, of the idolatrous worship set up by the son of Nebat, who built there a "sanctuary," or temple, in imitation of, and as a rival to, the Temple in Jerusalem, as well as a royal palace for his own residence (Amo_7:13).

It was overthrown and became desolate in the overthrow, first of the northern kingdom of Israel by Assyria, and again in the subsequent overthrow of Judah, and the desolation of the whole land by the Babylonians; but it was rebuilt after the partial restoration at the conclusion of the seventy years' captivity, and a considerable number of the former inhabitants, mixed probably with some

from the other tribes, once again settled in it (Ezr_2:28; Neh_7:32, Neh_11:31).

Now, the special significance in this deputation from Bethel to the “House of Jehovah” in Jerusalem lies in the fact that it is, as J. P. Lange and Dr. Wright well point out, an evidence “that the lessons taught by the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities were not lost upon the men of Bethel.” The men who had formerly belonged to the northern ten-tribed kingdom no longer cherished hopes of a separate destiny, nor looked to a different centre than their brethren of Judah. “Notwithstanding the many sacred memories connected with their city, and the fact that it had been the seat of a Temple in the days of the Israelitish kingdom, to which the tribes of Israel had resorted in numbers, no attempt was now made on their part to dispute the legitimate right to Jerusalem being regarded as the only place where the sacrifices and services enjoined by the precepts of the Mosaic Law could be offered.”

(2) Owing to the omission of the particle ■■■ (eth) after Bethel, which in such cases usually indicates the accusative, Ewald, Koehler, Dr. Wright, and others have taken the clause, “Sharezer Regem-melech and his men,” as in apposition with Bethel, and have translated Zec_7:2 thus: “And Bethel, that is Sharezer Regem-melech and his men, sent to entreat Jehovah,” etc.; but we agree with Keil that there is something so harsh and inflexible in the assumption of such an apposition as this, that, in spite of the omission of the particle, it is preferable to regard the names as in the accusative, even as the Revised Version has done.

(3) As to the names of these men, it is a rather striking fact that, while those who came as a deputation from Babylon with the offering to the House of the Lord, in Zec_6:9-15, bore names all expressive of some relationship to Jehovah, those who came from Bethel have foreign names which originally were associated with the false worship of their oppressors. ■■■■■■■■■ (Sharetser) was the name of one of the parricide sons of Sennacherib (Isa_37:38), and also of one of the princes of Babylon who desolated Jerusalem and destroyed the Temple (Jer_39:3-13). The full Assyrian name was Nergal-Sarusur, or Nergal-Shar-Ezer, which, according to Schrader, means “May Nergal protect the king.” Here Nergal, the name of the Assyrian false god, is dropped, but the prayer, originally idolatrous, is retained.

■■■■■ (Regem) is found as a proper name in 1Ch_2:47. Gesenius explains Regem-melech as signifying “friend of the king.” It may originally also have been an Assyrian name, though Regem has not been found in that language, but has been explained from the Arabic. But it is probable that, as in the case of Daniel, Hananiah, and Mishael, so these men also, apart from the names bestowed upon them by their Gentile conqueror, in whose service they stood, had also their proper Jewish names; and the reason why their Babylonian or Assyrian names are given here is probably to mark them out as men of importance, who very likely held positions of office in the Court of Assyria or Babylon.

(4) The deputation, after entreating the favour of the Lord by presenting gifts and offerings,1 was instructed to address the inquiry “to the priests of the House of Jehovah of hosts,” because according to the Mosaic institution they in all such matters were to teach Jacob God’s judgments, and Israel His law (Deu_33:8-10); or, as we have it in the beautiful picture in Mal_2:5-7, “the priest’s lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth.” That they should also consult “the prophets”—that is, Haggai and Zechariah—was very natural, since by their ministry, and its immediate powerful effect in rousing the people to the long-neglected task of

rebuilding the Temple, they had indeed proved and authenticated themselves in the sight of the whole people to be “Jehovah’s messengers in Jehovah’s message” (Hag_1:13).

(5) The question itself was, “Shall I (i.e., the city of Bethel) weep in the fifth month, separating myself (■■■■■■■—hinnazer—like the Nazarite ‘who separated himself,’ or abstained from strong drink and other bodily indulgences),2 as I have done these many years?” The fast of the fifth month, which is the month of Ab, answering to August, is still observed by the Jews on the ninth day, in celebration of the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar; but, according to the Talmud and Jewish historians, the following list of calamities all happened on

1 The phrase ■■■■■ ■■■■■ (■■hilah penei) primarily signifies to “stroke the face,” hence to entreat favour, or to appease, or propitiate. It is used of entreating the favour of the rich with gifts (Job_11:19; Pro_19:6; Psa_45:12), and is often used in reference to God. No intelligent reader is, of course, in any danger of misunderstanding these anthropomorphic expressions in the Bible when applied to God.

2 Fasting and mourning were generally accompanied with weeping (comp. Jdg_20:26; 1Sa_1:7; 2Sa_1:12; Ezr_10:1; Neh_1:4, etc.). the same day, namely: (1) On that day the decree went forth from God in the wilderness that the people should not enter the land because of their unbelief; (2) on the very same day of the destruction of the First Temple by the Chaldeans, the Second Temple also was destroyed by the Romans; (3) on that day, after the rising under Bar Cochba, the city of Bethar was taken, “in which were thousands and myriads of Israel, and they had a great king whom all Israel and the greatest of the wise men thought was King Messiah”; but (4) he fell into the hands of the Gentiles, and they were all put to death, and the affliction was great, like as it was in the desolation of the Sanctuary; (5) and lastly, on that day “the wicked Turnus Rufus, who is devoted to punishment, ploughed up the (hill of the) Sanctuary, and the parts round about it, to fulfil that which was said by Micah, ‘Zion shall be ploughed as a field.’ ”1

Here, however, the inquiry doubtless had reference only to the fast in celebration of the destruction of the First Temple by the Chaldeans, the continued observance of which, now that the new Temple was almost finished, might seem to them almost incongruous, especially as the prophets proclaimed that the restoration of the Temple would be a sign that Jehovah had once more restored His favour to His people. The question, as Keil observes, also involved the prayer “that the Lord would continue permanently to bestow upon His people the favour which He had restored to them, and not only to bring to completion the restoration of the Holy Place, but accomplish generally the glorification of Israel which had been predicted by the earlier prophets”; or, to quote another writer, “the question was in some respects similar to that asked by the Apostles of the Lord after His resurrection, ‘Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the Kingdom to Israel?’ ”2 The Lord’s answer to this question through the mouth of His prophet divides itself into two parts—the first, 1 See Maimonides yad ha-chazaqah, Hilchoth Taanith, c. 5.

2 Dr. C. H. H. Wright. which may be described as the negative part of the answer, being contained in Zec_7:4-14; and the second, or positive part, in Zec_8:1 &c. Each of these two larger divisions is, however, again subdivided into two sections. The whole answer, thus falling into four parts, each of which begins with the words, “And the word of Jehovah of hosts came to me, saying” (Zec_7:4, Zec_7:8, Zec_8:1, Zec_8:18)—the usual formula, as has already been pointed out, by which the prophets authenticated their messages as being not of, or from, themselves, but from

the mouth of the Lord.

We said at the beginning that, though these two chapters are a prophecy separate and complete in itself, it will be found on close examination to go over the same line of thought as unfolded in the series of visions in the first six chapters. The outstanding feature of this prophecy, even as it was of the visions, is that they are debharim tobhim, debharim nichummim (“good words, even comforting words,” Zec_1:13). In both there are the consolatory anouncements that “Jehovah is jealous for Zion with great jealousy,” and will “return to Jerusalem with mercies”; and that not only would the people be restored and the land be rebuilt, but that He Himself would dwell in the midst of Jerusalem, which should be known henceforth as the “city of truth” and “the holy mountain”—the centre to which the Gentile nations shall come to seek Jehovah to be taught in His way.1 But as the consolatory messages in the visions are introduced by a call to repentance, and the reminder that all their sorrows and troubles were occasioned by their disobedience to the words which Jehovah had spoken to them through the former prophets (Zec_1:1-6), so also the wonderful prophecy of the future blessing of Israel and the future glory of Jerusalem in Zec_8:1 &c. is preceded by what is practically also a call to repentance in Zec_7:4-14, and the exhortation to give heed at last to the words of the same “former prophets.”

1 Comp. Zec_1:14 with Zec_8:2; Zec_1:16 with Zec_8:3; Zec_2:4 with Zec_8:4-5; Zec_2:10-11 with Zec_8:3, Zec_8:20-23. But let us now examine in detail the different parts of the answer. The first “word of Jehovah” which the prophet was commissioned to speak not only to the deputation from Bethel, but to “all the people of the land” whose thought the men of Bethel expressed, “and to the priests” who, instead of answering to the ideal “messengers of Jehovah of hosts” (Mal_3:5), and being able to give answer in such an emergency, had, in Haggai’s and Zechariah’s time, sunk to the same level as the people—was designed to show the worthlessness before God of mere outward acts, or forms of repentance and piety, if the inner spirit of them be wanting.

“When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth month and in the seventh, even these seventy years, did ye at all fast unto Me, even Me?” In these words the Lord overthrows the false notion which they may have entertained, which certainly the Jews now do entertain, that fasting in itself is a meritorious act. He admits that they had fasted long, “seventy years,” and often, not only in the fifth but also “in the seventh month,” which was the fast appointed for the murder of Gedaliah, which completed the calamities of Jerusalem, and led to the migration of the little remnant to Egypt for fear of the vengeance of the Chaldeans.

Moreover, they were very thorough and earnest about their fasts; they not only abstained from food (as in Jewish fasts still, which are one unbroken abstinence from food and drink from sunset to sunset), but they accompanied their fasting with mourning and lamentations—the word used in the Zec_7:5 being used for mourning for the dead or for special great public calamities—and yet their observance of these fasts was a matter of utter indifference to God. Why? Because even in their fasting and mourning they were centred on themselves; they fasted not unto God. It was not the outward sign and accompaniment of true sorrow and repentance for sin, but of sorrow for their calamities. They were self-imposed, to begin with; and they regarded them, not only as intrinsically meritorious, but as an end in themselves rather than as the means of turning away from self and all idea of self-merit to the grace of God. And not only in their fasts but also in their feasts there was the same concentration on self and regardlessness of God. “And when ye eat and when ye

drink, do not ye eat for yourselves and drink for yourselves? ”which is the very opposite of the apostolic exhortation, which really sums up the intention and spirit of the many precepts and commandments of the law—“Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” But apart from the special message which they conveyed to those to whom they were originally addressed, and their application to the Jewish people at the time, there is a solemn lesson in these words which men at the present time, both Jews and Christians, should lay to heart. Are there not thousands now who are very zealous and regular in religious observances, and who think that they are acquiring great merit before God, to whom Christ in that day will say, “Depart from Me; I never knew you?” Did ye at all do it unto Me, even Me? Was it not for the most part will-worship and mere religiousness, without any knowledge of, or real regard for, the will of God? The Zec_7:7 begins in the Hebrew with the words, Halo eth haddebharim asher qara Yehovah—to which most translators and commentators have supplied a verb, on the supposition that the sentence is elliptical, and have rendered it, “Should ye not hear the words which Jehovah hath cried,” as the Authorised and Revised Versions do; or, “Should ye not do the words,” etc., as Maurer and others translate; or, “Do ye not know the words,” according to Ewald, Koehler, Pusey, and others. But the sentence is also capable of another rendering, which we are inclined to think is the correct one, namely: “Are not these the very things which Jehovah cried (that, is ‘did He not have the same complaints to make, and the same remonstrances to address’), through the former prophets, when Jerusalem was inhabited and in prosperity (or ‘in safety’), and her cities round about her, and the South and the lowland were inhabited?” the three districts named being those into which the land of Judah was divided, namely, the Negebh, which is “the southern district,” extending as far as Beersheba (Jos_15:21); the Shephelah, or “lowland” district, toward the west; and the “hill country of Judah,” which is here included under “Jerusalem and the cities round about.”

There are many Scriptures in the former prophets which bear witness to the truth of what Zechariah here affirms, namely, God’s repudiation of mere outward acts of religious observances, and particularly of fasting, as being in any way pleasing to Him. “Wherefore have we fasted,” we read, for instance, in Isa_58:1 &c., “and thou seest not? Wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and Thou takest no knowledge?” Then the answer, which is very much the same as in Zechariah, “Did ye at all fast unto Me, even Me?”—“Behold in the day of your fast, you find your own pleasure. . . . Ye shall not fast as ye do this day to make your voice to be heard on high. Is it such a fast that I have chosen? A day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head like a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Wilt thou call this a fast, and an accept able day to the Lord?” (Isa_58:3-5). But it is quite true, as another writer observes, that reference is here made, not so much to the passages in the former prophets, in which fasting is specially referred to (as, e.g., the one from Isaiah just quoted) as to those numerous Scriptures in which the general principle was taught which was enunciated by Samuel in his question, “Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offering and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord?” (1Sa_15:22-23); or, as set forth in the words of the great lawgiver, “And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in His ways, and to love Him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of the Lord, and His statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good” (Deu_10:12-13).

This—that “to obey” is in God s sight “better than sacrifice,” and “to hearken” “than the fat of rams,” and that obedience to the great moral precepts of the law is infinitely more important than meaningless ceremonies and abstinence from meat and drinks, is brought out still more clearly in the second section of the first part of the answer (Zec_7:8-10).

“And the word of the Lord came unto Zechariah, saying, Thus hath the Lord of hosts spoken, saying, Execute true judgment, and show mercy and compassion every man to his brother: and oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart.”

Here we are reminded of Isa_58:6-12, and many other scriptures in the earlier prophets, where the Lord tells us the kind of fast in which He does takes pleasure—“Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?” (Isa_58:6-8, R.V.). But Zechariah, in the passage we are now considering (Zec_7:8-10), instead of quoting the exact words of the former prophets, gives the substance of their preaching on this subject in words renewed to himself by the direct inspiration of the Spirit of God.

We note also that it is particularly man’s duties to his neighbours which are here summarised; but man’s duty to God is presupposed, for even the precepts which inculcate love and mercy to our fellow-men, are enforced by the words, “I am Jehovah thy God,” which remind us of our relation and obligations to Him, even as in the New Testament it is our debt of love and gratitude to Christ which is the impelling motive of love to the brotherhood. And let me remind you, dear reader, that Christians do have need to lay these moral precepts to heart, for though we are not under the law, the law of God is written on our hearts, and it is His purpose that the righteousness of the law should be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. Beside, whatever be our relation to the law of Moses, we are “under law to Christ,” and it is in the New Testament that we are commanded to live and act justly and righteously, and to “have compassion one upon the other,” and “to think no evil,” which is the equivalent of the beautiful word we have in this passage in Zechariah, “Let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart.” But to return to our context. This was the summary of the teaching of the former prophets; the result is stated in Zec_7:11 and Zec_7:12, “But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears that they should not hear. Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the Lord of hosts had sent by His Spirit by the hand of the former prophets: therefore came there great wrath from the Lord of hosts?”

We have already pointed out the parallelism between the line of thought in the consolatory message contained in Zechariah 7:1 &c. and Zechariah 8:1 &c. and that which is unfolded in the series of visions. The same is true also of the introductory addresses, or calls to repentance, which in each case precede the prophecies of hope and of future glory. The parallel to Zec_7:8-14 is Zec_1:4-6. There also we read, “Be not as your fathers, to whom the former prophets cried, saying, Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, Return ye now from your evil ways and your evil doings; but they did not hear nor hearken unto Me, saith Jehovah.” Here, however, the process of Israel’s self-hardening and disobedience, which brought about the desolation of the land and the

scattering of the people, is enlarged upon, (a) “They refused to hearken” or to give heed to the word of God through the prophets. (b) “They pulled away the shoulder” vayyitt’nu khatheph sorareth, a Hebrew phrase which is found elsewhere only in that great confession in Neh_9:29, and means literally they offered a recusant, or unwilling, rebellious shoulder,1 instead of serving Jehovah “with joyfulness and gladness of heart” (Deu_28:47), and finding His yoke easy and His burden light, (c) “And stopped their ears” ■■■■■■■■■ (hikhbidu), literally, “made it heavy” the word being the same as in that solemn passage, Isa_6:10, “Make the heart of the people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and turn again, and be healed.”

It is one of the terrible moral consequences of men turning away from doing the will of God, that the more they hear, the duller their perceptions become, so that in the end, though having eyes, they see not. (d) The final stage of this process of rebellious self-hardening is expressed in Zec_7:12, “And they made their hearts as an adamant stone” It is not quite certain what stone is meant by ■■■■■■ (shamir), but it was harder than flint (Eze_3:9). In Jer_17:1 it is rendered “diamond.” “It was hard enough to cut ineffaceable characters; it would cut rocks, but could not be graven itself or receive the characters of God.”2

Truly a fit figure to set forth the hardness and obduracy of the natural unregenerate heart. It is altogether hopeless, and nothing can be done to improve or soften it; the only hope for men in such condition being in this stony heart being altogether taken away by the power and grace of God, and in the creation within them of “an heart of flesh,” responsive and impressionable to the Spirit and Word of God. The enormity of the guilt of Israel is magnified by the

1 That is, they shook off the yoke which was sought to be laid upon them, “as if they had been a refractory heifer struggling with all its might against the yoke laid upon it.”—Wright; comp. Hos_4:16.

2 Pusey, fact that that which they refused to hear and to receive into their hearts in order to obey was the ■■■■■ (torah) “law,” which we must take in the usual sense as describing the law of Moses, and the ■■■■■■■■ (debharim), “words” of “the former prophets,” neither of which originated with man, both being “sent by Jehovah of hosts through the Spirit”; which is a very remarkable incidental statement of the Bible’s own claim to inspiration.1 The human channel of communication used of God may be Moses, or Isaiah, or Jeremiah, or any of the other “prophets,” but the wonderful things they spoke came not by the will of man, but these holy men of God “spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2Pe_1:20-21). And the process of apostasy here described by Zechariah did not end with the rejection of the law and the words which God spoke through the prophets. It continued even after the partial restoration, as far as the great majority of the people was concerned. The climax was reached when, after the continued process of disobedience and self-hardening, and because their hearts were already alienated from God, Israel turned their backs upon Him Who was not only the greatest of the prophets, but was Himself “the Word of God”—“the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person.”

Nor, alas! can Christendom boast or glory over the Jews, for its history, too, is one of continued rebellion, not only against the law and the prophets, but against the greater light of New Testament revelation, and culminates in the greatest apostasy in the history of the human race, when Satan shall be worshipped instead of God, and Anti-christ preferred to Christ. The consequence of this

continued provocation of God and the hardening of their hearts against His word was that “there came great wrath from Jehovah of hosts” for God is not mocked, and, however great and wonderful His 1 The same we have in Nehemiah 9:30; “And testifies! against them by Thy Spirit through the prophets.” patience and long-suffering, His anger is in the end poured out upon all who are obdurately impenitent. On the last page of the Hebrew Bible—which, as the books are there arranged, closes with 2 Chronicles—we read these very sad and pathetic words: “Moreover all the chiefs of the priests, and the people, trespassed very greatly after all the abominations of the heathen; and they polluted the house of the Lord which He had hallowed in Jerusalem. And the Lord, the God of their fathers, sent to them by His messengers, rising up early and sending; because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling-place: but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, till there was no remedy” (2 Chronicles 36:14-16)—“till there was no remedy” and “there came great wrath from Jehovah.”

How His wrath showed itself is next described: “And it came to pass as He cried (that is, ‘called, remonstrated, and reasoned with them through the prophets’) and they would not hear, so they shall cry” (in their distress and anguish) “and I will not hear”—solemn and awful words, which have not only verified themselves in the terrible history of the Jewish people these past two thousand years, but are a warning to the individual sinner, whether Jew or Gentile, of whom similar language is used,1 when he hears God’s voice, not to harden his heart and refuse to obey His word as Israel did, “in the provocation and the day of temptation in the wilderness,” and who entered not into God’s rest because of unbelief.

Zec_7:14 shows the awful consequences of the “great wrath” which came from Jehovah:

(a) In relation to the people. “But I will scatter them” ■■■■■■■■■■■ (ve’esa-areim—“as with a whirlwind” or, “I will toss them”) “among all the nations whom they have not known”; who will therefore have no pity or compassion upon them—a process which only began with the destruction of the

1 Pro_1:24-33.

First Temple and the seventy years’ captivity in Babylon, but has continued all through the centuries since, during which the Jewish nation continues to be “sifted,” or “tossed about among all nations as corn is tossed about in a sieve” (Amo_9:1 &c.)1—until the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled, and “He that scattered Israel shall gather him and keep him as a shepherd doth his flock.”

(b) In relation to the land. “And the land was desolate (or most probably, ‘shall be desolate’) the perfect tense standing here for the future, or ‘prophetic perfect’) after them, so that there shall be no one passing through or returning” (meobher umishabh)—an idiom expressing the fact that the land shall be destitute of a population, so that there shall be none to pass to and fro, or “up and down” in it; a prophecy also which has not only verified itself during the seventy years’ captivity, but in the course of the many centuries since the destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans, during which the land has in the providence of God been practically without a people, while the people has been without a land.

Hitherto in Zec_7:13 and Zec_7:14 God in the first person has been the speaker, but the last sentence with which the chapter closes seems to be a reflection or ejaculation of the prophet’s, in

which he gives God the glory by ascribing the desolation which has come upon the land as due entirely to their sins: “And they made the pleasant land” (eretz ■hemdah, a beautiful and true description of the promised land which is carried over from Jer_3:19) “a desolation”; for, just as all nature was involved in Adam’s sin, and ever since the Fall “the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now” (Rom_8:1 &c.); so Palestine, which is indeed naturally “a delightsome” and fertile land, has in a special manner become involved in the sin of Israel, and lies desolate until the people’s covenant relationship to

1 See also Deu_28:49-50, Deu_28:64-65; Jer_16:13; and other places. Pusey rightly observes that the expressions “nations whom they know not,” “whose tongue thou shall not understand” are meant to set forth the intensification of their sufferings in captivity because the common bond between man and man, mutual speech, shall be wanting.

God is restored, when the land shall once again, and more than ever before, flow with milk and honey, and “the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose.”

Now, in conclusion, to sum up the negative part of the answer to the question put by the deputation from Bethel. Its purport was as follows: There is no occasion as yet to abrogate the observances of the fasts in which you call to mind the calamities which you and your fathers have brought upon the land, by your evil ways and doings, for the underlying cause of the evil which came upon you—namely, sin and rebellion against the word which God spake to you through the former prophets—you have not yet truly repented of. Your fasting and mourning, however, are in themselves nothing to God so long as they are not the accompaniment of a real sorrow for sin, and a heart-desire to do His will as expressed in His moral law. Take warning, therefore, from the experience of your fathers—who kept on hardening their hearts, until there was no more remedy, and great wrath from God came upon them—lest the same, and something worse yet, happen to you. The positive part of the answer, which tells when and how the fasts shall be abrogated, yea, turned into feasts, follows in Zec_8:1 &c.

4.13. Chapter 12 - The Positive Part of the Answer

CHAPTER XII ADDRESS TO THE DEPUTATION FROM BETHEL ON THE QUESTION OF THE OBSERVANCE OF FASTS (B) THE POSITIVE PART OF THE ANSWER (Zechariah 8:1-23) And the word of the Lord of hosts came to me, saying, Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: I am jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I am jealous for her with great wrath. Thus saith Jehovah: I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called The city of truth; and the mountain of Jehovah of hosts, The holy mountain. Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, every man with his staff in his hand for very age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof. Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: If it be marvellous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in those days, should it also be marvellous in Mine eyes? saith Jehovah of hosts. Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: Behold, I will save My people from the east country, and from the west country; and I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem; and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness. Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: Let your hands be strong, ye that hear in these days these words from the mouth of the prophets, that were in the day that the foundation of the house of Jehovah of hosts was laid, even the Temple, that it might be built. For before those days there was no hire for man, nor any hire for beast; neither was there any peace to him that went out or came in because of the adversary: for I set all men every one against his neighbour. But now I will not be unto the remnant of this people as in the former days, saith Jehovah of hosts. For there shall be the seed of peace; the vine shall give its fruit, and the ground shall give its increase, and the heavens shall give their dew; and I will cause the remnant of this people to inherit all these things. And it shall come to pass that, as ye were a curse among the nations, O house of Judah and house of Israel, so will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing. Fear not, but let your hands be strong. For thus saith Jehovah of hosts: As I thought to do evil unto you, when your fathers provoked Me to wrath, saith Jehovah of hosts, and I repented not; so again have I thought in these days to do good unto Jerusalem and to the house of Judah: fear ye not. These are the things that ye shall do; Speak ye every man the truth with his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates: and let none of you devise evil in your hearts against his neighbour; and love no false oath: for all these are things that I hate, saith Jehovah. And the word of Jehovah of hosts came unto me, saying, Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: The fast of the fourth month, and the fast of the fifth, and the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth, shall be to the house of Judah joy and gladness, and cheerful feasts; therefore love truth and peace. Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: It shall yet come to pass, that there shall come peoples, and the inhabitants of many cities: and the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to entreat the favour of Jehovah, and to seek Jehovah of hosts: I will go also. Yea, many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek Jehovah of hosts in Jerusalem, and to entreat the favour of Jehovah. Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold, out of all the languages of the nations, they 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.

CHAPTER XII AS shown in the exposition of Ezekiel 7:1-14, of which the scripture we are now to consider is a continuation, the message which the prophet was inspired to deliver, not only to the deputation from Bethel, but “to all the people of the land,” in answer to the question whether they should continue to observe the fasts which had been appointed in celebration of certain sad anniversaries connected with the destruction of the Temple and the desolations of the land by the Chaldeans, divides itself into two parts. The first, which I have described as the negative part of the answer, is contained in Zechariah 7:1-14; and the second, or positive part, in Zechariah 8:1-23. “Each of these two larger divisions,” to repeat some sentences from the previous exposition, “is, however, again subdivided into two sections—the whole answer thus falling into four parts, each of which begins with the words, ‘And the word of Jehovah of hosts came to me, saying’ (Zec_7:4, Zec_7:8, Zec_8:1, Zec_8:18)—the usual formula, as has already been pointed out, by which the prophets authenticated their messages as being not of, or from, themselves, but from the mouth of the Lord.” The negative part of the answer in Zechariah 7:1-14 may, moreover, be regarded in a very important sense as preparatory to the debharim tobhim debharim nichummim (“good words, even comforting words,” Zec_1:13), which the prophet proceeds to unfold in the glorious prophecy in Zechariah 8:1-23, inasmuch as Zechariah 7:1-14 is practically a call to repentance, and a solemn reminder that their sorrows were the direct consequence of their sins, and that before Israel’s fasts shall at last turn to feasts, and they shall enjoy the “good thing” which Jehovah has promised them, they must give heed to the voice of the prophets, and be no more like their fathers, who brought all these calamities upon themselves by obdurate disobedience and progressive apostasy from God. The first section of the consolatory message in Zechariah 8:1-23 consists of Zec_8:1-17. The first thing which strikes us in reading the series of great and precious promises in this scripture is the frequent reiteration of the sentence—“saith Jehovah of hosts.” Apart from the authenticating formula, “The word of Jehovah of hosts came unto me,” by which each of the four sections is introduced, it is repeated eleven times in the first seventeen verses of the 8th chapter; and the object and reason for it is to strengthen our faith, and to assure us at the very outset that, however incredible from a natural or human point of view the fulfilment of these things may be, they will most certainly come to pass, because the Name of the infinite, eternal, and faithful Jehovah, with Whom nothing is too hard or impossible, stands pledged to their accomplishment.1

Let us bear this in mind as we proceed, and not stagger at the promises of God through unbelief, saying, as many, alas, do say, “How is it possible?” The series of promises commences with the words, “Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, I am jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I am jealous for her with great wrath (or ‘fury’).” This is a repetition, with one slight variation in the original, but “in the same rhythm,” of the declaration of His tender love for Zion in the first of the series of visions

1 “At each word and sentence in which good things, for their greatness almost incredible, are promised, the prophet declares, ‘Thus saith Jehovah of hosts,’ as if he would say, Think not that what I pledge you are my own, and refuse me not credence as man. What I unfold are the promises of God.”—Jerome. So also Lange: “Es handelt sich darum eine ganze Reihe scheinbaren unmöglichkeiten durch die Gewähr des Namens Jehovah Zebaoth in Gewissheiten zu verwandeln.” By making the name of Jehovah of hosts surety for their accomplishment, a whole series of apparent impossibilities are thus turned into certainties.

(Zec_1:14).1 And because His love for Zion is so great, He is jealous on her account, and His anger is stirred to the heat of “fury” against the nations, for the reason already stated in the first

vision, namely, because when He was but “a little displeased” and gave over “the dearly beloved of His soul” for a time into the hands of her enemies (Jer_12:7), the nations among whom they were scattered “showed them no mercy,” but rather “helped forward the affliction.”

We have dwelt fully on these solemn and fervent words of Jehovah and their application, not only to the great world-powers of antiquity, but to the nations of Christendom, in my exposition of the first vision, so we need not tarry on this point here. But I may take the opportunity of again emphasising one fact in connection with the warning to the nations contained in these words, and this is the testimony which history supplies, that God’s jealous anger and hot displeasure against the nations, because of their oppression and cruelty to Israel, is to be greatly dreaded. “Where,” to repeat a few sentences, “are the great nations of antiquity who have lifted up their hands against the Jewish people?” And in modern times the ancient word which God spake to Abraham is still verifying itself in the experience of nations as of individuals: “I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse.” And the fervent inalienable love of Jehovah for His people will manifest itself, not only in His wrath and indignation against the nations who have oppressed and persecuted them, but in the full restoration of the long-interrupted communion.

“Thus saith Jehovah, I am returned to Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem”—the glad announcement of which, contained in the two verbs shabhti and shakhanti

1 Only ■■■■■■■ ■■■■■, ■hemah gedolah, “great heat of anger,” or “fury,” is here substituted for ■■■■■ ■■■■■, qetseph gadol (Zec_1:14), there rendered, “very sore displeased” in the English versions, but literally “great anger,” though not quite so strong an expression as here.

(“I am returned” and “I will dwell,” which are in the prophetic perfect tense), being again an inspired repetition of the “good and comfortable words” which were set forth in the first vision.

Thus the word shabhti (“I am returned”) takes us back to Zec_1:16 (“I am returned—shabhtti—to Jerusalem with mercies”), and shakhanti (“I will dwell”) to Zec_2:10, where we read, “Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith Jehovah.”

According to some commentators these glad announcements of the return and dwelling of Jehovah in the midst of His people, in Zechariah 8:1-23, “signify nothing more nor less than the restitution of His favour and goodwill toward Israel,”1 as shown in their partial restoration from Babylon, and in the relief which the remnant then experienced. But this is a very poor and inadequate view to take of this prophecy, as its very connection with the glorious predictions in Zechariah 1:1-21 and Zechariah 2:1-13 itself shows. No, as I have shown in my notes on the first vision, the announcement, “I am returned to Zion with mercies,” is itself the very heart and substance of the consoling part of the message which the prophet was commissioned to deliver; and the fulfilment of the promise, “I will dwell in the midst of thee,” is the goal to which all the former prophets looked forward, and will in its fulness be realised only in the visible and manifest reign—in and from Mount Zion, in the midst of restored and converted Israel, of Him Whose Name is “Immanuel”—which, being interpreted, is “God with us.”

We take this promise, then, not only in a more literal, but, if we may use the expression, also in a more personal sense. At the commencement of “the times of the Gentiles,” which began with the Babylonian Captivity, when God was about to give Israel over into the hands of their enemies, the prophet Ezekiel saw the slow and reluctant departure of the glory of Jehovah from the Temple and

City of Jerusalem. And with this withdrawal 1 C. H. H. Wright. of the presence of Jehovah from the midst of His people, commenced Israel's Ichabod period, and the long night of darkness which has rested on the people and on the land. But not for ever has Jehovah forsaken His land and cast off His people. "I will go," He said through the prophet Hosea, "and return to My place till they acknowledge their offence" (or, lit., "till they declare themselves guilty"), "and seek My face: in their affliction (lit., 'in their tribulation') they shall seek Me early." Then He will return unto them with mercies, and "His going forth is sure as the morning; and He shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter rain that watereth the earth" (Hos_5:15, Hos_6:1-3). In its fulness, to repeat again some sentences from the notes on the first vision, this promise will only be fulfilled when this same Jesus, Whom at His first coming they handed over to the Gentiles to be crucified, and Who, after His resurrection, ascended back into heaven to the glory which He had with the Father before the world was, shall return in the manner, and under the circumstances, described by the same prophet in the last three chapters of his prophecy.

Then Jehovah, in the person of the Messiah, "will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem," which shall become the centre of His governmental dealings with the world, and the place whence light and truth shall go forth unto all the nations. "And Jerusalem shall be called 'Ir ha-emeth, the City of Truth"; first, because it shall be the seat of the El-emeth) "The God of Truth"; and, secondly, because "the remnant of Israel," which shall then dwell in it, "shall not any longer do iniquity, nor speak lies" (Zep_3:13), but be known throughout the earth for their truth and fidelity toward God and man. "And the mountain of Jehovah of hosts" i.e., Mount Zion, shall be called "The Holy Mountain" because there the Holy One of Israel shall once more take up His abode, and by His presence in their midst sanctify His people, so that they, too, shall be holy; and, Qodesh la-Yehovah—"Holiness (or 'holy;) unto Jehovah," shall be written, not only upon their hearts and foreheads, but upon all their possessions, down to the very "bells of their horses," and the "pots" which they shall use to prepare their food.1

Now follows a beautiful picture of restored and flourishing Jerusalem. No longer shall the holy city, and the land of which it is the metropolis, be depopulated by wars and other grievous calamities, and lie desolate; no longer shall such terrible sights be witnessed in her streets as are described by inspired writers who witnessed the siege and capture of the city by the Babylonians, which, however, were surpassed in the still more awful and horrible conditions which prevailed during the siege and destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, and in subsequent sieges since then—when old and young were cut off without mercy, and those children and sucklings who were not destroyed by the sword "fainted for hunger in the top of every street."2 But the promises contained already in the law, of prolongation of life and numerous offspring, which in the past have been only at certain intervals partially fulfilled, because of Israel's sin and disobedience, shall, under the new and unconditional covenant, into which the people shall then be brought, be fully realised. There and then "there shall be no more an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days." Then "they shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for as the days of a tree shall be the days of My people, and My chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands" (Isa_65:20-22). And thus it shall come to pass, saith Jehovah of hosts, that "there shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, every man with his staff in his hand, for multitude of days. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof" "The two opposite pictures," to adopt words of

1 Zec_14:20-21. See also Isa_1:26, “Thou shall be called The City of Righteousness, The Faithful City”; Isaiah 60:14, “They shall call thee The City of Jehovah, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel”; Isa_62:12, “They shall call them The Holy People, the Redeemed of the Lord.”

2 Lam_2:11-19; Psa_78:63-64. another writer, “the old man so aged that he has to lean on his staff for support because of the multitude of his days,” and the young in the glad buoyancy of recent life, fresh from their Creator’s hands (shall in that day) “attest alike” (as in measure they do now in all communities of men) “the goodness of the Creator Who protecteth both, the children in their yet undeveloped strength, and the very old, whom He hath brought through all the changes and chances of this mortal life, in their yet sustained weakness; for the tottering limbs of the very old, and the elastic, perpetual motion (and playfulness) of childhood, are like far distant chords of the diapason of the Creator’s love.”1

Then, as if doubly to confirm the immutability of His counsel, and to strengthen our hearts in the certain fulfilment of the things just announced, as well as of those which follow—however “marvellous” or “impossible” they may appear to human sight—there follows a brief parenthetical statement (Zec_8:6) which is closed in, so to say, by a twofold use of the divine attesting formula, “saith Jehovah of hosts.”

Even the saved remnant, contemplating the actual fulfilment of these great and precious promises, will exclaim, “This is Jehovah’s doing” (or, lit., “This is of Jehovah”; for by no human or natural means could this have been brought about)—“it is marvellous in our eyes” (Psa_118:23). But “thus saith Jehovah of hosts, If it is marvellous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in those days? should it also be marvellous in Mine eyes? saith Jehovah of hosts.” The word ■■■■■■■, yipalei, used in this verse, from ■■■■■, polla, rendered variously “wonderful,” “marvellous,” “hard,” “difficult,” “hidden,” in the Authorised Version, reminds us of its use in at least two other places in the Old Testament in which God wants to teach us the great and prominent lesson which He has designed the whole of mankind to

1 Pusey.

2 Bayyamim hahem. The Authorised Version has “these days”; but this is incorrect. learn from the history of Israel. One is in Genesis 18:1-33. There we read that “Sarah laughed within herself” when she heard the Angel of Jehovah give the definite promise to Abraham of the birth of Isaac, for to nature and human reasoning it was no longer possible for Sarah to bear a child. But “Jehovah said to Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old? Is anything too hard (or ‘wonderful’) for Jehovah?”

Indeed, one great reason of the long delay of the fulfilment of the promise of the birth of the child, in whom the great promise of blessing for all nations was to be handed down, was because God wanted to lay a supernatural basis for the history of Israel; and that both Israel and the nations of the future might learn that the things which are naturally impossible are not supernaturally impossible, and that nothing which Jehovah has ever spoken is “too hard” for Him to accomplish. The other place where the word is used is in Jeremiah 32:1-44, a prophecy which is in some respects parallel to Zechariah 7:1-14 and Zechariah 8:1-23. Jeremiah was shut up in the court of the prison adjoining the palace, when the word of the Lord came to him that his uncle’s son, Hanameel, would come to him with the request that he should buy a piece of ground which

belonged to him in Anathoth; and the prophet, in obedience to God's command, went through all the legal formalities connected with the purchase of land in Palestine. Now, from the human and natural point of view, the whole transaction seemed a mere farce and absurdity. The Chaldeans had already laid waste the whole land, and were even then besieging Jerusalem. How unlikely, so far as human probabilities went, that houses, or fields, or vineyards, would ever again be possessed by Jews in Palestine.

Jeremiah's own faith in the promises of God in reference to the future of the people and the land, was strongly put to the test by this symbolical transaction which he was commanded to carry through, but he stood the test; he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief. He looked away from human improbabilities and natural impossibilities to the Almighty and covenant-keeping God, and exclaims (Jer_32:17), "Ah, Lord God, behold Thou hast made the heaven and the earth by Thy great power and stretched-out arm, and there is nothing too hard (or 'wonderful') for Thee"—to which God Himself adds, so to say, His "Amen," by repeating in Jer_32:27 the prophet's own words—"Behold, I am Jehovah, the God of all flesh; is there anything too hard (or 'marvellous') for Me?" and proceeds to tell him that, though the city and land would now be given over to desolation, and the people carried into captivity because of their great sin and manifold provocations of the Holy One, yet the time would assuredly come when "men shall buy fields for money, and subscribe the deeds and seal them, and call witnesses in every part of the promised land; for I will cause their captivity to return, saith Jehovah."

Before passing on to the following verses, let me ask you, dear reader, Have you learned this great lesson? Have you experienced personally the supernatural power of the living God, the Creator of the ends of the earth, Who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, and with Whom nothing is impossible, or "marvellous," in your own heart and life? For only then can you believe in the great and marvellous things which God promised to do for Israel in the future, and through them for the whole world. But let us proceed to the next brief paragraph (Zec_8:7-8). "Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, Behold I will save My people from the east country, and from the west country: and I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God, in truth and righteousness." This is one of the greatest and most comprehensive promises in reference to Israel's restoration and conversion to be found in the prophetic Scriptures, but on which I may not tarry long for want of space, and because I have fully dwelt on this subject in some of my other writings.1 1 The Jewish Problem Its Solution; also, The Shepherd of Israel and His Scattered Flock. But let me very briefly point out in passing—first, that it is a promise which has manifestly not yet been fulfilled. The expression ■■■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■, literally, "from the land of the rising of the sun, and from the land of the going down of the sun" properly rendered, "from the east country, and from the west country," in the English versions, really includes all parts of the earth, as may be seen from Psa_50:1; Psa_113:3; Mal_1:11, etc., where the same Hebrew idiom is used. Now, never in the past has such a restoration taken place. A representative section, but a mere handful out of the whole people, was indeed brought back to the land after the seventy years' captivity in Babylon, of which Zechariah himself was a witness, but that could not possibly be the restoration here promised; first, because, as is to be inferred from the whole prophecy, this was to be something which should take place at a time future in the point of view, or outlook, of this post-exilic prophet, to whom, what we may call the chief act in the restoration from Babylon was

already an accomplished fact; and, secondly, because that partial restoration was only from one direction, namely, from the east, or “north” (as Babylon and Persia were called, because their invasions of Palestine were from the north). From the “west” they could not then have been brought back, since very few of the Jewish nation had as yet wandered westward.

It was only at the second stage of Israel’s dispersion, which was brought about by the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple by the Romans, that Israel became in the fullest sense a Diaspora—scattered over all the face of the earth—the majority always found in lands more or less to the west of Palestine. No; the promise here is a divine summary and repetition of the many promises of the yet future restoration which were uttered by the former prophets, as, for instance, Isa_43:5-6, where we read, “Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth”; and will be fulfilled when “Jehovah shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people; . . . and He shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth” (Isa_11:11-12). That the restoration spoken of here is yet future, is proved also by the fact that it is to be followed by Israel’s national conversion, which has certainly never yet taken place. “And they shall be My people, and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness.” The restoration of Israel to their own land after the many centuries of dispersion and wanderings, will, as I have stated elsewhere, “be a great mercy and a wonderful event in the world’s history”; but a still greater mercy, and a still more wonderful thing, will be the restoration of the long-interrupted covenant relationship and communion between them and their God. This is what is promised in the last words of Zec_8:8, “They shall be My people”—the “Lo-ammi” period, during which Israel, separated from God, is given over into the hands of his enemies, shall at last be ended, and God shall again receive them graciously and acknowledge them as “Ammi” and He, Jehovah, shall be their God, be’ emeth u-bhits’ dakah, “in truth and in righteousness”—even as we read in Hos_2:19-20, “And I will betroth thee unto Me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto Me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto Me in faithfulness; and thou shalt know the Lord.” But the expression be’emeth u-bhits dakah—“in truth and in righteousness”—belongs to both clauses of the brief statement which announces the restoration of the covenant relationship between Israel and God, for not only will God act toward them (as, indeed, on His part He has ever done) in truth and in righteousness, but this also shall henceforth be the condition of the people. No longer shall it be said of them that “they swear by the name of Jehovah, and make mention of the God of Israel, but not in truth nor in righteousness” (Isa_48:1), but like the man after God’s own heart, of whom the expression is first used (1Ki_3:6), and their other fathers, who “walked with God”; so also restored and converted Israel shall walk before Him “in truth and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart” throughout the rest of their national history—even as we read in Jer_32:38-41, which, as already stated, is in some respects parallel to Zechariah 8:1-23 : “And they shall be My people, and I will be their God; and I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear Me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them: and I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; and I will put My fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from Me. Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with My whole heart and with My whole soul.” A word more, perhaps, needs to be said on the expression in Zec_8:8, “And they shall dwell in the

midst of Jerusalem" upon which the allegorising commentators have fixed as a proof that it is not a literal restoration of literal Israel which is spoken of.

Thus Pusey, Dr. Wright, Keil, and others are quite dogmatic that it is not the literal Jerusalem, because this, to quote the words of the first of the above-named authors, "could not contain the Jews from all quarters of the world, whom, as they multiplied, the whole land could not contain; but the promised Jerusalem, the Jerusalem which should be inhabited as towns without walls, to which the Lord should be a wall of fire round about," which, as is to be seen from his comments on the 7th verse, he interprets of the Church. To this I would reply that the enlarged Jerusalem, which "should be inhabited as towns without walls," and of which Jehovah Himself shall be the defence and "the glory in the midst thereof," is also the literal Jerusalem, as I have, I think, clearly shown in my exposition of the 2nd chapter. As to the expression, "in the midst of Jerusalem," even Dr. Wright, who denies any future fulfilment of this prophecy to literal Israel, says: "The allusion is evidently to Jerusalem, not so much as the actual residence of all the people, but as the place where Israel should worship Jehovah." Jerusalem stands here for the land of which it is the centre and metropolis, to which restored and converted Israel (in whatever part of the country they may be located) will turn, as the place where the glory of their Divine Messiah will then be especially manifested—even as in times past the tribes from all parts of the land went up during the three great festivals, there to appear before God, being thus taught to regard the place where His honour dwelt, and His glory was specially manifested, as their true home. The great and glorious promises contained in the first eight verses of this chapter, like all prophecy about the future, are to be turned to practical account. Not only is the restored remnant to derive comfort and stimulus from "these words," but they are to act as incentives in the path of obedience and to the more perfect accomplishment of the will of God in the present: "Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: Let your hands be strong, ye that hear in these days these words from the mouth of the prophets which were in the day that the foundation of the house of Jehovah of hosts was laid, even the Temple, that it might be built?"

"Let your hands be strong," which is an idiom for the expression "Be of good courage" (Jdg_7:11; 2Sa_2:7; Eze_22:14, etc.), reminds us of the words of Zechariah's contemporary and colleague, whose voice was now silenced by death: "Be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith Jehovah; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest; and be strong, all ye people of the land, and work" (Hag_2:4)—though here, in the 8th chapter of Zechariah, the phrase is used as an exhortation not merely or especially to the continuation of the building of the Temple, as is the case in Haggai, but with reference to their doing, individually and collectively, the will of God in all things.

"These words" refer particularly to the words of promise which had just been uttered by Zechariah in the preceding verses of this chapter, and by Haggai in the prophecy from which I have just quoted, who are together spoken of as "the prophets" who were God's mouthpieces to the people since a beginning was made by them in rebuilding the Temple, and are thus contrasted with the "former prophets" to whom Zechariah so often refers. The word ■■■■■■■■, l'hibanoth ("that it might be built"), is added as a more precise definition of the time to which the prophet refers in the expression, "in the day that the foundation of the house of Jehovah of hosts was laid"; for there had, in fact, been two beginnings, or foundation-layings, of the Temple. Already, in the seventh month of the very year of the return of the first colony of exiles, under the leadership of Zerubbabel and Joshua the high priest, the altar of Jehovah was rebuilt, and the sacrificial service restored in

Jerusalem; and in the second month of the second year the foundation was laid amid solemn and joyous scenes described in the 3rd chapter of Ezra. But very soon difficulties and hindrances came in the way. There were the Samaritans and their intrigues and accusations at the Persian Court; and there were the still more insidious and dangerous enemies in their own midst, and in their own hearts—namely, the selfish love of ease and comfort, and their unwillingness to devote their time and means to the building of the house of God, because they wanted to build “ceiled houses” for themselves (Hag_1:3-5). And so they neglected the work, excusing themselves that “the time is not come, the time that Jehovah’s house should be built”; with the result that for about thirteen years the work which they began was suspended and “lay waste.” But in the second year of Darius the king the word of Jehovah came to Haggai and Zechariah, whose rebukes, exhortations, and appeals, “in the Name of the God of Israel” (Ezr_5:1-2), roused the people to make a new beginning, and then it was that they took up the task “with set purpose of heart” l’hibanoth—“that it might be built” (Hag_1:12-15). And with “the day” in which they set their hearts to obey the voice of Jehovah their God in this matter, there began a new epoch in the history of the remnant of the people, and their leaders, for “from this day will I bless you,” saith Jehovah (Hag_2:19).

Then there follows a contrast between the time before they obeyed the voice of Jehovah their God and took up the work of building the Temple, and the condition of things since they hearkened to the voice of the Word of God through Haggai and Zechariah. Before, when they cared only for their own affairs, nothing prospered with them, and there was nothing but disaster and disappointment: “For before those days there was no hire (or ‘wages’) for man, nor any hire for beast,” so little was the produce that it did not pay the labour of man and beast; which answers to the description of those same days by Haggai: “Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put into a bag with holes” (Hag_1:6). And not only so, but (to return to our passage in Zechariah) “for him that went out and for him that came in (literally) there was no peace, because of the. adversary” which is most probably a true and graphic description of the conditions which then prevailed; for, to quote words from another writer, “in such an empire as the Persian there was large scope for actual hostility among the petty nations subject to it; so that they did not threaten revolt against itself, or interfere with the payment of tribute, as in the Turkish Empire now.”1 On the rebuilding of the walls (a little later) we actually read that “the adversaries”—i.e., the Samaritans, Arabians, Ammonites, and Ashdodites—conspired to fight against Jerusalem, and to slay the Jews, but were frustrated because the Lord’s protection was now over the little remnant of the people. And not only was there no peace “in those days” to him that went out and to him that came in, because of the

1 According to Hitzig the expedition of Cambyses to Egypt occurred at this time; and though it was not referred to in the Book of Ezra, the march of the Persian army through the land southward must have caused no little affliction to the colonists under their then distressing circumstances. adversary without, but the misery was increased because there was strife and contention which prevailed among themselves, for “the Lord hath set (vaashallach) all men every one against his neighbour.” But now, having entered on the path of obedience, and made God’s service their delight, God was going to “make their wants His care”: “But now I will not be unto this people as in the former days, saith Jehovah of hosts. For there shall be the seed of peace” (or, the seed of peace even); “the vine1 shall give her fruit, and the ground shall give her increase, and the

heavens shall give their dew” which reminds us somewhat of the promise in Hos_2:21-22, “And it shall come to pass in that day, I will answer, saith Jehovah, I will answer the heavens, and they shall answer the earth; and the earth shall answer the corn, and the wine, and the oil,” etc. And not only shall the blessing of the Lord resting on their toil produce plentiful harvests and abundant vintage, but no one shall despoil them of these gifts of God’s bountifulness.

“And I will cause the remnant of this people to inherit all these things.” And the improvement in the condition of the restored remnant since they set themselves earnestly to the task of building God’s house, was only a pledge of the greater things which God has promised them, and which yet await their fulfilment in the day of Israel’s national restoration and conversion, as announced by the prophet in the first part of this chapter. The whole may be said to be summed up in the words in Zec_8:13, “And it shall come to pass that, as ye were a curse among the nations, O house of Judah and house of Israel, so will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing: fear not, let your hands be strong.”

1 The expression ■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■ ■■■■■ (zera-hashalom haggephen) is peculiar, but I think that the rendering adopted by Keil, Koehler, Wright, and others is the correct one, and that zera-hashalom, “seed of peace,” is a noun which stands in apposition to haggephen, “the vine.” Keil thinks that the vine may especially be called “the seed of peace,” inasmuch as it can only prosper in days of peace, its cultivation requiring much care and attention, which it is impossible to bestow in times of war or adversity.

Here we note first of all how both “Judah” and “Israel”—i.e., the entire nation, which had previous to the Exile been for a time divided into two kingdoms—are now after the partial restoration from Babylon, included in undivided unity in one common destiny, both of wretchedness and blessedness. Together they are, during the Lo-ammi period—the time during which God’s face is averted from them—“a curse,” for the solemn and terrible words which He spoke through Jeremiah have been literally fulfilled in the whole nation: “I will give them up to be tossed to and fro among all the kingdoms of the earth for evil; to be a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse, in all places wherein I shall drive them” (Jer_24:9, Jer_42:18).

But, as they have been together in their entirety “a curse,” or the object of curse, i.e., so smitten of God as to serve the object of curses, and “the nations when imprecating curses on their foes were wont to wish them the fate of Israel”1—and not only so, but as the unbelieving majority of the nation had also actually and actively in the period of their separation from God and bitter hostility to their Messiah and His gospel been a curse to the nations—so says Jehovah, “will I save you” (not only from your captivity, but from your sin; not only from your outward enemies and oppressors, but from the evil of your own hearts—from yourselves), “and ye shall be a blessing.” This glorious promise is to be understood, not only as “equivalent to being so blessed as to be used as a benedictory formula,”2 but is a revival and an application of the original promise to Abraham, “thou shalt be a blessing” as Pusey well observes, and reiterates the oft-expressed purpose of God to make saved and blessed Israel the source and instrument of blessing to all the nations of the earth, even as we read in Isa_19:24, “In that day shall Israel be . . . a blessing in the midst of the land”; and Eze_34:26, “I will make them and the places round about My hill a blessing.”

1 C. H. H. Wright.

2 Keil. In measure this has already been the case, for all the great blessings which have come to the world have come to it through the seed of Abraham; “for of them,” to quote another, “according to the flesh Christ came, Who is over all God blessed for ever: of them were the apostles and evangelists, of them every writer of God’s Word; of them those who carried the gospel throughout the whole world.”1 But, so far, the blessing which has come through Israel to the world has been only partial, and has extended only to individuals; but when Israel as a nation is “saved in Jehovah with an everlasting salvation,” and their hearts are set aflame with love to the long-rejected Messiah and zeal for His cause, then “the receiving of them” shall indeed be “as life from the dead” to the whole world, and the great Messianic blessings shall universally be spread by them throughout the whole earth. In Abraham and his seed which includes Christ and Israel—shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And it is God’s faithfulness and the steadfastness of His purpose which form the grounds for our hope of His certain fulfilment of His promises. This is brought out in Zec_8:14 and Zec_8:15, “For thus saith the Lord of hosts: As I thought to do evil unto you, when your fathers provoked Me to wrath, saith the Lord of hosts, and I repented not; so again have I thought in these days to do good unto Jerusalem and to the house of Judah: fear ye not.” The remnant of Israel to whom Zechariah spoke knew from their own experience that Jehovah is faithful—yes, faithful in carrying out His threatenings as well as in fulfilling His promises; for when, after repeated warnings, their fathers continued in their impenitent provocations of Him through their many sins, the “evil” which He fore-announced that He would do unto them came. They may, therefore, be assured that when He announces to them through the prophet that His thoughts toward them now are “thoughts of peace and not of evil,” and that His purpose “in these days” is “to do good unto Jerusalem

1 Pusey. and to the house of Judah,” He will not repent or prove false to His word. This passage again reminds us of Jeremiah 32:1-44—a scripture which, as we observed before, is in some respects parallel to Zechariah 7:1-14 and Zechariah 8:1-23, where we read (Jer_32:42): “Thus saith Jehovah: Like as I have brought all this great evil upon this people, so will I bring upon them all the good that I have promised them.” But these great promises of God, to be experimentally realised, must be responded to by the faith and obedience of God’s people, and, as has been well said, “God’s covenanted grace leads those truly blessed by it to holiness, not to licentiousness.” Hence the exhortation to practical godliness which follows in Zec_8:16-17,

“These are the things (debharim, literally, ‘words’) which ye shall do: Speak ye every man the truth with his neighbour; truth and judgment of peace judge ye in your gates: and let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour, and love no false oath: for all these are the things that I hate, saith Jehovah”; which is an inspired repetition and application of the preaching of the former prophets, which Zechariah had already summarised in Zec_7:9-10, an exposition of which will be found in my notes on those verses. I would only here add that the mishpat shalom, “judgment of peace,” which they are exhorted to judge “in their gates” (the place where justice and judgment were wont to be administered, Deu_16:18; Deu_21:19, etc.), means “judgment which issues in peace,” or “such an administration of justice as tends to promote peace and establish concord between those that are at strife.”1 The sins enumerated in the Zec_8:17 which are con-

1 Keil. The remarks of the Jewish commentator, Kimchi, on this expression are as follows: “If ye judge righteousness there will be peace between the parties in the lawsuit; according as our Rabbis have said in a proverb, ‘He that has his coat taken from him by the tribunal, let him sing

and go his way'—in proof of which they have adduced the verse, 'And all this people shall also go to their place in peace' (Exo_18:23): 'ALL the people,' even he that is condemned in judgment. And our Rabbis, of blessed memory, have interpreted mishpat shalom (judgment of peace) of reconciliation between the litigants, for it is said (in Sanhedrin, fol. 6b), 'What sort of judgment is that in which there is peace? It is that of arbitration.' " trary to "truth and peace" are emphatically described as the very things which God hates, ■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■, eth kol-elleh asher sanethi—as if He meant to say, "This is the sum of what I hate"; for they sum up in brief the breaches of both tables of the law—that which sets forth man's duty to God, and that which sets forth his duty to his fellow-man. And because God hates these sins we, too, must hate them, for "religion consists in conformity to God's nature, that we should love what God loves and hate what God hates."

We now come to the last of the four sections into which the whole of Zechariah 7:1-14 and Zechariah 8:1-23 are divided. Here we have the direct positive part of the reply to the original question by the deputation from Bethel (Zec_7:1-3) to ask whether there was still occasion to observe the fasts which had been appointed to celebrate the anniversaries of the destruction of the Temple and the desolation of the land by the Chaldeans: "And the word of Jehovah of hosts came unto me, saying, Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: The fast (or 'fasting') of the fourth, and the fast of the fifth, and the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth (months) shall be (or 'become') to the house of Judah joy and gladness, and cheerful feasts—■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■, moadim tobhim ('good seasons', or 'holidays'); therefore love truth and peace." The fast of the ninth day of the fourth month was instituted to celebrate the taking of the city by Nebuchadnezzar in the eleventh year of Zedekiah's reign;1 the fast of the fifth month (the blackest day of all in the Jewish calendar) commemorates the destruction of both the city and the Temple,2 and many other calamities which, according to Jewish tradition, happened on this same day (some of which are enumerated in my notes on Zec_7:3); the fast of the seventh month, as already stated in the exposition of chap. 7., was appointed for the murder of Gedaliah;3 and the fast of the tenth commemorated the commence-

1 Jer_52:6-7.

2 Jer_52:12-13.

3 2Ki_25:25-26; Jer_41:1-3. ment of the siege of Jerusalem on the tenth day of that month in the ninth year of Zedekiah.1

All these days are still observed as fasts by the Jewish nation in all parts of the earth, for it is still the night of weeping for Israel, and Zion still sits desolate and mourns. But the long night of weeping is to be followed by a morning of joy, when Jehovah shall accomplish the "good" which He has purposed and promised to Israel and Jerusalem (Zec_8:14-15), and then the former troubles and calamities shall be "forgotten" (Isa_65:16), and the very days which commemorate them shall be turned into "joy and gladness" and moadim tobhim—cheerful feasts or sacred festivals. "Therefore," the prophet turns again to the remnant whom he was addressing, "love ha-emeth ve ha-shalom—truth and peace"—for the promises of future blessedness and glory, whether national in relation to Israel, or spiritual in relation to the individual believer in Christ, are intended in every case to act as incentives to holiness of life and consecration to God's service in the present; and though God's covenants and promises to the nation are unconditional, and

“without repentance,” or any change of mind as far as He is concerned, and are not made to depend on Israel’s goodness or righteousness, yet righteousness, truth, and love must be blessed fruit of these promises.

What the consequence of Jehovah’s dwelling in the midst of Israel will be to the other nations, and how Israel’s blessing will react upon the whole earth, we see in the last four verses of our chapter.

“Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: It shall yet come to pass” (or, “it shall yet be”)—however unlikely it may have appeared in the eyes of the remnant of the people to whom Zechariah prophesied, and however “wonderful” or impossible it may appear in our eyes—“that there shall come peoples” (a collective and representative name for all peoples), “and the inhabitants of many (or ‘great’) cities: and the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily (literally, ‘going, let us go’— ■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■—or 1 2Ki_25:1; Jer_39:1; Eze_24:1-2.

‘let us go on and on,’ i.e., ‘perseveringly until we attain’ the blessed goal)1 to entreat the favour (literally, to ‘entreat the face’) of Jehovah2 and to seek Jehovah”—to which the ready and glad response of those invited will be, “I will go also—and many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek Jehovah of hosts in Jerusalem, and to entreat the face of Jehovah”—all which is but an iteration by the central figure in the group of post-exilic prophets of the glorious announcements concerning “the latter days” made by the former prophets. Thus, for instance, we read both in Isaiah and in Micah, “And it shall come to pass in the latter days, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many peoples shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem” (Isa_2:2-3, R.V.). The allegorising commentators, according to whom “the literal fulfilment of such passages is a sheer impossibility”3—as if it had not been foretold in this very scripture that the fulfilment of the great and glorious things which are here prophesied would appear too “wonderful” and impossible in the eyes of men—would have us believe that what is predicted by Isaiah, and Micah, and Zechariah (indeed, by all the prophets) in

1 Pusey wrongly applies this, as all the other great promises in this chapter, to the present; yet there is some truth in his observation that “the words seem to speak of that which is a special gift of the gospel, namely, continued progress, ‘forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before, to press forward toward the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.’ Let us go on and on; whence it is a Christian proverb, Non progredi est regredi—Not to go on is to go back. Augustine observed, ‘The whole life of a good Christian is a holy longing to make progress’; and again, ‘The one perfection of man is to have found that he is not perfect.’ ‘If thou sayest it sufficeth, thou art lost.’ Nolle proficere deficere est—To be unwilling to increase is to decrease.”—St. Bernard, quoted by Pusey.

2 See footnote on this phrase in the exposition of chap. 7. p. 213.

3 C. H. H. Wright. reference to the universal spread of the knowledge of Jehovah through the instrumentality of Israel, has already been fulfilled, or is now exhaustively fulfilling itself in this gospel dispensation.

Thus one of them, commenting on these verses, writes: “Zechariah describes vividly the eagerness and mutual impulse with which not only many, but mighty nations should throng to the gospel, and every fresh conversion should win others also, till the great tide should sweep through the world.”

“The inhabitants of one city shall go to another. It is one unresting extension of the faith, the restlessness of faith and love. ‘They shall not be satisfied with their own salvation, careless about the salvation of others; they shall employ all labour and industry, with wondrous love, to provide for the salvation of others as if it were their own.’ It is a marvellous stirring of minds. Missionary efforts, so familiar with us as to be a household word, were unknown then. The time was not yet come. Before the faith in Christ came, the Jewish people were not to be the converters of mankind. They were to await Him, the Redeemer of the world, through Whom and to Whom they were to be first converted, and then the world through those who were of them. This mutual conversion was absolutely unknown. The prophet predicts certainly that it would be, and in God’s time it was. ‘From you,’ St. Paul writes to a small colony in Greece, ‘sounded out the Word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to Godward is spread abroad. Your faith’ he writes to the heathen capital of the world, ‘is spoken of throughout the whole world.’ Within eighty years after our Lord’s ascension the Roman governor of Bithynia reported, on occasion of the then persecution, that it spread as a contagion. ‘The contagion of that superstition traversed not cities only, but villages and scattered houses too.’ Before the persecution the temples had been desolated, the solemn rites long intermitted, the sacrificed animals had very rarely found a purchaser. An impostor of the same date says: ‘Pontus is full of atheists and Christians.’ ‘There is no one race of men,’ it was said before the middle of the second century, ‘whether barbarians, or Greeks, or by whatsoever name called, whether of those wandering, homeless tribes who live in waggons, or those pastoral people who dwell in tents, in which there are not prayers and eucharists to the Father and Creator of all things, through the name of the crucified Jesus.’ ‘The word of our teacher,’ said another, ‘abode not in Judæa alone, as philosophy in Greece; but was poured out throughout the whole world, persuading Greeks and barbarians in their several nations and villages and every city—whole houses and each hearer individually—and having brought over to the truth no few even of the very philosophers; and if any ordinary magistrate forbid the Greek philosophy, forthwith it vanishes, but our teaching forthwith, at its first announcement, kings and emperors and subordinate rulers and governors, with all their mercenaries and countless multitudes, forbid, and war against us and try to extirpate, but it rather flourishes.’ ”1 That there is a measure of truth in all this no one will gainsay, nor can any one deny the fact of the marvellous, rapid spread of the gospel in the first two or three Christian centuries, through those Jewish apostles and messengers whose hearts were all aflame with love and zeal for their all-glorious Redeemer, and through their first converts from among the Gentiles. But what about the subsequent history of the professing Church? Has it continued in its first love? Has it “gone on and on” in faith and purity, and in zeal for Christ’s cause and the salvation of men? Alas! instead of converting the world, the Gentile Church became more and more merged into the world, and their candlesticks of corporate testimony were one by one removed from the earth. Not as if the Word of God has failed in that whereto it was sent: a people for His Name from among the Gentiles—a multitude which no man can number, out of all nations, and kindreds, and tongues—

1 Pusey. The quotations are from Justin Martyr, Trypho, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian. have been, and are being, gathered into the fold of the One Great Shepherd. But this dispensation, according to the predictions of Christ and His apostles, instead of ending in the universal knowledge of God, and in peace and righteousness among the nations, is to end in almost universal apostasy and failure, and in the greatest conflict among the nations that the world has yet known.

Beside this, what is here predicted is something which, as we have seen, is to take place subsequent to the restoration and national conversion of Israel. Has that yet taken place? No; as we observed in the notes on Zechariah 2:1-13, it is only ignorance of God's plan and self-delusion which can boast of the gradual conversion of the world, and speak of "Christian nations" in this present dispensation. But when Jehovah will have mercy upon Jacob, and will yet choose Israel again and set them in their own land—when, after the long centuries of darkness and unbelief the eyes of the blind shall be opened and Israel nationally is converted, and the heart of each of them is fired with that love and zeal which burned in the heart of Paul after the Lord revealed Himself to him, saying: "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest"—then this prediction of Zechariah shall be fulfilled, and "many peoples and strong nations shall come and seek Jehovah of hosts in Jerusalem, and to entreat the face of Jehovah"; and the still more ancient promise shall be realised: "As truly as I live, saith Jehovah, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of Jehovah" "for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea."1

All this is confirmed and brought to a climax in the last verse: "Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: In those days it shall come to pass that ten men out of all the languages of the nations shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you, for we have heard that Jehovah is with you."

Ten is used in Scripture for an indefinite number;2 1 Num_14:21; Isa_11:9.

2 Gen_31:7; Lev_26:26; Num_14:22; 1Sa_1:8. here it stands for "a great and complete multitude." The unusual Hebrew phrase, mikol leshonoth haggoyim—"of all the languages of the nations"—is an echo of Isa_66:18, where we read that "all nations and tongues" (or "languages"—haggoyim vehalleshonoth) shall be gathered to see God's glory in Jerusalem. They shall lay hold on the khenaph, which is the corner of the long flowing garment worn in the East. Among the Jews, to each of the four kenaphayim of the outer garment of white, the ■■■■■■■ (tsitsith, "fringes," or tassels (of blue) were attached; and some writers have supposed that this is what is referred to, since it was the distinctly visible sign of "a man, a Jew." It is spoken of as being laid (or caught) hold of, first with a view to detain the Jew, so as to beg his permission to accompany him. But it has the sense of keeping firm hold, expressive of the earnest determination of the Gentile seekers of Jehovah to accompany the Jew, who is himself represented as travelling towards Zion, with his face turned thitherward. Like Ruth, the Moabitess, to her Jewish mother-in-law, so the Gentile converts to the God of Israel shall say: "Entreat us not to leave Thee, or to return from following after Thee: for whither Thou goest we will go: . . . Thy people shalt be our people, and Thy God our God." "We will go with you, for we have heard that Jehovah is with you."

It is because the Jew shall then not only "believe in one God" (which is their boast now), but shall be so one with God that for a Gentile convert to call himself by the name of Jacob will be equivalent to saying, "I am the Lord's"; and to surname himself "by the name of Israel," equal to

“subscribing with his hand unto Jehovah” (Isa_44:1-5). It is because the glorious hope and promise contained in the Name “Immanuel” shall then be fulfilled in a literal and personal sense to Israel nationally, and Jehovah Himself, the Holy One of Israel, in the Person of their Messiah Jesus, shall dwell in the midst of them; and because, finally, Qodesh l’Yehovah—“Holiness (or ‘holy’) unto Jehovah”—shall then be written upon their foreheads, yea, upon all that they possess, that the Gentiles shall honour and reverence them “as the priests of Jehovah, the ministers of our God” (Isa_56:10), and cleave unto them as the appointed messengers of salvation and instruments of blessing, saying, “We will go with you, for we have heard that Jehovah is with you.” A pledge and prophecy of it we have in the history of the gospel in this dispensation, for it is a remarkable and wonderful fact that “the religion introduced by a Jew, the religion which consists of faith in the person of One who was indeed a Jew—namely, our blessed Lord—is that which has been embraced” by multitudes from among the Gentiles. Those are, therefore, not far wrong who have interpreted the words “a man, a Jew,” of Christ; for although, as the whole context shows, it is not primarily and directly of the Messiah, but of the Jews in the days of their future blessing, that this prophecy is spoken; yet, as we have seen, it is only when Israel shall be the Messianic people and the representatives of Christ among the nations, Who will then be the King of the Jews, that this prophecy will be fulfilled. In this connection it is interesting to observe that even the Jews saw a reference in this scripture to the Messiah. Thus in an ancient Midrash we read: “All nations shall come, falling on their faces before the Messiah, and the Israelites saying, Grant that we may be Thy servants, and of Israel. For, as relates to the doctrine and the knowledge of the law, the Gentiles shall be their servants, according as it is written: ’In those days it shall come to pass that ten men shall take hold out of all the languages of the nations, shall even take hold of the skirts of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.’ ”1 1 Pesikta Rabbathai, in Yaklut Shimoni.

4.14. Part 2 - The Prophecies

PART II THE PROPHECIES

4.15. Chapter 13 - An Examination of Modern Criticism

CHAPTER XIII INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND PART OF ZECHARIAH AN EXAMINATION OF THE MODERN CRITICISM IN REFERENCE TO Zechariah 9:1-17, Zechariah 10:1-12, Zechariah 11:1-17, Zechariah 12:1-14, Zechariah 13:1-9, Zechariah 14:1-21

CHAPTER XIII THE aim which we set before us in these “Notes” on Zechariah was by God’s help to make this precious portion of Old Testament revelation intelligible, and spiritually profitable, to the ordinary intelligent English reader, and in doing so to avoid as much as possible minute critical points, and lengthy discussions of the questions of dates and authorship.

We might, therefore, have accepted the contention of the more “moderate” of the modern critical writers, that the contents and “religious” or spiritual value of these sacred oracles are independent of the question as to whether they were, or were not, actually composed by the person, or persons, and at the time “traditionally” attached to them—and have proceeded at once to the exposition of Zec_9:1 &c. But this contention is only partially true. The ethical and spiritual character of a writing is not altogether independent of its authorship and the circumstances in which it originated; and then, too, as far as these chapters are concerned, it is not a question merely as to what “religious” value we can find in them for ourselves, or for the professed people of God at the present day. The true believer and disciple is anxious above all to understand the meaning of the divine oracles, which holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost; and we are concerned here not only with the application, but with the interpretation of these chapters. Both Jews and Christians have always believed that they contain fore-announcements of great and solemn events, and that we have in them divine forecasts of things which were to transpire at a time, or times, which from the prophets’ then point of view, at any rate, are contemplated as future.

Now in order rightly to understand or explain the prophetic element in these chapters, and to know whether these forecasts have already been fulfilled or not, much will depend on the question of the date of their origin. It makes all the difference, for instance, whether Zechariah 12:1-14, Zechariah 13:1-9, Zechariah 14:1-21 were composed by an unknown contemporary of Jeremiah, whose prophecies of a siege of Jerusalem, and “anticipations” of God’s manifest interposition on behalf of His people in the hour of their greatest extremity (which, however, were falsified by the events), refer to the siege of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple by the Chaldeans, or whether the writer is the inspired post-exilic prophet under whose name these chapters stand, who not only lived after the destruction of the Temple, but witnessed the rebuilding of the Temple after the partial restoration from Babylon, and who therefore must speak of another Temple and a yet future siege.

Now, while Zechariah’s authorship of Zechariah 1:1-21, Zechariah 2:1-13, Zechariah 3:1-10, Zechariah 4:1-14, Zechariah 5:1-11, Zechariah 6:1-15, Zechariah 7:1-14, Zechariah 8:1-23 (with which I have already dealt so far) is universally acknowledged, strong objections have been raised in modern times against the assumed authorship and date of the last six chapters. The Spirit of the

Early English Criticism On examining the great amount of criticism on this subject, we find that it divides itself into two separate streams, which are impelled by two different motives. The earliest critics of the traditional authorship of these chapters were learned English divines, men who believed in the plenary inspiration of Holy Scripture, whose actuating motive was to justify the inerrancy of the citation in Mat_27:9-10, which ascribes to Jeremiah a prophecy found in Zec_11:1 &c. Thus Joseph Mede1 (the very first who sought to establish a pre-exilic authorship of these chapters) says, in his note on the above passage in Matthew: “It 1 Joseph Mede, born in 1586 at Borden, Essex, author of the Clavis Apocaliptica; died in 1638. would seem the Evangelist would inform us that those latter chapters ascribed to Zachary . . . are indeed the prophecies of Jeremy, and that the Jews had not rightly attributed them: . . . there is no scripture saith they are Zachary’s, but there is a scripture saith they are Jeremy’s, as this of the Evangelist.” And proceeding from this point of view, he discovered, as he thought, internal proof that these chapters belonged not to Zechariah’s, but to Jeremiah’s time. He was followed by Hammond, Kidder, Newcome, etc.1

We shall see when we come (D.V.) to the exposition of Zec_11:1 &c. as to whether there is any other possible explanation of the occurrence of Jeremiah’s name in that passage in Matthew; meanwhile, without entering more fully into this point here, we would adopt the words of another English Biblical scholar,2 and say:

“Is it not possible, nay, is it not much more probable, that the word Ιερεμιου (Jeremiah) may be written by mistake by some transcribers of Matthew’s Gospel, than that those of the Jewish Church, who settled the canon of scripture, should have been so grossly ignorant of the right author of these chapters as to place them under a wrong name? It is not, I think, pretended that these chapters have been found in any copy of the Old Testament otherwise placed than as they now stand. But in the New Testament there are not wanting authorities for omitting the word Ιερεμιου (Jeremiah). Nor is it impossible to account plausibly for the wrong insertion of Jeremiah (Mat_27:9) by observing that exactly the same words occur in Mat_2:17, where we read Τοτε επληρωθη το ρηεν υπο (in some copies δια—see Wetstein) Ιερεμιου του

1 Archbishop William Newcome on the Twelve Minor Prophets. The spirit of these early English critics may be judged from the following words. After stating his reasons for accepting Mede’s view that Zechariah 9:1-17, Zechariah 10:1-12, Zechariah 11:1-17 were written by Jeremiah, Newcome says: “But whoever wrote them, their divine authority is established by the two quotations from them in the New Testament.” How different this from modern criticism, which takes no account of the New Testament in this respect, nor even of the direct testimony of Christ!

2 Dr. Benjamin Blayney, author of Dissertation on the Seventy Weeks of Daniel, etc.; died in 1801.

προφητου λεγοντος (Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying). Now supposing a transcriber to have had in his copy either δια του προφητου (through the prophet) only, or δια Ζαχαριου του προφητου (through Zechariah the prophet), yet carrying in his mind what he had written a little before, he might inadvertently and without intention have written the same over again, as will easily be granted by those who are at all used to transcribe.” The Rationalistic Criticism which reduces Prophecy to Human Divination The other stream of criticism directed against the date and authorship of these chapters rises from a different source, and is impelled by the same motive which, alas, underlies the whole of the so-called “modern criticism.” There are, no doubt, exceptions; but reading the many, and for the most part conflicting opinions

of modern writers on this question, one is struck with the truth of Keil's remarks, that the objections which modern critics offer to the unity of the book (and the same may be said also of much of their criticism of other books of the Bible) do not arise from the nature of these scriptures, but "partly from the dogmatic assumption of the rationalistic and naturalistic critics that the Biblical prophecies are nothing more than the productions of natural divination; and partly from the inability of critics, in consequence of this assumption, to penetrate into the depths of the divine revelation, and to grasp either the substance or form of their historical development so as to appreciate it fully."1 In illustration of these remarks of Keil, it may not be out of place to quote a striking instance of the elimination of any reference to a distant future, and, indeed, of any supernatural element from the prophetic scriptures on the part of modern critics. Before me lies the last edition of what is regarded by many as a standard work on the 1 Keil, in the Introduction to his Commentary on Zechariah.

Literature of the Old Testament. The author (Canon Driver) is esteemed as one of the more "moderate" of this school. Like many others, he divides Zechariah 12:1-14, Zechariah 13:1-9, Zechariah 14:1-21 from Zechariah 9:1-17, Zechariah 10:1-12, Zechariah 11:1-17, but he follows those of the German rationalistic school, who ascribe a post-exilic origin to the second half of Zechariah, though he denies Zechariah's authorship. These are his words on the last three chapters:

"As regards the occasion of the prophecy it is impossible to do more than speculate. It is conceivable that in the post-exilic period where our history is a blank (B.C. 518 - 458; 432 - 300) the family of David assumed importance in Jerusalem, and supplied some of the leading judges and administrators, and that they had been implicated with the people of the capital in some deed of blood (Zec_12:10-14), on the ground of which the prophet depicts Jehovah's appearance in judgment. In the heathen invaders of Zechariah 12:1-14, Zechariah 13:1-9, Zechariah 14:1-21 he perhaps has not in view any actual expected foe, but pictures an imaginary assault of nations, like Ezekiel (Ezekiel 38:1-23, Ezekiel 39:1-29), from which he represents Jerusalem, though not without severe losses, as delivered. In other features the prophecy appears to be one of those (cf. Isaiah 24:1-23, Isaiah 25:1-12, Isaiah 26:1-16, Isaiah 27:1-13) in which not merely the figurative, but the imaginative, element is larger than is generally the case, especially in the pre-exilic prophets. But even when allowance has been made for this, many details in the prophecy remain perplexing, and probably no entirely satisfactory explanation of it is now attainable." The italics are Canon Driver's.

We refrain from characterising the remarks which ascribe the origin of some of the sublimest prophecies in the Old Testament in reference to the last things to the exercise of the "imaginative" faculty of the writers, but let us, for lack of space, look at one point only. The first reference, which is so easily disposed of with a stroke of the pen, is Zec_12:10-14. Now this passage begins with the words: "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplication; and they shall look unto Me Whom they have pierced: and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son, and they shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born"—and proceeds to describe an intense universal mourning throughout "the whole land," when every tribe shall mourn apart, and "their wives apart."

Even Jews believed that this is a prophecy of solemn events in the future—though, on grounds which we cannot stop here to indicate, they wrongly applied Zec_12:10 to a “Messiah ben Joseph,” who, according to them, was to precede the Messiah ben David.

Certainly the remarkable correspondence in this case, between the prediction and that part of it which has already been fulfilled in the Gospel narrative, is one of the most striking proofs of the divine inspiration of the prophecy, as well as of the Messiahship of our Lord Jesus of Nazareth. But for Canon Driver and the school which he represents, New Testament history is evidently non-existent, or, if it exists, it has no relation whatever to Old Testament prophecy; and rather than admit the possibility of a divine fore-announcement in reference to a distant future, this sublime scripture is made to refer to “some deed of blood” in which the leaders and the people were implicated sometime before these chapters were written, which, according to him, was some time between 518 and 300 B.C.—of which “deed of blood” which could occasion such deep and universal mourning, history knows nothing!

Now, to quote another author:

“The human authorship of any books of Holy Scripture—and so of these chapters of Zechariah—is, in itself, a matter which does not concern the soul. It is an untrue imputation that the date of books of the Bible is converted into matter of faith. In this case Jesus has not set His seal upon it; God the Holy Ghost has not declared it. But, as in other cases, what lay as the foundation of the theory was the unbelief that God, in the way above nature, when it seemed good to Him, revealed a certain future to His creature man. It is the postulate (or axiom, as appears to these critics), that there is no superhuman prophecy, which gives rise to their eagerness to place these and other prophetic books, and portions of books, where they can say to themselves that they do not involve such prophecy. To believers it has, obviously, no religious interest at what time it pleased Almighty God to send any of His servants the prophets. Not the dates assigned by any of these self-devouring theories, but the grounds alleged in support of those dates, as implying unbelief of God’s revelation of Himself, make the question one of religious interest, namely, to show that these theories are as unsubstantial as their assumed base is baseless.”1 That it is not unjust to say that to most of these critics either prophecy in the Christian sense of the term does not exist; or, to quote one of them, that “all definite prophecy relates to an immediate future” and has reference to events which, as men imbued with the ethical principles which determine God’s dealings with men and nations, and as careful observers of the signs of the times, the prophets could well conjecture, or “anticipate,” as likely to come to pass—the following quotation from one of the chief fathers of the modern criticism shows:

“That which is most peculiar in this prophet” (writes Ewald, of the supposed unknown author of the last six chapters of Zechariah) “is the uncommon high and pious hope of the deliverance of Jerusalem and Judah, notwithstanding all visible greatest dangers and threatenings. At a time when Jeremiah, in the walls of the capital, already despairs of any possibility of a successful resistance to the Chaldees and exhorts to tranquillity, this prophet still looks all these dangers straight in the face with swelling spirit and divine confidence; holds, with unbowed spirit, firm to the like promises of older prophets, as Isa_29:1 &c.; and anticipates that, from that very moment when the blind fury of the destroyers would discharge itself on the sanctuary, a wondrous might would crush them in pieces, and that this must be the beginning of the Messianic weal within and

without.”2

1 Pusey.

2 Professor H. Ewald, Die Propheten des Alten Bundes.

Zec_14:1 &c. is, according to Ewald, a modification of the earlier “anticipations” of this prophet.

“This piece,” he says, “cannot have been written till somewhat later, when facts made it more and more improbable that Jerusalem would not anyhow be conquered, and treated as a conquered city, by coarse foes. Yet then, too, this prophet could not part with the anticipations of older prophets, and those which he had himself at an earlier time expressed so boldly, amid the most visible danger, he holds firm to the old anticipation (in remembrance of) the great deliverance of Jerusalem in Sennacherib’s time (Isa_37:1 &c.), which appeared to justify the most fanatic hopes for the future (comp. Psa_59:1 &c.). And so now the prospect moulds itself to him thus, as if Jerusalem must indeed actually endure the horrors of the conquest, but that then, when the work of the conquerors was half-completed, the great deliverance already suggested in that former piece would come, and so the sanctuary would notwithstanding be wonderfully preserved, the better Messianic time would notwithstanding still so come.”

Principal George Adam Smith, to whose work, The Book of the Twelve Prophets, we shall have occasion to return presently, and who, like Canon Driver, follows those German critics who ascribe a post-exilic origin to these chapters, though denying Zechariah’s authorship, after mentioning some grounds for a later date, says:

“But though many critics judged these grounds to be sufficient to prove the post-exilic origin of Zechariah 9:1-17, Zechariah 10:1-12, Zechariah 11:1-17, Zechariah 12:1-14, Zechariah 13:1-9, Zechariah 14:1-21, they differed as to the author and exact date of these chapters. Conservatives, like Hengstenberg, Delitzsch, Keil, Kohler, and Pusey, used the evidence to prove the authorship of Zechariah himself after 516, and interpreted the references to the Greek period as pure prediction. . . . But on the same grounds Eichhorn saw in the chapters not a prediction, but a reflection, of the Greek period. He as signed Zechariah 9:1-17, Zechariah 10:1-12. to an author of the time of Alexander the Great; Zechariah 11:1-17, Zechariah 12:1-14, Zechariah 13:1-6 he placed a little later, and brought down Zechariah 13:7-9, Zechariah 14:1-21 to the Maccabæan period.” But it is a sad fact that the grounds, when closely examined, on which Eichhorn and the others, who, admitting a post-exilic origin of these chapters, yet deny that they were written by Zechariah, are neither “the geographical references” nor the historical or philological indications in the scripture in question, but the underlying presupposition on the part of these critics that “pure prediction” is an impossibility, and the attempt to eliminate or explain away the supernatural element in the prophetic scriptures. And since, as an instance, there is too marked and striking a resemblance between the historic events connected with the march and conquest of Alexander the Great through Syria, Phoenicia, and Palestine, with the description in Zec_9:1 &c. and Zec_10:1 &c., they cannot be prophetic of these events (for that would be admitting the possibility of “pure prediction”), but must be “a reflection,” or, in other words, a description of the events after they had taken place. But to come back to Ewald and those who ascribe a pre-exilic origin to the second part of Zechariah, it must be pointed out that the prophecy, had it preceded the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, could not have been earlier than the reign of Jehoiakim, since the

mourning for the death of Josiah is spoken of as a proverbial sorrow of the past. But in that case the prophecy which “anticipates” a miraculous interposition of God for the deliverance of Jerusalem would have been in direct contradiction to Jeremiah, “who for thirty-nine years in one unbroken dirge predicted the evil” which should come upon the city; and the inventive prophet would have been “one of the false prophets who contradicted Jeremiah, who encouraged Zedekiah in his perjury, the punishment whereof Ezekiel solemnly denounced, prophesying his captivity in Babylon as its penalty; he would have been a political fanatic, one of those who by encouraging rebellion against Nebuchadnezzar brought on the destruction of the city, and in the name of God told lies against God.

“It is such an intense paradox that the writing of one convicted by the event of uttering falsehood in the name of God, incorrigible even in the thickening tokens of God’s displeasure, should have been inserted among the Hebrew prophets, in times not far removed from those whose events convicted him, that one wonders that any one should have invented it. Great indeed is the credulity of the incredulous!”1 The Uncertainties and conflicting “Results” of Rationalistic Criticism But though the preponderating weight of modern critical opinion since the beginning of the nineteenth century is that these chapters belong to a period before the Captivity (Zechariah 9:1-17, Zechariah 10:1-12, Zechariah 11:1-17, somewhere in the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, or Hezekiah, and Zechariah 12:1-14, Zechariah 13:1-9, Zechariah 14:1-21, because of the mention of the mourning for that king as an event of the past in Zechariah 12:1-14, after the death of Josiah2), yet over against them stands another group of critics of equal repute, who transfer these chapters to late post-exilic, post-Zecharian days.

We have already referred to Eichhorn, who, “after long vacillation,” assigned these chapters (which, according to him, are made up of different fragments) to different epochs of the Greek-Maccabæan period (332 B.C. to 161 B.C.). And to him must be added H. E. G. Paulus, Bötcher, Vatke, Bernard Stade, and others.

Principal George Adam Smith is so sure of the correctness of Stade’s theory, who assigns “between 300 and 280 B.C.” as the date of these chapters, that he has carried it out even in his arrangement of the order of the books. In his Book of the Twelve Prophets he places Malachi after the first part of Zechariah (Zechariah 1:1-21, Zechariah 2:1-13, Zechariah 3:1-10, Zechariah 4:1-14, Zechariah 5:1-11, Zechariah 6:1-15, Zechariah 7:1-14, Zechariah 8:1-23); then Joel,

1 Pusey.

2 Some have not been satisfied with merely two unknown writers for these six chapters. One B. G. Flügge, in a work published in Göttingen in 1818, entitled, Die Weissagungen welche die Schriften des Propheten Zacharias beigebogen sind, not only referred these chapters to pre-exilic days, but split them up into nine fragments, of different dates. for whose assignment to so late a date there is no justification in fact, and is only part of the newest destructive critical theories of the Pentateuch, to the baselessness of which (if the generally accepted older date be admitted) Joel’s prophecy testifies. Then, after Malachi and Joel, as a section by itself, he places Zechariah 9:1-17, Zechariah 10:1-12, Zechariah 11:1-17, Zechariah 12:1-14, Zechariah 13:1-9, Zechariah 14:1-21.1 But there is truth in the remark that “Criticism which reels to and fro in a period of nearly 500 years, from the earliest of the prophets to a period a century after Malachi, and this on historical and philological grounds, certainly has come to no definite basis, either as to history or philology.

Rather, it has enslaved both to preconceived opinions; and at last, as late a result as any has been, after this weary round, to go back to where it started from, and to suppose these chapters to have been written by the prophet whose name they bear."2

1 In the large edition of Die Heilige Schrift des Alten Testaments (the New Critical German Translation of the Old Testament), by Kautzsch and others, in the notes and appendices to which are embodied all the "results" of German scholarship and criticism of the nineteenth century, I read the following note to Zechariah 9:1-17, Zechariah 10:1-12, Zechariah 11:1-17, Zechariah 12:1-14, Zechariah 13:1-9, Zechariah 14:1-21 :

"In Betreff dieser sechs Kapitel die wegen ihre Stellung hinter den Weissagungen Sacharyas schon frühzeitig diesem Propheten zugeschrieben worden sind, ist noch immer streitig, ob wenigstens ein vorexilischer Kern (und zwar für kap. 9.-11. aus dem 8 Jahrhundert, für 12.-14. aus dem Ende des 7 Jahrhundert). Auzunehmen, oder ob das Ganze erst aus der spätern nach exilischen Zeit (dem 4 oder gar 3 Jahrhundert) herzuleiten sei—namely, 'In reference to these six chapters, which, on account of their position after the prophecies of Zechariah, were already in early times ascribed to this prophet, it is still a matter of dispute if we are to regard them as containing at least a pre-exilic kernel (or foundation—namely, for chapters Zechariah 9:1-17, Zechariah 10:1-12, Zechariah 11:1-17 from the eighth century, and for Zechariah 12:1-14, Zechariah 13:1-9, Zechariah 14:1-21 from the end of the seventh century, B.C.), or if the whole is to be referred to the later post-exilic time (namely, the fourth or even the third century B.C.).' "

2 Pusey. In the last sentences he has, no doubt, the case of De Wette in his mind, who, after advocating a pre-exilic origin of these chapters in the first three editions of his Einleitung ins Alte Testament, changed his mind in the 4th edition.

Stähelin, in his Einleitung in die Kanonische Bücher des Alten Testaments, says: "De Wette often assured me orally, that since he felt himself compelled to admit that this portion evinces acquaintance with the latest prophets, he could not deny it to be Zechariah's." De Wette's characterisation of these chapters was that they are "prophecies of fanatic contents, which deny all historical explanation."

It is obvious that there must be some mistake either in the tests applied or in their application, which admits of a variation of at least 450 years from somewhere in the reign of Uzziah (say 770 B.C.) to later than 330 B.C. The Arguments against the Unity of Zechariah examined But now let us very briefly examine the arguments against the unity of the Book of Zechariah. They are summarised by Professor von Orelli of Basel, one of the "moderate" of the modern school,1 whose own conclusion in the end is that "Zechariah 9:1-17, Zechariah 10:1-12, Zechariah 11:1-17, is a prophecy of a later contemporary of Hosea," and Zechariah 12:1-14, Zechariah 13:1-9, Zechariah 14:1-21 are "by an unnamed prophet at Jerusalem in the time of Jeremiah." The critical grounds are these:

(a) "The great diversity of literary form and manner existing generally between Parts I. and II. In Part II. are wanting those careful headings with indications of author and date which are found in Zechariah I. and Haggai. The style in Parts I. and II. is very different, both as relates to the phraseology in particular and the tenour of discourse generally. . . . The peculiar expressions of Part I. are not found in Part II., and conversely. The different tenour of the whole is of still greater

importance. To put it in brief, the first part on the whole offers a somewhat awkward prosaic style; whereas in the second, where there are no visions, exhibits in the discourses a spirit and a fire of enthusiasm such as one meets with elsewhere only in the early prophetic writings, but there all the oftener."

Now, in reference to the arguments based on supposed differences of literary form and style, which play such an important part in modern criticism, which is directed not only against these chapters, but against almost all the books of the Bible, it is sufficient to repeat a truism which 1 In his Introduction to Zechariah in his Commentary on the Twelve Minor Prophets. has been often stated, that diversity of subject is sufficient to account for differences of form and style where such exist. Headings and indications of authorship and date were necessary as introducing the series of visions at the beginning of the prophet's ministry, and to the address which formed the reply to the deputation from Bethel (Zec_7:1 &c., Zec_8:1 &c.); but no argument can be based on their absence from the oracles in the second part.

Some of the other prophets, too, use headings and attach dates to some of their utterances, and omit them in others.1 Introductory formulas are, for instance, "made use of by Hosea in Hosea 1:1-11, Hosea 2:1-23, Hosea 3:1-5, Hosea 4:1-19, Hosea 5:1-15, which are completely wanting in Hosea 6:1-11, Hosea 7:1-16, Hosea 8:1-14, Hosea 9:1-1, Hosea 10:1-15, Hosea 11:1-12, Hosea 12:1-14, Hosea 13:1-16, Hosea 14:1-9, and yet no doubt is entertained of the integrity of that book. The style, moreover, of that prophet is very different in Hosea 1:1-11, Hosea 2:1-23, Hosea 3:1-5 from what it is in Hosea 4:1-19, Hosea 5:1-15, Hosea 6:1-11, Hosea 7:1-16, Hosea 8:1-14, Hosea 9:1-1, Hosea 10:1-15, Hosea 11:1-12, Hosea 12:1-14, Hosea 13:1-16, Hosea 14:1-9; and the style of Ezekiel 4:1-17, Ezekiel 5:1-17, is totally different from that of Ezekiel 6:1-14, Ezekiel 7:1-27, or of Ezekiel 27:1-36, Ezekiel 28:1-26."2 But even those critics who agree in denying the unity of Zechariah do not agree among themselves on the points of style. Thus, Rosenmüller speaks of the first eight chapters as being "prosaic, feeble, poor," and of the last six chapters as "poetic, weighty, concise, glowing"; while Böttcher, on the other hand, speaks of the "lifeless language" of the last chapters, and compares them with the "amazingly fresh" style of the Psalms attributed to the time of the Maccabees. The argument from style, however, to quote from W. H. Lowe's Hebrew Student's Commentary, must always remain a doubtful one. Pusey has given an instance of the precarious nature of such arguments in the following: "An acute German critic imagined to have proved from their style that the Laws of Plato were not the work of Plato; and yet Jowett (trans., Plato, Dialog, 4. p. 1) has shown their genuineness by twenty citations in Aristotle (who must have been intimate with Plato for some 1 Isa_1:1; Isa_6:1; Eze_1:1-3; Eze_8:1-2; Eze_40:1-2.

2 C. H. H. Wright. seventeen years), by allusions of Isocrates (writing a year after Plato's death), by references of the comic poet Alexis (a younger contemporary), besides the unanimous voice of later antiquity.

"But it would not at all be surprising, as Keil, Stähelin, and others have observed, to find that the style of Zechariah varies in Zechariah 1:1-21, Zechariah 2:1-13, Zechariah 3:1-10, Zechariah 4:1-14, Zechariah 5:1-11, Zechariah 6:1-15, Zechariah 7:1-14, Zechariah 8:1-23 from that in Zechariah 9:1-17, Zechariah 10:1-12, Zechariah 11:1-17, Zechariah 12:1-14, Zechariah 13:1-9, Zechariah 14:1-21, as the subject-matter treated of in the two portions is radically different. 'In the

former portion the prophet had to narrate a series of visions seen by him in one night, and to record divers exhortations of a practical kind suggested by the inquiry of the deputation from Bethel; in the second portion he speaks of the distant future. In the former he might be expected to write in simple prose; in the latter he might at times rise to lofty heights of poetry.

“ ‘Moreover, and this must not be forgotten, it is exceedingly probable that the second portion was composed many years after the first—long after the Temple had been completed—and matters had assumed a kind of normal condition as regards the Jewish colony, and also at a time when the realization of the bright hope of attaining their national independence seemed to be as far off as ever.’ ”1 “That Gentle Lover of Peace”

Principal George Adam Smith finds a great argument against Zechariah’s authorship of the last six chapters in the fact that “the peace, and the love of peace, in which Zechariah wrote, has disappeared. Nearly everything in the last part breathes of war, actual or imminent. The heathen are spoken of with a ferocity which finds few parallels in the Old Testament. There is revelling in their blood, of which the student of the authentic prophecies of Zechariah will at once perceive that gentle lover of peace could not have been capable.”

We confess that we fail to “perceive” the truth of this statement, or to find any “ferocity,” or “a revelling in the 1 C. H. H. Wright. blood of the heathen,” on the part of the writer of these chapters.

What is true is that the prophet, who already in the First Part was commissioned to announce God’s “great fury” against the nations who oppressed Israel, and already there foretells the overthrow of Gentile world-power, does in the last chapters, when he comes to prophesy more particularly of the last days, and of the solemn events which are to usher in the day when Jehovah shall at last be “King over all the earth” set forth in realistic language the final great conflict, and the terrible judgments which are to come, not only on “the heathen,” but on Israel also.

It might be true that, according to his natural disposition, Zechariah, “that gentle lover of peace,” might not find it a congenial task to prophesy of war and judgment, or to describe the destruction of the enemies of God and of His people; but other “gentle lovers of peace” among Israel’s inspired prophets also had to utter some terribly heavy things against the ungodly in Israel and the nations who forget God, when compelled so to do by the hand and the Spirit of God. There was no gentler man nor greater lover of peace than Jeremiah, and when he had to announce impending calamities and judgments he shrank from his task and did it with a broken heart; but Jehovah’s word came to him saying, “Behold, I have put My words in thy mouth: see, I have set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, and to destroy and to over throw; to build and to plant.” He who was the embodiment of gentleness and love, and loved to reveal the Father’s heart, had yet to warn men of the place of doom—“where the worm dieth not, and where the fire is not quenched.” But let us turn briefly to the other arguments against the unity of Zechariah, as summarised by Von Orelli. We pass over the statement under the heading (b), namely, that “the circle of thought is quite different in the two parts of the book,” for, as he himself observes, “this cannot be conclusive against the unity of the author, as, e.g., we cannot demand that Zechariah, in his later discourses, should use again the entire angelology of the visionary part: the figure of Satan, the seven eyes of God,” etc.

(c) “A much more important point is that the outward, historical, and political situation presupposed in Zechariah 9:1-17, Zechariah 10:1-12, Zechariah 11:1-17, Zechariah 12:1-14, Zechariah 13:1-9, Zechariah 14:1-21 is not that of the age of Zerubbabel.” But is that so really? Let me put over against this statement, one by another German commentator, who was certainly not less scholarly nor less painstaking than those against whom he contends. “The current opinion of these critics, that the chapters in question date from the time before the Captivity,” writes Professor Keil, “is completely overthrown by the circumstance that even in these oracles the condition of the covenant nation AFTER THE CAPTIVITY forms the historical ground and starting-point for the proclamation of the picture of the future development of the Kingdom of God,” which statement he proceeds to prove (to my mind satisfactorily) by a number of references in these chapters. And that the historic foreground and starting-point of these chapters are not only post-exilic, but might very well fit in with the time of Zerubbabel, is also shown by Hengstenberg, Stähelin, Hävernick, Koehler, Kliefoth, Lange, Bredenkamp, and other prominent Bible scholars and commentators. To show that the critics themselves are far from sure of “the historic and political situation presupposed in Zechariah 9:1-17, Zechariah 10:1-12, Zechariah 11:1-17, Zechariah 12:1-14, Zechariah 13:1-9, Zechariah 14:1-21,” we might point again to the group which includes Eichhorn, H. E. G. Paulus, Vatke, B. Stade, etc., and their English exponents—Driver, George Adam Smith, etc., who, though denying Zechariah’s authorship, yet ascribe a post- exilic origin for these chapters, some of them as late, or even later, than 300 B.C., which guesses are also based chiefly on the supposed “historical and political situation” which they discover in these chapters.

Misconceptions and Misinterpretations

It can be shown, however, that many of the supposed “result ” and conclusions of modern critics are based, not only on misconceptions as to the “outward, historical, and political situation presupposed” in the scriptures with which they deal, but on misunderstandings and misinterpretations of the text. This will appear more clearly when we come to the exposition of these chapters; but an illustration of this fact is found in the summarised arguments against the unity of Zechariah given by Von Orelli under the last two headings of (d) and (e) We will quote them one by one, and very briefly examine them. The italics in all cases are, of course, ours.

(i.) “As relates to the circumstances of Israel in Zechariah 9:1-17, Zechariah 10:1-12, Zechariah 11:1-17, Zechariah 9:1-17 is of the nation as found in foreign lands (Zec_9:11); but a more general exile is still to come (Zec_10:2-9).”

We confess we cannot see how, supposing this is admitted, it would go to prove a pre-exilic origin of these two chapters, but we may quote words written by an English divine already before the end of the eighteenth century. “It is urged” says Benjamin Blayney, “that many things are mentioned in these chapters which by no means correspond with Zechariah’s time, as when events are foretold which had actually taken place. But it may be questioned whether those subjects of prophecy have been rightly understood, and whether that which has been construed as having a reference to past transactions may not in reality terminate in others of a later period, and some perhaps which are yet to come.”

Taking it for granted, as we do, that it is possible for an inspired prophet, speaking by the Spirit of God, to utter things not only in reference to an immediate, but also of a distant future, the references quoted from Zechariah 9:1-14 and Zechariah 10:1-12 “as relates to the circumstances

of Israel," answer exactly to the facts as contemplated from the starting-point of Zechariah's time; for the actual conditions were these: A remnant had returned after the seventy years' Captivity, but many of Zion's children—indeed by far the majority—were "prisoners of hope" (Zec_9:12) in the hands of the Gentiles. In the end, all the dispersed, wherever they may be found—whether in the lands "of the rising of the sun," or in those "of the going down of the sun" (Zec_8:7-8)—will be gathered; but that Zechariah foresaw a second stage in the dispersion, a more universal scattering before the final and universal gathering, we have already seen in the exposition of Zec_2:10-11, and Zec_8:7-8.

(ii.) "The Temple in Jerusalem was still standing (Zec_11:13)." Why not? Did not Zechariah early in his ministry see the completion of the building of a temple in Jerusalem after the partial restoration? And here again, supposing the difficult prophecy in Zechariah 11:1-17 refers (as, in the light of its striking and manifest fulfilment in Christ, it assuredly does) to a more distant future from the point of view of the prophet, when a temple would exist in Jerusalem?

(iii.) "Nay, even Ephraim has not gone into exile, . . . but is presupposed as a still existing power (Zec_9:10-13, Zec_10:6, Zec_11:7-14)"

Now, this would be a very serious argument against the post-exilic date of these chapters if the statement were true; but here also the conclusion is not justified by a proper understanding of the references given. It is based on the mention of "Ephraim" or "the house of Joseph," which are used as designations of "Israel" (Zec_11:14) in the narrower sense—namely, for those who during the long schism belonged to the northern kingdom in contrast to "Judah," or "the house of Judah," or "Jerusalem," which stand, when thus contrasted, for the southern kingdom. But if the mention of Ephraim, or "Israel," together with "Judah" and "Jerusalem," is to be taken as a proof that "Ephraim had not gone into exile" when these chapters were written, then on the same ground we might conclude that the northern kingdom still existed when Zechariah 7:1-14 and Zechariah 8:1-23 were written; and not only Zechariah 7:1-14 and Zechariah 8:1-23, but even the vision of the Horns and Carpenters in Zechariah 1:1-21, for there also we read of the "house of Judah and the house of Israel" (Zec_8:13), and of "Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem" (Zec_1:19, Zec_2:2); and yet it is universally admitted, even by the critics, that Zechariah 7:1-21 and Zechariah 8:1-23, as well as the visions, were written by Zechariah long after the overthrow—not only of Ephraim or the northern kingdom, but even of "Judah." But in truth these full designations, "house of Judah and house of Joseph," or "Judah and Ephraim," or "Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem," are used by the prophet as all-inclusive terms, for the whole people, after both kingdoms had been overthrown, and the schism which had existed so long had ceased with the Captivity. "The entire nation," as I wrote in my note on Zec_8:13, "which had previous to the Exile been divided for a time into two kingdoms, are now, after the partial restoration from Babylon, included in both parts of the book, in undivided unity in one common destiny." Together they are, during the Lo-ammi period, "scattered" and "a curse among the nations," and together (the prophet foretells) Jehovah shall "redeem" and gather them, "so that they shall be a blessing."

(iv.) The last of the internal grounds against the unity of Zechariah advanced by the critics, as summarised by Von Orelli, is that "the chief moral and religious faults presupposed in Part II. are pre-exilic. This part still contends chiefly against idolatry (Zec_10:2), and regards the extirpation of false prophets as still future; their number must still have been great at the time when Zechariah

8:2-6 was written." In reference to idolatry, let me quote the words of another writer:

"Idolatry certainly was not the prevailing national sin after God had taught the people through the Captivity. It is commonly taken for granted that there was none. But where is the proof? Malachi would hardly have laid the stress on marrying the daughters of a strange god, had there been no danger that the marriage would lead to idolatry. Nehemiah speaks of the sin into which Solomon was seduced by 'outlandish women,' as likely to occur through the heathen marriages; but idolatry was that sin. Half of the children could only speak the language of their mothers. It were strange if they had not imbibed their mothers' idolatry too. In a battle in the Maccabee war it is related, 'Under the coats of every one that was slain they found things consecrated to the idols of the Jamnites, which is forbidden the Jews by their law' (2Ma_12:40).

"The Teraphim were, moreover, an unlawful and forbidden means of attempting to know the future—not any coarse form of idolatry; much as the people now, who, more or less, earnestly have their fortunes told, would be surprised at being called idolaters."1 But it is very probable that Zechariah is speaking in Zec_10:2, Zec_13:2, etc., of the sin which brought on the Captivity, and not of it as existing in his own day. The prediction repeated from one of the former prophets, that God will cut off the very names and memory of idols from restored and converted Israel of the future, does not necessarily imply that they existed when the prophet wrote. And as to false prophets, they continued to exist after the Captivity—such, for instance, were Shemaiah, who "prophesied" against Nehemiah, and the prophetess Noadiah, and "the rest of the prophets" of whom we read in Neh_6:12-14. But here again it is overlooked that it is the distant future of Israel's final deliverance and cleansing which is before the prophet's range of vision, though it is linked to promises which have for their starting-point the more immediate future. There were false prophets at the time of the Lord's first advent, and He Himself warns His disciples against "false prophets" who would appear in the professing Church "in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves," and predicts that before the time of the end "many false prophets would arise and deceive many" (Mat_7:15, Mat_24:11-24, etc.).

Internal Marks of the Unity of Zechariah

We must draw this already lengthy disquisition to a close. We think we have shown that the objections raised by modern critics against the unity of Zechariah have no sufficient basis in fact.

1 Pusey. On the other hand, there are strong reasons, even apart from "tradition" (which in this case includes the testimony of the compilers of the Old Testament Prophetic Canon centuries before Christ, and of the Talmud)—which has always ascribed this scripture to Zechariah—to believe that it was the same human pen which committed to writing the series of visions in Zechariah 1:1-21, Zechariah 2:1-13, Zechariah 3:1-10, Zechariah 4:1-14, Zechariah 5:1-11, Zechariah 6:1-15 and the address to the deputation from Bethel in Zechariah 7:1-14, Zechariah 8:1-23, that the Spirit of God used also to write the last six chapters. The internal proofs of the integrity of the whole book have been thus summarised by another writer, of which, for the sake of conciseness, I gladly avail myself:

"(1) Both portions exhibit an extensive acquaintance with the writings of the later prophets.

"(2) They both exhibit also an extensive acquaintance with the earlier books, thus: In Zec_1:4-6, Zec_7:12, reference is made to the former prophets generally.1

“(3) In both divisions there are similar if not identical expressions to represent the whole people, such as ‘the house of Israel and the house of Judah’ (Zec_8:13), ‘the house of Judah and the house of Joseph’ (Zec_10:6).

“(4) Zec_11:11 is very similar to Zec_2:9-11, and the promise Zec_10:1 to that of Zec_8:12. In both portions Jerusalem is bid rejoice (Zec_2:10, Zec_9:9), and in both the only King of Israel mentioned is the Messiah.

“(5) In both portions there are promises of the bring-

1 Zec_2:12 (E.V. Zec_2:8) recalls the thought, though not the phraseology, of Psa_17:8; Zec_3:8, Zec_6:12, alludes to Isa_4:2, as well as to Jer_23:5 and Jer_33:15; Zec_3:10 is from Mic_4:4; Zec_6:13 evidently refers to Psa_110:4; Zec_8:8 recalls Hos_2:21 (E.V. Hos_2:19); Zec_8:20-22 in substance may be compared with Mic_4:1-2, Isa_2:2-3. And in the Second Part, Zec_9:1-8 bears some resemblance to Amo_1:3, Amo_2:6; Zec_9:10 (first half) is borrowed from Mic_5:10, and (second half) from Psa_72:8; Zec_13:2 is a quotation from Hos_2:17 or Mic_5:12-13 (comp. Isa_2:18, Isa_2:20); and Zec_13:9 from Hos_2:20 (E.V. Hos_2:23); compare also Zechariah 9:16 with Isa_11:12; Zec_10:12 with Mic_4:5; Zec_10:10-12 with Isa_11:15, Isa_14:25, Isa_10:24-27, Isa_30:31, etc.; Zec_12:8 with Joe_3:10; Zec_12:10 with Joe_2:28-29; Zec_14:3 with Isa_34:1-4; Zec_14:6-7 with Amo_5:18-20; Joe_3:15; Isa_30:26; Zec_14:8 with Isa_11:9, Isa_2:3, Mic_4:2; Zec_14:11 with Amo_9:13-15; Zec_14:20 with Isa_23:18; Zec_14:21 with Isa_4:3, Isa_35:8, Joe_3:17, etc. ing back of the exiles (comp. Zec_2:6-13, Zec_8:6-8, with Zec_9:11-12 and Zec_10:10-12).

“(6) In both there is the habit of dwelling on the same thought or word (e.g., Zec_2:10-11, Zec_6:10, Zec_6:12-13, Zec_8:4-5, Zec_8:23, Zec_11:7, Zec_14:10, Zec_14:4, Zec_14:5). In both the whole and its part are mentioned together for emphasis, as Zec_5:4, Zec_10:4; and in Zec_12:12 we have ‘every family apart,’ and then in Zec_12:13, the specification. In both parts we have the unusual number of five sections to a verse, e.g., Zec_6:13, Zec_9:5-7.

“(7) Both divisions are written in Hebrew free from Aramaisms. In both the expressions m■■’■bh■■r umish■■bh occurs (Zec_7:14, Zec_9:8), an expression which occurs elsewhere only in Eze_35:7.

“(8) The highly poetic language and deep prophetic insight of Zechariah 9:1-17, Zechariah 10:1-12, Zechariah 11:1-17, Zechariah 12:1-14, Zechariah 13:1-9, Zechariah 14:1-21 we consider as an additional argument in favour of the unity of authorship of the whole book. For the man to whom in his youth such mystic visions as those of Zechariah 1:1-21, Zechariah 2:1-13, Zechariah 3:1-10, Zechariah 4:1-14, Zechariah 5:1-11, Zechariah 6:1-15 were vouchsafed, is just such an one to whom we should not be surprised to find that in his later years such profound revelations as those contained in Zechariah 9:1-17, Zechariah 10:1-12, Zechariah 11:1-17, Zechariah 12:1-14, Zechariah 13:1-9, Zechariah 14:1-21 were revealed, and who from his poetic and imaginative temperament would be likely to find suitable poetic language and metaphors wherewith to clothe them when revealed to him.

“The internal evidence being favourable to the hypothesis of the post-exilian origin of Zechariah 9:1-17, Zechariah 10:1-12, Zechariah 11:1-17, Zechariah 12:1-14, Zechariah 13:1-9, Zechariah 14:1-21, as well as of Zechariah 1:1-21, Zechariah 2:1-13, Zechariah 3:1-10, Zechariah 4:1-14,

Zechariah 5:1-11, Zechariah 6:1-15, Zechariah 7:1-14, Zechariah 8:1-23, and to that of unity of authorship, rather than adverse to it, and there being no positive external evidence to the contrary, we conclude that it is probable that the whole of the so-called Book of Zechariah is the work of Zechariah, grandson of Iddo."1 1 W. H. Lowe, M.A., "Hebrew Student's Commentary."

4.16. Chapter 14 - The Prince of Peace

CHAPTER XIV THE GENTILE WORLD-CONQUEROR AND ISRAEL'S PRINCE OF PEACE (Zechariah 9:1-17) The burden of the word of Jehovah upon the land of Hadrach, and Damascus shall be its resting-place (for the eye of man and of all the tribes of Israel is toward Jehovah); and Hamath, also, which bordereth thereon; Tyre and Sidon, because they are very wise. And Tyre did build herself a stronghold, and heaped up silver as the dust, and fine gold as the mire of the streets. Behold, the Lord will dispossess her, and He will smite her power in the sea; and she shall be devoured with fire. Ashkelon shall see it, and fear; Gaza also, and shall be sore pained; and Ekron, for her expectation shall be put to shame: and the king shall perish from Gaza, and Ashkelon shall not be inhabited. And a bastard shall dwell in Ashdod, and I will cut off the pride of the Philistines. And I will take away his blood out of his mouth, and his abominations from between his teeth, and he also shall be a remnant for our God: and he shall be as a chieftain in Judah, and Ekron as a Jebusite. And I will encamp about My house against the army, that none pass through or return; and no oppressor shall pass through them any more: for now have I seen with Mine eyes. Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy king cometh unto thee: He is just, having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt the foal of an ass. And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem; and the battle-bow shall be cut off; and He shall speak peace unto the nations, and His dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth. As for thee also, because of the blood of thy covenant I have set free thy prisoners from the pit wherein is no water. Turn you to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope; even to-day do I declare that I will render double unto thee. For I have bent Judah for Me, I have filled the bow with Ephraim; and I will stir up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece, and will make thee as the sword of a mighty man. And Jehovah shall be seen over them, and His arrow shall go forth as the lightning, and the Lord Jehovah will blow the trumpet, and will go with whirlwinds of the south. And Jehovah of hosts will defend them, and they shall devour, and shall tread down the sling-stones; and they shall drink, and make a noise as through wine; and they shall be filled like bowls, like the corners of the altar. And Jehovah their God will save them in that day as the flock of His people: for they shall be as the stones of a crown, lifted on high over His land. For how great is His goodness, and how great is His beauty! grain shall make the young men flourish, and new wine the virgins.

CHAPTER XIV THE overthrow of world-power, and the establishment of Messiah's Kingdom, may be given as the epitome of the last chapters of Zechariah, to which we have now come. The two oracles which make up the whole of the second half of the book (Zechariah 9:1-17, Zechariah 10:1-12, Zechariah 11:1-17 and Zechariah 12:1-14, Zechariah 13:1-9, Zechariah 14:1-21) show by their headings, as well as by their contents, and even by their formal arrangement, that they are corresponding portions of a greater whole. Both sections treat of war between the heathen world and Israel, though in different ways. In the first (Zechariah 9:1-17, Zechariah 10:1-12, Zechariah 11:1-17), the judgment through which Gentile world-power over Israel is finally destroyed, and Israel is endowed with strength to overcome all their enemies, forms the fundamental thought and

centre of gravity of the prophetic description. In the second (Zechariah 12:1-14, Zechariah 13:1-9, Zechariah 14:1-21), the judgment through which Israel itself is sifted and purged in the final great conflict with the nations, and transformed into the holy nation of Jehovah, forms the leading topic.

“The formal or structural resemblance between the two long oracles into which the last six chapters divide themselves appears also in the fact that in the centre of each the announcement suddenly takes a different tone without any external preparation (Zec_11:1 and Zec_8:7), so that it appears as if it were the commencement of a new prophecy; and it is only by a closer study that the connection of the whole is brought out and the relation between the two is clearly seen—namely, that the second section contains a more minute description of the manner in which the events announced in the first section are to be realised. In the threatening word concerning the land of Hadrach, Zechariah 9:1-17 and Zechariah 10:1-12 form the first section, Zechariah 11:1-17 the second. In that concerning Israel the first section extends from Zec_12:1 to Zec_13:6, and the second from Zec_13:7 to the end of the book.”1

Zechariah 9:1-17 and Zechariah 10:1-12, as has just been observed, go together and form a continuous prophecy. The foreground, or more immediate future, to which it refers, is the course of the victories of Alexander the Great, “which circled round the Holy Land without hurting it,” and ended in the overthrow of the Persian Empire—though the foreground merges, as we shall see, into solemn events both of judgment and of mercy of a more distant future. The prophecy begins with the word ■■■■■ (massa), which the Authorised Version, together with all the ancient versions (with the exception of the Septuagint), have rendered “burden”; but the majority of modern scholars translate simply “oracle,” or “utterance,” or “sentence.”

It is not necessary to enter here into a long critical examination of the actual force of this word when used as a superscription to prophetic utterances; but it is certainly true that ■■■■■ (massa), which is from the verb ■■■■■ (nasa), “to lift,” or “take up,” as a man takes up a burden, “is never placed in the title,” as is observed already by Jerome, “save when the vision is heavy, and full of burden and toil.”

It is used by Isaiah entirely as the heading to the prophecies which contain threatenings and announce judgments against the nations who have acted as oppressors of Israel,2 and in Nahum it forms the introductory formula to the prophetic description of the destruction of Nineveh. In short, in ordinary Hebrew “massa is unquestionably used in the sense of a burden, and the prophecies to which it is affixed are mainly prophecies of woe and disaster.” Here, moreover (in Zec_9:1 and in Zec_12:1), massa 1 Keil. I have taken the liberty of recasting and slightly condensing his valuable remarks.

2 Isa_13:1; Isa_14:28, Isa_15:1, Isa_17:1, Isa_19:1, Isa_21:1, Isa_21:11, Isa_21:13, Isa_22:1, Isa_23:1. A full and able criticism, five pages long, on the use of the word will be found in Hengstenberg (Christology) on Zechariah 9:1-17. does not stand alone as the introductory formula, as is the case in Isaiah and Nahum, but is followed by ■■■■■■ ■■■■ (debhar Yehovah), “the word of Jehovah”; as is the case also in Mal_1:1, which begins, “The burden of the word of Jehovah to Israel.”

Very many pages have been devoted by commentators to the discussion as to the meaning of Hadrach, Because the name occurs nowhere else in the Bible, and because of the difficulty in

identifying it with any known place or district in Syria, it has been generally understood by Jewish and Christian commentators as having a symbolical or mystical significance. Thus Kimchi says, “We find in the words of our Rabbis of blessed memory that Rabbi Benaiah says Hadrach is the name of the Messiah, who is sharp—■■■■ (■had)—to the Gentiles, and tender—■■■ (rakh)—to Israel.” And this interpretation of Rabbi Benaiah is echoed also by other Jewish expositors. The explanations given by most Christian commentators have been quite as fanciful. Thus Hengstenberg (who devotes eight learned pages to it in his Christology), Kliefoth, Keil, and others explain Hadrach to be “a symbolic epithet, descriptive of the Medo-Persian Empire, which is called ‘sharp-soft,’ or ‘strong-weak,’ on account of its inwardly divided character.”1

Gesenius, Bleek, and others have taken Hadrach as the name of some Syrian king who is supposed to have reigned in Damascus between Benhahad III. and Rezin, which utterly baseless supposition (since there is no trace whatever in history of the existence of such a king) has been taken by them as a support for the theory of a pre-exilic origin of these chapters.

Others have wrongly understood the word as standing for “an Assyrian fire-god,” or as the name of “a deity of Eastern Aramea,” of which also there is no trace in history; while Olshausen, Von Ortenberg, Bredenkamp, and others regard Hadrach as a scribal error for Hauran, which is a district south of Damascus, and is mentioned also in connection with Hamath and Damascus in Eze_47:18.

1 Keil. But it is now pretty certain that there was a city called Hadrach in the neighbourhood of Damascus, for comparatively recent monumental historical discoveries have in this, as in so many instances beside, confirmed and thrown light on the Hebrew text. In the list of Assyrian eponyms—that is, the list of the various officers after whom the Assyrian years were named in a certain definite order, the kings themselves acting in due course as eponyms—we read, in B.C. 772, in the eponymy of Assur-bel-ezer, governor of Calah, of an “expedition to Hadrach” (Ha-ta-ri-ka). This statement immediately follows the name of the governor of Sallat (or Salmat, as Rawlinson and Schrader give the name), who was the eponym in the previous year, when an expedition was made to the city of Damascus. Hadrach (or Hatarika) figures also in the expeditions in the eponyms of later Assyrian kings and generals.

Sir Henry Rawlinson says that in the catalogue of Syrian cities tributary to Nineveh (of which we have several copies in a more or less perfect state, and varying from each other both in arrangement and extent) there are three names which are uniformly grouped together, and which read Manatsuah, Magida (Megiddo), and Du’ar (Dor). “As these names are associated with those of Samaria, Damascus, Arpad, Hamath, Carchemish, Hadrach (or Hatarika) and Zobah, there can be no doubt about the position of the cities.”1

We proceed to the next line—“And Damascus shall be its resting-place”;2 that is, the judgment which is the “burden” of this prophecy shall first of all have Damascus

1 Those interested in this subject will find full notes and long quotations from Rawlinson, Schrader, etc., in Dr. Wright’s Zechariah and his Prophecies, and in Pusey in his Minor Prophets.

2 ■■■■■■■ (menuchah) is indeed commonly used of “quiet, peaceful resting,” and some (as already the Targum) have understood it as indicating the conversion of the people of Damascus. But this idea is contrary to the context. Rather is it to be understood of the lighting down of God’s

wrath, which shall there rest until it has accomplished His purpose of judgment. Dr. Wright suggests as a parallel Jer_49:38, when, in allusion to His judgment impending over Elam, God says, “I will set My throne in Elam.” as its goal, and from that centre it shall spread itself over the whole district which the passage goes on to describe. The easiest and most natural translation of the second half of the first verse—Ki la-Yehovah ■ein adam ve khol shibhte Israel—is that given in the Authorised Version and in the text of the “Revised”—i.e., “for the eye of man and of all the tribes of Israel is toward the Lord”; but the margin of the Revised Version has another rendering, which is supported by the LXX, the Syriac, and the Targum, and is adopted also, with slight variations, by some modern scholars—namely, “for Jehovah has an eye (or ‘to Jehovah is an eye’) upon (or ‘over’) man and the tribes of Israel”—which is regarded as a parallelism to Jer_32:19, “Great in counsel and mighty in work, for Thine eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men, to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.” But the rendering given in the Authorised Version is doubtless the true one.

It primarily describes the consternation into which men would be thrown at the approach of the conqueror, who would be the executor of God’s judgment, or, as another has expressed it, when the fulfilment of this prophecy takes place “upon Hadrach and Damascus, and the wrath of God descends upon those cities and districts, the eyes of the nations, as well as those of the people of Israel, will look toward Jehovah, and marvel at the wonders of judgment which will then be performed in their sight, in accordance with the solemn warnings of the prophet.” The eye of all the tribes of Israel is particularly specified as directed then toward Jehovah, probably because the Jews had special reason to fear the wrath of Alexander, their high priest having from a sense of loyalty to the Persians refused at first to pay tribute or allegiance to the Macedonian conqueror. But what is here foretold as primarily taking place as the result of the terror inspired among the nations which then constituted parts of the Medo-Persian Empire by the rapid march and conquests of Alexander the Great, also foreshadows what will take place in a yet future time, when, driven by fear and consternation of God’s judgments which shall then be in the earth, the eyes of all men, and “of all the tribes of Israel” in particular, shall be directed toward Him who was once pierced, but now marches forth conquering and to conquer (Rev_1:7). In Isaiah 17:1-14 we have a somewhat parallel prediction of men’s eyes, and specially of the eyes of Israel, being turned to God as the result of judgment, and there also it is primarily coupled with the burden, or oracle, against Damascus: “In that day” we read, “shall a man look unto his Maker, and his eyes shall have respect to the Holy One of Israel; and he shall not look to the altars, the work of his hands, neither shall he have respect to that which his fingers have made”—a passage which reminds us also of the language of the godly remnant in the 26th chapter: “Yea, in the way of Thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for Thee: to Thy Name and to Thy Memorial is the desire of our soul. With my soul have I desired Thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek Thee early: for when Thy judgments are in the earth the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness.”1 But to proceed to Zec_9:2, “And Hamath, also, which bordereth thereon”—i.e., on Damascus—shall be involved in the like fate, and share in the burden of wrath of which Damascus is the “resting-place.”

There was a district or small kingdom in Syria, as well as a city of that name (which was its capital), the present Hamath, and within its bounds “in the land of Hamath” Riblah was situated, associated in Jewish memory with terrible sufferings and humiliations at the hands of their

conquering foes (2Ki_23:33, 2Ki_25:6-7, 2Ki_25:20-21).

Then, having spoken of the two capital cities which represent Syria, the prophet proceeds to speak of the two 1 Isa_17:1-8, Isa_26:8-9. capitals of Phœnicia: “Tyre and (or ‘with’) Sidon,1 because (or ‘although’) she is very wise.”

How Tyre especially showed her worldly wisdom, and the great material prosperity which she attained thereby, we see in Zec_9:3, “And Tyre built herself a stronghold, and heaped up silver as the dust, and fine gold as the mire of the street.” The words in the Hebrew are vatibhen Tsor matsor. There is a kind of play on the word Tyre (Tsor). The similarity of the sound and meaning may be somewhat imitated, as Dr. Wright suggests, by the English rendering, “Tyre built herself a tower” though the Hebrew word “matsor” has a much wider significance than the English “tower.” “Tyre” (Tsor) was perhaps, in the first instance, so called because of her natural strength, or strong fortifications, the word suggesting a rocky stronghold. But she was not satisfied with that—she built herself in addition a matsor—a strong rocky fortress. This refers, no doubt, to the new Tyre, which was on an island thirty stadia (about seven hundred paces) from the mainland. This new Tyre is called in Isa_23:4, ■■■■■ ■■■■■, maoz hayyam, “the stronghold of the sea,” because, although very small in extent, it was surrounded by a wall a hundred and fifty feet high, and was so strong a fortification that Shalmaneser besieged it for five years without success, and Nebuchadnezzar for thirteen years, and apparently was unable to conquer it. This is confirmed by the heathen historian Diodorus Siculus, who says, “Tyre had the greatest confidence owing to her insular position and fortifications, and the abundant stores she had prepared.” Thus, thinking herself doubly strong and impregnable, she gave herself up, as the capital of Phœnicia, to commercial enterprise, and “heaped up silver as the

1 Sidon is regarded as an annexe of Tyre, which, as Keil points out, answers to the historical relation in which the two cities stood to one another. Tyre was, indeed, originally a colony of Sidon, but it very soon overshadowed the mother city, and rose to be the capital of all Phœnicia, so that even in Isaiah and Ezekiel the prophecies concerning Sidon are attached to those concerning Tyre, and its fate appears interwoven with that of Tyre. Hence, after the mere mention of Sidon, Tyre only is spoken of in Zec_9:3-4. dust, and fine or shining gold (■harutz) as the mire of the street.”1 But worldly wisdom, natural strength, and material resources are of no avail if it is the Lord who rises in judgment against us; and that is true of nations as of individuals.

“Behold, the Lord will dispossess her, and He shall smite her power (or ‘her wealth’) in the sea; and she shall be devoured with fire.” “Behold” (hinneh), by which word our special attention is directed to something very important. “Behold,” though Tyre is so wise, so doubly strong, so rich—yea, even though her strength were a hundred times as great, and she enclosed herself in a hundred strong walls of one hundred and fifty feet high, “the Lord will dispossess her”; for cities or peoples cannot barricade themselves against God, and “it is altogether useless to build strongholds to keep Him out.” It was the Lord who did it through Alexander, whom He used as His scourge against Phœnicia and the Persian power at that time.

“If the reference of a prophecy can be judged of by the event,” says another writer, “there can be no doubt whatever to what period this prophecy must refer. The judgments denounced against Damascus, Hadrach, and Hamath are expressed in such general terms that several events which occurred at very different periods might be adduced as fulfilments of the prophecy. But the

prophecies referring to Tyre were not accomplished until the capture and destruction of that city by Alexander the Great. Tyre was unsuccessfully attacked, during the supremacy of the Assyrian power, by Shalmaneser. It was again besieged for many years by Nebuchadnezzar, and it is still a matter of doubt whether it was actually taken by that monarch. It is, indeed, highly probable that Nebuchadnezzar, though he failed in his attack on the island fortress, was so far

1 Compare especially Ezek. 28. No wonder the Prince of Tyre became the foreshadowing of Antichrist, and the King of Tyre (Eze_28:12) the earthly foreground and type of the chief of the fallen angels. successful as to gain possession of the city on the mainland, which was possibly denuded of all that was valuable, and that the Tyrians after the loss of the city on the mainland made peace with the Chaldean monarch on favourable terms. But it is certain that if Tyre was captured at all by Nebuchadnezzar, it was not then burned with fire—her sea-girt fortress was not destroyed nor her naval power ruined. Though she may have lost her independence, she did not lose the important position she occupied as the greatest commercial and naval city in the world, and the naval power of the Phœnicians proved in the Persian period of the greatest possible importance to that empire.

“The case was very different when Alexander the Great, having completely shattered the might of Persia in the decisive battle of Issus, marched with his victorious army into Syria. Alexander directed the main division of his army against Phœnicia, while he dispatched Parmenio with a strong detachment to operate against Damascus. Damascus, where Darius had deposited his riches, opened its gates to that general, who overran all the land of Hadrach, and must also necessarily have occupied Hamath, which probably submitted without a struggle. Sidon surrendered without making any resistance; but Tyre, after a vain attempt at negotiation, ventured to resist.

“Proudly confident in the strength of their island fortress, the Tyrians mocked the attempts of Alexander to reduce their city. Every engine of war suited for defence had been stored up in their bulwarks, and every device which their skilful engineers could suggest was had recourse to, and for a time with marked success. ‘Ye despise this land army through confidence in the place that ye dwell in is an island, but I will show you that ye dwell on a continent,’ was the language of Alexander. The shallow channel between the mainland and the island was at last bridged over by a huge dam of earth erected after repeated failures, and the city which had stood a five years siege from the Assyrians, a thirteen years siege from the Chaldeans, was taken after a short siege of seven months by Alexander.

Ten thousand of its brave defenders were either massacred or crucified, the rest were sold into slavery, and none escaped save those who were concealed by the Sidonians in the ships. O. Curtius adds distinctly that ‘Alexander having slain all save those who fled to the temples, ordered the houses to be set on fire.’1

“The city of Tyre was afterwards repeopled by fresh settlers, and recovered some of its prosperity. During the reigns of the Seleucidian monarchs it rose again to considerable importance. But the prophecy of Zechariah had been fulfilled to the letter. The city lost its insular position; for the mole of Alexander was never removed, and covered over and strengthened by the deposits of sand and other matter, it remains even to this day a monument of the execution of the Divine wrath upon the proud, luxurious, and idolatrous city.”2 But the burden of judgment travels south. The overthrow of

the Phœnician stronghold and the approach of the powerful enemy greatly terrifies Philistia: “Ashkelon shall see it (or ‘let Ashkelon see it’) and fear; Gaza also shall be sore pained (or ‘greatly tremble’); and Ekron, for her expectation (or ‘her hope’) shall be ashamed; and a king shall perish from Gaza, and Ashkelon shall not be inhabited (or ‘shall not abide’). And a bastard shall dwell in Ashdod, and I will cut off the pride of the Philistines.”

Only four of the five capital cities of the Philistines are mentioned, Gath being usually omitted in the later prophets, perhaps because it belonged, for a time at any rate, to the kingdom of Judah, and was, according to some, ultimately incorporated with it. The order in which these Philistine cities are named is the same as in Jer. 25., which prophecy was certainly not unknown to Zechariah.

1 There is a full and graphic account of the siege and capture of Tyre by Alexander in Professor George Rawlinson’s Phœnicia (“The Story of the Nations” Series), pp. 216-236.

2 At present Tyre, now called Sur, is an unimportant place with 6000 inhabitants, about half of whom are Moslems and the rest Latin Christians and “United Catholics.”

Though no special mention is made of Ashkelon, Ekron, or Ashdod in the histories of Alexander’s march, they were no doubt occupied by the Macedonian troops. The fate of Gaza, however, at that time is fully recorded. “Strongly fortified, and occupying an important position, its very name, ‘the strong,’ testified to its natural strength. Despite, therefore, of the terror caused by the overthrow of Tyre, Gaza ventured to resist Alexander, and was not reduced to submission for five months. Its king perished, and the city lost the semi-independence which it seems to have had under the Persian Empire. For the Persians, like their predecessors, the Assyrians and the Babylonians, were wont to permit many of the cities and districts which formed a portion of their empire to retain a state of semi-independence. Hence frequent mention is made of kings subject to the Persian ‘King of kings.’ ” The one who actually bore the name of King of Gaza at the time of the siege of the city by Alexander was Betis, or Batis, who, though a Persian satrap and commander of the city, had assumed a relatively independent position. His end was tragic. After the fall of Gaza, when ten thousand of the inhabitants were slain and the rest sold into slavery, Batis was bound to a chariot with thongs thrust through the soles of his feet, and dragged through the city.

We cannot with certainty define what is meant by “a bastard shall dwell in Ashdod.” The word ■■■■■■■, mamzer, is only found in one other place in the Hebrew Scriptures (Deu_23:2), and its etymology is somewhat obscure. Among the Jews the term is used of one born out of lawful wedlock, but some think that it properly describes only one who is mixed, or of ignoble birth, and not necessarily one illegitimately born. The ancient versions (the LXX, Syriac, Targum, Vulgate) render the word in our passage by “a foreigner.” In any case, as Keil observes, it describes one whose birth has some blemish connected with it, so that he is “not an equal by birth with the citizens of a city or the inhabitants of a land.” Hengstenberg has rendered it freely by “Gesindel” (a rabble). The second line in Zec_9:6 may be taken as explanatory of the first. By the dwelling of the mamzer in Ashdod “the pride of the Philistines shall be cut off.”

“It would appear that the Philistines were wont to pride themselves upon their nationality, their prowess, and their independence. Their pride would be humbled by Gaza’s being deprived of any ruler bearing the name of king, by the city of Ashkelon being removed from its ancient place (i.e.,

ceasing to exist), and by Ashdod being inhabited by a mixed and bastard population."1 In Zec_9:7 there is a ray of promised mercy shining out of the thick cloud of judgment which was to alight upon Philistia, for the end of the judgment is the deliverance of the people from their idolatrous abominations, and the incorporation of the remnant which shall remain, among God's people.

"And I will take away his blood and his abominations from between his teeth, and he also shall be a remnant (or 'shall remain') for our God: and he shall be as a chieftain (or, 'as a small tribe, or family') in Judah, and Ekron shall be as a Jebusite." It is the Philistine nation or people personified as one man who are here spoken of in the singular. The blood (or, literally, "bloods," for the word is in the plural) which God will "take," or "cause to pass away" from his mouth, is the blood of his idolatrous sacrifices, which in the next sentence are called shiqqutsim—"abominations"—and thus deprived of, or delivered from, their polluting idolatry, the remnant that remains shall belong to "our God"—the living God of Israel—who stands out so glorious in His holiness when contrasted with the "abominations" of the heathen, "and He shall be as a chieftain in Judah."2

1 Wright.

2 The word ■■■■■ (alluph) is used in the earlier books of the Bible of the "dukes," or tribal chiefs or princes of Edom and of the Horites (Genesis 36:1-43; Exo_15:15); but is applied by Zechariah in Zechariah 12:1-14 of the princes or chieftains of Judah. It is connected with ■■■■■ (elleph), "a thousand," and stands perhaps literally for chief, or "head of a thousand." Some critics would substitute eleph for alluph in our passage, and render it "he shall be as a thousand," i.e., a small

"And Ekron shall be as the Jebusite," which latter, to quote the word of another commentator, "stands here for the former inhabitants of the citadel of Zion," who adopted the religion of Israel after the conquest of this citadel of David, and were incorporated into the nation of the Lord. "This is evident from the example of the Jebusite Araunah, who lived in the midst of the covenant nation (2 Samuel 24:1-25 and 1 Chronicles 21:1-30) as a distinguished man of property, and not only sold his threshing-floor to King David as a site for the future Temple, but also offered to present the oxen with which he had been ploughing, as well as the plough itself, for a burnt-offering."

Here we are reminded once again that though the more immediate reference of the prophecy in this chapter was to Alexander's march and conquests, it looked on and merges into a more distant future. Koehler rightly points out that Zec_9:7 was not fulfilled by the deeds of Alexander, "since neither the remnant of the Phœnicians nor the other heathen dwelling in the midst of Israel were converted to Jehovah through the calamities connected with his expedition." On this ground this German scholar regards the conquests of Alexander as the commencement of the fulfilment, which was then continued through the calamities caused by the wars of succession—the conflicts between the Egyptians, Syrians, and Romans—until it was completed by the fact that the heathen tribes within the boundaries of Israel gradually disappeared as separate tribes, and their remnants were received into the community of those who confessed Israel's God. But, as Keil observes, "we must tribe or "clan" in Judah. Calvin, however, gives quite a different interpretation to this somewhat difficult passage. He paraphrases Zec_9:7 thus: "I will rescue the Jew from the teeth of the Philistine" (the figure, according to him, being taken from wild beasts rending their prey with the teeth), "who would have devoured him as he would devour blood or flesh of his abominable sacrifices to idols; and even he, the seemingly ignoble remnant of the Jews, shall be sacred to our God; and though so long in a servile position, and bereft of dignity, I will make them all to be as

governors, or princes, ruling others; and Ekron shall be as a tributary bondservant, as the Jebusite." Then the antithesis would be between the Jew that remaineth and the Ekronite. But the interpretation I have given above is doubtless the correct one. go a step further, and say that the fulfilment has not yet reached its end, and will not, until the kingdom of Christ shall attain that complete victory over the heathen world" which is foretold in the following verses of this chapter. Then, as has already been stated, when God's judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world shall learn righteousness, and after Israel as a nation is converted, all the tribes and families of the earth shall be blessed with and through them. But while Israel's enemies in the north and south have occasion to tremble at the approach of the hostile army, God Himself would be the shield and protector of His people and His special dwelling-place in their midst. "And I will camp about My house, ■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■—vechanithi lebhethi (or 'for'—i.e., on account, or for the protection of My house) because of the army" (which is most probably the correct reading, though some, by a slight alteration of the first vowel, would read ■■■■■■■ (matsabhah) instead of ■■■■■■ (mitsabhah), and translate: "I will encamp about, or for, My house, as a garrison, or guard"), "because (or 'on account') of him who passeth through or returneth;1 and no oppressor shall pass through them any more, for now have I seen with Mine eyes."

"My house" stands not for the congregation of Israel, as some suppose, but for the Temple; but the protection of the house carries with it also the protection of the people, which it is supposed will henceforth be under God's favour, so that in the next, or parallel line, the plural is used in the expression, "no oppressor shall pass through them any more." The word ■■■■■ (noges), translated "oppressor," primarily means "taskmaster"—one who compels slaves to perform their appointed tasks (Exodus 3:7, Exodus 5:6-10). It is used

1 The phrase ■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■ (me■obher umishabh), "because of him that passeth by and because of him that returneth"; or, "because of him that passeth to and fro," occurs altogether only four times in the Hebrew Scriptures, and as it is found in Zec_7:14 and here in Zec_9:8, it has rightly been taken (as the expression is so unusual) as an indication of the common authorship of the first and second halves of this book, as is pointed out in the Introduction to the second part of this book. also of cattle-drivers and tax-gatherers. Once only, and in this very prophecy (Zechariah 10:4), it is used in a good sense, as describing one who has absolute rule; but here it stands for the foreign tyrants, the heads of the great Gentile kingdoms who oppressed Israel. In the last sentence in Zec_9:8, "For now have I seen with Mine eyes," we have an echo and reminiscence of Exo_3:7, "I have surely seen (or 'seeing I have seen') the affliction of My people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows"; where also the word "for I have seen" stands in connection with Israel's affliction at the hands of their "taskmasters," which is the same word in plural form as rendered "oppressor" in Zec_9:8. Yes, the God who delivered Israel from under the oppression of Egypt, and with Whom only to "see" the afflictions of His people is to be moved with compassion for their sorrows, will yet again look "with His own eyes," and interpose, and deliver them from the power of their oppressors; which promise, whatever the more immediate reference, will not be exhaustively fulfilled until the final national deliverance of Israel, of which the deliverance from Egypt is regarded in the prophetic Scriptures as a type, and until the final overthrow of the enemies of God and of His people, of which the overthrow of Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea was a foreshadowing. With regard to the special fulfilment of the prediction in Zec_9:8 in the more immediate future from the prophet's point

of view, let me remind my readers of the account given by Josephus of the remarkable episode in Alexander's march through Palestine, which agrees also with traditions preserved in the Talmud and Midrashic literature. At the commencement of his campaign against Phœnicia, Alexander the Great sent messengers to the Jewish high priest in Jerusalem demanding aid from the Jews and the payment of the tribute which they used to pay to the King of Persia. The high priest, however, refused to break the oath of fidelity which he had sworn to Darius, and Alexander in consequence threatened to inflict a severe chastisement on Jerusalem as soon as he had captured Tyre, and reduced the Philistine strongholds.

"Now Alexander, when he had taken Gaza, made haste to go up to Jerusalem; and Jaddua the high priest, when he heard that, was in an agony, and under terror, as not knowing how he should meet the Macedonians, since the king was displeased at his foregoing disobedience.

"He therefore ordained that the people should make supplications, and should join with him in making sacrifices to God, whom he besought to protect that nation, and to deliver them from the perils that were coming upon them; whereupon God warned him in a dream, which came upon him after he had offered sacrifice, that he should take courage, and adorn the city, and open the gates; that the rest should appear in white garments, but that he and the priests should meet the king in the habits proper to their order, without the dread of any ill consequences, which the providence of God would prevent. Upon which, when he rose from his sleep, he greatly rejoiced; and declared to all the warning he had received from God. According to which dream he acted entirely, and so waited for the coming of the king.

"And when he understood that he was not far from the city, he went out in procession with the priests and the multitude of the citizens. The procession was venerable, and the manner of it different from that of other nations. It reached to a place called Sapha, which name, translated into Greek, signifies a prospect; for you have thence a prospect both of Jerusalem and of the Temple. And when the Phœnicians and the Chaldeans that followed him thought they should have liberty to plunder the city and torment the high priest to death—which the king's displeasure fairly promised them—the very reverse of it happened; for Alexander, when he saw the multitude at a distance in white garments, while the priests stood clothed in fine linen, and the high priest in purple and scarlet clothing—with his mitre on his head—having the golden plate whereon the name of God was engraved, he approached by himself, and adored that name, and first saluted the high priest. The Jews also did altogether, with one voice, salute Alexander and encompass him about; whereupon the kings of Syria and the rest were surprised at what Alexander had done, and supposed him disordered in his mind. However, Parmenio alone went up to him and asked him how it came to pass that, when all others adored him, he should adore the high priest of the Jews? To whom he replied, 'I did not adore him, but that God who hath honoured him with his high priesthood; for I saw this very person in a dream, in this very habit, when I was at Dios in Macedonia, who, when I was considering with myself how I might obtain the dominion of Asia, exhorted me to make no delay, but boldly to pass over the sea thither, for that he would conduct my army, and would give me the dominion over the Persians; whence it is, that having seen no other in that habit, and now seeing this person in it, and remembering that vision, and the exhortation which I had in my dream, I believe that I bring this army under Divine conduct, and shall therewith conquer Darius and destroy the power of the Persians, and that all things will succeed according to what is in my own mind.'

“And when he had said this to Parmenio, and had given the high priest his right hand, the priests ran along by him and he came into the city; and when he went up to the Temple, he offered sacrifice to God according to the high priest’s direction, and magnificently treated both the high priest and the priests. And when the Book of Daniel was showed him wherein Daniel declared that one of the Greeks should destroy the empire of the Persians, he supposed that himself was the person intended; and as he was then glad, he dismissed the multitude for the present, but the next day he called them to him and bade them ask what favours they pleased of him; whereupon the high priest desired that they might enjoy the laws of their forefathers, and might pay no tribute on the seventh year.”1 Israel’s Prince of Peace and His Mission in the World From the victorious progress of the great Gentile world-conqueror, with his great army, which God uses as His rod to chastise the peoples and cities enumerated in the first verses of this chapter; and from the deliverance of the people and land of Israel by Jehovah, who would camp round about His house with an invisible host, “because of him who passeth by, and because of him that returneth” (the primary reference of which, as we have seen, was to a more immediate future)—the prophet passes to the true King of Israel, whose strength rests not in chariots and horses, or in the multitude of an host; and to the great deliverance and salvation which He shall bring, not only to Israel, but to “the nations.” And it is quite in keeping with the character of Old Testament prophecy that there is no perspective observed, nor clear indications given of the pauses and intervals between the different stages and acts by which Messiah’s work would be accomplished, and His Kingdom finally established. Like the traveller who from a great distance beholds a whole mountain range as one mountain, without discerning the different peaks, with the long valleys between, so do the Old Testament seers often behold

1 Josephus Antiquities of the Jews, 11. 8. 3. “Rationalism, while it remains such,” observes Pusey, “cannot admit of Daniel’s prophecies which the high priest showed him, declaring that a Greek should destroy the Persian empire, which Alexander rightly interpreted of himself. But the facts remain that the conqueror, who above most gave way to his anger, bestowed privileges almost incredible on a nation, which under the Medes and Persians had been ‘the most despised part of the enslaved’ (Tacitus), made them equal in privileges to his own Macedonians, who could hardly brook the absorption of the Persians, although in inferior condition, among themselves. The most despised of the enslaved became the most trusted of the trusted. They became a large portion of the second and third then known cities in the world—they became Alexandrians, Antiochenes, Ephesians, without ceasing to be Jews. The law commanded faithfulness to oaths, and they who despised their religion respected its fruits.”

Messiah’s Person and Mission without clearly discerning from their distant point of view the interval between the sufferings and the glory that should follow. And not only are their eyes always fixed on the distant and ultimate future, and the final great national and spiritual deliverance of Israel at the time of the end, but the distant future was always connected by them with the more immediate or proximate future. Every promised deliverance they regarded as a pledge of the final great deliverance, and in every redemption which God wrought for His people they saw already the last great redemption which was to be brought to the world by the advent of the Messiah. This we must bear in mind as we proceed to examine the prophecy which is now before us.

We shall not stop to argue with those who would give a non-Messianic, non-Christian interpretation to this great prophecy. Fortunately, such are in the minority, even among the critics.

The attempts of one and another rationalistic writer to apply this passage to Zerubbabel, or Nehemiah, or Judas Maccabeus, or to the entrance of Uzziah into Jerusalem after his victories over the Philistines, or to the entry of Hezekiah into Jerusalem on the day of his coronation (of which there is no historic record, and which, as well as its application to Uzziah, is bound up with the theory of a pre-exilic origin of the second part of Zechariah), have been sufficiently refuted by scholars of the same school.

"When we brush aside all the trafficking and bargaining over words that constitutes so much of modern criticism, which in its care over the letter so often loses the spirit, there can, at least, be no question that this prophecy was intended to introduce, in contrast to earthly warfare and kingly triumph, another Kingdom, of which the just King would be the Prince of Peace, who was meek and lowly in His Advent, who would speak peace to the heathen, and whose sway would yet extend to earth's utmost bounds. Thus much may be said, that if there ever was a true picture of the Messiah-King and His Kingdom, it is this; and that, if ever Israel was to have a Messiah, or the world a Saviour, He must be such as is described in this prophecy—not merely in the letter, but in the spirit of it. And, as so often indicated, it was not the letter but the spirit of prophecy—and of all prophecy—which the ancient synagogue, and that rightly, saw fulfilled in the Messiah and His Kingdom. Accordingly, with singular unanimity, the Talmud and the ancient Rabbinic authorities have applied this prophecy to the Christ."1 But let us approach the Scripture itself. In view of the magnitude and the joyful character of the announcement about to be made, the prophet exclaims, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem," which reminds us of the similar summons in the first part of this book: "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith Jehovah,"2 which again is an inspired post-exilic echo of the joyous proclamation with which the Book of

1 Edersheim. Many pages could be filled with quotations from the Talmud, the Midrashim, and Jewish commentators, in which this passage is applied to the Messiah. In the Talmud Bab., fol. 98, we read Rabbi Joshua ben Levi asks: "It is written in one place, 'Behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven,' but in another place it is written, 'lowly, and riding upon an ass.' How is this to be understood? The answer is, If they be righteous (or deserving) He shall come with the clouds of heaven; if they be not righteous, then He shall come lowly, and riding upon an ass." With the exception of Rabbi Moshe ha-Kohen (quoted by Aben-Ezra, who applied the prophecy to Nehemiah) and Aben-Ezra (who applies it to "Judas, the son of the Hasmonean") all the Jewish commentators apply it to the Messiah. Rashi says, "This cannot be explained except of King-Messiah, for it is said of Him, 'And His dominion shall be from sea to sea'; but we do not find that such a one ruled over Israel in the time of the Second Temple."

Saadiah Gaon, commenting on the words in Dan. 7., "Behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven," says, "This is the Messiah our righteousness. But is it not written of the Messiah, 'Lowly, and riding upon an ass'? Yes, but this shows that He will come in humility, and not in pride upon horses."

Non-Jewish readers interested in Rabbinic interpretations must be referred to Schöttgen, vol. 2. p. 20 &c.; Pusey, The Minor Prophets (who has a fairly full collection of passages with references); Wünsche, Die Leiden des Messias, pp. 66, 103, etc.; Hengstenberg, in his Christology; Alexander McCaul, in his Observations on the 9th chapter of his (Kimch's) Commentary, etc.

2 Zec_2:10.

Immanuel1 closes: “Cry aloud and shout, thou inhabitress of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.” But when the infinite Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel, whom no man hath seen, or can see, manifests Himself, and comes visibly to dwell in the midst of His people, it is always in the person of the Messiah, and the “Lo, I come, and will dwell in the midst of thee,” is explained therefore by the equivalent announcement, “Behold, thy King (Messiah) cometh unto thee.” The coming of the King, which is announced in our passage in Zechariah 9:1-17 is, however, a different one from the coming foretold in the passages quoted from Isaiah 12:1-6 and Zechariah 2:1-13. For although, as already stated, there is no perspective observed in Old Testament prophecy, and the two advents of the Messiah are often seen and spoken of by the prophets as one, we know now, in the fuller light of the partial fulfilment, that there is a coming of the Redeemer first in humiliation to suffer and die, before He shall come again a second time in divine majesty to reign over this earth, and to fulfil in a literal sense the hope and promise contained in the name “Immanuel,” by Himself, the God-Man, visibly dwelling “in the midst of them,” so that Israel will at that time be able to say to the nations, “God is with us,”2 not only in the spiritual sense, in which His presence is a reality to us now, but in the literal sense of having their Divine Messiah-King dwelling and reigning among them.

It is to the first advent of Messiah, then, that attention is especially called by the word “Behold,” in Zechariah 9:9, although, as we shall see, this very prophecy looks on also to the second advent, and beyond the sufferings of Messiah, to the glory that should follow.

I have already, in the exposition of Zec_6:12, pointed out how the Messiah is introduced to us four different times in the Old Testament, and under four

1 Isaiah 7:1-25, Isaiah 8:1-22, Isaiah 9:1-21, Isaiah 10:1-34, Isaiah 11:1-16, Isaiah 12:1-6. Has been appropriately so styled.

2 Hebrew, “Immanu-El,” Pusey. Isa_8:10, the same as Isa_7:14. different aspects, by this word “Behold,” which correspond also to the fourfold portraiture of Christ in the four Gospels. Here it is especially as Zion’s King that we are called upon to contemplate Him: “Behold, thy King cometh unto thee.” He does not say “a King,” but “thy King; thine own, the long-promised, the long-expected; He who, when they had kings of their own given them by God, had been promised as the King;1 the Righteous Ruler among men, of the seed of David; He who, above all other kings, was their King and Saviour, whose Kingdom was to absorb in itself all kingdoms of the earth, the King of kings and Lord of lords.”2

“Cometh unto thee”—that is, to Zion, or Israel. He was in a manner, then, “of her,” and not of her, as another writer observes. “Of her, since He was to be her King; not of her, since He was to come to her. As man He was born of her; as God, the Word made flesh, He came to her.” But the word, ■■■■, lakh, rendered “unto thee,” means also “for thy good,” as Keil points out, as is implied also from the whole context, “He cometh unto thee” that is, as thy Deliverer, or, as an ancient cabalistic Jewish writing paraphrases it, “He shall come to thee to upraise thee; He shall come to thee to raise thee up to His temple, and to espouse thee with an everlasting espousal.”3

Zion’s coming Saviour-King is described first as ■■■■■■ (tsaddik) “righteous” (rendered in the English version “just”), which means, not “one who has a right cause,” as one or two

commentators have explained, nor merely “one righteous in character, answering in all respects to the will of Jehovah,” as Koehler expresses it, but one animated with righteousness, and maintaining and displaying in His righteous rule this fundamental attribute of the ideal king.

Secondly, He is ■■■■■ (nosha’) which the English Bible renders “having salvation,” in which it is supported by the 1 e.g., Psalms 2:1-12, Psalms 72:1-20; Isa_32:1; Jer_23:5-6; 2Sa_23:3.

2 Pusey.

3 Zohar. authority of the ancient versions (e.g., the LXX, the Targum, the Syriac, and Vulgate), who all render the word “Saviour.” A Jewish controversialist, who has written, perhaps, the best-known polemical work against Christianity, accuses the Christians of corrupting the text here, saying:

“The Nazarenes have altered the word ■■■■■, nosha’ (saved) and written instead of it ■■■■■■■, moshia’ (Saviour), in order to add some auxiliary confirmation to their faith.”1 But in the first place the accusation as it stands is false. The Christians have never altered this word. In every Christian edition of the Hebrew Bible it stands just as it does in those edited by Jews. But, in “the next place, allowing him to mean what he does not say, that some Christians, as the Vulgate, have translated the word ‘Saviour,’ and not ‘saved,’ as he would have it, they did not do this with a fraudulent intention to confirm their faith, but were led by Jews to think that this was the right sense of the word. The Jews, who translated Zechariah into Greek before the rise of Christianity, translated ■■■■■ (nosha’) by σωζων, ‘saving,’ or ‘Saviour,’ and Christians simply followed them. The mistake, therefore, is not to be attributed to the Christians, but to the Jews themselves. But if Jews say that the Greek text has been altered, then we refer them to the Targum of Jonathan, who translates the word by ■■■■■■ (Phariq), ‘Redeemer,’ or ‘Saviour;’ and surely Jonathan had no fraudulent desire to favour Christianity. His translation shows that the meaning of the word originated, and was common, amongst the Jews themselves; they, therefore, and not the Christians, are answerable for it.”2 But it is pretty generally agreed now that ■■■■■ (nosha’) is the Niphal participle of the verb ■■■■■ (yasha’), and is used in the passive sense, so that the word must be rendered not “saving,” but “saved”; though it may be used here, as 1 Rabbi Isaak ben Abraham, of Troki (born 1533, died 1594), in his Chizzuk Emunah.

2 Alexander McCaul.

Hengstenberg suggests, in a more general sense (as in Deu_33:29 and Psa_33:16, where nosha’—“saved”—is found) as describing one “who is endowed with salvation,” or “furnished with the assistance of God” requisite for the fulfilment of His mission.

We shall see presently the application of the prophecy contained in this word to our Lord, Jesus of Nazareth, but to the prophet’s contemporaries the expression would probably recall, as Dr. Wright suggests, the language of the 2nd Psalm, “where the Messiah is represented as saved and delivered, in spite of all the combinations made against Him, and destined to be one day seated on His royal throne.” But taken in its passive sense as meaning “saved,” there is none the less promise in the word for the people as well as for the Messiah; for, as has been well observed, if the King of Israel is “saved,” His people (whose Head and Representative He is) must be saved likewise. “His deliverance, or salvation, is a sure sign of the deliverance of His people, which is to be accomplished by His means.” The ideal King of Israel is further characterised as ■■■■■ (’ani)

which is rendered in the English versions “lowly,” but which primarily means “poor” “afflicted” This word, as is properly observed by Hengstenberg, Keil, and others, gathers up “the whole of the lowly, miserable, suffering condition” of the righteous Servant of Jehovah, as it is elaborately depicted in Isaiah 53:1-12;1 and those who feel themselves constrained to recognise in that great prophecy in Isaiah a vivid description of the suffering and death of the Messiah, cannot regard it as strange that Zechariah, who

1 Keil. The apparent paradox that the King who is endowed with salvation and comes to deliver should be “afflicted,” or “poor,” led the translators of the LXX, the Targumists, the majority of Jewish commentators, and many critics in modern days, to adopt the translation “lowly,” or “meek,” which is also the rendering given by the evangelists in the Gospels, who, however, simply quote the word from the Greek LXX. ■■■■■ (’ani), and ■■■■■ (’anau), both come from ■■■■■ (’anah), to be “bowed down,” to be “humbled”; but ■■■■ (’ani) seems, as Von Orelli points out, to refer more to the physical state (in the sense of being “poor” “wretched” “afflicted”), and ■■■■■ (’anau) to qualities of the spirit (in the sense of being “harmless,” “humble,” “ meek,” etc.). was doubtless acquainted with the writings of Isaiah, and who in all his Messianic passages—both in the first and second parts of his book—tersely summarises the great predictions of “the former prophets,” should be led to describe Israel’s Redeemer-King as “afflicted” and suffering. And in keeping with His character shall be the manner in which He shall present Himself to His people. Not in outward pomp or with display of worldly power, shall He appear, but “riding upon an ass, even upon a colt, the foal1 of an ass.” The second sentence in this line more precisely defines the kind of ass which the Messiah shall ride upon. It shall be a young animal not yet ridden on, but still accustomed to run behind the she-asses, as the last qualifying words of the description imply. The question is discussed by commentators whether the riding upon an ass is to be regarded as an emblem of Messiah’s “lowliness,” in keeping with the description of Him as “’ani” “poor,” “afflicted,” or as an outward sign of the peacefulness of His mission. But it seems to me that both ideas are merged in the prophecy of this symbolic action. It is true that in the East the ass is generally of a nobler breed, and is not so despised as in the West, and in the earliest times of Jewish history we read of judges and rulers riding on asses; but that was only, as Hengstenberg has shown by a full discussion of all the references, until horses were introduced, when it was no longer in accordance with the dignity of kings and rulers of Israel to ride on asses.2 “In fact, from the time of Solomon downwards, we do not meet with a single example of a king, or of any distinguished personage, riding upon an ass.” In Jeremiah’s time, for instance, it was certainly regarded as becoming royal dignity for kings and princes to be “sitting in chariots and riding on horses,”3 so that when the Messiah is here represented as “riding on an ass,”

1 Lit., “the son of she-asses.”

2 Hengstenberg.

3 Jeremiah 17:25. it does suggest the idea of lowliness, in keeping with what had just been said of Him as being “poor” or “afflicted.” At the same time, as there is a contrast suggested in the context between the great Gentile world-conqueror, who with his chariots and horses comes to subdue and tread down, and Israel’s Redeemer-King, who comes to “speak peace,” and as in Zechariah 9:10, the horse is certainly one of the emblems of war, His riding upon an ass does also symbolise the peaceable character of His mission.

Before passing on to Zechariah 9:10, let me very briefly point out the fulfilment of this prophetic picture of the Messiah in the Christ of history:

(a) The Messiah was to be, in a peculiar manner, Zion's King; and our Lord Jesus Christ was born "King of the Jews," and the very inscription on His cross, Jesus Nazarenus, Rex Judœorum, still proclaims this everlasting, indissoluble relationship between Christ and Israel. It is true that the Jews as a nation still say, "We will not have this Man to reign over us," and that the "many days during which the children of Israel abide without a king and without a prince" still continue. But Jesus of Nazareth is Israel's King; and, as sure and certain as there was once a cross raised for Him on Golgotha, so certain is it that "the Lord God" will yet "give unto Him the throne of His Father David," and that He will "reign on Mount Zion and before His ancients gloriously."

(b) "Behold, thy King cometh unto thee" which reminds us of the pathetic lament of the evangelist, "He came unto His own," i.e., His own estate, His own possession (the word being in the neuter), the land and people where above all other places in the world He had a right to expect a welcome, and to be greeted with the enthusiastic joy depicted by the prophet; but, alas! as the sequel proved, "His own"—they that were His by reason of peculiar and manifold relationship, and who ought to have been prepared for Him as a bride for the bridegroom—"received Him not."

(c) And Christ is the only Person in all history whose character and experience answer to the description of the ideal King in this prophecy. He alone, among the sons of men, can be described as the true Tsaddik—the Righteous One, who did no violence, nor was deceit found in His mouth; the One who always loved righteousness and hated iniquity, whose purity and beauty of character is borne witness to even by those who have not learned to bow their knees in allegiance before Him as the Son of God.

(d) The Lord Jesus Christ, for us men and our salvation also became "poor" and "afflicted"—so poor that He Himself could say: "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head."

(e) And of Him alone also is it true that He is endowed with, and is the bringer of, salvation, because He was Himself "saved" or "delivered," or "made victorious" (as some would render) in the great conflict which He came to wage on our behalf with the powers of darkness. "He trusted in Jehovah that He would deliver Him,"1 and the chief priests and scribes taunted Him with it on the cross, saying: "Let Him deliver Him now if He desireth Him: if He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe on Him: He saved others, Himself He cannot save!"2 Thus in their blindness and ignorance uttering unconsciously an eternal truth, for it was because He came to save others, and His life, as He Himself had predicted, had to be laid down "a ransom for many," that He could not save Himself. But though He willingly drank the cup of shame and sorrow which the Father had given Him to drink, and was not delivered from the death on the cross, "He was delivered in very deed from the hand of the great destroyer, for God raised Him from the dead, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be holden of it."3 Thus He was saved by the almighty power of the Father, "and declared to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead. And because He

1 Psa_22:8.

2 Mat_27:39-43.

3 Act_2:23-24. became obedient unto death—even the death of the cross—He was made perfect as Redeemer and Mediator, and is now the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him."1

We cannot enter here into the significance of Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem, which believers in the New Testament can never dissociate from this prophecy in Zechariah. But I agree with the view of Vitringa, Hengstenberg, and Koehler, that though this scripture then received a literal accomplishment, "that triumphal procession was not, in the main, the fact which the prophecy was designed to depict. The prophecy would have been as truly and really fulfilled if the triumphal procession had never taken place. That single incident in the life of our Lord is not the point which the prophet had in view. It was rather the whole of the Saviour's life, the entire series of events connected with Christ's first advent, which was presented in one striking picture. The actual entrance of Christ into Jerusalem in the manner described in the Old Testament prophecy was an express declaration that this passage was indeed Messianic in the fullest sense, and was fulfilled in His Person and work."2

It is in this sense that Matthew and John3 quote this passage in connection with that entry; not, however, in the stiffness and deadness of the letter. "On the contrary (as so often in Jewish writings), two prophecies—Isa_62:11 and Zec_9:9—are made to shed their blended light upon this entry of Christ, as exhibiting the reality, of which the prophetic vision had been the reflex. Nor yet are the words of the prophets given literally—as modern criticism would have them weighed out in the critical balances—either from the Hebrew text, or from the LXX rendering; but their meaning is given, and they are 'Targumed' by the sacred writers according to their wont. Yet who that sets the prophetic picture by the side of the reality—the 1 Rom_1:3; Php_2:8; Heb_5:9.

2 C. H. H. Wright.

3 Mat_21:4-5; Joh_12:14-15. description by the side of Christ's entry into Jerusalem—can fail to recognise in the one the fulfilment of the other?"1 From the Messiah's humiliation, the depths of which are reached in the words "poor," or "afflicted," and "riding upon an ass" (Zec_9:9), the prophet's vision is directed to the glory that should follow, and to the blessed results of the advent of this Redeemer-King, not only in relation to Zion and Israel, but to the whole earth:

"And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim,2 and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle-bow shall be cut off; and He shall speak peace unto the nations: and His dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth." As the deliverance which Israel's Prince of Peace shall bring will not be by means of chariots and horses, or by the multitude of a host, so also shall His Kingdom not be founded on worldly might; nor shall those subject to His rule have need to rely on any of these things. This is in keeping with what the Lord had already spoken through one of the earlier prophets: "I will have mercy upon the house of Judah, and I will save them by (or 'in') Jehovah their God, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen."3 In other words, Jehovah alone, in the Person of the Messiah, shall then be the hope and confidence of His people, for "He is their Help and their Shield";4 or, as He had already said of restored Jerusalem, through Zechariah, in the third vision: "I, saith Jehovah, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and I will be the glory in the midst of her"5—that is, her all-sufficient outward protection and inward illumination.

1 Edersheim.

2 The mention of Ephraim alongside of Jerusalem in this place is considered by some commentators as proof of the pre-exilic origin of the second half of Zechariah—"when the kingdoms of Israel, on the one hand, and of Judah on the other, were independent nations." Von Orelli even sees in this passage a proof that Ephraim "at the time, apparently, rejoiced in considerable military strength." But, as I have shown in the "Introduction to the Second Part of Zechariah," the argument rests on a misconception, and has no real basis in fact.

3 Hos_1:7.

4 Psa_115:9.

5 Zec_2:5.

He will, therefore, "cut off" the instruments of war and emblems of worldly power, first of all from His own people because they shall have no need of them, and lest they should still be tempted to be like the Gentile world-powers, some of whom "trust in chariots and some in horses."1 But the mission of the Jewish Messiah—the Prince of Peace—extends not only to Israel and Palestine: "He shall speak peace to the nations"—an expression which does not mean exactly that Messiah would command peace to the nations, as Koehler and others interpret; or that He "would bring about peace by compassing the disputes and quarrels of the contending nations," as some other writers understand it. The phrase ■■■■■ ■■■■■, daber shalom ("to speak peace"), is used in some instances in the sense of speaking that which avowedly has peace for its object, whether the profession be sincere or not;2 or simply speaking in the sense of announcing peace and the removal of hostility. Thus God is said to "speak peace to His people and to His saints."3

It is in this latter sense, I believe, that the words are to be understood here. Israel's Redeemer-King comes to publish peace to the nations—not only peace from outward strife and conflict with one another, but that deeper inner peace, and the removal of hostility between man and God, which has been the cause of all outward restlessness and strife—though it is implied also that there is both power and authority in the word which He shall speak to bring about the blessed end which He has in view.

"And His dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth"—which is a verbal quotation by our prophet from the 72nd Psalm, where the effects of the blessed reign of the true Son of David, Israel's ideal "King," is so beautifully depicted, and where we read that "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before Him; and His enemies shall lick the dust. . . . Yea, all kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him."

1 Psa_20:7.

2 Psa_28:3, Psa_35:20.

3 Psa_85:8. The phrase ■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■, miyyam ad yam—from sea to sea—is idiomatic, and equivalent to "from the sea to the other end of the world where the sea begins again." The nahar ("river") is the Euphrates, and is mentioned as the remotest eastern boundary of the promised land, according to Gen_15:18; Exo_23:31. In short, from the Holy Land, which will then be

extended to the limits originally promised to the fathers, and which will be the centre of Messiah's blessed rule, His dominion will extend even "unto the ends of the earth."

Before finally taking leave of Zec_9:10, we must note once more that, in keeping with the special style and characteristic of our prophet (which we had occasion to observe again and again in our study of the first half of the book), Zechariah not only bases his prophecy of Messiah's Person and Mission on the utterances about Israel's coming Redeemer of the "former prophets," but gives, so to say, a terse summary of God's previous revelations on this great theme. This indeed is one reason why this short prophetic book of only fourteen chapters is so marvellously rich in its contents; for, in addition to new Divine communications granted to this priest-prophet, we have in it, as it were, an inspired condensation, or summary, of the great prophecies and promises contained in the earlier prophets.

We have already noted the verbal quotation from the 72nd Psalm, but there are also earlier prophetic utterances which are interwoven in this inspired picture of Messiah's Person and Mission as presented by Zechariah. The chief of these is Micah 5:1-15 : "But thou, Bethlehem-Ephratah, which art little (or 'least') to be among the cities of Judah, out of thee shall One come forth unto Me that is to be Ruler in Israel; whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting. . . . And He shall stand and feed in the strength of Jehovah, in the majesty of the name of Jehovah His God: and they shall abide, for now shall He be great unto the ends of the earth. And this One shall be our peace. . . . And it shall come to pass in that day, saith Jehovah, that I will cut off thy horses out of the midst of thee, and I will destroy thy chariots, and I will cut the (walled) cities of thy land, and I will throw down all thy strongholds."1

Here we have a Child born in time, in a small obscure place in Palestine, and of a race despised by the other nations, whose "goings forth" are from eternity, and who would be great unto the ends of the earth, and not only be the bringer of peace, but Himself "be our peace." And the same picture of the true Son of David and ideal King of Israel, with the same enigmatical and apparently paradoxical combination of characteristics of humiliation and helplessness on the one hand, and of power and dominion on the other, which is to spread over the whole earth, not by force of arms but by means of His simple Word, is given also by Micah's contemporary Isaiah the son of Amos,2 and was also doubtless in the mind of Zechariah as he spoke of the King who should appear in lowliness but would yet speak peace to the nations, and exercise a sway which would extend to the ends of the earth.

Secondly, I must once again repeat what has been stated at the beginning of my remarks on Zec_9:9, that there is no perspective observed in the Old Testament prophecy, and that the prophets behold from their distant point of view the two advents of Messiah as one, not observing the different stages and long pauses in the process of the fulfilment of His mission on earth. A pause of nearly two thousand years has already ensued between the 9th and 10th verses of this great prophecy—between the time when Jesus, "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet" Zechariah, presented Himself to the daughter of Zion as her true King, "meek, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass,"3 and the time when He shall "speak peace to the nations," and shall visibly "stand and feed (or 'rule') in the strength of Jehovah, in the majesty of the name of Jehovah His God."

1 Mic_5:2, Mic_5:4, Mic_5:10-11.

2 Isa_9:1-7 (R.V.).

3 Mat_21:4-5.

Indeed, we know by comparing scripture with scripture that before the instruments of war shall finally be “cut off,” and the Messiah is manifested as the Judge and “Reprover” of strong nations, so that they “shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning-hooks,” and neither learn nor practise war any more, the greatest war which this afflicted earth has ever seen is to take place, during which time the nations will “beat their plough shares into swords, and pruning-hooks into spears.” But this is sure and certain, that however long the pause may last, God never loses the thread of the purpose which He has formed for this earth; and as surely as the prophecies of the sufferings of Christ have been literally fulfilled, so surely will those also be which relate to His glory and reign; and although Israel and the nations have had to wait long for it, the angels song at the birth of our Saviour, “Peace on earth and goodwill toward men,” will yet be realised, and Christ will not only be owned by His own people as “the King of the Jews,” but His rule will extend “from sea to sea, and from the river even unto the ends of the earth.”

Meanwhile, while He is still rejected on earth, He is exalted at the right hand of God in heaven; and to those who already recognise Him as King, and render to Him the glad allegiance of their hearts, He already “speaks peace,” yea, a peace which passeth all understanding even in the midst of outward strife and travail—such as the world can never give nor take away.

Zechariah 9:11-17 (to which the whole of Zechariah 10:1-12) set forth in fuller detail the results of the advent and mission of the Redeemer-King, more particularly in relation to Israel nationally. The prophet had spoken of Messiah in Zechariah 10:10, as the One who would also “speak peace to the (Gentile) nations,” whose dominion would extend even “to the ends of the earth”; now he turns again to Zion and Israel. “As for thee (or, literally, ‘thou also’), by (or ‘because of’) the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth” (or release, or send free) “thy prisoners” (or captives: literally, “thy bound ones”) “out of the pit wherein is no water.”

It is the whole nation which is thus addressed, as we see from the context, where the inclusive terms “Ephraim and Judah” and “Judah and Ephraim”1 are used. This is clear also from the words which follow, for the covenant which God made, whether with Abraham or with the people at the foot of Mount Sinai, included the whole people, and there was no provision or promise in it which applied to one part, or to some of the tribes and not to the others. The primary reference of the phrase ■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■, bedam berithekh—“the blood of thy covenant”—is most probably to Exodus 24:1-18, when, at the ratification of the Sinaitic covenant, we read that Moses took the blood of the slain animals in basins, and, after sprinkling half on the altar, which represented God, and half on the people, he exclaimed, “Behold, the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words.”2 To that covenant Israel proved itself unfaithful; and as they still persist as a nation in taking their place before God on the ground of a broken law, and strive, though vainly, to establish a righteousness of their own, they have been permitted to have a long and bitter taste of the curses which the law proclaims against disobedience to its precepts. But though Israel proved themselves unfaithful, and this particular covenant itself was “broken,”3 “the blood of the covenant” on which emphasis is laid in this prophecy, was a sign and pledge of the faithfulness of God (though all men prove liars), and typically set forth the provision which God has made by which eventually His disobedient and rebellious people would be brought back within

the sphere of blessing. But the covenant of Sinai was not the only one which God made with and for Israel; there was a much earlier one—the one He made with Abraham, which was in the nature, not of a contract between two parties, but of a promise to the fulfilment of which God alone was pledged.

1 Zec_9:10-13.

2 Exo_24:8.

3 Jer_31:31. And in connection with that covenant, too, there was the shedding of the blood of the animals and birds which Abram was commanded to slay1—which, as well as the blood-shedding on Sinai, and indeed of all the blood of the sacrifices which were “on Jewish altars slain,” pointed to the great sacrifice “of nobler name,” and to the much more precious blood which alone secures to sinful man God’s covenanted blessings. The antitypical ratification of the covenant, therefore (whatever the primary reference of these words in Zechariah), took place when Israel’s Messiah, Jesus, appeared as the “minister of the circumcision to confirm the promises made unto the fathers.”2

“This is My blood of the new covenant,” He said, when about to lay down His life a ransom for many; and since the great sacrifice on the cross, all the promises of God, “how many soever,” or whatever they may be, whether made to Israel nationally, or intended for all men generally—ratified as they now are in His own precious blood, have become, so to say, doubly sure and certain, for “in Him is the Yea, and in Him the Amen, to the glory of God by us.”3 But to return to our prophecy. Because of the everlasting covenant-relationship which exists between Him and His people, sealed and ratified with blood, “I have sent forth” God says, “thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water.” The perfect tense of the verb ■■■■■■■■■ (shillachti)—“I have sent forth,” or “released”—is prophetic of what God intends to do, there being many instances in the prophetic Scriptures where the perfect is used for the future. With the eternal, unchangeable God, His promises, however distant be the set time of their fulfilment, are already as good as accomplished. The description “prisoners” in a “pit,” or “dungeon,” “wherein is no water,” primarily describes, figuratively, Israel’s condition in captivity, out of which God, in virtue of His covenant promise, will deliver them.

It reminds us of the description of Jacob, when given

1 Gen_15:9-10.

2 Rom_15:8-9.

3 2Co_1:20. over for a time “for a spoil,” and “Israel to the robbers,” which we find in Isaiah: “But this is a people robbed and spoiled; they are all of them snared in holes, and they are hid in prison houses: they are for a prey, and none delivereth; for a spoil, and none saith, Restore.”1 But though in “prison,” and “robbed,” and “spoiled,” they are not given over to death, this being already hinted at in the expression bor ein mayim bo—“the pit (or ‘dungeon’) without water in it,” which is an echo of Genesis 37:24 (where exactly the same phrase is found), with an evident allusion to the story of Joseph. It was with a view to save him from a violent death that Reuben proposed that Joseph should be thrown into the pit, which was doubtless a disused cistern, such being on occasion also used as dungeons. But it made all the difference to Joseph that there was no water in that pit or

cistern; for had there been water in it, he would have been drowned. So it is with Israel. They are likened to one bound and in a “pit,” or “dungeon,” which, alas! has also been literally the case with multitudes of Israel’s sons and daughters during the period of their “captivity”; but God sees to it that there should be no water in the pit, and that His people, which is still bound to Him by covenant blood, should not utterly perish. And eventually, at the word of God, Israel, like Joseph, shall be freed from the pit and lifted from the position of humiliation and suffering to become a nation of princes on the earth. And Israel’s deliverance from national bondage will synchronise, and be, so to say, the outward sign of their still greater spiritual deliverance, for the words “prisoners” (asirim, literally, “bound one”) and “pit” (bor) are used in other scriptures to describe the condition of men, who are not only in outward bodily captivity, but who are in the bondage of sin and captives to Satan.

Thus the Messiah is anointed and sent to open the prison-gates “to them that are bound”;2 and in the day

1 Isa_42:22.

2 Asurim, Isa_61:1; the same as “prisoners” in Zec_9:11. when Israel, by a look at their crucified Messiah, is “redeemed from all his iniquities” and experiences God’s “plenteous redemption,”1 it will be this greater spiritual deliverance that they will celebrate in words which are already familiar and precious to us who know the Messiah of Israel as our personal Redeemer.

“He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay; and He set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings” (Psa_40:2-3). And the same double promise of national and spiritual deliverance and blessing is contained also in Zec_9:12 :

“Turn ye to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope.” The ■■■■■■■, bhitsaron—“stronghold,” or “fortress”—to which the captives are invited to return, is perhaps primarily their own land, which is as a rocky and fortified “fastness” as compared with the low-lying “pit” of their captivity. But even the Jewish commentator Kimchi sees in it a reference also to God, who is the strength and sure refuge of His people, and paraphrases the first words of this verse, “Turn ye to God, for He is a stronghold and tower of strength.” And this agrees also with earlier prophetic utterances in which God Himself is spoken of as the safe hiding-place and defence of His people, as, for instance, Joel 3. (which seems to me to be one of the scriptures from the earlier prophets which was in the mind of Zechariah when writing the last verses of the 9th chapter), where we read that in the day when the Lord shall gather the nations for judgment, and the whole order of nature shall be shaken, “Jehovah will be the refuge of His people, and a stronghold to the children of Israel.”2 The expression ■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■, asirei hatiqvah—“prisoners of hope,” or of “the hope”—truly describes the Jewish people in their banishment and scattering, and marks the difference between the nation which stands in an indissoluble relationship to God by reason of the “blood of the covenant,” and all other nations as nations. The

1 Psa_130:7-8.

2 Joe_3:1-6. Here the word for stronghold is ■■■■■ (maoz).

Jewish nation may for its sins be sent into captivity as “prisoners”; Jacob may be “given over for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers,” “but there is hope (tiqvah) for thy latter end, saith Jehovah,”1 or,

to quote from an earlier chapter of the same prophet: “For I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith Jehovah, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you ■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■ (acharith vethiqvah)”—literally, “a latter end and hope”2—that is, a “latter end” according to the hope based on God’s own promise. Therefore the Psalmist, in response to the agonising cry of the remnant of Israel “from the depths” of their national tribulation and anguish in Psalms 130:1-8.—which at the same time breathes such a spirit of confident reliance on God’s word of promise as is expressed in the words: “I wait on Jehovah; my soul doth wait, and in His word do I hope”—is inspired to address to them the encouraging exhortation: “O Israel, hope in Jehovah (for it is a hope which will not be put to shame); for with Jehovah there is mercy, and with Him, there is plenteous redemption, and He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities”3 And since his iniquities have been the underlying cause of all his sufferings and sorrows, when God forgives Israel his sins, and removes his transgressions, He shall “redeem” him also “out of all his troubles.”4 And there is a certain analogy in this respect between Israel and the Church, or rather between Israel in their present condition as “prisoners of hope,” and those who, in and through Christ, have already set their hope upon God. We are not in outward or bodily dispersion and banishment, as Israel is; nor, praise be to God, are we in bondage to sin or Satan. In Christ we have even now “redemption by His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace”; already we have been delivered out of the power of darkness and are translated into the kingdom of the Son of His love, and are made heirs and joint-heirs with Christ of an inheritance which is incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away. Yet,

1 Jer_31:17.

2 Jer_29:11.

3 Psa_130:7-8.

4 Psa_25:22. inasmuch as we are still environed by an unrenewed creation, which, on account of man’s sin, was subjected to vanity; so long as we still carry about “the body of this death” and know the motions of sin and death within us; so long as we are still in this present evil age, and not actually in our glorious promised land, and our Father’s own house we are “prisoners of hope,” for not only do we still form part of that creation which groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now, “but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For by hope are we saved; but hope that is seen is not hope: for who hopeth for that which he seeth? But if we hope for that which we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.”1

We are therefore longing and looking for the realisation of “the Blessed Hope,” namely, “the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ,” who also shall bring rest and deliverance to a groaning creation and fashion anew the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of His glory, according to the working whereby He is able even to subject all things unto Himself.2

1 Rom_8:22-25.

2 Zec_9:12 is the only place in the Hebrew Bible where the word for hope has the article. It is therefore, as has been observed, not any hope, or general hope, that the prophet speaks about, but THE SPECIAL hope of Israel, “the hope which sustained him through all the years of patient

expectation." The centre and essence of it is the Messiah, and the great promised national and spiritual redemption which He was to accomplish, and which will not be fully realised till He shall appear a second time apart from sin unto salvation, and to establish His righteous rule on the earth. The hope is carried over therefore from the Old Testament into the New. Paul speaks of it as "the hope of Israel," for which the Jews of Rome saw him bound as a prisoner in a chain (Act_28:20), or, as he said in his defence before Agrippa: "I stand here to be judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers, unto which promise our twelve tribes earnestly serving God night and day hope to attain. And concerning this hope I am accused by the Jews, O King" (Act_26:6-7).

It was doubtless in his mind when he spoke of "the blessed hope and the appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ" (Tit_2:13), for then the hope as regards the Church, and Israel, and the world, will be fully realised.

But, to proceed to the second half of Zec_9:12, "even to-day" in thy present adversity and in spite of all appearances, "do I declare" (or "tell" you as good news, from which you may already draw consolation and hope) "that I will render" (or "cause to return") "double unto thee."

There are several scriptures in which the word "double" occurs as expressing a principle of God's dealing with His own people. The key and explanation of it is found in His own appointment in reference to the first-born. According to the law, the first-born son inherited a double portion of his father's property as compared with the other members of the family. This, except it were forfeited by personal unfitness, or transgression, was his inalienable right. If, contrary to God's original appointment, any man of Israel had two wives, "the one beloved and the other hated, and they had borne him children, both the beloved and the hated, and if the first-born son be hers that was hated, then it shall be in the day that he causeth his sons to inherit that which he hath, that he may not make the son of the beloved the first-born before the son of the hated, . . . but he shall acknowledge the first-born, the son of the hated, by giving him a double portion (shenayim) of all that he hath; . . . the right of the first-born is his."1 An illustration of this principle we have in the case of Joseph. Reuben having, by an act of personal moral defilement, disqualified himself to inherit the birthright, it was transferred to Joseph,2 and as a consequence his descendants were counted as two tribes—Ephraim and Manasseh—who had two portions of the land instead of one; and Joseph himself became by this act entitled to a double portion of Jacob's personal possessions. Now Israel is God's "son," God's "first-born" in relation to the other nations,3 and He deals with them on the principles of His own law. In his own land, and under the protection of the Covenant-keeping God of his fathers, Israel enjoys a "double portion" of favour and

1 Deu_21:15-17.

2 1Ch_5:1-2.

3 Exo_4:22. blessing. But commensurate with privilege is responsibility, and of him to whom much is given much is required. Therefore when Israel sinned he was visited with "double" punishment. This is the explanation of such passages as "She hath received of the Lord's hand double" (kiphlayim—"twofold") "for all her sins";1 or, "I will recompense their iniquity and their sin double" (mishneh—"a repetition"; once and again) "because they have defiled My land . . . and have filled Mine inheritance with their abominations."2 This is the key and explanation of the woeful history of

the Jewish people during the centuries of their banishment and dispersion. This is why under the whole heaven it hath not been done as has been done upon Jerusalem;3 and that, as Josephus complains, Israel's sorrows and sufferings surpass that of all the rest of mankind. But Israel's disobedience and consequent sufferings are not to last for ever. Even in their dispersion they are, as we have seen, "prisoners of the hope," and when restored to their land and brought back into favour as God's "first born" among the nations, then "for their shame they shall have double"—mishneh—"and for the" (or, instead of) "confusion they shall rejoice in their portion; therefore in their land they shall possess the double. Everlasting joy shall be unto them."4 And it is particularly this grand prophecy in Isaiah 61:1 &c., to which, as it seems to me, there is this inspired reference in our passage in Zechariah when he announces to them in their then still national day of gloom that God will cause the double to return to them. From the final results to Israel and the nations of the advent and mission of the Messiah we are in the next three verses taken back to the process.

Before Judah shall finally be saved, and Israel possess again in their land the "double" portion of blessing and privilege, Gentile world-power must be broken, and the

1 Isa_40:2.

2 Jer_16:18.

3 Dan_9:12.

4 Isa_61:7. enemies of God's kingdom be finally overthrown. The figures in Zec_9:13-15 are very bold and graphic: "For I will bend (or 'stretch') Judah for Me as a bow, and I will fill it with Ephraim;1 and I will stir up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece, and I will make thee as the sword of a mighty man. And Jehovah shall appear above them, and His arrow shall go forth as the lightning: and the Lord Jehovah shall blow the trumpet, and shall go forth (or 'march') with whirlwinds (or 'in the tempests') of the south." Judah is the drawn bow, Ephraim the arrow, and Zion the sword in the hand of Jehovah, by means of which the foe is thoroughly subjugated. The ■■■■■ ■■■■■, Benei-Yavan, sons of Javan, who come within the range of the prophet's vision in this passage, are "the Greeks as the world-power," or the Græco-Macedonian kingdom; but, as we shall see, the more immediate merges here also into the more distant future. The "weak beginnings" of the fulfilment of this prophecy, to borrow an expression from Keil, is to be seen "in the wars between the Maccabees and the Seleucidæ, or Greek rulers of Syria," to which also some ancient Jews applied this prophecy:

"The wars of the Jews against Greece, under the heroic leadership of the Maccabees, were occasioned by the attempt to overturn the Jewish religion and substitute in its place Grecian customs (comp. 1Ma_8:9-18; 2Ma_4:13-15). Those wars were essentially religious in their character. The Maccabean heroes went forth to the contest with the full conviction that the cause in which they were engaged was the cause of God, and that the Lord was with them in all their various difficulties and trials. In the glowing language of the prophet (Zec_9:14), Jehovah was seen over them, and His arrow went forth as the lightning; yea, the Lord Jehovah blew with the trumpet, for He was the real Captain of His host, and the war waged by the Jews was in defence of His truth. The

1 ■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■. Von Orelli regards Ephraim as the quiver—the object filled with arrows for God's use.

Lord is further described as going forth in the storms of the south; because the storms from that quarter, coming from the desert, were generally the most violent (Isa_21:1). The language used is highly figurative, but it need not surprise us that the exploits of the Maccabees should be so described when we call to mind the vivid language in which David depicts his own deliverance in the remarkable song in the day when God delivered him from his foes.1 Small as were the armies which Judas and his brethren commanded, those armies were the armies of Israel, and they went forth to battle in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, who was then defied by the Grecian foe, even as in former days He had been defied by the Philistine (1Sa_17:45). Thus doing battle against the enemies of their God, 'out of weakness they were made strong, they waxed valiant in fight, and turned to flight the armies of the aliens' (Heb_11:34)." But that the prophecy cannot be altogether restricted to the Maccabean struggle with the Syrian Greeks is manifest, for the whole passage points to the complete subjugation of imperial world-power.

No; Zion and Greece, as has been well observed by another writer, are in this prophecy of Zechariah opposed to one another as the city of God and the city of the world (the "civitas Dei, and the civitas mundi" as Augustine has it), and the defeat of Antiochus Epiphanes and his successors at the hands of comparative handfuls of despised Jews, to which this passage may primarily refer, foreshadows the final conflict with world-power, and the judgments to be inflicted on the confederated armies who shall be gathered against Jerusalem, not only directly by the hand of God, but also by the hand of Israel, who shall then be made strong in Jehovah, so that "the feeble among them shall in that day be as David, and the house of David shall be as God, as the Angel of Jehovah before them."

1 Psa_18:6-9; comp. also Psa_144:6-7; Psa_77:16-19; and especially Hab_3:12-14.

Then, in a literal sense, Jehovah in the person of their Messiah "shall be seen over them, and His arrow shall go forth as the lightning," and He Himself as the Captain of the Host "shall blow the trumpet,"1 and "shall go forth and fight against those nations as when He fought in the day of battle."2 The 15th verse illustrates the word of the Psalmist, "Through God we shall do valiantly, for He it is that shall tread down our adversaries."3 "Jehovah of hosts" we read, "shall defend them;4 and they shall devour; and they shall tread down the sling stones; and they shall drink, and make a noise as through wine: and they shall be filled like bowls, like the corners of the altar." The devouring (or "eating") and "drinking" must, of course, be understood in a figurative sense—for it is only to a perverted imagination, worthy of those who from time to time seek to revive the diabolical lie which is known by the name of the "Blood Accusation," that the thought could ever occur that the Jews did literally eat the flesh and drink the blood of their conquered adversaries.5 The figure which is here before the prophet's mind is 1 See the somewhat parallel passage Isa_30:30-33, where the enemy primarily referred to is the Assyrian.

2 Zec_14:3.

3 Psa_60:12, Psa_108:13.

4 ■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■, yagen ■aleihem—literally, “shall be a shield over them.” Pusey points out that the word is used before only by Isaiah (Isa_37:33, Isa_38:6). This image of complete protection stands first in God’s word to Abraham, “I am thy shield” (Genesis 15:1). But it is laid hold of by David when he appeals to God: “Thou, Lord, art a shield around me” (Psa_3:3).

5 A German scholar named Ghillany, in a treatise on Die Menschenopfer der Alten Hebräer, published in Nüremberg in 1842, does actually descend to this absurdity. He adduces this verse in Zechariah in proof that the prophet “in his dreams of victory let us have an insight into the barbarism of the victorious Hebrews,” who, according to him, “did actually in ancient times eat their fallen foes as food, and drank their blood in the rage of victory, as well as partook of portions of their bodies”! But whatever cannibal “barbarisms” may have existed among some of the Gentile nations, both in the East and in the West, Israel had never sunk quite so low even in the most “ancient” times, and the very idea of actually drinking blood is repugnant to the Jewish religion, as Dr. Wright well observes, and is condemned in both the Law and the Prophets. that which was used by Balaam ages before: “Behold the people (Israel) shall rise up as a great lion, and lift up himself as a young lion. He shall not lie down till he eat the prey and drink the blood of the slain” (Num_23:24). It is also found in Mic_5:8, “And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the nations, in the midst of many people as a lion among the beasts of the forest, as a young lion among the flocks of sheep: who, if he go through, treadeth down and teareth in pieces, and there is none to deliver.”

“The idea of actually drinking blood was repugnant to the Jewish religion, and condemned in both the Law and the Prophets; but when nations are compared to wild animals, language must be used characteristic of the habits and usages of such animals.”1 “The one thought seems to be that their enemies should cease to be, so as not to molest them any more. . . . They should disappear as completely as fuel before the fire, or food before the hungry.”2 The Authorised Version renders ■■■■■ ■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■ (vekhabhshu abhnei qela’) “and they shall subdue with sling stones”; but the sling stones cannot, as Keil points out, for grammatical reasons, if the whole sentence be considered, be taken in an instrumental sense—that is, that Israel would overcome their enemies with mere sling stones, as David did Goliath. The true meaning is rather that given in the Revised Version, “they shall tread down sling stones”; and since in the next verse Israel is likened to the precious stones set in a crown, it is probably correct to suppose, with Hengstenberg, Keil, Hitzig, Pusey, etc., that “the sling stones” are, in comparison, to be taken “as a figure denoting the enemy, who is trampled under the feet like stones.” The idea is further carried out in figurative language when the victorious Israelites are described in the second half of Zec_9:15 as making a noise like men drunk with wine—the drink with which they are made drunk being the blood of the enemies of the Lord. “With this

1 Wright.

2 Pusey. blood the prophet describes the victorious Jews as being filled, like the sacrificial bowls in which the priests were wont to catch the blood of the victims which were slain; and they would be sprinkled with it like the corners of the altar, which expression includes the horns of the altar, which were wont to be sprinkled with the sacrificial blood.”1 The climax is reached in the last two verses. The final overthrow and subjugation of world-power is followed by the exaltation and the glorification of the people of God. “And Jehovah their God shall save them in that day as the flock

of His people: for they shall be as the stones of a crown lifted on high." The picture in Zec_9:16 changes from war and bloodshed to that of the Shepherd and His flock, which plays so prominent a part in the last chapters of this prophetic book.

Jehovah in that day shall "save them." This does not mean here merely that He will help and deliver them. This, as another writer points out, would affirm much too little after what has gone before. "When Israel has trodden down his foes, he no longer needs deliverance." The meaning is rather that God will in that day endow them with salvation, not only in the negative sense of deliverance, but in the positive sense; and, if we want to know what is implied in it, we have it in the figure of the next clause. He will do for them and be to them all that a shepherd does and is to his flock, which implies that He will not only seek, and deliver, and gather them, but He Himself, in the person of the Messiah, as all the prophets bear witness, will tend, and feed, and lead, and rule over them—all which is implied in the Hebrew word "Shepherd." That most beautiful "nightingale song," Ps. 23., which is so precious to us now, will then express the experience of saved Israel. "Jehovah is my Shepherd, I shall not want"—because in His Shepherd-care the fullest provision is made for every need, both spiritual and temporal, for His own flock.

1 C. H. H. Wright.

Another aspect of this positive "Salvation" which Jehovah shall then bestow upon His people, is brought before us in the second half of this verse. In contrast to their enemies, who are likened to "sling stones," which shall then be contemptuously trodden under foot, saved Israel shall be ■■■■■ ■■■■■■■, abhnei-nezer "stones of a crown" (or jewels set in a consecrated crown),1 lifted on high over His land—which reminds us of Isa_62:1, where we read that after "Zion's righteousness shall go forth as brightness, and her salvation as a lamp that burneth," so that "the nations shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory"—then "Thou shalt also be a crown of beauty in the hand of Jehovah, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God." We note the expression in this verse, "over His land," which reminds us of the unique relationship in which Jehovah stands to the land, as well as to the people of Israel. "The land is Mine,"2 He said of Palestine in a very special sense, though the whole earth belongs to Him; and this, as Pusey observes, "was laid down as the title-deed to its whole tenure." He appointed it in His sovereign right, and with a gracious purpose in view, as the inheritance of the seed of Abraham; but the ownership remains vested in Him. It is called also "Immanuel's Land"3 because the theocratic King-Messiah is the true heir to it, not only by reason of His being the true Son of Abraham, and Son of David, to whom the land was promised, but because He is the Son of God, to Whom it, in a special sense, belongs. For a long time Israel has been banished from their possession on account of sin, and Jerusalem and Palestine are being trodden down of the Gentiles; but the counsel of Jehovah, both as regards the land and the people, standeth for ever, the gifts and the calling of God are without repentance; and when the covenant relations between God

1 The primary meaning of the masculine noun ■■■■■, nezer, is separation, or consecration. Then it is used also of the sign of consecration—as, for instance, the long hair of the "Nazarite," and the crown of the king, or priest. The word is first found in Exo_29:6, where it is used of the "holy crown" which the high priest was to wear over the "mitre."

2 Lev_25:23.

3 Isa_8:8 and “His own” people Israel are restored, “Jehovah shall inherit Judah, His portion in the Holy Land, and shall choose Jerusalem again.”1 The prophet ends this section of the prophecy with the exclamation: “For how great is His goodness, and how great is His beauty!—■■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■ ■■■, Ki mah tubho umah yaphyo—corn shall make the young men to flourish and new wine the maids.”

There is difference of opinion among commentators to whom the first half of this verse is to be applied. On strict grammatical grounds it must be applied to God, to whom the suffixes “His land,” “His people,” refer in the verse immediately preceding; but it is argued by Koehler and others that since beauty is never attributed to Jehovah Himself in the Old Testament, it is better to understand the words as applying to the people. And this is the view taken by most modern scholars. With this contention, however, I cannot concur; for, first, though it be true that the term ■■■■■, yaphi (beauty), was not used before of God, it is used of the Messiah in such scriptures as, “Thou art fairer” (or more beautiful) “than the sons of men,” and “Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty.” And it is in the face of their Messiah-King that Israel shall behold, even as we do already, the glory and beauty of the invisible God.

“Goodness” is very frequently attributed to God in the Old Testament, as, for instance, in Psa_31:19, “Oh how great is Thy goodness, which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee. Which Thou hast wrought for them that put their trust in Thee, before the sons of men”; and Psa_145:7, “They shall utter the memory of Thy great goodness.”

I take the words then, with Hengstenberg and others, as referring to God, “whose great doings had been the prophet’s theme throughout.”

Let me, in closing the exposition of this chapter, echo this exclamation of the prophet, “How great is His goodness!” “Goodness is that attribute of God whereby

1 Zec_2:12.

He loveth to communicate to all who can or will receive it, all good—yea, Himself, who is the fulness and universality of good, Creator of all good, not in one way, not in one kind of goodness only, but absolutely, without beginning, without limit, without measure, save that whereby without measurement He possesseth and embraceth all excellence, all perfection, all blessedness, all good.”

“This good His goodness bestoweth on all and each, according to the capacity of each to receive it; nor is there any limit to His giving, save His creatures’ capacity of receiving, which also is a good gift from Him. From Him all things sweet derive their sweetness, all things fair their beauty, all things bright their splendour, all things that live their life, all things sentient—their sense, all that move their vigour, all intelligences their knowledge, all things perfect their perfection, all things in any wise good their goodness.”1

“And how great is His beauty!” This we cannot fully know until we are fully transformed into His image and can gaze upon His unveiled glory. But even now we may pray with David: “One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple” (Psa_27:4). And the more we behold it even now by faith and with the veil of flesh between, and inquire about it, the more

shall we be changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit.

But, to come back to the context, this goodness and beauty of Jehovah shall in that future day also be reflected by restored and converted Israel, when “they shall be as precious stones of a crown lifted up high over His land.” And of the abundance of spiritual blessing and “glory” which shall then dwell in the land,2 material prosperity and temporal abundance will, as is not the case in the present dispensation, be the outward sign and accompaniment. “Corn” exclaims the prophet, “shall make the young men 1 Quoted by Pusey.

2 Psa_85:9. cheerful” (yenobhabh, literally, to “grow” or to “increase”), “and new wine the maids (or ‘virgins’).” But the mention of young men and maidens is, as has been observed, merely intended to “heighten the picture of prosperity given by the prophet,” and is in some respects a parallel to the prophetic description of the prosperity of the land and people in the earlier portion of the book, where the streets of Jerusalem are spoken of as being again “full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof.”1

1 Zec_8:5.

4.17. Chapter 15 - The Shepherd-King

CHAPTER XV WHAT ISRAEL'S SHEPHERD-KING WILL BE AND DO FOR HIS PEOPLE (Zechariah 10:1-12)

Ask ye of Jehovah rain in the time of the latter rain, even of Jehovah that maketh lightnings; and He will give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field. For the teraphim have spoken vanity, and the diviners have seen a lie; and they have told false dreams, they comfort in vain: therefore they go their way like sheep, they are afflicted, because there is no shepherd. Mine anger is kindled against the shepherds, and I will punish the he-goats: for Jehovah of hosts hath visited His flock, the house of Judah, and will make them as His goodly horse in the battle. From him shall come forth the corner-stone, from him the nail, from him the battle bow, from him every ruler together. And they shall be as mighty men, treading down their enemies in the mire of the streets in the battle; and they shall fight, because Jehovah is with them; and the riders on horses shall be confounded. And I will strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of Joseph, and I will bring them back, for I have mercy upon them; and they shall be as though I had not cast them off; for I am Jehovah their God, and I will hear them. And they of Ephraim shall be like a mighty man, and their heart shall rejoice as through wine; yea, their children shall see it, and rejoice; their heart shall be glad in Jehovah. And I will hiss for them, and gather them; for I have redeemed them: and they shall increase as they have increased. And I will sow them among the peoples, and they shall remember Me in far countries; and they shall live with their children; and shall return. I will bring them again also out of the land of Egypt, and gather them out of Assyria; and I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon; and place shall not be found for them. And he will pass through the sea of affliction, and will smite the waves in the sea, and all the depths of the Nile shall dry up: and the pride of Assyria shall be brought down, and the sceptre of Egypt shall depart. And I will strengthen them in Jehovah ; and they shall walk up and down in His name, saith Jehovah.

CHAPTER XV THE blessed and prosperous condition of restored and converted Israel under the care and leadership of their true Shepherd-King may be given as the summary of the chapter to which we have now come. The first verses are linked on, and are a continuation of the promises contained in the last section of the 9th chapter. (Zec_9:7-11) Of the abundance of spiritual blessings and glory which shall then dwell in the land, to repeat a few sentences from my notes on Zec_8:19—"Material prosperity and temporal abundance will, as is not the case in the present dispensation, be the outward sign and accompaniment." "Corn," exclaims the prophet at the conclusion of that chapter, "shall make the young men cheerful (or, literally, 'grow' or 'increase'), and new wine the maids (or 'virgins')." But for Palestine to become once again, yea, even more than before, a land "flowing with milk and honey," after its many centuries of barrenness and desolation, the fertilising showers are essential; and though this is promised to them, they are yet exhorted to "ask" for it, even as in Ezek. 36., where, after promising, among many other great things, that "this land which was desolate shall become like the garden of Eden, and the waste and desolate and ruined cities shall become fenced and inhabited," we read: "Thus saith the Lord God,

yet for this will I be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them”1—for the promises of God, whether in relation to temporal or spiritual blessings, are only turned into experience by the faith and prayers of His people.

1 Eze_36:37. But it is perhaps necessary to repeat and emphasise that it is literal rain which is meant here, in the first instance, in which connection it is important to observe that Israel was taught to regard the giving or withholding of this great temporal blessing, upon which the prosperity of the land and the life of man and beast are dependent, as entirely in the hand of God. “Are there any among the vanities of the heathen that can cause rain?” exclaimed the prophet Jeremiah, “or can the heavens (of themselves) give showers? art not Thou He, O Jehovah our God? therefore we will wait upon Thee: for Thou hast made all these things.”1 In these modern times men have grown wiser, and no longer recognise or acknowledge God in what to them is entirely due to “natural causes”; but such wisdom is based on a science only falsely so called, and is foolishness in the eyes of those who know that there is a living, personal God, the Creator and Upholder of all things, who, though He in His infinite power and wisdom appointed certain “laws” to govern His creation, is Himself all the time behind and above these laws, to guide and control; and does, either by using “natural means” which are known to us, or apart from them, interfere in the affairs of men and nations with a view to deliver, or instruct, or correct. To Israel, rain in due season, so that the land should yield her increase, was promised as the direct reward of national obedience.

“And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto My commandments which I command you this day, to love the Lord your God, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul, that I will give the rain of your land in its season, the former rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil.”2 And it is a notorious fact that the withholding of the showers and the scarcity of the rainfall—whatever the secondary causes by which it may be accounted for—was one of the chief factors in the predicted desolation of

1 Jer_14:22.

2 Deu_11:13-15; Lev_26:3-4; Deu_28:1-12.

Palestine, during the many centuries that the people has been banished from it on account of apostasy. But to return to our passage. It is especially “the latter rain” which in Palestine is so important as strengthening and maturing the crops, that they are here exhorted to ask of the Lord, so that He may graciously complete “what He had begun by the former rain, filling the ears before the harvest.”1 But though the primary reference is to literal showers, “on which the successful cultivation of the fruits of the ground depends,” I agree with the German Bible scholar who says that the exhortation to ask for rain “only serves to individualise the prayer for the bestowal of the blessings of God, in order to sustain both temporal and spiritual life.”

Indeed, there is a blending of temporal and spiritual blessings in the promise in the 9th and 10th chapters, the outward and visible being the types and symbols of the spiritual and eternal. When, on coming out of Egypt, 1 There are four words in the Hebrew Bible for rain, three of which occur in this 1st verse of our chapter.

(1) ■■■■■, yoreh (also ■■■■■, moreh), which stands for the “first” or “former,” or very early rain.

(2) ■■■■■, matar, the ordinary word for “rain” during the rainy season.

(3) ■■■■■, geshem, which stands for heavy, or torrential rain.

(4) ■■■■■■■, mal’qosh, “the latter rain.” The variations of sunshine and rain, which in England extend throughout the year, are in Palestine confined chiefly to the latter part of autumn and winter. The autumnal, or “early” rain, commences in October (in the Lebanon about a month earlier) and continues to November, with long spells of beautiful weather the whole fall being very small. It prepares the soil for ploughing and sowing. November to February inclusive is the rainy season, the storms and showers often being extremely heavy; but during these months also there may be many days at a time of fine weather. In March and April is the time of the latter rain. The period of sowing varies according to situation from the end of October right into December (barley is not, as a rule, sown till January or February). Harvest-time also differs according to situation from early in May, or even April (in the low-lying parts), to June and even July, as we have ourselves witnessed on the higher slopes of the Lebanon. From May to the end of September is the very dry and hot season. The almost uninterruptedly cloudless and burning sun dries up all moisture, and, as the heat increases the grass withers, the flower fades, the bushes and shrubs take on a hard grey look, the soil becomes dust, and many parts of the country assume the aspect of parched and barren deserts.

Israel was brought into covenant relationship with God, we read, “Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain; Thou didst confirm Thine inheritance when it was weary.”1 And when Jehovah shall have mercy upon Zion again, and bring back His people after the long centuries of their “weary” wanderings, the light of His blessed countenance shall be as “life” to them, “and His favour as a cloud of the latter rain”2—yea, in response to the spirit of grace and of supplication which shall then be created in them, God says, “I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and streams (or ‘floods’) upon the dry ground; I will pour My Spirit upon thy seed, and My blessing upon thine offspring.”3

Viewed as a symbol of spiritual gifts and blessings, there is a message also for you and me in this ancient exhortation, dear reader. Indeed, I look upon this passage as one of the most beautiful scriptures in the Old Testament in reference to prayer, and God’s manner of answering.

I. “Ask ye of Jehovah, . . . and Jehovah shall give” which reminds us of the word of our Lord Jesus: “Ask, and ye shall receive,” for the God of Israel is a God who does answer prayer. Sometimes the answer may be brought about by apparently natural causes, but all the same it is “Jehovah that maketh lightnings,”4 and commandeth the clouds to discharge their fertilising showers.

II. “Ask ye of Jehovah RAIN, . . . and He shall give them showers of rain, ■■■■■ ■■■■■, m’tar geshem”—literally, “rain of plenty, or pouring rain”; for our God is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, and this both in relation to temporal and spiritual things.

III. “And He will give to every one grass in the field,” for He individualises His gifts and blessings, and not one is left out of His gracious and bountiful provision and care. But one great condition of effectual prayer is that our; hearts and expectations be set wholly upon God. “Hear,

1 Psa_69:9.

2 Pro_16:15.

3 Isa_44:3.

4 The lightnings are spoken of as the harbingers of rain; see also Jer_10:13, “He maketh lightnings for the rain,” which is a verbal repetition of Psa_135:7

O My people, and I will testify unto thee: O Israel, if thou wouldest hearken unto Me; there shall no strange god be in thee; neither shalt thou worship any strange god. I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.“1

It was Israel’s divided heart, the turning away from the true and living God to follow after the vanities of the Gentiles, which was the cause of Israel’s calamities and ruin in the past. This is what the prophet reminds them of in the 2nd verse: “For the idols (‘teraphim’) have spoken vanity, and the diviners have seen a lie; they have told false dreams (or, ‘and dreams speak vanity’), they comfort in vain: therefore they went their way (or ‘wandered’) like sheep, they are oppressed (or ‘afflicted’), because there was no shepherd.”

It is the teraphim, or “speaking” oracles of the heathen, and their consulters, or diviners, that the prophet specially speaks of in this verse.

“Apart from our passage there are only seven other scriptures in the Hebrew Bible where the teraphim are introduced; but these suffice to show that they were not only idols, the use of which is classed by God with witchcraft, stubbornness, and iniquity,2 but that they were a peculiar kind of idols, namely, those used for oracular responses. The first mention of the teraphim is in connection with Jacob’s flight from Laban, in Genesis 30:1-43; and in the light of the other passages there seems probability in the explanation of Aben Ezra that Rachel stole them in order that her father might not discover the direction of their flight by means of these oracles.3

”The second place where we find them is in that strange narrative about the Ephraimite Micah, and the Danite expedition to Laish, in Jdg_17:1 &c. and Jdg_18:1 &c., where we get a sad and characteristic glimpse of the condition of some among the tribes in those days, ‘when there was no

1 Psa_81:8-10.

2 1Sa_15:23.

3 See Aben Ezra in loc. Gesenius traces “teraphim” to the unused root “taraph,” which in the Syriac has the significance, “to inquire.” king in Israel, and every man did that which was right in his own eyes.’ This narrative supplies an illustration of the fact that not only is man incapable of himself to find God, but that, left to himself, he is incapable of retaining the knowledge of God in its original purity even when once divinely communicated; and that even the things revealed, apart from the continued teaching of God’s Spirit, are liable to become corrupted and distorted in his mind. Here we have a sad instance of a certain knowledge of Jehovah mixed up with the worship of ‘a graven image and a molten image,’ which were an abomination in His sight, and the illegitimate use of the divinely instituted ephod, which was only to be borne by the high priest, joined together with the pagan teraphim. But the point to be noted is that here also these teraphim were used for oracular consultations, for it was of them that the apostate Levite of Bethlehem asked for counsel for the idolatrous Danites.1 In Eze_21:21 we find the exact antithesis to David’s consulting the ephod, in the pagan king of Babylon ‘consulting with images’ (literally, ‘teraphim’), in reference to his projected invasion of Palestine.2

“Now it is clear that in olden times, whenever by apostasy and disobedience fellowship with Jehovah was interrupted, and when in consequence there was no revelation from Him, ‘neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets,’ Israel turned to the pagan teraphim, or, like poor Saul, they ‘sought unto such as had familiar spirits and wizards that peep and mutter.’

“A parallelism, in its spiritual significance, is to be found in Christendom. What the ephod or the prophet was in olden times, Holy Scripture is now. It is even a ‘more sure word’ than voices from heaven, or answers by

1 Jdg_18:5-6.

2 The only other instances where teraphim are mentioned are 1Sa_19:13-16, from which we gather, first, the sad fact that idolatry was practised by Michal, the daughter of Saul; and, secondly, that the teraphim must have had some resemblance to the human form, since the idol could be mistaken for the body of David. There were no doubt larger ones in the temples, and smaller ones of all sizes, and for idolatrous purposes, in the houses.

Urim and Thummim. The Scriptures, first spoken by holy men of God as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, are now ‘the oracles of God’ themselves speaking with voices which carry their own conviction to hearts honestly seeking for truth, and ever confirming themselves in the world’s history and in the Christian’s experience; but men in the present day, even in Christendom, stumbling at the supernatural, as if there could be a revelation of the Infinite and Everlasting One without such an element in them, turn away from these oracles often on the flimsiest grounds, and instead are giving heed on the one hand to the speculations of a ‘science falsely so called,’ and on the other hand ‘to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils,’ and are thus in a measure supplying an illustration of the solemn words of the apostle, that if men receive not the love of the truth that they might be saved, ‘God shall for this cause send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie.’1

“For of the modern Christian teraphim it is as true as of the ancient pagan ones, that ‘they speak vanity’ or ‘wickedness’; and as for their ‘diviners,’ or false prophets representing them, ‘they see a lie, and tell false dreams, they comfort in vain’; for it is a comfort not well founded, and will not stand the test of death, or of a judgment to come.”2 But to return to our passage: “Therefore”—the prophet continues, because they followed lying oracles, and they who should have strengthened them in God, and in His truth, told them their own false dreams, and comforted them with vain expectations—“they went their way (or ‘wandered’)3 like sheep, they are afflicted (or ‘oppressed’), because there is no shepherd.” The primary reference is very probably to their wandering and oppression in the Babylonian Captivity, but the picture is true also of the much longer exile and greater

1 2Th_2:11-12.

2 Quoted from The Ancient Scriptures and the Modern Jew.

3 ■■■■, nas■u. The metaphor of the verb is taken from the pulling up the stakes of a tent or sheep-fold, a breaking up which involves an idea of wandering, and in this connection of wandering into captivity. affliction which commenced with the destruction of the second Temple. This is how our Lord Jesus beheld Israel’s multitudes, and “was moved with compassion on

them,1 because they were distressed (or ‘plagued,’ or ‘harassed’) and scattered,” i.e., they were troubled, neglected, uncared for. Their outward condition, as they followed Him about from place to place, a disorganised mass, hungry and weary, was pitiable enough, but this was but a faint picture of their spiritual condition, of the wretchedness of their souls, in consequence of the misguidance and tyranny of their false leaders. And there in Matthew 9:1-38, even as in this passage in Zechariah, which may have been in our Lord’s mind at the time, the saddest touch in the gloomy picture of Israel’s distressed and helpless condition is contained in the words, “because there is no shepherd” or, “as sheep having no shepherd” i.e., no one to guide, or control, or care for them. There were indeed in the time before the Captivity, as later in our Lord’s time, many who called themselves “shepherds,” but they were false, deceiving shepherds, who devoured the flock, and sought only to feed themselves. But to proceed to Matthew 9:3.

Because their appointed shepherds have proved false, Jehovah Himself, in the Person of the Messiah (as we shall see from the 4th verse), is going to act the part of the Good Shepherd to them. And first He will show His care for His people by delivering them from their false shepherds. “Mine anger is kindled against the shepherds, and I will punish the he-goats.” It is not necessary to suppose, with Hengstenberg, Keil, Koehler, etc., that by these false shepherds and he-goats, the “heathen governors and tyrants” who ruled over them in captivity, are meant. It is much more likely that the prophet has such scriptures from the “former prophets,” as Jer_23:1 &c. and Eze_34:1 &c., in his mind, where the false shepherds are their own faithless princes, priests, and prophets—in short, those in their 1 Mat_9:36, R.V. own nation who should have led them, but only misled them; and of whom, alas! there has been no lack at any time or period in Jewish history.

■■■■■■■■, atudim—“he-goats,” though it does sometimes (as in Isa_14:9) signify rulers or princes, must not here be confounded with “the shepherds,” but must be viewed in the light of Eze_34:1 &c., where, after judgments are announced against the false shepherds (or rulers), we read, “And as for you, O My flock, thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I judge between cattle and cattle, as well (as between) the rams and the he-goats (atudim)”1—where the latter stand for the rich and strong ones among the people themselves who oppressed the humble and the poor. And not only will He deliver them from the false shepherds, the best part of the promise is contained in the second half of the verse, “For Jehovah of hosts hath visited (or ‘visits’) His flock, the house of Judah, and makes them as His goodly horse in the war (or ‘battle’).” The perfect tense of paqad, “to visit,” is used here also prophetically of what God has resolved to do and will assuredly carry out. And when He visits His flock for good, and assumes His shepherd-care of them, they will be no more like distressed and scattered sheep, a prey to any wild beast, but they shall be strong in Jehovah and in the power of His might. He shall make them (or “set them”) “as His goodly horse,” or, as the phrase may be rendered, “the horse of His Majesty”—that is, the horse fit and equipped for the God of Majesty to ride forth upon “in battle,” to execute His judgments upon the nations.

We now come to Zec_10:4, which I regard as one of the richest Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament. In keeping with Zechariah’s style, which I have so often had occasion to point out in my notes on the earlier chapters, we have in this short verse not only allusions, but a terse summary of a number of utterances by the “former prophets” in reference to the character and mission of Israel’s promised Redeemer.

1 Eze_34:17.

“From him the corner (or ‘corner-stone’), from him the nail (or ‘peg’), from him the battle bow, yea, from him shall proceed every ruler together (or, ‘he that will exercise all rule’).”1

1 Many different interpretations of this verse have been given by commentators, who for the most part ignore any reference to the Messiah. Dr. Wright admits that “the corner” means the corner-stone, and that in Isa_28:16 this title, with others, is used in reference to the Messiah (p. 272): and so evidently the term “nail,” which is taken from Isaiah 22:1-25; but a few pages further on he blames Dr. Pusey, Bishop Wordsworth, and others for explaining these terms of the Messiah (which the Jewish Targum also does), and says that “such explanation cannot be defended on any rational principles of exegesis.” But if in those passages in Isaiah (which there is every reason to believe were known to Zechariah, and to which he very probably alludes) these titles refer to the Messiah, what “rational” grounds are there for saying that they do not refer to the Messiah in this passage in Zechariah?

Hengstenberg, who translates, “Out of him the corner-stone, out of him the peg, out of him the war-bow, out of him will every ruler come forth together,” explains in a general way as follows: “Having attained perfect freedom by the help of the Lord, who gives success to their arms, they will now receive rulers and officers from among themselves, and a military force of their own; and whereas they formerly were a prey to strange conquerors, they will now terrify even foreign nations.”

Keil, who translates the same as Hengstenberg, explains phinnah, the “corner,” as “a suitable figure for the firm stately foundation which Judah is to receive.” Yathed, “nail” or “plug,” is a suitable figure for the supports or upholders of the whole political constitution. The war-bow stands for weapons of war and the military power; and noges (which I have rendered ruler in the absolute sense), according to him (as well as Hengstenberg), “has the subordinate idea of oppressor or despotic ruler in this passage also; but the idea of harshness (which is implied in the title) refers not to the covenant nation, but to its enemies.” Kliefoth, explaining each word on the principle of a part of the whole, interprets “the corner-stone” to indicate the walls or fortifications; the “tent peg,” to denote the camp; “the battle bow,” warlike weapons of offence in general. All these are, according to him, included in the last phrase, Khol noges yachdav) which he translates, “All which rules.”

Lange maintains that the four terms are expressions denoting the leaders of the people—two of them indicating the leaders required for war, and the other two the leaders in the days of peace. According to him, the “corner-stone” denotes the fixed and established government; the “tent peg,” those who took charge of travel; while the “battle bow” is supposed to indicate the regular leaders on the battlefield; and the noges, which he renders “assaulter” or “ oppressor,” the man who breaks through the hostile line of battle. But the explanation is fanciful, as are others which may be quoted. On the rendering of the last clause see the note on p. 355.

I must add that in my notes on this verse I have embodied some paragraphs from the chapter, “Four Precious Titles of the Messiah,” in my book, Rays of Messiah’s Glory, which is out of print.

“From him,” must be understood of Judah—the sense being equivalent to “out of himself,” with a probable allusion to Deu_18:15-19, where the promised great prophet like unto Moses, but who should yet be greater than Moses, is spoken of as coming forth “from the midst of thee, of thy

brethren"; and Jeremiah 30:21, where we read: "And their Prince (literally, their 'glorious one') shall be of themselves, and their ruler shall proceed from the midst of them." It is partly in explanation how, and through whom, the promise in Zec_10:3 shall be fulfilled, namely, that when Jehovah visits "the house of Judah" they shall suddenly be transformed from a flock of scattered, troubled sheep, into His stately irresistible war-horse.

It is also in harmony with the whole testimony of prophetic scripture that the family of David, of the tribe of Judah, should be the human stock, and Bethlehem Ephratha in the portion of Judah, the place on earth where He should come forth "that is, to be Ruler in Israel" though we are at the same time reminded that, according to His Divine nature, "His goings forth are from of old from the days of eternity," as the passage in Mic_5:2 reads literally.

I. The Corner-stone

Out of Judah then shall come forth "the corner" (■■■■■, phinnah, the corner-stone). The allusion is doubtless to Isa_28:16, where, contrasting the sure refuge which He Himself provides for His people with the refuges of lies which men make for themselves, which shall be swept away by the hailstorms of His judgments, the Lord says, "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation ('a foundation well founded'); he that believeth shall not make haste"—a scripture which has always been regarded as Messianic by both Jews and Christians. The Christian cannot also forget the fact that in the New Testament the figure of the foundation stone, and headstone of the corner, is applied to our Lord Jesus both by Himself and by the apostles.1 But the question is, What is implied in it? Writing as I do here, primarily for Christians, and in the full light which the New Testament revelation casts upon the ancient prophecies in the Old Testament, I would say that the first and most obvious truth which the Spirit of God would have us learn from this figure is that the Messiah is the sure foundation of "the House of God, which is the Church of the living God." For the safety and stability of a building almost everything depends on the foundation. The plan and material may be ever so perfect; the ornamentation ever so elaborate and beautiful—but all is of no avail if the foundation be sand, for it cannot abide the storm or flood. On the other hand, the materials of a building may be of more humble quality, the ornamentation may be less elaborate or plain; but if the foundation be sound, the rain may descend, the floods come, and the winds blow and beat upon that house, it will not fall, for it is built upon a rock. Now the great God, the Divine Architect of the universe, has purposed within Himself from all eternity to raise out of frail, imperfect, human materials a glorious Temple for His own eternal habitation through the Spirit, which, when completed, shall show forth, even more than the material temple of the universe, to principalities and powers the infinite power and manifold wisdom of God; and in order to ensure its eternal safety He has bestowed great care on the foundation. He Himself has laid it: "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation," for it is a task which could not be entrusted to, or accomplished by, men or angels. And the "tried" and "precious" corner-stone which He laid as the basis of this mystical structure is His own Son, who is "perfected for evermore," against whom even the gates of hell shall not prevail. This accounts for the continuance and immovableness of the Church of Christ, in spite of the many storms it has had to brave, and the insidious attacks from enemies and false friends. Let the storm rage; let infidelity assail; let 1 Mat_21:42; Act_4:11; 1Pe_2:4-8. men and devils do their utmost. Has it not been foretold in advance that the same precious foundation stone upon which millions would build unto their eternal safety, would also become a stone of stumbling and rock of offence against which

many would stumble, and fall, and be broken to pieces?1 But “the foundation of God remains sure,” and those whose feet are firmly planted on it have no occasion to fear. Therefore the prophet adds: “He that believeth shall not make haste”—that is, to flee in alarm at the threatened judgments, in the day when God ariseth to shake terribly this earth, but shall abide safe on the unshakeable Rock of Ages and Eternal Refuge.

But, secondly, the corner-stone served not only as a foundation, but, to quote a dictionary definition, it is “that stone which unites the two walls at the corner.” It is a point of much interest that the original foundation stone of Solomon’s Temple was actually discovered as one of the early results of the exploration carried on by the Palestine Exploration Fund. I take the following from a small work by one of its agents, which gives the account of this discovery:

“Among the ancient Jews the foundation corner-stone of their sanctuary on Moriah was regarded as the emblem of moral and spiritual truths. It had two functions to perform: first, like the other foundation stones, it was a support for the masonry above; but it had also to face both ways, and was thus a bond of union between two walls. . . .

“The engineers, in order to ascertain the dimensions of this foundation stone, worked round it, and report that it is three feet eight inches high and fourteen feet in length. At the angle it is let down into the rock to a depth of fourteen inches; but, as the rock rises towards the north, the depth of four feet north of the angle is increased by thirty-two inches, while the northern end seems entirely embedded in the rock. The block is further described as squared and polished, with a finely dressed face.

1 Isa_8:14-15; Mat_21:42-44.

“It does not appear to have any marginal draft at the bottom, and indeed this was not necessary, as the lower part, being sunk in the rock, would always be hidden from view; but the absence of the lower draft indicates that the block was dressed in the quarry in a somewhat peculiar style, with a view to its being the foundation corner-stone. The draft on the upper margin of the stone is four inches wide. Fixed in its abiding position 3000 years ago, it still stands sure and steadfast, a fitting emblem of the ‘Rock of Ages,’ that cannot be removed, but abideth fast for ever.”1 And in this respect also the corner-stone is a fit emblem of our Lord Jesus Christ. “For He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace”2 In spite of mutual prejudice and the otherwise impassable legal and ceremonial gulf that separated the Jew from the Gentile, Christ is the angle at which they both meet to be united as one building, or, even more closely, as the members of one body. This indeed is the connection in which Paul speaks of Christ under this figure in that great scripture from which I have already quoted.

After reminding the Ephesian believers how that formerly they were “Gentiles in the flesh, called uncircumcision by that which is called circumcision in the flesh made by hands, . . . without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world,” he proceeds to say:

“But now, in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. . . . Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of

the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ 1 Recent Discoveries in the Temple Hill of Jerusalem, by J. King, M.A.

2 Eph_2:14-15.

Himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord, in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."1

I must not tarry here to point out the difference between the "corner-stone" and the "headstone of the corner," to which there are also many allusions in the Hebrew Scriptures, and of the important truths which are set forth under the figures in reference to Israel's past and future attitude to their Messiah, having elsewhere fully entered into these subjects.2 I proceed therefore to the second designation of the Messiah in this passage.

II. The Nail in the Sure Place The word ■■■■■, yathed, translated here "nail" (rendered in the Septuagint π■σσαλος), is used first of a tent-pin, or stake, which is driven into the ground and to which the tent is fastened;3 and, secondly, of the strong peg inside the Oriental tent, or which is built into the wall of the Eastern building, on which is hung most of its valuable furniture.4 The primary allusion is to Isaiah 22:1-25, where we read: "And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder, and he shall open and none shall shut; and he shall shut and none shall open. And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place; and he shall be for a throne of glory to his father's house. And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father's house, the offspring and the issue, every small vessel, from the vessel of cups even to all the vessels of flagons."5 Now this prophecy in Isaiah, though uttered primarily of a son of David—namely, Eliakim merges into the Son

1 Eph_2:19-22.

2 See "The Conclusion of the Hallel, a Prophetic Drama of the End of the Age," in The Ancient Scriptures and the Modern Jew.

3 Exo_27:19; Exo_35:18; Isa_22:22-23.

4 Eze_15:3.

5 Isa_22:22-24 (R.V.). of David, the Messiah, in whom all the promises given to the Davidic house finally centre and are being fulfilled. It is He who is "the glorious throne to His Father's house," the true heir and perpetuator of the throne of His father David, and of His Kingdom, "to establish it, and to uphold it with judgment and with righteousness from henceforth, even for ever,"1 and who, as we have seen in the exposition of Zec_6:1 &c., "shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne." Anyhow, to us it is not without significance that the risen Christ in His message through His servant John to the Church in Philadelphia, in allusion to the words addressed to Eliakim, claims to be the one who is in possession of the key of the house of David—"These things, saith He that is holy, He that is true, He that hath the key of David, He that openeth and none shall shut, and that shutteth and none openeth."2 The reference in Isa_22:22-24, and in our passage in Zechariah which is based upon it, is not to the "nail," or pin, or stake, to which the ropes of the tent are fastened, but to the strong peg inside the tent, or built into the wall of the house.

(a) The “nail,” or peg, when thus fastened in a sure place, was used to hang burdens upon. This we see from Isa_22:25, where, speaking of the overthrow of the unfaithful Shebna, the treasurer of the king’s house, who thought himself quite safe in his position, as a nail in a sure place, the Lord says, “And the burden upon it” (■■■■■■, hammassa—“the heavy weight,” used here figuratively of the weight of office and responsibility as governor of the king’s house) “shall be cut off.” In the light of this fact we easily perceive the applicability and preciousness of this figure as applied to the Messiah. He is not only the Foundation of the mystical temple, and the uniting “Corner-stone” in whom all believers, either Jew or Gentile, are made one, but to those inside the spiritual house He is the Nail in a sure place, upon whom they may hang their “burdens.” Ah, how many

1 Isa_9:7.

2 Rev_3:7. here be among God’s people who know Christ as the Foundation of their hopes for eternity, but little as their Burden-bearer, “who bears their grief and carries their sorrows”! Cast thy burden upon the Lord, O Christian, whatever it may be, “and He will sustain thee.”

(b) But, secondly, the chief purpose of the nail, or peg fastened in a sure place, is, that upon it may hang all the glory of the house, “all vessels of small quantity, from the vessels of cups (or goblets) even to all the vessels of flagons.” A great portion of the wealth of the ancient Orientals (and the same is still true in measure) consisted in gold and silver vessels and in changes of raiment. These, as well as shields, swords, and suits of armour taken in battle, they were wont, with Eastern ostentation, to hang on the “pegs” in their tents or houses for the admiration of all who entered. And this, to pass from the figure to the great truth it is meant to represent, is what God expects us to do with Christ. When it is said, “They shall hang upon Him all the glory of His Father’s house,” it means that Israel shall yet render to Him that honour and glory, that joyful allegiance and willing consecration of themselves and their possessions, to which He is entitled as the true heir of the Davidic “house,” and Lord of the theocratic kingdom. And it is our privilege also even now, during the period of His rejection, to “hang upon Him,” that is, consecrate to Him and His service all that which we may regard as “our glory.” Nor is there any one, even the least and the weakest of His redeemed people, who can say that he has nothing which he can dedicate to Him, for that which is most precious in His sight is a loving, confiding heart and an adoring spirit. But next to, and together with, the offering of ourselves, we are to “hang upon Him” whatever possessions or gifts or talents which He may have entrusted to us. And it is precious and beautiful to note that there is a place on the peg for “the cup or goblet” as well as for the “flagon”: and “the vessel of small quantity,” when fully consecrated to the Master’s use, is of greater use, and brings more “glory” to Him, than the “vessel of large quantity” when not so fully surrendered. And as with our persons, so with our gifts. The “small offerings” from those who have but little, and to whom the giving implies real sacrifice for His blessed Name’s sake, are at least equally if not more precious in His sight than the “large offerings” from those who have much. Above all, it is the motive which Jehovah, “by whom actions are weighed” (not counted or measured), takes into account.

III. The Battle Bow

It is generally agreed that every one of the four terms used in this verse (phinnah, “corner”; yathed, “nail”; qesheth milchamah, “battle bow”; and noges, “ruler” or “exactor”) are all used metaphorically, and denote persons, or, as I verily believe, one Person, who Himself fulfils these

different functions. The last two terms bring before us an aspect of the Messiah's character which will be manifest at His Second Coming. Then He will be the "Battle bow"—the mighty and skilful Archer, who shall send forth His "sharp arrows" in the heart of the king's enemies, "whereby the people shall be made to fall under Him."1 This is an aspect of Christ's character on which men do not like to dwell; but let it not be forgotten that the same prophet, Isaiah, who pictures Him in the 53rd chapter (Isa_53:1 &c.) as the suffering Lamb of God, who "as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, openeth not His mouth," describes Him in the 63rd chapter (Isa_63:1 &c.) as clothed in majesty, marching forth in the greatness of His strength to take vengeance on the nations: "Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? I have trodden the winepress alone, and of the peoples there was no man with Me: yea, I trod them, in Mine anger, and trampled them in My fury; and their lifeblood is sprinkled upon My garments, and I have stained all My raiment"2—an Old Testament vision which will be fulfilled at "the revelation

1 Psa_45:5.

2 Isa_63:2-4 (R.V.). of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of His power, in flaming fire, rendering vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus, . . . when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be marvelled at in all them that believe."1

"And I saw the heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and He that sat thereon, called Faithful and True; and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. And His eyes are a flame of fire, and upon His head are many diadems; and He hath a name written, which no one knoweth but He Himself. And He is arrayed in a garment sprinkled with blood: and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies which are in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and pure. And out of His mouth proceedeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron: and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God. And He hath on His garment and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS."2 IV. The Autocratic Ruler, or "Exactor"

It is not possible to speak with absolute certainty of the exact meaning of the last clause in the verse which we are considering, as the construction of the sentence in the original is unusual and peculiar, and has led to conflicting translations and interpretations. In rendering the words ■■■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■, khol noges yachdav—"every ruler together," or, "he that will exercise all rule,"—I am guided more by the context and obvious sense than by strict principles of Hebrew grammar.3 It seems to me that, as the first terms 1 2Th_1:7-10 (R.V.).

2 Rev_19:11-16 (R.V.).

3 It is capable also of the following renderings, for which some have contended: "Out of him (Judah) shall come (or 'go') forth every exactor (in the sense of absolute ruler) together." But, even if this be the most correct reading, it would still apply to the Messiah, inasmuch as He embraces in Himself a variety of different functions. Thus, for instance, He is represented by the prophets as being "a Priest upon His throne" (Zec_6:1 &c.), and not only as in this verse undoubtedly refer to the Messiah in allusion to utterances about His person and mission by the "former prophets," so must this last clause also. Certain it is that the Messiah at His Second Coming shall gather up in

Himself all authority and rule. He shall be then not only the Nasi—the chosen Prince from among the people; not only the Moshel, God's Viceroy or Deputy Ruler on the earth; not only a constitutional King, who reigns but does not rule—but He shall be the Noges, the absolute Ruler, or "Exactor"—the most absolute and autocratic King the world has yet seen. In Messiah's reign on the earth God's sovereignty will be fully manifested, but it is blessed to remember that it will be sovereignty exercised by One who is not only "glorious in holiness," infinite in wisdom and power, but by Him who is also infinite in compassion, and whose very nature is love. His absolute autocratic rule, therefore, though a terror to the ungodly, is a thought full of comfort to the righteous, for it will mean righteousness, peace and joy to this long-afflicted earth, and the very consummation of blessedness to His own people. But there is truth in

Israel's King, but as the Prince (Eze_37:24-25). The Messiah was to be like unto Moses (Deu_18:15), who, in himself, united the different offices of prophet, priest, and king; so that the phrase is quite applicable to Him on that account. Just as His atoning death can be spoken of in the plural (see Hebrew of Isa_53:9), on account of the various sacrifices receiving their fulfilment in His own body, which He offered once and for all—so, in a sense, He is many also in His reign, because all authority will meet in Him as the Centre. Aaron Pick, formerly Hebrew Professor at the University of Prague, in his Literal Translation of the Twelve Minor Prophets, renders our text thus: "From Him the Corner, from Him the Nail, from Him the Battle Bow, yea, from Him shall come forth He that conquereth all together." The last sentence may also be understood as gathering up the ideas in the first three terms, Phinnah, Yathed, and Qesheth milchamah. From him (Judah) the Corner, from him the Nail, from him the Battle Bow; yea, from him shall proceed He who shall unite in Himself, not only all that is implied in these three terms, but every power and authority "together." Yet another rendering, but in the sense just suggested, is given by George Adam Smith in his Book of the Twelve Prophets, namely, "From him the Corner-stone, from him the Stay (or 'Tent-pin'), from him the War-bow, from him the Oppressor—shall go forth together." That ■■■■■, noges, is here used in a good sense, is pretty generally admitted by lexicographers and commentators. Hitzig renders it "Feldherr" (commander). The cognate word in Ethiopic, Negus, signifies king. the suggestion that the title noges (absolute ruler or "exactor") is applied here to Israel's ideal king or absolute ruler in His relation, not to His own people, but to their and His enemies, from whom He will "exact submission and allegiance with a rod of iron," and who will make down trodden Israel to rule over those who have long oppressed and ruled over them.

"Now therefore be wise, O ye kings: Be instructed, ye judges of the earth.

Serve Jehovah with fear, And rejoice with trembling.

Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish in the way, When His wrath is kindled but a little.

Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him." In Zec_10:5 the line of thought unfolded in the first three verses of this chapter is resumed, and the change which will come over the people after Jehovah of hosts, in the person of the Messiah, shall "visit His flock, the house of Judah" (Zec_10:3), is now fully described.

Instead of being like a troubled and helpless flock of sheep (Zechariah 10:2), they shall suddenly be transformed into His "goodly horse" (or "the horse of His Majesty") in battle, and instead of being "afflicted" and at the mercy of their adversaries, they shall be as "mighty men" treading upon

their enemies. The “mire of the streets” is used here as a figure of their enemies, and is parallel to Zec_9:15, where it is said, “they shall trample on the sling stones” (which is the figure of contempt used there to describe their adversaries), while they themselves are likened to the abhnei nezer, “stones of a crown” (or jewels set in a consecrated crown), lifted on high over the land. The figure is found elsewhere in the prophetic Scriptures. Thus Micah says, “Mine eyes shall behold her (‘mine enemy’); now shall she be trodden down (or, a ‘treading down’), as the mire of the street”;1 but Zechariah, by a yet bolder

1 Mic_7:10. image, “pictures those trampled upon as what they had become—the mire of the streets—as worthless, as foul.”1 But not in their own strength shall they prevail, they shall be and “fight” as heroes, “because Jehovah is with them” the source and secret of their strength—therefore, “the riders upon horses”—the enemies’ cavalry, the most formidable arm of the hostile forces—shall be put to shame, or confounded.

Yes, Israel in that day shall experience the truth of the words of their sweet Psalmist:

“Some trust in chariots and some in horses; But we will make mention of the Name of Jehovah our God;

They are bowed down and fallen; But we are risen up and stand upright.” And the great deliverance which Jehovah shall then accomplish for Israel will embrace the entire nation, which in Zechariah’s prophecies are regarded as no longer divided into two separate kingdoms, but as one people, with a common and inseparable destiny. “And I will strengthen the house of Judah; and I will save the house of Joseph; and I will bring them again, and make them dwell (or ‘settle them’): for I have mercy upon them, and they shall be as though I had not cast them off; for I am Jehovah their God, and I will hear them.” In keeping with Zechariah’s very terse style, and the summaries which we find sometimes in single words and expressions, both in the first and second parts of his book, of utterances by the “former prophets,” we have here embodied in the one word ■■■■■■■■■■■■ (which the Authorised Version has translated, “I will bring them again to place them”), the promise uttered fully by Jeremiah, namely: “I will bring them again into this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely,”2 for the most satisfactory grammatical explanation of the Hebrew word is that it is a blending of two verbs which have the respective meanings of “I will

1 Pusey.

2 Jer_32:37. make them dwell,” and “I will bring them back”—both ideas, as already the Jewish commentator Kimchi points out, being expressed in the one word, namely, “He will cause them to return to their own land, and will cause them to dwell there in peace and security.” And He will do all this—strengthen, save, restore, and establish them, because “He shall have mercy upon them,” for, “The goodness and loving-kindness of God, and not any merit of theirs, is the first and principal cause” of Israel’s whole salvation and grace, and the words of the inspired Psalmist: “They got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them”; but—

“Thy right hand, and Thine arm, and the light of Thy countenance, Because Thou hadst a favour unto them”— will be true of the future restoration, as it was true of their original possession of the land! And His mercy and loving-kindness will blot out all the past of sin and sorrow. “And they shall be,” He says, “as though I had not cast them off” (or, literally, “as though I had not loathed them,”

the word being expressive of God's strong abhorrence of sin, and of sinners when they become wedded to it)—which reminds us of the greater promise of the new covenant: "I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more";1 and of the promise in Ezekiel: "And I will settle you as in your old estates, and I will do better unto you than at your beginnings."2 Zec_10:5 ends with a beautiful glimpse of the restored relationship between Jehovah and His long-wandering people:

"For I am Jehovah"—that is, the everlasting, unchangeable, covenant-keeping God—which is the reason why the sinful sons of Jacob have not been consumed. And He is now "their God" for the Lo-ruhamah and Lo-ammi period of Israel's history shall then be ended, and no

1 Jer_31:34.

2 Eze_36:11. longer shall He say: "Ye are not My people, and I will not be your God."1 No; then He "will hear them"—or, as we read more fully in Zechariah 13:1-9, "They shall call on My name, and I will hear them; and I will say it is My people; and they shall say Jehovah is my God,"2 which reminds us of many similar, if more general, promises in the prophetic Scriptures, as, for instance: "Then shalt thou call, and Jehovah shall answer; thou shalt cry, and He shall say, Here I am"; and again: "I, Jehovah, will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them."3 And the joy and blessing and victory here promised is henceforth to be shared alike by the whole nation, which the prophet, in keeping with the peculiarity of his style, designates by the separate names, "House of Judah," and "House of Joseph," or "Ephraim," which together include the whole people which had, indeed, previous to the Exile, been for a long time divided into two frequently hostile kingdoms, but are from the time of the partial restoration from Babylon regarded as one nation, with one common hope and destiny.

"And they of Ephraim shall be like a mighty man, and their hearts shall rejoice as through wine; yea, their children shall see it and rejoice; their hearts shall rejoice (or 'be glad') in the Lord"—which is in effect a repetition more particularly in reference to "Ephraim" of what is stated in Zechariah 9:15 and Zechariah 10:5 of Judah. And the reason why "Ephraim," or those previously belonging to the northern kingdom, are specially mentioned as included in the word of promise, is probably to be found (as suggested by Calvin and Hengstenberg) "in the circumstances of the times," or in the historic foreground of this prophecy. If the predictions of the earlier prophets in reference to Judah were now (that is, in Zechariah's time) only beginning to be fulfilled, and therefore needed to be renewed lest the nation should think itself deceived, much more was this the case with regard to Ephraim. The great body of the people belonging to the northern

1 Hosea 1:8.

2 Zec_13:9.

3 Isa_41:17, Isa_58:9. kingdom was still in exile, though a small fraction of them had joined the children of Judah on their return, and there was outwardly but little in existing circumstances to support the hope of that grand restoration, which, according to the declaration of the former prophets, was one day to occur.

They of the "house of Joseph," as being in an apparently even more hopeless condition, are therefore especially assured that under the true son of David, the Redeemer-King, whose advent

to “Zion” and “Jerusalem” the prophet had jubilantly announced in Zec_9:1 &c., and who, in Zec_10:4 is spoken of as coming forth out of Judah, would fully share in all the blessings promised to the “house of Judah.” They too would be brought back and made strong in the Lord and in the power of His might for the final conflict with their adversaries, so that they “shall be like a mighty man” or hero (that is, in “treading down their enemies in the mire of the streets,” Zec_10:5), “and their hearts shall rejoice as through wine”—which exhilarates and “maketh glad the heart of man” with a gladness which is not natural, and is a fit emblem, therefore, of the strength and exhilaration which are imparted by the Spirit of God.1 And it will not be an evanescent joy which will soon fade away. No; “their children (also) shall see it,” that is, the great things which God shall then do unto them—and be glad. “Their heart shall rejoice in Jehovah”—as the highest and only lasting source of joy “to whom,” as an old writer puts it, “is to be referred all gladness which is derived from created things—that whoso glorieth may glory in the Lord, in whom alone the rational creature ought to take delight.”

Most commentators suppose that Zec_10:8 to the end of the chapter still speak of Ephraim; but the supposition is, I think, without sufficient warrant. Having spoken of the “house of Judah” and the “house of Joseph” separately, the prophet now proceeds to set forth the purpose of God

1 Eph_5:18. in reference to both parts of the nation who constitute one people with one common destiny:

“I will hiss for them, and gather them; for I have redeemed them.” This verb ■■■■■, sharaq, to “hiss,” or “whistle,” or “pipe,” is used several times in the earlier scriptures to describe God’s signal in calling together nations and peoples to accomplish His purposes. Thus, in Isaiah He uses this word when He threatens to gather the Gentile nations to chastise His people: “It shall come to pass in that day, that Jehovah shall hiss (or ‘whistle’) for the fly that is in the uttermost part of the rivers of Egypt, and for the bee that is in the land of Assyria. And they shall come and rest all of them in the desolate valleys, and in the holes of the rocks, and upon all thorns, and upon all bushes” And again: “He will lift up an ensign to the nations from far, and will hiss (or ‘whistle’) unto them from the end of the earth. And behold they shall come with speed swiftly; none shall be weary or stumble among them.”1 That is, He would gather the hostile nations against them “like the countless numbers of the insect creation, which, if united, would irresistibly desolate life. He would summon them as the bee-owner by his shrill call summons and unites his own swarm.” But now the time to favour Zion having come, this same word is used in our passage in Zec_10:8. for the signal which He will use for the gathering together of His own dispersed people from the four corners of the earth. The word sharaq, however, describes not only the shrill noise used to call together a swarm of insects—it means also, as already suggested above, to “pipe,”2 and is used of the shepherd signal for the gathering of his scattered flock.

This, indeed, is the picture presented to our minds in this chapter. At present, because they have given heed to false dreamers, “they go on their way (or wander about) 1 Isa_5:26-27, Isa_7:18-19.

2 In the Song of Deborah, Jdg_5:16, translated in the A.V.: “Why abodest thou among the sheepfolds to hear the bleatings of the flocks?” is properly rendered in the R.V.: “Why safest thou among the sheepfolds to hear the pipings for the flocks? ■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■ (sheriqoth ’adarim).” like sheep; they are troubled (or ‘afflicted’) because there is no shepherd” (Zec_10:2); but when Jehovah of hosts, in the person of the Messiah, again “visits His flock,” namely, “the

house of Judah" (Zec_10:3) and "the house of Joseph" (Zec_10:6), He "will pipe for them and gather them."

If I may digress for a moment, and mention incidents of personal experience, I would say that on more than one occasion I have had the figure referred to in this passage illustrated before my eyes. On one occasion (it was in 1891) while camping for a few days with missionary friends in a wild part high up on the Lebanon, a picturesque-looking young Bedouin shepherd was leading a small flock of sheep to some distant part in search of pasturage. Passing our encampment he stopped for a while to converse with us, and in the meantime his flock got scattered among the rocks; but by and by, when he was ready to start, he pulled out from under his burnoose a reed pipe, and began to play on it a not very melodious tune; and it was interesting and beautiful to notice how, as he was playing, his scattered sheep, some of which had wandered off to some distance, collected closer and closer around him, and formed into a flock; and when they were all there he started off again at their head. Involuntarily this passage from Zechariah came to my mind: "I will pipe for them and gather them." On another occasion, when travelling in 1889 one whole night in a diligence in inland Algeria, we stopped about dawn at an inn in a small Arab village to change horses. While this was being done, an Arab who stood near began to play, or whistle, on one of the same kind of rough reed or bamboo pipe. At first I thought he was playing for our benefit in order to get baksheesh, but I soon observed that as he continued "piping," sheep and cows and goats came toward him from all directions. It was the village shepherd gathering his flock to lead them forth to pasture.

Thus also the Shepherd of Israel is going to gather His flock and lead them into their own pastures. "If any of thine outcasts be in the uttermost parts of heaven," He says, "thence will Jehovah thy God gather thee, and from thence will He fetch thee; and Jehovah thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and He will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers."1 And He will do this, He says, because "I have redeemed them"—with a full and complete redemption, not only from outward captivity, but "from all their iniquities"2 so that they shall be known and called in that day "The holy people, the redeemed of Jehovah"—henceforth to serve and glorify Him, "Who hath ransomed them from the hand of him that was stronger than he."3 And when thus redeemed and gathered in their own land again, "they shall increase as they have increased"—which latter phrase, as already Kimchi in his commentary explains, is meant to remind us of God's wonderful and gracious dealings with them during the last days of their sojourn in Egypt, where "the children of Israel were fruitful" because of the blessings of Jehovah upon them, "and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them."4 And thus, again after the future greater redemption, the spared remnant, who shall have been brought through the fiery purging ordeal described in the last chapters of this very prophecy, shall increase mightily, even "as they have increased" (that is, in Egypt), and become a mighty nation on the earth. And this increase will characterise the seed of Israel in a striking degree, even while still scattered among the nations. This I believe to be the meaning of the words which follow in Zec_10:9, "And I will sow them among the peoples; and they shall remember Me in far countries: and they shall live with their children, and shall return." The controversy among commentators as to whether the expression, "I will sow them among the peoples," is to be understood as a prediction of a scattering of the people among the nations subsequent to the partial

1 Deu_30:4-5

2 Psa_130:8 3 Isa_62:12; Jer_31:11

4 Exodus 1:7 restoration from Babylon, is, according to my judgment, settled by the fact that the verb ■■■■■ (zara'), which is employed, is never used of scattering, or dispersing, in a bad sense, but always "to sow"; and the prediction in this verse cannot therefore refer to a dispersion of the Jewish people to be inflicted as a punishment. It is most probable that this passage in Zechariah is based on two utterances of the former "prophets." The first is Hos_2:23, where we read: "And I will sow her unto Me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not My people, Thou art My people; and they shall say, Thou art my God." And the second is Jer_31:27, "Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of man, and with the seed of beasts."

It is not necessary then to understand the words in Zachariah as referring to a future act of dispersion (though, as a matter of history, a dispersion subsequent to the partial restoration from Babylon—or rather, a new and more terrible and universal phase of the dispersion which was inaugurated by the Babylonian Captivity, did take place after Israel's national apostasy from God was completed in the rejection and crucifixion of their Messiah), but rather as a prediction first of all that in the dispersion which had already begun with the destruction of the city and Temple by the Babylonians, and which would last till the full and final restoration of the whole nation (Judah and Israel) to their own land, which is still in the future God would cause them to multiply. This increase (to judge from the analogy of their experience in Egypt, to which allusion is made more than once in this chapter) would take place toward the end of the time of their sojourning among the nations, and would be a precursor of their national restoration.1

1 The marvellous increase of the Jewish people since their so-called "emancipation" in the nineteenth century, is, indeed, a striking sign of the times. The statement of a recent writer in the Jewish Chronicle, that at the commencement of the sixteenth century there could scarcely have been more than a million Jews left in the entire world after the untold sufferings, dispersions, And not only would they be preserved even in dispersion, and increase and multiply even as they did during the last days of their sojourn in Egypt, but in those "far countries" where they shall be found "they shall remember Me," saith Jehovah—which is perhaps an inspired echo by Zechariah of the words of Ezekiel: "And they that escape of you shall remember Me among the nations whither they shall be carried captive, and they shall loathe themselves for the evil which they have committed in all their abominations. And they shall know that I am the Lord."1 The next sentence in Zec_10:9, "They shall live with their children, and turn again," must be connected with the words which immediately precede. Because they shall remember Jehovah "in the far countries" they shall live. Here we probably have an allusion (as Hengstenberg suggests) in one word (in the Hebrew) "to the figure which Ezekiel has so beautifully carried out in Eze_37:1 &c." They who, while dispersed among the nations, are seen by the prophet as dry bones scattered over the valley of vision, are to live again, for: "Behold, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, O and massacres which they had to endure in the dark and middle ages—is probably true. The historian Basnage, in his History of the Jews from Jesus Christ to the Present Time, calculated that in his time (end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth century) there were three

million Jews in the world. Since then, however, the growth of Jewry has been phenomenal. At the commencement of the nineteenth century there were said to be five millions. Half a century later the numbers reached six or seven millions; and at the end of another half a century—in 1896—the greatest living authority on Jewish statistics gave their number as eleven millions. And now after this short interval it is officially established that there are over thirteen million Jews in the world. And the surprising feature of this latest calculation is the officially-authenticated fact that, in the country where they are most persecuted, and which during the past three decades has driven forth millions to seek an asylum in other countries, there are more Jews to-day than ever before; and this in spite of pogroms, and baptisms, and overcrowding, and starvation, and the pursuance of a merciless policy of repression which led Pobiedonostsef to prognosticate that, in the end, a third of Russia's Jews would emigrate, a third would die, and a third would join the dominant faith. The old story of Israel in Egypt renews itself to-day in Russia: "The more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied."

1 Eze_6:9. My people; . . . and I will put My Spirit in you, and ye shall live, . . . and ye shall know that I am Jehovah."1 Neither shall this new national and spiritual life be transient in its character. No; not only shall they live, but "their children" also, the thought expressed in these words being the same as "their children also shall see it," in Zec_10:9. "And shall return" (or "turn again")—not only to their land but to their God, the word being the same which the prophets constantly used when calling to Israel to repent—as, for instance: "Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?"2 In Zechariah 10:10 the gathering and leading back by the Shepherd of Israel of His scattered flock are more minutely described:

"I will bring them back out of the land of Egypt, and from Assyria will I gather them"; which two Powers, to quote another writer, may perhaps be regarded as "standing here as of old, for the two conflicting empires (Egypt to the south and Assyria to the north) between which Israel lay, at whose hand she had suffered, and who represent the countries which lay beyond." But there is no need to allegorise the names of Egypt and Assyria, as almost all the commentators do, as used only typically of the lands of Israel's oppression. I believe it to be a prophecy which merges into the most distant future (from the prophet's then point of view), and will be literally fulfilled at the final restoration, "when Jehovah shall lift up His hand

1 Eze_37:11-14.

2 This is one of those scriptures which seem to speak of a turning of Israel to God while still in the "far countries" of their dispersion, and may appear to be in conflict with the many prophecies which predict a restoration of Israel in unbelief, and their conversion in the land at the visible appearing of Christ. But there is no real conflict or contradiction between these various scriptures, the solution of the apparent difficulty being in the fact that while a large representative section of the nation will be in Palestine in a condition of unbelief when the Lord appears, and will be converted there, the remaining part of the nation will still be in the dispersion, and upon them the spirit of grace and supplication will come in the "far countries" where they shall be found. The subject is fully dealt with in Types, Psalms, and Prophecies, pp. 364- 377. again the second time to recover the remnant of His people, . . . and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from Assyria and from Egypt, . . . and from the four corners of the earth."1

It is a fact that there are now many Jews scattered in the regions which formed the “Assyrian” or Babylon empire2 as well as in Egypt, and with the revival and progress of the East their numbers in those countries will greatly increase. And when Jehovah thus gathers them and leads them back, He will bring them “into the land of Gilead and Lebanon,” which probably represent the whole promised land east and west of the Jordan. But even there “place will not be found for them,” which reminds us of Isa_49:20-21, where we read: “The children of thy bereavement shall yet say in thine ears, The place is too strait for me: give place to me that I may dwell. Then shalt thou say in thine heart, Who hath begotten me these, seeing I have been bereaved of my children, and am solitary, an exile, and wandering to and fro? Who hath brought up these? Behold, I was left alone; these, where were they?” which again reminds us of the jubilant exclamation in Isa_54:1 :

“Sing [exult] O barren, thou that didst not bear;

Break forth into singing, and cry, thou that didst not travail: For more are the children of the desolate Than of the married wife, saith Jehovah.”

1 Isaiah 11:11-12.

2 Ewald, Hitzig, and other writers who deny the post-exilic origin of the second half of Zechariah, have argued from the mention of “Assyria (and not Babylon) that these chapters must have been written before the Babylonian Captivity and soon after the overthrow of the northern kingdom of Israel”; but it must be borne in mind that in post-exilic times the King of Babylon was sometimes styled “the King of Assyria” (Ezra 6:22; 2Ki_23:29; Jdt_1:7, Jdt_2:1; comp. Herod, i. 178, 188), inasmuch as his authority extended over Assyria, In later books the expressions, “King of the Persians” and “King of Assyria” are interchanged. Compare Ezra (1Es_2:30) with 1Es_7:15. The King of Persia is also styled King of Babylon (Ezra 5:13; Neh_13:6), and references are sometimes made to Assyria when Babylon is really signified, or when, as in this passage, allusion is made to the enemies of the covenant people north and south of their land (comp. Lam_5:6; Jer_2:18). The words are addressed to Jerusalem, the counterpart of Sarah, in her barrenness at first and her fruitfulness afterwards. She is barren now—not, indeed, because she had never borne children, but because in her captivity and exile she had been robbed of her children, and as a holy city had all this time given birth to none. But she is to awake and sing, because the children that shall gather around her after her long period of desolateness would be more than when in the time before her calamity came upon her she had as a married wife—yea, so great will be the increase of Zion’s future population, that, instead of bewailing her lonely and desolate condition, she shall even hear her children say “in her own ears” that the place is too strait, and the call to the surrounding nations: “Give place (literally, ‘give way,’ or ‘fall back’), that I may be able to settle down.”

I have elsewhere pointed out1 that the land which God by oath and covenant promised to the fathers is about fifty times as large as the part which hitherto the Jews actually possessed, and that it is only pitiable ignorance which made the superficial Voltaire utter the blasphemy that the God of the Jews must have been a little God, because He gave His people a land no larger than Wales, and called it “a good land and a large” (Exo_3:8). Surely a land which includes within its boundaries an area at least one-third more than the whole of France may with right be called “a large land”; but it is possible that even the larger land, with its desert parts transformed into fruitful

fields, will not suffice to hold the whole of blessed Israel in the millennial period, so great and rapid will be the increase of the saved remnant. In Zec_10:11 God's wonderful works on behalf of His people in the past are again alluded to as the basis and illustration of what He will do for them in the yet greater deliverance of the future. When He brought them out of Egypt, He went before them in the pillar of cloud; and when pursued by Pharaoh and his host, and there 1 See The Jewish Problem. seemed no way of escape, He made a way in the sea, and a path in the deep waters for His redeemed to pass over.1 Now, "as in the days of thy coming forth out of the land of Egypt," He says, "will I show him marvellous things."2 Once again He Himself will march at their head, and no obstacle shall be allowed to hinder the progress of His redeemed people on their way back to Zion. Should any hindrance present itself, even if it be as formidable as the Red Sea at the exodus from Egypt, "He shall pass through the sea of affliction (or straitness), and shall smite the waves in the sea, and all the depths of the river (or Nile) shall dry up (even as the Jordan did before the Ark of the Covenant): and the pride of Assyria (Israel's former oppressor from the north) shall be brought down, and the sceptre of Egypt (Israel's enemy from the south) shall depart." But these two empires may also represent Gentile world-power in general, which will then give way to the Kingdom of the Messiah which the God of heaven shall set up, Whose blessed rule shall extend from Mount Zion even unto the ends of the earth. And not only will the Shepherd of Israel gather them and lead them back to their own habitation, removing by His Almighty power and grace every obstacle out of the way, but there in their own land, when the Spirit shall have been poured upon them from on high, they shall be "strong in the Lord and in the power of His might," and ready to do exploits in His name. "I will strengthen them, in Jehovah," we read in the last verse of our chapter, "and in His Name shall they walk up and down"—which last expression may denote first their life, or walk and conversation, which shall all be rooted in God, and be in full accord with "His Name," which stands for His revealed character, which shall then be fully and gloriously manifested in their midst in the person of their Messiah, the image of the invisible God. But the phrase ■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■, u-bhish'mo yithallakhu, probably means also that they shall walk up and down in His Name, as His messengers and representatives, dispensing

1 Isa_51:10.

2 Mic_7:15. the blessings of Messiah's gospel among the nations by whom they shall be known as the "priests of Jehovah," and be welcomed as "the ministers of our God,"1 ■■■■■■ ■■■■■, neum Yehovah—"the saying, or utterance, of Jehovah."

These are the last words of the chapter, and form, so to say, the signature which stands pledged to the fulfilment of the contents of the prophecy. And yet even evangelical writers and commentators deny that there ever will be a literal fulfilment of these plain and solemn predictions, and see in them at the most only forecasts of the gradual spread of Christianity and of the absorption of a certain number of Jews into the Church. Thus, one German scholar, after summarising the contents of the whole prophecy from Zec_9:11 to Zec_10:12, says: "The principle of fulfilment is of a spiritual kind, and was effected through the gathering of the Jews into the Kingdom of Christ, which commenced in the times of the Apostles, and will continue till the remnant of Israel is converted to Christ its Saviour."2 And another, to whose elaborate and, in some respects, useful work reference has often been made in these "notes," says: "In the remarkable position occupied by Israel in the early Christian Church—for our Lord and His apostles were Jews, and the majority of the early evangelists were men of this nation—in the

wonderful fact that the Jews, though politically crushed beneath the Gentile yoke, conquered the nations of the earth by means of that religion which sprang from their midst—in such facts this prophecy, and other similar prophecies, found a most glorious and real fulfilment. The nations have been enlightened by the Jews, and books written by Jewish pens have become the laws and oracles of the world."3

But, as I have had occasion to remark more than once, such method of interpretation turns the great prophetic utterances in the Bible into mere hyperbole, and substitutes an unnatural and shadowy meaning for what is plain and obvious, thereby throwing a vagueness and uncertainty over

1 Isa_56:6.

2 Keil.

3 Wright. all Scripture. No, no; just as the scattering of Israel was literal, so the gathering also will be literal; and it is not in the absorption of a remnant of the Jewish people into the Church, and in the gradual spread of "Christianity" that "these prophecies find a most glorious and real fulfilment," but in a yet future nationally restored and converted Israel, which shall yet be the centre of the Kingdom of God and of His Christ, and the channel of blessing to all the nations of the earth.

4.18. Chapter 16 - Rejection of the True Shepherd

CHAPTER XVI A DARK EPISODE

Open thy doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour thy cedars. Wail, O fir-tree, for the cedar is fallen, because the goodly ones are destroyed: wail, O ye oaks of Bashan, for the strong forest is come down. A voice of the wailing of the shepherds! for their glory is destroyed: a voice of the roaring of young lions! for the pride of the Jordan is laid waste. Thus said Jehovah my God: Feed the flock of slaughter; whose possessors slay them, and hold themselves not guilty; and they that sell them say, Blessed be Jehovah, for I am rich: and their own shepherds pity them not. For I will no more pity the inhabitants of the land, saith Jehovah: but, lo, I will deliver the men every one into his neighbor's hand, and into the hand of his king: and they shall smite the land, and out of their hand I will not deliver them. So I fed the flock of slaughter, verily the poor of the flock. And I took unto me two staves: the one I called Beauty, and the other I called Bands, and I fed the flock. And I cut off the three shepherds in one month; for my soul was weary of them, and their soul also loathed me. Then said I, I will not feed you; that which dieth, let it die; and that which is to be cut off, let it be cut off; and let them that are left eat every one the flesh of another. And I took my staff Beauty, and cut it asunder, that I might break my covenant which I had made with all the peoples. And it was broken in that day; and thus the poor of the flock that gave heed unto me knew that it was the word of Jehovah. And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my hire; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my hire thirty pieces of silver. And Jehovah said unto me, Cast it unto the potter, the goodly price that I was prized at by them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them unto the potter, in the house of Jehovah. Then I cut asunder mine other staff, even Bands, that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel. And Jehovah said unto me, Take unto thee yet again the instruments of a foolish shepherd. For, lo, I will raise up a shepherd in the land, who will not visit those that are cut off, neither will seek those that are scattered, nor heal that which is broken, nor feed that which is sound; but he will eat the flesh of the fat sheep, and will tear their hoofs in pieces. Woe to the worthless shepherd that leaveth the flock! the sword shall be upon his arm, and upon his right eye: his arm shall be clean dried up, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened.

CHAPTER XVI THE 11th chapter stands in the same relation to the verbal prophecies which make up the second part of Zechariah, as the 5th does in relation to the first part of the visions.

"All the ways of the Lord are mercy and truth" . . . And again, "I will sing of mercy and of judgment: unto Thee, O Lord, will I sing."1 These words of the inspired Psalmist may, as an old writer well observes, be written over the whole Book of Zechariah. In the first part we have first a series of five visions which in various symbols set forth "the good and comfortable words"2 of promise concerning restoration, enlargement, and temporal and spiritual blessing which God has yet in store for the land and the people of Israel. But to complete the prophetic forecast of the future, and also (to borrow an expression from another writer) "to prevent an abuse of the proclamation of salvation," the obverse side of the picture, which sets forth a yet future apostasy and judgment,

had to be presented. This is done in the visions of the Flying Roll and the Ephah, in the first of which we hear God's great curse pronounced against sin; and in the second we see its banishment from His own land and presence "to the land of Shinar"—the original place of rebellion and apostasy against God—where it shall meet with its final doom. In the 6th chapter, however, we emerge again from the dark valley of sin and apostasy, and we are shown in the symbolical transaction there set forth how, in spite of it all, 1 Psa_25:10, Psa_101:1.

2 Zec_1:13.

Israel's Messiah will yet be crowned, and sit and rule upon His throne, and be a Priest upon His throne; and how, not only Israel, but "they that are far off," shall find a place in the glorious Temple which He shall build. And thus it is also with the second part. First, we have a series of verbal prophecies, which are full of promise of future restoration and blessedness; and then, in order to prevent a carnal misuse of the promises of salvation on the part of the godless majority in the nation, and also as a hint that the full realisation of the promises was, from the prophet's point of view, in the yet distant future—we are suddenly in the 11th chapter brought to the precipice of a tremendous gulf of national apostasy and consequent judgment. But even from this deep abyss we shall emerge again in the last three chapters, where Israel's national repentance and mourning over Him whom they have sold for thirty pieces of silver, and "pierced," are depicted for us in inspired language, which reads almost like history instead of prophecy. And the end and blessed issue of Israel's national conversion and reunion with their Messiah will be, that "Jehovah will be King over all the earth: in that day shall Jehovah be One, and His Name One."1 The first brief section into which our chapter is divided, consisting of Zec_11:1-3, may be regarded as the prelude of what follows. In dramatic style the prophet announces the desolating judgment which will sweep over the whole land:

"Open thy doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour thy cedars.

"Howl, O fir-tree, for the cedar is fallen, because the goodly ones are spoiled: howl, O ye oaks of Bashan, for the strong forest is come down.

"A voice of the howling of the shepherds! for their glory is spoiled: a voice of the roaring of young lions! for the pride of Jordan is spoiled."

There is a blending of the literal with the figurative in these verses. The primary reference is very probably to

1 Zec_14:9. the physical desolation which is to befall the land in consequence of its being invaded by an enemy. The progress of the devastating scourge which is here depicted has been graphically described by another:

"Lebanon is bidden to open its doors; that is, its steep mountain paths, in order that the fire of the enemy might consume its cedars. The firs, or cypresses, are called upon to howl or lament because the cedars are fallen; for if the more excellent and valuable trees were felled without mercy, the poor firs and cypresses must needs expect a similar fate.

"From the heights of Lebanon the destructive storm sweeps down on the land of Bashan, and the oaks—the pride of the land (with their kindly shade from the burning heat)—are likewise felled by the enemy to meet the wants of the invading army, and to construct his means of offence and

defence. Thus, the wood hitherto practically inaccessible is brought low. The desolating storm sweeps from the high lands to the low lands. The very shepherds are forced to howl, because their splendour is laid waste; namely, the pasture lands in which they were wont to feed and tend their flocks in the day of peace and quiet. The conflagration extends even to the south of the land. Judah is wrapped in flames. The close thickets which fringed the Jordan river, as it ran along through the territory of the southern kingdom, are consumed by the fire. The thickets which shut in that stream so closely that its waters could not be seen till the traveller was close on its banks, which were wont to be the abode of lions and other beasts of prey in those days, are likewise described as destroyed. 'The pride of Jordan' is rendered desolate, and hence the voice of roaring of lions is heard wailing over the general ruin." But while the physical desolation of the land is that which is primarily set forth in this brief opening section of the chapter, there is also contained in it, if not directly, at least indirectly, an announcement of a destructive judgment of the people, "inasmuch as the desolation of the land also involves the destruction of the people living in it."

Most interpreters, indeed, both Jewish and Christian regard the language as figurative. Thus, the "cedars" are taken to mean the highest and noblest in the land, while the "cypresses," or "firs," represent the common people, who are commanded to "howl," because since the "cedars" have fallen there is no hope of their being spared. Certainly in Ezekiel 17:3 the family of David is represented by a lofty cedar, and in Isa_15:8 and Jer_22:6-7 the cedars of Lebanon stand as "the emblem of the glory of the Jewish State." But even though "the scientific expositor" may regard the allegorical interpretation of this particular passage as "fanciful,"1 and we ourselves would by no means wholly commit ourselves to it, it is none the less of interest that a very ancient Jewish interpretation identifies Lebanon here with the Temple "which was built with cedars from Lebanon, towering aloft upon a strong summit—the spiritual glory and eminence of Jerusalem, as the Lebanon was of the whole country." Thus Kimchi, after explaining these verses as a prophecy of the destruction of the kings of the Gentile nations, in accordance with the interpretation of the Targum of Jonathan, who paraphrases, "A voice of the howling of the shepherds because their glory is spoiled" (Zec_11:3), as: "The voice of the crying of the kings because their provinces are desolated," he says: "This interpretation is according to the Targum, but our Rabbis of blessed memory have interpreted the chapter of the desolation of the Second Temple, and Lebanon is the Holy Temple."2

1 Dr. Wright.

2 The remarkable tradition which Kimchi here quotes, is found in the Talm. Bab., Treatise Yoma (fol. 39, col. 2), and is as follows: "Our rabbis have handed down the tradition, that forty years before the destruction of the Temple, the lot (for the goat that was to be sacrificed on the Day of Atonement) did not come out on the right side, neither did the scarlet tongue (that used to be fastened between the horns of the scapegoat) turn white (as, according to tradition, it used to do, to signify that the sins of the people were forgiven), neither did the western lamp burn; the doors of the sanctuary also opened of their own accord, until R. Johanan, the son of Zacchai, reproved them. He said: 'O sanctuary, sanctuary! why dost thou trouble thyself?' R. Isaac, the son of Tavlai, says: 'Why is the Temple called Lebanon (white mountain)?' Answer: But whether literal or figurative, the passage announces a judgment which would embrace, as already stated, the land and the people, and not stop short of the holy city, or sanctuary. In the next and longest section of the chapter (Zec_11:4-14), the prophet proceeds to set forth the causes and the manner of the

judgment which in Zec_11:1-3 had been announced in general terms.

Let us first take the briefest possible glimpse at the main contents of this paragraph: “Israel, prophetically viewed as given over to judgment, is called ■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■, (tson ha-haregah),” “sheep of slaughter,” or, “of slaughtering.” As a manifestation of God’s mercy, however, an effort is to be made to save them. The prophet, representing the Lord as the True Shepherd of Israel, is commanded to feed them, and he, in obedience to the command, takes upon himself the office of the shepherd and endeavours to rescue them from the wicked shepherds who are leading them to certain destruction. The obstinacy of the majority of those whom he seeks to save, however, compels him to give up the office and leave the flock to their utter misery and ruin. Then (in order to make manifest the ingratitude, as well as the wickedness, of those on whom such care had in vain been bestowed) the shepherd asks for his wages, and they in mockery offer him thirty pieces of silver—the sum which, according to the law, was to be paid in compensation for a slave who had been killed (Exo_21:32). This money the prophet, by God’s command, throws down contemptuously in the Temple, in the presence of all the people, “to the potter,” after which he breaks the last emblem of his relation to them as shepherd. This is the briefest outline which we shall endeavour to fill in when we come to the exposition, but before doing this one or two further preliminary remarks are still necessary.

‘Because it makes white the sins of Israel.’ Rav. Zutra, the son of Tobiah, says: ‘Why is the Temple called “forest” ’ (Zec_11:2)? Answer: Because it is written, ‘The house of the forest of Lebanon’ (1Ki_7:2), etc.”

(1) As just stated, the prophet must be viewed as acting in this chapter not in his own person, but, in a very special sense, as the representative of God. This is clear from such expressions as, “I cut off three shepherds in one month” (Zec_11:8), “that I might break my covenant which I have made with all the peoples” (Zec_11:10), etc.; which neither Zechariah nor any other prophet did, or could do, but the Lord only.

Hengstenberg, Pusey, and others think that the prophet acts here directly as the type, or representative, of the Angel of Jehovah or the Messiah; but to this most modern commentators object, on the ground that, while in the visions recorded in the first part of Zechariah the Angel of Jehovah is indeed spoken of as an actor, “no intimation whatever is given in this chapter that the Angel of Jehovah is to be regarded as the doer of the things which are here related, and we have no right to assume that the prophecy is a continuation of the visions in the earlier part of this book.” But it practically comes to much the same thing, whether we regard the prophet as representing in his actions as shepherd, Jehovah, or more directly the Messiah, for the coming of the Messiah is often spoken of in the Old Testament as the coming of Jehovah. In Ezekiel 34:1-31, for instance, Jehovah Himself is represented, in His capacity as the true Shepherd of Israel, as seeking, saving, strengthening, healing, and satisfying His people; but as we read on in that chapter we become aware that it is not Jehovah directly who is going to do all this, but mediately through the Messiah. “And I will set them up one shepherd over them, and He shall feed them, even My servant David; He shall feed them, and He shall be their shepherd”—namely, the true David, the Messiah, as the Jews themselves have always rightly interpreted this passage. And so it is always: in all His relations and dealings with men, both in mercy and in judgment, it is God in Christ who acts. As a matter of fact, this prophecy (as is admitted by one who is not inclined to see many references to

Christ in the Book of Zechariah) “is one of a peculiarly Messianic character, and (as we shall see more clearly farther on) what Jehovah is said here to perform was done in very deed by the Messiah.”

(2) The second preliminary question to be settled is the time to which this prophecy, and more especially the symbolical action described in Zec_11:7-14, is to be referred.

Two or three Jewish commentators, who are influenced in their interpretations by their hostility to Christianity, and some of the “modern” rationalistic Christian theologians, to whom Christ and the New Testament are non-existent, or of no account in their interpretations of the Old Testament, refer it to some event, or events, which they imagine occurred in the time of the First Temple before the Babylonian Exile.1 A full and lengthy refutation of this view is, however, supplied by another Jewish commentator, namely, Abarbanel. One argument of his is, of itself, quite sufficient.

“To what purpose,” he asks, “should God show the prophet past events, which he had seen with his own eyes and with the eyes of his father; and what necessity was there to make known to him the captivity of the tribes and the desolation of the first house, which had occurred but a short time before; and (above all) to do this in parables, which are only employed in reference to the future, to make events known before they happen? But with regard to the past, information is not conveyed in parables. It is not possible to suppose that God would communicate a plain matter of recent history in obscure symbols, and, therefore, the symbolical representation cannot refer to the past, and must predict what was to happen during the time of the Second Temple.”2

1 I may quote as an instance, Professor Driver, who says that this scripture “is to be interpreted in all probability, not as a prediction, but as a symbolical description of events which had happened recently when the prophet wrote.”

2 It is of interest to observe that as far as the “Jewish interpretation” is concerned, not only Abarbanel, but the Talmud (both the Jerusalem and the Babylonian), Joseph Ben Gorion (Breithaupt’s edition, p. 889), Aben Ezra, Abraham “the Levite,” Alshech, and even R. Isaac of Troki in his polemical work against Christianity—all agree with Christians in applying this prophecy to the time of the Second Temple. But even among those who rightly apply this prophecy to the time of the Second Temple, there is still a difference of opinion. According to some, the whole of the dealings of God with Israel during the time of the Second Temple are alluded to. This is the view of most of the Jewish interpreters and of eminent Christian commentators. Thus, according to Calvin, “the Lord discharged the duties of a shepherd by means of all His faithful servants in the time of the Second Temple, but most perfectly of all by Christ”; and Koehler sees in this scripture “a representation of the mediatorial work in the plan of salvation, of which Daniel was the first representative, and which was afterwards exhibited on the one hand by Haggai and Zechariah, and on the other hand by Zerubbabel and his successors as the civil rulers of Israel, and by Joshua and those priests who resumed the duties of their office along with him.” But the ground on which this view is chiefly based—namely, that because the prophecy in chaps. 9. and 10. embraces the whole period of the Second Temple, from Alexander the Great to the coming of Christ, and even merging into the time of the end—therefore, this one in chap. 11. must be equally comprehensive, and start from the same historical point of time, is, to say the least, a very uncertain one. For my own part, I believe that the more carefully we look into this solemn scripture, the more manifest it becomes that the state of things which it prophetically depicts answers exactly

to the condition of the Jewish nation immediately preceding the final catastrophe at the destruction of the Second Temple, and the dissolution of the Jewish polity by the Romans, and does not correspond to their condition and experience during the whole, or even greater part, of their history after the partial restoration from Babylon. For this, and other reasons which for lack of space I cannot enter here, I must confess myself on the side of those who view Zechariah 11:1-17 as restricted to the principal object of the preceding great prophecy (Zechariah 9:1-17 and Zechariah 10:1-12), namely, the prediction concerning the coming of the Messiah (Zec_9:9-10), which is in Zechariah 11:1-17 presented from another point of view, in order that the meaning may be fully understood, and "not be so perverted by a one-sided and worldly interpretation as to become pernicious instead of salutary";1 or, in other words, that this prophecy refers particularly to the office of shepherd which was to be filled by the Messiah, and to His blessed labours and experience in seeking to save the "lost sheep of the house of Israel."

Let us now examine the scripture itself. There is discussion among commentators whether the phrase ■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■, tson ha-haregah—"sheep of slaughter," describes the Jewish nation as a flock which is already being slaughtered, or as one which is marked out for slaughter at a future time. There is no doubt that the condition of the people was deplorable enough in the time of the prophet, for already in the 10th chapter he describes them as those who "go their way (or 'wander') like sheep," and "are 'afflicted' (or 'oppressed') because there is no shepherd."2

Already they were a prey to false shepherds, and subject to the abuse and oppression of their own unfaithful civil and religious rulers and foreign tyrants; but, as may be gathered from the introductory remarks, I regard it as a special prophetic designation of the people during the time to which this prophecy has particular reference when it became more terribly and literally true.

Zec_11:5 illustrates the truth of the designation in Zec_11:4. They may, indeed, be described as sheep of slaughter, for "their possessors (literally, 'buyers') slay (or 'strangle') them, and hold themselves not guilty; and they that sell them say, Blessed be Jehovah, for I am rich." The buyers and sellers are those into whose hands the nation is delivered, and who do with them as they please, namely, the Gentile powers. They are represented as thinking themselves "not guilty" in all their cruel actions in relation to the Jewish people. This reminds us of

1 Hengstenberg.

2 Zec_10:2.

Jer_50:6-7, which was most probably before the mind of Zechariah. "My people hath been lost sheep: their shepherds have caused them to go astray: . . . all that found them have devoured them: and their adversaries say we offend not (are 'not guilty'1), because they have sinned against Jehovah, the habitation of justice, Jehovah, the hope of their fathers."

But, though it is true that Israel on account of their most terrible sins have been handed over by God as a righteous punishment into the hands of the Gentile world-powers, they are not held innocent for their cruel deeds towards them. This we see from the same 5oth chapter of Jeremiah, where God says: "Israel is a scattered sheep; the lions (the Gentile world-powers who are likened to ferocious wild beasts) have driven him away: first, the king of Assyria hath devoured him; and last this Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon hath broken his bones. Therefore thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I will punish the king of Babylon and his land, as I have punished

the king of Assyria”2 And what God did to Assyria and Babylon, He did also to Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome, and still will do to nations and individuals whom He uses as a scourge against His own people, for His word in another part of Jeremiah still holds true: “Therefore all they that devour thee shall be devoured; and all thine adversaries, every one of them, shall go into captivity; and they that spoil thee shall be a spoil; and all they that prey upon thee will I give for a prey.”3 But to return more directly to our scripture. Not only will they be thus abused and “slain” by Gentile oppressors, but “their own shepherds,” by which we must understand their own civil and religious rulers, those who ought to have fed and defended them—“pity them not”4—thus proving themselves false shepherds, who only sought their own, and were the chief cause of the sheep becoming a prey.

1 ■■■■■■■ ■■■—the same verb as in Zec_11:5.

2 Jer_50:17-18.

3 Jer_30:16.

4 ■■■■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■■■—yomar lo-yachmol—the verbs “sayeth” and “hath no pity” are singular—an emphatic mode of expression, by which each individual is represented as doing or not doing the action of the verb.

There is a sad gradation in the wretchedness of the people thus given over to judgment, as described in Zec_11:5-6. First, the Gentile nations pity them not, but buy and sell and slay them as “sheep of slaughter.” Secondly, their own shepherds, from whom something different might have been expected, have no compassion for them; and thirdly, and most terrible of all, “I will no more pity the inhabitants of the land, saith Jehovah,” for long-continued obduracy exhausts even the patience of Jehovah; and there comes a time in the history of nations and of individuals when the long-suffering God has to say “there is no more remedy” (or “healing”1), and His righteous anger has to manifest itself in judgment. In the solemn words of Zec_11:6 we have a forecast of what would take place after the rejection of the Good Shepherd, and the care and protection of God over His people would be withdrawn. God’s anger will show itself, not only in a negative manner (“I will no more pity”), but also in a positive way.

“And, lo” (or “behold”), this is God’s way of calling attention to something great which He is going to do either with nations or individuals—“I will deliver the men every one into the hands of his neighbour, and into the hand of his king: and they shall smite (literally, ‘break down,’ i.e., lay waste) the land”—solemn and awful words which well describe in advance the confusion, captious strife, hatred, and mutual destruction, which followed soon after the rejection of our Lord Jesus, their true Messiah and Shepherd, the detailed accounts of which may be read in Josephus, and even in the Talmud. A parallel passage is found in Jer_19:9, which was fulfilled in the siege of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, and the destruction of the First Temple: “And I will cause them to eat the flesh of their sons and the flesh of their daughters, and they shall eat every one the flesh of his friend in the siege and in the straitness, wherewith their enemies, and they that seek their lives, shall straiten them”—where

1 2Ch_36:16 also a twofold cause of their ruin is given, namely, strife among themselves, which is heightened by sufferings and oppression inflicted by the foe without. Contention within, and the enemy without, are not only mentioned in the passage just quoted from Jeremiah, but they are

linked together by Zechariah himself in Zec_8:10, as the two chief methods of punishment employed by God for the chastisement of His people. “There was no peace to him that went out or came in because of the adversary, and I set all men every one against his neighbour”—“which miserable state of things existed before the Babylonian Captivity and is represented in Zechariah 11:1-17 as returning with still greater force on account of the base ingratitude and relapse into apostasy on the part of the people.”1 The phrase, “into the hand of his king,” must be understood as referring to the king of “his,” i.e., Judah’s own choice. That it is of a foreign oppressor, and not of a native ruler, that the prophecy speaks, is evident, among other things, from the fact that the Jews had no king at the time of Zechariah, and that this prophet never (either in the first or second half of the book), even in his descriptions of the future, speaks of any king, with the exception of the Messiah.

When, on that fateful eve of the Passover, Pilate brought Jesus out before the Jews, and half in mockery said, “Behold your king,” they cried, “Away with him, crucify him!” and when he again appealed, “Shall I crucify your king?” the chief priests, who constituted themselves the leaders of the people, answered: “We have no king but Cæsar!” and, having thus deliberately made this terrible choice, they were “delivered” into Cæsar’s hand; and soon after the Roman armies, under Vespasian and Titus, laid waste the land and destroyed the people. How terrible was the retribution. “If we let this man thus alone,” said the chief priests and Pharisees in council, “all men will believe on him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.” So they decided to carry

1 Hengstenberg. out the wicked counsel of Caiaphas, who said: “It is expedient for you that one man die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not,” and handed Him over to the Romans. But the very thing they feared, and on account of which they decided on committing the great national crime of betraying their Kinsman-Redeemer into the hands of the Gentiles, came upon them, for these very Romans did come, “and take away both their place and their nation.”

But, terrible as is the punishment which came upon the Jewish nation in consequence of their rejection of the Good Shepherd, we must beware of wrong conclusions, and of perverting Scripture by false interpretation. Thus, Hengstenberg, Pusey, and other commentators—who are great literalists as far as the threatenings and curses are concerned in applying them to the Jewish people, but “spiritualise” and misapply all the promises—lay great stress on the last words of Zec_11:6, “I will not deliver them,” in proof that the captivity of the Jewish nation brought about by the Romans “shall be without remedy or end.” Pusey, for instance, quotes with great approval the words of Jerome: “Hear, O Jew, who holdest out to thyself hopes most vain, and hearest not the Lord strongly asserting, ‘I will not deliver them out of their hands,’ that thy captivity among the Romans shall have no end.” But this is a one-sided perversion of the truth. As far as the generation which is contemplated in this prophecy is concerned, there was “no remedy,” or “deliverance,” as was the case also with the generation of the time of the first Captivity and the destruction of the Temple by the Babylonians, of which similar expressions are used; and as is the case in every generation with those who prove themselves obdurate, and persistently harden their hearts and refuse God’s gracious call: “Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways: for why will ye die, O house of Israel.”

But, as far as the purpose of God with the Jewish nation is concerned, it ever abides unchanged and unalterable, for the unchangeable God remains true and faithful, though all men prove liars. This same prophet, who in Zechariah 11:1-17 predicts Israel's rejection of the Good Shepherd, and their consequent rejection of God for a time, graphically describes in the last three chapters, which deal with the last events of this age, Israel's restoration and conversion when the spirit of grace and of supplication shall be poured upon them, and they shall bitterly lament and repent of their great national sin, and look upon Him whom they have pierced. And this is in accord also with the clear statements of the New Testament, which tells us that "all Israel shall be saved, even as it is written: There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is My covenant unto them when I shall take away their sins." And even in the generation of which the terrible words are written, "I will not deliver them out of their hands," there were "the poor of the flock" (Zec_11:7, Zec_11:11) who did "give heed" and "knew the word of Jehovah," who (as we shall see) are none other than the remnant, according to the election of grace, which, blessed be God! has never been wanting even in the darkest period of Israel's history.

We proceed to what may be said to constitute the heart of this remarkable prophecy, namely, the actual "feeding," or shepherding, of the flock which, through their own obstinacy, became "the flock of slaughter."

"So I fed the flock of slaughter, verily the poor of the flock. And I took unto me two staves: the one I called Beauty, and the other I called Bands, and I fed the flock. And I cut off the three shepherds in one month; for my soul was weary of them, and their soul also loathed me. Then said I, I will not feed you: that that dieth, let it die; and that that is to be cut off, let it be cut off; and let them which are left eat every one the flesh of another. And I took my staff Beauty, and cut it asunder, that I might break my covenant which I had made with all the peoples. And it was broken in that day; and thus the poor of the flock that gave heed unto me knew that it was the word of the Lord. And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my hire; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my hire thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter, the goodly price that I was prised at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them unto the potter, in the house of the Lord. Then I cut asunder mine other staff, even Bands, that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel" (Zec_11:7-14).

We may pause for a moment to ask whether the symbolical transaction which is here described was an inward or outward one. Most of the Jewish commentators take the latter view. Thus Abarbanel, for instance, says: "God commanded the prophet to perform a real action, and in a waking state, which action was to be an intimation and a sign of that which was to happen in God's dealings with Israel," and adds: "By attending to the affairs of the prophets thou mayest know that God, blessed be He, sometimes commanded them to perform real actions, and in a waking state, and afterwards explained to them the reason of the command according to the sign that was in them.1 . . . But sometimes the blessed God commanded the prophets to do things foreign to their character, and unnecessary for them to do; which things were also to be a sign and a type of coming events, and did not expound the meaning, because He knew that the thing itself could be understood" (as, for instance, Isa_8:1-2; Eze_4:1-2, Eze_5:1). But, as has been observed, the narrative in this chapter differs in some respects from the symbolical actions of the prophets and from Zechariah's own visions.

“The symbolical actions of the prophets are actions of their own: this involves acts which it would be impossible to represent, except as a sort of drama. Such are the very central points, the feeding of the flock, which yet are intelligent men who understand God’s doings: the cutting off of the three shepherds; the asking for the price; the unworthy price offered; the casting it aside. It differs 1 He quotes Isa_20:2; Isa_8:4; Jer_13:1, etc., and Ezekiel as examples. from Zechariah’s own visions, in that they are for the most part exhibited to the eye, and Zechariah’s own part is simply to inquire their meaning and to learn it, and to receive further revelation. In one case only (Zec_3:5) he himself interposes in the action of the vision; but this, too, as asking that it might be done, not as himself doing it. Here (in Zechariah 11:1-17) he is himself the actor, yet as representing Another, Who alone could cut off shepherds, abandon the people to mutual destruction, annulling the covenant which He had made.”1 Maimonides, then, seems to say rightly: “This, ‘I fed the flock of the slaughter,’ to the end of the narrative, where he is said to have asked for his hire, to have received it, and to have cast it into the Temple, to the treasurer—all this Zechariah saw in prophetic vision. For the command which he received, and the act which he is said to have done, took place in prophetic vision or dream. This,” he adds, “is beyond controversy, as all know who are able to distinguish the possible from the impossible.”

Let us bear in mind also that, as has been well observed by an old writer, the actions of the prophets are not always to be understood as actions, but as predictions—as, for instance, when God commands Isaiah to “make the heart of the people fat and their ears heavy”;2 or when He says that He appointed Jeremiah over the nations, to root out, and to break down, and to destroy, and to over throw, and to build, and to plant“;3 or when He commanded the same prophet to cause the nations to drink the cup whereby they should be bereft of their senses.4 Neither Isaiah nor Jeremiah actually did this, but foretold in advance in this manner what would be. So it is here. But to proceed to the exposition. And, first, I will deal with what I believe to be a parenthetical sentence in Zec_11:7, which occurs again in Zechariah 11:11, and which has greatly puzzled the commentators, and of which all sorts of explanations have been given: ”So I fed,” we

1 Pusey.

2 Isa_6:10.

3 Jer_1:10.

4 Jer_25:15-27. read, “the sheep of slaughter”; after which there follow the three Hebrew words, ■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■ ■■■■■, lachen aniyye hatson, which the Authorised Version has rendered, “Even you, O poor of the flock”; and the Revised Version, “Verily, the poor of the flock”; and the explanation usually given is that “the poor of the flock” is practically only another name for “the sheep of slaughter.” But this is very unsatisfactory, for, first, the primary and natural meaning of the adverb ■■■■■, lachen, is not “even” or “verily,” but “therefore”; and secondly, the designation “aniyye ha-am” “the poor of the people,” or, as the word also means, “the needy,” “the weak,” “the afflicted,” is almost invariably used in the Hebrew Bible of the pious or godly in the nation who are persecuted and oppressed by the godless—of those whom the wicked in his pride “hotly pursue,” or persecute, but who, knowing God to be their refuge, can look up to Him and say: “But I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinketh upon me.”1

Certainly in Zec_11:11 the “aniyyeh hatson” who “observed” the prophet, and knew that it was the word of Jehovah, must refer to the God-fearing portion of the nation. In brief, I believe that the sentence should be rendered, “therefore (on this account) the poor of the flock,”2 and that in these three words in the Hebrew there is summed up the result, or blessed fruit of the labours of the Good Shepherd. Not altogether in vain, or fruitless, would His self-sacrificing effort to save the lost sheep of the House of Israel prove. The mass would indeed prove obstinate,

1 Compare Psa_10:2-9; Psa_14:6; Psa_53:6; Psa_35:10; Psa_37:14; Psa_40:17; Psa_70:5; Psa_72:4; Psa_86:1; Psa_109:16-22; Isa_10:2; Isa_14:32; Isa_41:17; and many other places where ■■■■■, ani, is used.

2 The LXX has evidently made a great blunder over these sentences, for in Zec_11:7 it has for ■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■—ε■ς τ■ν Χαναανα■τιν, “in the land of Chanaan” (or Canaan), leaving out the word for “sheep” or “flock” altogether; and in Zec_11:11 it has got ο■ Χαναναι■οι—the Canaanites, or “merchants.” And yet some modern scholars adopt these evident misreadings as the basis of emendations of their own of the Hebrew text—as, for instance, Sir George Adam Smith, who has translated the sentence in Zec_11:7, “for the sheep merchants,” and in Zec_11:11, “the dealers of the sheep.” But the Hebrew text in this place needs no emendation or alteration when properly understood. and by rejecting Him choose death rather than life, and thus experience the truth of the awful designation, tson ha-haregah, “sheep of slaughter”; but, as has been the case even in the very darkest periods of Israel’s history, God would leave in the midst of them “an afflicted and poor people,” who would trust in the Name of Jehovah,1 the remnant according to the election of grace, in and through whom the purposes of God would be carried forward. The New Testament parallel and ultimate fulfilment is in Joh_1:11, “He came unto His own, and they that were His received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He the right (or ‘power’) to become children of God, even to them that believe in His Name.”

“The elect are the end of all God’s dispensations,” observes another writer. “He fed all; yet the fruit of His feeding, His toils, His death, the travail of His soul, was in those only who are saved. So also the apostle says: ‘Therefore, I endure all things for the elects’ sake, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.’ He fed all; but the poor of the flock alone, those who were despised of men because they would not follow the pride of the high priests and scribes and Pharisees, believed on Him.” On entering his office as shepherd, the prophet “took two staves.” The Eastern shepherd, to quote from Dr. Thomson’s The Land and the Book, “invariably carries a staff or rod with him when he goes forth to feed his flock. It is often bent, or hooked, at one end, which gave rise to the shepherd’s crook in the hand of the Christian bishop. With this staff he rules and guides the flock to their green pastures, and defends them from their enemies. With it, also, he corrects them when disobedient, and brings them back when wandering. This staff is associated as inseparably with the shepherd as the goad is with the ploughman.” That on certain occasions, at any rate, it was customary for the shepherd to have not only one but two staves—one

1 Zep_3:12. for keeping off wild beasts and thieves, and the other for feeding the flock—is manifest from the reference so familiar to us in Psalms 23:1-6 : “Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me.” The names of the staves, like everything else in this symbolical transaction, were

significant. One he called ■■■■■, noam, which means “beauty,” “pleasantness,” “favour”—and had reference, as we see from Zec_11:10, to the grace and loving-kindness of God in keeping off their enemies from destroying them; and the other he called ■■■■■■■■, ■hobhlim, “bands,” or literally “binders,” and symbolised, as we see from Zec_11:14, that part of the shepherd’s rule by which the sheep were kept united among themselves as one flock. “And so” (thus equipped), he says again at the end of Zec_11:7, “I fed the flock.”

There is, perhaps, not another scripture in the Old Testament which has been more variously interpreted than the first part of Zec_11:8, “And I cut off the three shepherds in one month.” Who are the three shepherds, and what are we to understand by the expression, “in one month”? The following are a few out of the many answers which have been given to these questions: (1) Von Hoffmann, Koehler, Keil, Dr. C. H. H. Wright, W. H. Lowe, and others understand by the three shepherds Gentile rulers, in whose power the Jews were, and who ought to have acted to them as “shepherds”; but they differ as to who these rulers were, and also in their interpretation of the “one month.” Thus, Von Hoffmann identifies the three shepherds with three empires, namely, the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, and the Macedonian. According to him the “one month” signifies a prophetic period of thirty prophetic days, each of seven literal years duration. This would be equivalent to 210 years. The three empires named actually lasted 215 years, reckoning from the Babylonian Captivity to the death of Alexander the Great; but the slight discrepancy of five years is considered of little consequence in reckoning sabbatic periods. The chief objection to this interpretation is that it cannot be shown that “a day” is ever used in the prophetic Scriptures to represent seven years. His reference to Dan_9:24, in support of his theory, does not apply, for there the “seventy weeks” (or “seventy sevens”) are seventy weeks of years, i.e., 490 years, and on that principle the “one month” could only signify thirty years. “Moreover,” as Wright observes, “it is not in accordance with fact, or with Daniel’s prophecy in chap. 8., to view the death of Alexander as the destruction of the Macedonian empire, which continued to exist, though no longer as a united empire, under the rule of the Diadochi, or successors of Alexander.”

Koehler, Kliefoth, and Keil also identify the three shepherds with the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, and Macedonian empires; but, according to them, the only way in which the expression “in one month” can be symbolically interpreted is by dividing the month as a period of thirty days into three times ten days, according to the number of the shepherds, and taking each ten days as the time employed in the destruction of a shepherd. “Ten is the number of the completion or the perfection of any earthly act or occurrence. If, therefore, each shepherd were destroyed in ten days, and the destruction of the three was executed in a month, i.e., within a space of three times ten days following one another, the fact is indicated, on the one hand, that the destruction of each of these shepherds followed directly upon that of the other; and, on the other hand, that this took place after the full time allotted for his rule had passed away.” I agree with another writer that this explanation as to what is meant by the “one month” appears highly artificial.

Dr. Wright explains the “one month” on the year-day principle (“each day for a year,” Eze_4:6), and identifies the thirty years with the period “between B.C. 172, when Antiochus Epiphanes desecrated the Temple, and B.C. 141, when the three alien shepherds, Antiochus Epiphanes, Antiochus Eupator, and Demetrius I. were cut off, and the last trace of Syrian supremacy was removed by the expulsion of the Syrian garrison from its fortress in Jerusalem.” But this is in accord with his general interpretation of the chapter (as is the case also with all the others who

seek to identify the shepherds with Gentile rulers or kingdoms); by which also the “shepherds” in Zec_11:5, and the solemn words of judgment in Zec_11:6, are made to apply, not to the Jews, but to their Gentile oppressors—a view which seems to me untenable; for first, there is no mention or reference to the Gentiles in the announcement of the devastating judgment in Zechariah 11:1-3, which I regard as the prelude to the whole prophecy, but only to the borders of the promised land from the north to the south.

Secondly, the awful condition of things depicted in Zec_11:6 is just that which, according to Zec_11:9 and Zec_11:11, is to happen to “the sheep of slaughter” after their rejection of the Good Shepherd; and thirdly, the very usage of the term “shepherds” precludes, it seems to me, the interpretation which makes it to mean Gentile tyrants, or oppressors—its almost exclusive application, when used in the Hebrew Bible in its figurative sense in relation to a flock of men, being to native Israelitish rulers or leaders, whether civil or religious,1 most of whom, alas! proved themselves to be only false shepherds without any heart for the sheep.

(2) Maurer, Hitzig, Ewald, Bleek, Bunsen, S. Davidson, and other writers have fastened upon this passage as containing, according to them, “one of the clearest proofs” of the pre-exilic authorship of the second part of Zechariah, inasmuch as the “three shepherds” are supposed to refer to three kings of the northern or ten-tribed kingdom of Israel who were “cut off in one month” (which they take

1 The only exception is Isa_44:28, where God says of Cyrus, “He is My shepherd”; but there he is so called because he is raised up to play the role, not of an oppressor of Israel, but as performing God’s pleasure, even saying to Jerusalem she shall be built, and to the Temple, “Thy foundations shall be laid.” in its literal significance), and, therefore, contend that this prophecy must have been written before the destruction of that kingdom by the Assyrians in 721 B.C., and not, as is generally accepted, before the restoration from Babylon. The historical event, or events, to which our passage is made by these writers to refer, is 2Ki_15:8-14, where we read of the assassination of Zechariah, son of Jeroboam II., by Shallum, who very shortly was himself smitten by Menahem. But we need only look into this passage in 2 Kings to see the baselessness of this interpretation and of the theory based upon it. Shallum, who murdered Zechariah, himself reigned “a full month” before he was in turn murdered by Menahem, who was not killed at all, but reigned ten years, and was succeeded by his son Pekahiah. Maurer, Ewald, Bunsen, and S. Davidson, in support of this theory, have invented “a third unknown usurper,” who succeeded Zechariah for a very brief period before Shallum actually reigned, or “possibly on the other side of the Jordan,” and who also met with a violent end; but such inventions, of which history knows nothing, and for which there is no place in the historical narrative in the Scriptures, are not worthy to be refuted.1

(3) There remains one other explanation which, though not altogether free from difficulties, seems to me the correct one, namely, that the prophet is speaking, not of three individuals, but of three orders, or classes, of shepherds. But even among those holding this view there have been

1 I may mention a few other interpretations, or rather guesses and conjectures, respecting the three shepherds. Abarbanel explains them to mean the three Maccabees—Judas, Jonathan, and Simon; Kimchi refers them to Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, and Zedekiah; Jerome (following the Talmud), to Moses, Aaron, and Miriam; Grotius, to David, Adonijah, and Joab; Burger, to Eli and his two sons, or to Samuel and his two sons; and Kalmet explains them of the three Roman

emperors—Galba, Otho, and Vitellius. Another theory contended for is that the three shepherds are John, Simon, and Eleazer, the three desperate leaders of the Jewish factions in the last struggle against Rome; but, as a matter of fact, John of Gischala and Simon Bar Giora were taken alive to Rome, and Simon was slain in Rome during the triumphal procession of Vespasian and Titus about three years after the destruction of the Temple; so that they certainly could not be the three shepherds who were to be “cut off in one month.” differences of opinion. Some, among them Lightfoot, thought the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes are referred to; others have imagined that the civil, ecclesiastical, and military authorities are meant. But I agree with Hengstenberg, that if it may be regarded as certain that the three shepherds represent the three classes of shepherds existing in the theocracy—in other words, the leaders of the nation—then “Zechariah could not possibly have thought of any others than the civil authorities (the rulers), the priests, and the prophets,” who are frequently spoken of in the earlier scriptures as the “shepherds,” or leaders of the people, and to whose misguidance is attributed the ruin of the nation.1

“The only difficulty in connection with this view is to explain the fact that the prophetical order should be introduced as one of the three, seeing that this had been extinct for a long time before the period of fulfilment. We reply that, in accordance with the essential character of prophecy, the prophet represents the future by means of the analogous circumstances of his own time. Just as the order of the civil shepherds continued to exist though the kings had ceased to reign, so did the order of prophets continue, so far as everything essential was concerned, even after the suspension of the gift of prophecy. The vocation of the prophet was to make known to the people the word and will of God (Jer_18:18). Before the completion of the canon this was done by means of revelations under the guidance of the Spirit of God, and the application of the results to the peculiar circumstances of the age. The place of the prophets was occupied by the scribes, on whom, according to the Book of Ecclesiasticus (Sir 39:1-35), the Lord richly bestowed the spirit of understanding, who studied the wisdom of the ancients, investigated the prophets, delivered instruction and counsel, and who were noted for wise sayings. They stood in the same relation to the prophets of the Old Testament, as the enlightened teachers of the Christian Church to the prophets of the New. The three constituent elements of 1 Comp. Jer_2:8-26, Jer_18:18. the Jewish Sanhedrim answer to the three shepherds mentioned here, namely, the leading priests, the scribes, the elders, ■ρχιερε■ς γραμματε■ς, πρεσβ■τεροι (Mat_26:3).”

It is interesting to note that among Christian interpreters this is the oldest view. Thus, Theodoret1 says: “He speaks of the kings of the Jews, and prophets, and priests; for by the three orders they were shepherded”; and Jerome,2 who, himself following the Talmud, interprets the three shepherds of Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, says: “I have read in someone’s commentary that the shepherds cut off in the indignation of the Lord are to be understood of priests, and false prophets, and kings of the Jews, who, after the Passion of Christ, were all cut off in one time.” So also Cyril,3 who says: “The three shepherds were, I deem, those who exercised the legal priesthood, and those appointed judges of the people, and the interpreters of Scripture, i.e., lawyers”; who, as shown above in the quotation from Hengstenberg, really took, at the time of Christ, the place of the prophets. As will have been already inferred, I do not understand the expression “in one month” in a literal sense, but as a period of time—long, when compared with that which might be figuratively expressed by “one day,” as in Zec_3:9; but brief, as contrasted with other periods of time. In short, it might be said to embrace the period during which our Lord Jesus “sought by repeated efforts,

but without avail, to deliver the lost sheep of the house of Israel from the spiritual tyranny of its blind and corrupt guides."

Anyhow, this is an historic fact, that it was consequent on the rejection of the Messiah, the Good Shepherd, that the Jewish polity was broken up, and that since then, and now for "many days," the children of Israel have been not only without a king and without a prince, but also without a prophet and without a priest. On the other hand, these three offices were, on the testimony of the prophets, to be 1 Died in 420 A. D.

2 423-457 A. D.

3 Died 444 A. D. united in the person of the Messiah, and have always in the consciousness of the Church been associated with Christ. If Israel had received Him, they would have found in Him their Prophet, Priest, and King; they might even, as Pusey suggests, "have been held under Him" (i.e., by human representatives of Him); but having rejected Him, these three offices, which, originally appointed by God, were mediatorial in their character, and were held on earth by those who were meant to represent and foreshadow Him who is the "One Mediator between God and man"—were "cut off," that is, abolished, as an outward sign that through their rejection of Christ their relations with God were broken off. The second half of Zec_11:9 describes the rupture between the Good Shepherd and the people as a whole, including those who ought to have acted as shepherds, but only misled and devoured the flock. It also, it seems to me, indicates the reason why "the three shepherds" were cut off.

Commentators generally view the cutting off of the three shepherds "as an act of God's loving-kindness toward the sheep of His pasture,"1 and as part of the beneficent care of the Good Shepherd for the flock. So it might have been, if delivered from their false shepherds, the people as a whole had turned to Him Who was sent to them of God to seek and to save, and Who in His one person combined the offices of Prophet, Priest, and King. But as not only the leaders, both civil and religious, but the people in general, took up more and more an attitude of opposition and hostility toward Him, the "cutting off" of the three "shepherds," or the abolition of the three mediatorial offices, which is the outward sign of the suspension of God's covenant relationship with them, must certainly be regarded also as an act of judgment on the nation as a whole.

And, if it be asked, what other expression of the beneficent activity of the Good Shepherd on behalf of the

1 Wright. sheep of slaughter do we find in this prophecy, if the cutting off of the shepherds is not to be regarded as an effort on His part for the deliverance of the flock, my answer is, that a full, though compressed, summary of the beneficent character of the activities of the Good Shepherd is given in Zec_11:8. There we see the Shepherd fully equipped with the two staves of Beauty (or "Favour"), and "Bands" (or "Binders"), feeding the flock. "So I fed the flock"; and in that blessed shepherding everything was included—protection and deliverance from without, and safety, guidance, and provision within. Oh! that my people had hearkened unto His voice, and that Israel had walked in His ways! Then would it, indeed, have been well with them. Not only would He soon have subdued their enemies and turned His hand in judgment against their adversaries, but their peace should have been as a river, and their righteousness as the waves of the sea. But the frequent complaint of God of the attitude of His stiff-necked people in the time of the prophets,

culminated in their spirit of opposition and hostility to Him, Who was the last and greatest of the prophets, and the very image of God. “My people hearkened not to My voice; Israel would none of Me. So I let them go (or ‘sent them forth’) after the stubbornness of their heart, that they might walk in their own counsels.”1

This, in brief, is the meaning of Zec_11:8-9, “And my soul was wearied (lit., ‘was shortened,’ i.e., became impatient)2 with them.” Oh! how much stubborn disobedience on the part of the flock is presupposed in this complaint on the part of the shepherd, “And their soul also loathed (■■■■■, bachal—a word expressive of intense disgust) me”: sad and solemn words which in their fulness were fulfilled in the intense loathing which the leaders of the Jewish nation manifested to Jesus of Nazareth. The terrible consequence was, that even the long- 1 Psa_81:12-16; Isa_48:18.

2 The expression ■■■■■ ■■■■■■■ is the same as in Num_21:4, where it is rendered in the A.V., “The soul of the people was much discouraged.” suffering of God as manifested in Christ was exhausted; “Then said I, I will not feed you: that which dieth, let it die; and that which perisheth (or ‘is cut off’), let it perish; and those that remain, let each one eat the flesh of another”—all which became terribly and literally true when, after the rejection of the Good Shepherd, the terrible calamities of war, famine, pestilence, intestine strife, and mutual destruction overtook the poor deluded people. The first outward visible sign of the rupture between the Shepherd and the sheep was the breaking of one of the staves: “And I took My staff ‘Beauty’ (or ‘Favour’) and cut it asunder, that I might break My covenant which I had made with all the peoples.” This staff was called ■■■■■, noam—“Beauty,” or “Pleasantness,” or “Favour”; because, as already said above, it was the symbol of God’s protection over them in keeping off the nations from attacking them from without. The covenant which He says He will break is not the covenant which He made with the people. The word for people in the original is in the plural, and refers to the Gentile nations, and the covenant is that which God, so to say, made with the Gentile peoples on their behalf. When Israel was in God’s favour and under His gracious protection, then He caused even their enemies to be at peace with them; and when the Gentile nations gathered against them ready to devour, the Shepherd of Israel soon broke the arm of their strength and prevented them doing harm to His people. But when He ceased to be their defence, then they became a ready prey to the Gentile world-powers, which are well symbolised in the Bible by wild beasts—“The boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast of the field doth devour it.”

Again, however, it is declared in the same word of prophecy that restored and converted Israel will be taken under the special protection of God, and a covenant will be made by Him on their behalf, not only with the nations, but with the beasts of the field. “In that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the land, and will make them to lie down safely. And I will betroth thee unto Me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto Me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto Me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know that I am the Lord.”1

We proceed to Zec_11:11, “And it was broken (namely, ‘the covenant’) in that day; and thus the poor of the flock that watched Me (or ‘gave heed unto Me’) knew that it was the word of Jehovah.” The manifest proof that the covenant which the Shepherd of Israel had made with the nations on Israel’s behalf was broken, served as a demonstration to the poor of the flock that what had been

foretold was indeed the Word of God. The point of time in the expression “in that day” is prophetic from the prophet’s point of view, and refers to the time and events following the breaking off of the relations between the True Shepherd, whom the prophet represented, and the flock. It is true that he speaks of the breaking of the covenant with the nations on Israel’s behalf as past, because in the vision which passed before his mind the things described had actually occurred. “If the prophecy,” remarks Hengstenberg, “had been couched in literal terms, instead of being clothed in symbol, it would have run thus: When, therefore, My covenant, or treaty, with the nations is brought to an end, those who fear Me will discern in the fulfilment the divine character of this sentence of Mine upon Israel.” By the ■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■, aniyye hatson—“the poor of the flock”—we can understand (as already explained) nothing else than the believing remnant who were saved out of the “flock of slaughter.” They are described as “Hashshomerim othi” rendered “that waited upon Me,” in the Authorised Version; and, “they that gave heed unto Me,” in the Revised Version. Literally, it is those that “watched with

1 Hos_2:18-20.

Me,” or, “those that observed Me”—that is, “kept their eyes constantly fixed on Me, ready to act according to My direction and will”—a beautiful designation not only of the believing remnant of Israel, but of those from all nations who have learned in truth that what was spoken by prophets and apostles, and Christ Himself, was indeed the Word of the living God, and whose eyes are fixed upon Him with ready obedience to do His will.

We come now to Zec_11:12-13, which form perhaps the most difficult passage in the whole prophecy:

“And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my hire; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my hire thirty pieces of silver.

“And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter, the goodly price that I was prised at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them unto the potter, in the house of the Lord.” As an indication that his service as shepherd was coming is to an end, he asks his wages. I need not again remind the reader that we have to do here with symbols and figures, and that the symbolical transaction in the vision in which the prophet was himself the chief actor was designed to set forth great spiritual truths. That the prophet only represented Jehovah, the true Shepherd of Israel, who in fulness of time was especially to manifest Himself in this character in His only-begotten Son, the Messiah, comes out very clearly in these verses, for the contemptible wages which they did offer, Jehovah says (in Zec_11:13), ironically, is “the goodly price that I was prised at of them.” The wages (■■■■■, sakhar, “hire,” or “reward”), which He actually sought from them for all His Shepherd care, was, as the commentators rightly understand, the spiritual fruit of His labours—repentance, faith, true heart piety, humble obedience and grateful love. This is brought out clearly in the Lord’s parable of the Vineyard, which is Israel, to whom He first sent His servants, and then His own Son, “that He might receive the fruits of it.” And although He has every right to demand this “hire,” He leaves it to His professed people, upon whom such bounteous care and attention has been lavished by Him, to make a free return to Him of their love and gratitude in order that the actual condition of their hearts towards Him may be thus tested. “Give me,” He says, “my ‘hire’ or ‘reward’ for all that I have been and done for you, if you think well (lit., ‘if it seem good in your eyes’), and if not, forbear.” For, as has been well expressed by another writer, “God does

not force our free will or constrain our service. He places life and death before us, and bids us choose life. By His grace alone we can choose Him; but we can refuse His grace and Himself." That which they did offer the prophet in return for His services is meant to express the black ingratitude of their hearts for the shepherd care of Jehovah. Instead of "wages," as Keil well expresses it, they offer Him an insult—"so they weighed for My hire thirty pieces of silver," which was exactly the amount which, according to the law, was to be paid in compensation for a slave gored to death by an ox.1 "And Jehovah said unto me, Cast it" (hishlikh—"fling it" with contempt as a thing unclean2) "unto the potter, the goodly price (or, 'the magnificence of the price') that I was prised at of them: so I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them, in the house of Jehovah, unto the potter.

There are two or three important points in this passage which need explanation:

(1) What is meant by casting to the potter? Many different conjectures have been advanced in answer to this question. The most generally accepted explanation by evangelical writers is that given by Hengstenberg, namely, that it is equivalent to casting a thing into an unclean place. This explanation rests on the supposition that the

1 Exodus 21:32.

2 The verb hishlikh is used for casting torn flesh to the dogs, Exodus 22:31; of a corpse which was cast unburied, Isaiah 14:19; and in many other such connections; and of idols "cast" to the moles and bats, Isaiah 2:20. potter who worked for the Temple had his workshop in the valley of Ben Hinnom, which having been formerly the scene of the abominable worship of Moloch, was regarded with abhorrence as an unclean place after its defilement by Josiah, and served as the slaughter-house for the city.1 But, as Keil observes with truth, "It by no means follows from Jer_18:2 and Jer_19:2 (on which Hengstenberg bases his supposition), that this potter dwelt in the valley of Ben Hinnom." On the contrary, the passages in Jeremiah which are referred to would rather lead us to the opposite conclusion, for when we read that God said to the prophet, "Go, and buy a potter's earthen bottle (or 'pitcher'), and take of the elders of the people, and go forth unto the valley of Hinnom, which is by the entry of the gate Harsith" (or "pottery gate"),2 it seems pretty clear that the pottery itself, where the pitcher was to be bought, stood inside the city gate, since he had to "go forth" from it toward the valley. But even if the potter had had his workshop in the valley of Hinnom, which was regarded as unclean, he would not necessarily have become unclean himself in consequence; "And if he had been looked upon as unclean, he could not possibly have worked for the Temple, or supplied the cooking utensils for use in the service of God—namely, for boiling the holy sacrificial flesh."

Without stopping to analyse here other unsatisfactory explanations, I would briefly state that the reason why the thirty pieces of silver which Jehovah ironically calls the "magnificence of the price" at which He was valued by them, were to be flung to the potter, was most probably because the potter was one of the lowest of the labouring classes, whose labour was estimated as of comparatively trifling value, and "whose productions, when marred by any trifling accident, could be easily replaced at an insignificant expenditure." The phrase, "Throw to the potter," may perhaps have been "a proverbial expression for contemptuous treatment"; but this also is only a con-

1 2Ki_23:10.

2 Jer_19:1-2. jecture. That it is meant to express the valuelessness of a thing is pretty certain.

(2) In the command that the prophet should cast the money to the potter, there is nothing said about his going to the Temple, but in the performance we read, “And I took the thirty pieces of silver and cast them, in the house of Jehovah, to the potter.”

Hengstenberg understands this to mean that the money was thrown there that it might be taken thence to the potter; but I agree with another Bible student that, “as the words read they can only be understood as signifying that the potter was in the Temple when the money was thrown to him; that he had either some work to do there, or that he had come to bring some earthenware for the Temple kitchen.”1 And the reason why the prophet went to the house of Jehovah was not merely to show that it was as the servant of the Lord and by His command that he was acting, but because “the Temple was the place where the people of the covenant were wont to assemble to present themselves before the Lord. In that holy place the awful repudiation on the part of the nation of Him, who was the Shepherd of Israel, was to be publicly made known. The base transaction (however done in a corner) was to be proclaimed upon the housetops. In the place where the solemn covenant between Jehovah and His people had so often been ratified by sacrifices, the fearful separation between the people of Israel and Himself was to be declared. What was done in the Temple was done in the presence of both parties to the covenant: in the presence of Jehovah, in whose honour the Temple had been erected, and in the presence of the nation, who, by its erection of that Temple, had accepted Jehovah as their Lord and God. In the presence of both parties the rejection of the Lord as the Shepherd of Israel was to be announced, and the dissolution of the covenant made by Jehovah to be publicly proclaimed by the act of His representative.”2 1 In Zec_14:20 there is a mention of earthenware “pots” as being used in the Temple.

2 Dr. C. H. H. Wright.

We have now reached the place where we must refer more fully to the fulfilment of this prophecy in our Lord Jesus. As regards the solemn prediction of the chapter as a whole (when viewed in the light of other prophecies in the Old Testament), its chief points have been thus summarised:

(1) That before the destruction of Jerusalem, Jehovah, in the person of the Messiah, would appear as the Shepherd of Israel.

(2) That only “the poor of the flock” would attend to His word; but the rest, both leaders and people, would reject and abhor Him.

(3) That the Good Shepherd should be valued at the price of a common slave.

(4) That the people would in consequence be given over to be the prey of the Gentile powers from without, and to civil feuds within. Now even the most superficial acquaintance with the Gospel narrative, and of the subsequent history of the Jewish people, must lead one to see how strikingly all this has been fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth, and in the events which took place in consequence of His rejection by His own nation.

If there had been no allusion at all in the New Testament to this prophecy, we should still, from the mere Gospel narrative, be led to see its true and full fulfilment in Christ. But the New Testament does cite Zec_11:12-13 as a direct prophecy of our Lord Jesus. After describing in Matthew

26:1-75 the betrayal of Jesus by Judas, to whom the chief priests weighed thirty pieces of silver, and His condemnation to death by Pontius Pilate, at the instigation of the high priests and elders of the Jews, the evangelist Matthew proceeds:

“Then Judas, which betrayed Him, when he saw that He was condemned, repented himself, and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned in that I betrayed innocent blood. But they said, What is that to us? see thou to it. And he cast down the pieces of silver into the sanctuary, and departed; and he went away and hanged himself. And the chief priests took the pieces of silver, and said, It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, since it is the price of blood. And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter’s field, to bury strangers in. Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of Him that was priced, whom certain of the children of Israel did price; and they gave them for the potter’s field, as the Lord appointed me.”1

It has been objected by Jews and others that there are certain discrepancies between the words of the prophecy and its fulfilment as recorded by Matthew. One of the alleged discrepancies is contained in the fact that “in the prophecy the thirty pieces of silver were weighed as wages for the shepherd,” whereas in the Gospel narrative they are said to have been paid to Judas for the betrayal of Jesus.

“But, in truth, as soon as we trace back the form of the prophecy to its idea, the difference is resolved into harmony. The payment of the wages to the shepherd in the prophetical announcement is simply the symbolical form in which the nation manifests its ingratitude for the love and fidelity shown towards it by the shepherd, and the sign that it will no longer have him as its shepherd, and therefore a sign of the blackest ingratitude and of hard-heartedness in return for the love displayed by the shepherd. The same ingratitude and the same hardness of heart are manifested in the resolution of the representatives of the Jewish nation, the high priests and elders, to put Jesus, their Saviour, to death, and to take Him prisoner by bribing the betrayer. The payment of thirty silverlings to the betrayer was, in fact, the wages with which the Jewish nation repaid Jesus for what He had done for the salvation of Israel; and the contemptible sum which they paid to the betrayer was an expression of the deep contempt which they felt for Jesus.

“There is no great importance in this difference, that

1 Mat_27:3-10. here the prophet throws the money into the house of Jehovah to the potter; whereas, according to Matthew’s account, Judas threw the silverlings into the Temple, and the high priests would not put the money into the Divine treasury, because it was blood-money, but applied it to the purchase of a potter’s field, which received the name of a field of blood. For by this very fact not only was the prophecy almost literally fulfilled; but, so far as the sense is concerned, it was so exactly fulfilled that every one could see that the same God who had spoken through the prophet had, by the secret operation of His omnipotent power, which extends even to the ungodly, so arranged the matter that Judas threw the money into the Temple, to bring it before the face of God as blood-money, and to call down the vengeance of God upon the nation; and that the high priest, by purchasing the potter’s field for this money, which received the name of ‘field of blood’ in consequence ‘unto this day,’ perpetuated the memorial of the sin committed against their Messiah. Matthew indicates this in the words ‘as the Lord commanded me,’ which correspond to ‘and

Jehovah said unto me,' in Zec_11:13 of our prophecy; on which H. Aug. W. Meyer has correctly observed, 'That the words, "as the Lord commanded me," express the fact that the application of the wages of treachery to the purchase of the potter's field took place in accordance with the purpose of God, whose command the prophet had received. As God had directed the prophet how to proceed with the thirty silverlings, so was it with the antitypical fulfilment of the prophecy by the high priests, and thus was the purpose of the Divine will accomplished.' "1

There remains, however, one real difficulty in the citation of this prophecy by Matthew, namely, in the fact that Matthew quotes the words of Zechariah as that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet.

It was the attempt to justify the inerrancy of this quotation in Matthew, which, as I have shown in my "Introduction" to the second part of Zechariah, led the

1 Keil. earliest English critics, who were believing men, to the conclusion that these chapters in Zechariah were not attributed by the Jews to their right author, who, in truth, was not Zechariah, but Jeremiah. But, as I have tried to show, there is no basis in fact for this theory. A more elaborate attempt to justify the occurrence of Jeremiah's name in this passage in Matthew was first made by Grotius, and afterwards developed by Hengstenberg. Stated in the briefest form, the reason for the introduction of Jeremiah's name in the place of that of Zechariah's is, according to these writers' explanation, "because, as far as the principal features are concerned, Zechariah's prophecy in Zechariah 11:1-17 is simply a renewal and repetition of the prophecy in Jeremiah 19:1-15. (or, according to others, of Jeremiah 18:1-23 and Jeremiah 19:1-19), and Zechariah announced a second fulfilment of that prophecy." Or, to quote for the sake of elucidation a longer summary:

St. Matthew intentionally ascribed the words of Zechariah to Jeremiah, because he wished to impress upon his readers the fact that Zechariah's prediction was a reiteration of two fearful prophecies of Jeremiah (Jer. 18., 19.), and should, like them, be accomplished in the rejection and destruction of the Jewish people. He wished to remind them that "the field of blood," purchased with the money that testified the fulness of their guilt, was a part of that valley of the son of Hinnom which their fathers had made a "field of blood" before them, and where Jeremiah had twice by the symbol of a potter's vessel, announced their coming destruction. The words of the prophet, "Cast it to the potter," were in themselves sufficient to direct the attention of readers acquainted with the prophecies to those two chapters of Jeremiah; but the manner in which St. Matthew introduces his quotation makes the allusion still more plain. He first relates the purchase of the potter's field, thereby pointing out the locality of Jeremiah's prophecy; then he mentions the fact that it was called "the field of blood," thereby referring to a very similar expression in that prophet, "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that this place shall no more be called Tophet, nor the valley of the son of Hinnom, but the valley of slaughter" (Jer_19:6); and then cites the words of Zechariah, as spoken by Jeremiah, in order to make all mistake impossible. St. Matthew had, therefore, a direct purpose in introducing the name of Jeremiah; it was to warn the Jews against the coming judgments. They fondly hoped that, as the chosen people of God, they were safe. St. Matthew points them to the potter's field, and thus reminds them of the calamities which had already come upon them for past sins, less heinous than that of which the potter's field now testifies.1

I have entered somewhat fully into this explanation because it has commended itself to many devout and scholarly Bible students; but, at the same time, I must confess that I myself do not feel at all positive of the connection between our passage in Zechariah and the particular prophecy in Jeremiah to which reference has been made. The whole rests upon the presupposition (1) that the potter, of whom Jeremiah purchased the pot, had his workshop in the valley of Hinnom, which was regarded with abhorrence as an unclean place; (2) that Zechariah threw the thirty pieces of silver at the spot in that valley where the potter's workshop was, with evident and intentional allusion to Jeremiah's prophecy which the people are assumed to have had in their minds. But, as shown above, it is not at all proven that the potter in Jeremiah had his workshop in the

1 Dr. Alexander McCaul. This seems to be also the view of Dr. Alfred Edersheim. Speaking on "the potter's field," in the passage in Matthew, he says: "The very spot on which Jeremiah had been Divinely directed to prophesy against Jerusalem and against Israel, how was it now all fulfilled in the light of the completed sin and apostasy of the people, as prophetically described by Zechariah! This Tophet of Jeremiah, now that they had valued and sold at thirty shekels Israel's Messiah-Shepherd—truly a Tophet—and become a field of blood! Surely, not an accidental coincidence this, that it should be the place of Jeremy's announcement of judgment: not accidental, but veritably a fulfilment of his prophecy! And so St. Matthew, targuming this prophecy in form as in its spirit, and in true Jewish manner stringing to it the prophetic description furnished by Zechariah, sets the event before us as the fulfilment of Jeremy's prophecy."—Edersheim, Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, vol.2. p. 576. valley of Hinnom,1 and, as far as the words in Zechariah are concerned, the obvious sense of the words is that the money was thrown to the potter "in the house of Jehovah" or Temple.

Failing any other satisfactory explanation, we shall have to assume that the name of Jeremiah has crept into the passage in Matthew by error in one of the following ways: By a simple slip of memory, according to Augustine, Luther, Beza, Koehler, Keil, and almost all writers of the modern school; or secondly, and to my mind much more probable, as a very old copyist's error more ancient than the date of any of the MSS which have come down to us.2 [3] The insult to the Shepherd of their offering Him for His hire nothing more than the price of a dead slave is followed by the completion of the severance of the relations which existed between the Shepherd and flock, and the final giving over of the sheep to their own evil devices: "And I cut asunder Mine other (or 'second') staff, even Bands (or 'Binders'), to destroy the brotherhood between Judah and between Israel." The retention by the Shepherd of this second staff for some time after the first had already been broken, is probably meant to indicate His reluctance to give up the flock which had been so dear to Him, and His waiting to the very end to be gracious to them if they had but turned from their evil ways. His very request for His "wages," or "hire," after the first staff was broken, was really, if they

1 It is clear, however, from Matthew 27:1-66 etc., that in our Lord's time there was a spot in that valley which was known as "the potter's field," probably because of the accumulation of potsherds and debris from potteries, or, as some suppose, because it furnished a sort of clay suitable for potters' ware.

2 In connection with this two suggestions have been made, either of which is quite probable, (a) That in the original MS the name Ζαχαρ■ου (Zechariah) stood in abbreviated form as Ζριου,

which a very early copyist mistook for ■ριου (the abbreviation for ■ερεμα■ου—Jeremiah), and thus the error was afterwards perpetuated; (b) that in the original text of the evangelist there was no name at all, but simply “as was spoken by the prophet”—δι■ το■ προφ■του—a formula which Matthew uses again and again (see Matthew 1:22, Matthew 2:5-15, Matthew 13:35, etc.); and that the early copyist made a double error of inserting a name which was not in the original, and that a wrong one.

[Addendum:

3 An alternative explanation not mentioned by the author is suggested in:

Albert Barnes Notes on the Bible, Matthew 27:9 : "Spoken by Jeremy the prophet - The words quoted here are not to be found in the prophecy of Jeremiah. Words similar to these are recorded in Zec_11:12-13, and from that place this quotation has been doubtless made. Much difficulty has been experienced in explaining this quotation. In ancient times, according to the Jewish writers; “Jeremiah” was reckoned the first of the prophets, and was placed first in the “Book of the Prophets,” thus: Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah, and the twelve minor prophets. Some have thought that Matthew, quoting this place, quoted the Book of the Prophets under the name of that which had the “first” place in the book, that is, Jeremiah; and though the words are those of Zechariah, yet they are quoted correctly as the words of the Book of the Prophets, the first of which was Jeremiah."

AdamClarke’s Commentary on the Bible, Matthew 27:9 : "It was an ancient custom among the Jews, says Dr. Lightfoot, to divide the Old Testament into three parts: the first beginning with the law was called The Law; the second beginning with the Psalms was called The Psalms; the third beginning with the prophet in question was called Jeremiah: thus, then, the writings of Zechariah and the other prophets being included in that division that began with Jeremiah, all quotations from it would go under the name of this prophet. If this be admitted, it solves the difficulty at once. Dr. Lightfoot quotes Baba Bathra, and Rabbi David Kimchi’s preface to the prophet Jeremiah, as his authorities; and insists that the word Jeremiah is perfectly correct as standing at the head of that division from which the evangelist quoted, and which gave its denomination to all the rest."] had only properly understood it, a call to repentance; but instead of “fruit” as the result of His care and blessed labours, they brought Him forth the “wild grapes” of contempt and black ingratitude. And thus reluctantly He had to give over “the dearly beloved of His soul,” not only into the hands of their enemies without, which was symbolised by the breaking of the first staff called “Noam” but the still more terrible calamity of civil strife and destructive feuds among themselves, which is symbolised by the breaking of the staff called ■Hobhlim (“Bands” or “Binders”). The ■■■■■■■, achavah, “brotherhood,” which was to be destroyed “between Judah and between Israel,” is not to be understood in the sense “that the unity of the nation would be broken up again in a manner similar to that in the days of Rehoboam, and that two hostile nations would be formed out of one people,” although the disruption of national unity which took in the days of Jeroboam may be referred to as an illustration of that which would occur again in a more serious form. “The schism of Jeroboam had a weakening and disintegrating effect on the nation of the twelve tribes, and the dissolution of the brotherhood here spoken of was to result in still greater evil and ruin; for Israel, deprived of the Good Shepherd, was to fall into the power of the ‘foolish,’ or ‘evil,’ shepherd, who is depicted at the close of the prophecy.” The preposition ■■■■, bein, which is twice repeated, has the meaning not

only of “between” but also of “among”1 and the formula, House of Judah and House of Israel, or simply, “Judah and Israel,” is, as we have had again and again to notice, this prophet’s inclusive designation of the whole ideally (and to a large extent already actually) reunited one people. I think, therefore, that we may rightly render the sentence “to destroy the brotherhood among Judah and among Israel”—that is to say, among the entire nation. The consequence of it would be the fulfilment of the threat in Zechariah 11:9, “Let them which are left eat every one the 1 See, e.g., Isa_44:4. flesh of another”—solemn and awful words, which, as already shown above, had their first literal fulfilment in the party feuds and mutually destructive strife, and in the terrible “dissolution of every bond of brotherhood and of our common nature, which made the siege of Jerusalem by the Romans a proverb for horror, and precipitated its destruction.”

There remains yet one act in this prophetic drama which sets forth the terrible fact that as a consequence of their rejection of the Good Shepherd they would be given over to the domination of one who would be the very opposite of Him Who came to seek and to save that which was lost.

“And Jehovah said unto me, Take unto thee yet again the instruments of a foolish shepherd.” The word ■■■, od (“yet again”) connects this action with the previous one (Zec_11:4-8), for it implies that the prophet had already acted in the capacity, and had had in his hands the emblems of the shepherd’s office once before. The adjective ■■■■■■■—evili (the sound of which is very much like the English word evil)—expresses more than the English rendering “foolish” given in this passage. It may almost be rendered “wicked.”1 “Folly and sin were almost identical terms in the eyes of the sacred writers,” and the word is frequently used as the synonym for ungodliness.2

What the instruments of the foolish shepherd were, and in what respects they differed from those of the Good Shepherd, are matters for speculation, since we are not told. Hengstenberg supposes that the “instruments of the foolish shepherd consisted of a strong stick mounted with iron, with which the sheep were hurt and wounded, whereas the Good Shepherd was wont to keep the sheep in order with a thin staff and gentle strokes”; but this is only conjecture.

1 See Job_5:3, where the same word is used.

2 See Psa_14:1; Pro_1:7, etc. The interpretation of this symbolical act is given by God Himself: “For I will raise up a shepherd in the land, which shall not visit (or ‘observe,’ or ‘care for’) that which is cut off (or ‘perishing’), neither shall he seek those that be scattered,1 nor heal that which is broken; neither shall he feed that which is sound (lit., ‘standeth,’ i.e., the strong), but he shall eat the flesh of the fat, and shall tear their hoofs in pieces.” The heartlessness and cruelty of this evil shepherd is strikingly described—first in a negative, and then in a positive, manner. Not only will he be utterly indifferent alike to the needs of those who are ready to perish as to those who are still sound, but he will positively devour the flock. He will even “tear their hoofs in pieces,” not “by driving them along rough and stony roads,” as Ewald and others explain, but “so that when he consumes the sheep he even splits or tears in pieces the claws to seize upon and swallow the last morsel of flesh or fat.”2 And the most solemn fact in this forecast is that God says, “I will raise up” such a shepherd in the land. Yes, He will raise him up in the same sense as He raised up the Assyrians, the Babylonians, and the Romans, i.e., as His scourge upon a godless generation. And the readiness of the “sheep of slaughter” to follow such a shepherd will be but part of the punishment for their rejection of the Good Shepherd. But who is meant by this foolish or wicked shepherd?

Jewish commentators interpret it of Herod;3 some Christian interpreters, like Hengstenberg, apply it to “all the evil native Jewish rulers collectively,” who, subsequent

1 The word is ■■■■■■■, hanaar, and means a youth or young man (rendered in the A. V. “the young one”), but it is never used of the young of animals.

Moreover, the mention of the young of the flock would not be suitable here, since there would be no need to seek them, “for lambs which feed beside their mothers do not generally go astray.” The R.V. and modern scholars generally have adopted the explanation of Gesenius, that na’ar is an abstract substantive meaning “scattering,” and used here for the concrete “that which is scattered.”

2 Keil.

3 So, e.g., R. Abraham of Toledo, quoted by Kimchi. to the rejection of Christ, oppressed and devoured the flock and ultimately brought about their own ruin; others again identify him with the imperial Roman power. Thus, in the words of one of the advocates of this view, “the Jews rejected Christ, the King of Israel, and accepted the Emperor of Rome. In the madness of their rage against Jesus of Nazareth, they cried out: ‘We have no king but Cæsar.’ They obtained their choice, and found it bitterness in the latter end.” “The description” (in Zec_11:16), the same writer proceeds, “is given in language suitable to the character of an evil shepherd under which the Roman Empire is described. It is strikingly similar in meaning to that given of the fourth, or Roman word-empire in the, Book of Daniel, as a wild beast more dreadful, terrible, and strong than those beasts that were before it, furnished with great iron teeth and brazen claws, devouring, breaking in pieces, and stamping even the residue of its prey under its feet (Dan_7:7, Dan_7:19, Dan_7:23).”1

I have set forth this view at some length, because I believe that a reference to Rome as the more immediate scourge of God in the punishment of Israel after their rejection of Christ is probably included in this prophecy, and this is in accordance with the explanation I have given of the words in Zec_11:6, “I will deliver the men every one . . . into the hand of his king.”2 But whatever partial reference to Imperial Rome there may be in this scripture, and however many evil and foolish shepherds there have already arisen since the words were uttered who have devoured the Jewish flock, the full and final fulfilment of this solemn prophecy will take place in the final phase of the development of the fourth great world-power (i.e., the Roman), when amid the ten horns, or kingdoms, there shall come up “a little horn” who shall be master of them all, and in whom all the beast-like qualities of apostate anti-Christian world-power shall be concentrated and reach their climax.

1 C. H. H. Wright.

2 See above the remarks on Zec_11:6. For just as the Good Shepherd, whose part the prophet acted in the first part of the chapter, is in the highest and truest sense none other than the Messiah, so the “foolish,” or wicked, shepherd is in the last resort none other than the one who is in every sense his opposite—the personal Antichrist, under whose brief reign all Israel’s previous sorrows and sufferings shall reach their climax in the final great tribulation; even though it may be granted that, as in the case of the Christ, so of the Antichrist, there have been, so to say, shadowy precursors in whom a certain partial historical fulfilment of the prophecy may be discernible. And he will indeed be the “foolish” shepherd; for as the Messiah is sometimes spoken of as Wisdom personified, so the Antichrist, in spite of his being wise in all the wisdom which is from beneath, will

be the very embodiment of folly; for (to quote from an old writer) “since the extremest folly consists in the extremest wickedness, he will be the most foolish who reacheth the highest impiety, and this he will do by arrogating to himself divinity, and claiming divine honours.” But the career of this evil shepherd shall be short, and his end will be sudden destruction—“Woe to the idol (or ‘worthless’) shepherd”—the prophecy ends, or, as some would render, the shepherd of “nothingness,” or “uselessness.”1 This is God’s estimate and description of him, even while he exalts himself unto heaven and seeks to be worshipped as God—“that leaveth (or ‘forsaketh’) the flock”—and thus proves himself a false shepherd and hireling,2 “the sword shall be upon his arm and his right eye.” The arm is the emblem of might and the eye of intelligence—the two things in which the one who will sum up in himself anti-Christian world-power will trust, and in which he will boast himself. Very well, he shall be smitten

1 The word ■■■■■■, elil, is frequently used as an adjective to describe idols as vain and useless (see Lev_19:4; Lev_26:1; Psa_96:5, and other places). In the prophets it is often used also as a name for idols. The probable underlying etymological idea is that of vanity or nothingness.

2 Joh_10:12-13. in these very parts—“his arm (the emblem of strength) shall be utterly withered up, and his right eye (the symbol and instrument of intelligence) shall be utterly darkened.” And this shall be the end of him who shall be slain with the breath of Messiah’s mouth, and be destroyed by the brightness of His appearing.

4.19. Chapter 17 - Final Conflict and Deliverance

CHAPTER XVII ISRAEL'S FINAL CONFLICT AND GREAT DELIVERANCE (Zechariah 12:1-14) The burden of the word of Jehovah concerning Israel. Thus saith Jehovah, who stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him: Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of reeling unto all the peoples round about, and upon Judah also shall it be in the siege against Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all the peoples; all that burden themselves with it shall be sore wounded; and all the nations of the earth shall be gathered against it. In that day, saith Jehovah, I will smite every horse with terror, and his rider with madness: and I will open Mine eyes upon the house of Judah, and will smite every horse of the peoples with blindness. And the chieftains of Judah shall say in their heart, The inhabitants of Jerusalem are my strength in Jehovah of hosts their God. In that day will I make the chieftains of Judah like a pan of fire among wood, and like a flaming torch among sheaves; and they shall devour all the peoples round about, on the right hand and on the left: and they of Jerusalem shall yet again dwell in their own place, even in Jerusalem. Jehovah also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem be not magnified above Judah. In that day shall Jehovah defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the Angel of Jehovah before them. And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication; and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced: and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of the Shimeites apart, and their wives apart; all the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart.

CHAPTER XVII IN commencing my notes on the last section of Zechariah (Zechariah 12:1-14, Zechariah 13:1-9, Zechariah 14:1-21), I take the liberty of repeating a brief paragraph from my introductory remarks to Zechariah 9:1-17 to which I would again draw the attention of the reader. The overthrow of world-power, and the establishment of Messiah's Kingdom, may be given as the epitome of the last six chapters of Zechariah. The two oracles which make up the whole of the second half of the book (Zechariah 9:1-17, Zechariah 10:1-12, Zechariah 11:1-17 and Zechariah 12:1-14, Zechariah 13:1-9, Zechariah 14:1-21) show by their headings, as well as by their contents, and even by their formal arrangement, that they are corresponding portions of a greater whole. Both sections treat of war between the heathen world and Israel, though in different ways. In the first (Zechariah 9:1-17, Zechariah 10:1-12, Zechariah 11:1-17), the judgment through which Gentile world-power over Israel is finally destroyed, and Israel is endowed with strength to overcome all their enemies, forms the fundamental thought and centre of gravity of the prophetic

description. In the second (Zechariah 12:1-14, Zechariah 13:1-9, Zechariah 14:1-21), the judgment through which Israel itself is sifted and purged in the final great conflict with the nations, and transformed into the holy nation of Jehovah, forms the leading topic. The foreground, or more immediate future of the first main section of the second half of the book (Zechariah 9:1-17, Zechariah 10:1-12, Zechariah 11:1-17), were, as shown in my notes on those chapters, the victories of Alexander the Great, the overthrow of the Persian Empire, the advent of the Messiah, and His rejection by Israel—though even there, as we had occasion to observe more particularly in connection with Zec_9:9-10, and Zec_10:4-12, the foreground of the more immediate or proximate future, and the events which were to precede and accompany the First Advent, merge into the great and solemn events of the Second Advent, and the time of the end. The second or last section, on the other hand (Zechariah 12:1-14, Zechariah 13:1-9, Zechariah 14:1-21), seems to me to carry our thoughts altogether to the more distant future, and is eschatological and apocalyptic in its character, for it is impossible to apply the solemn predictions in these chapters to events at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, which is the favourite theory of those who assign a pre-exilic origin for the second half of Zechariah, and who degrade this great prophecy to the level of a mere “political divination of the affairs of the kingdom of Judah in which ardent hopes were expressed by the unknown prophet—hopes destined, however, to be sadly disappointed—respecting the final result of the struggle of the Jewish kingdom with the Babylonian power.”1

Neither can we, without doing great violence to the prophecy, interpret it of the taking of Jerusalem by Antiochus Epiphanes, as some do, nor to the destruction of the city and Temple by the Romans; for (to quote from words of my own) in none of those calamitous events in the past history of Israel did God in the person of the Messiah visibly appear on the Mount of Olives with His angelic hosts as the Deliverer of His people and the destroyer of many nations which were gathered against them; nor was the spirit of grace and supplication ever yet poured out upon the Jewish nation, so that they might look upon and recognise “Him whom they have pierced”; nor has the Lord, from any of those past events onward, become “King over the whole earth” (Zec_14:9); not to mention many other great and solemn events which are predicted in these chapters which cannot be allegorised or explained away. We must reject, therefore, the view of some of the “orthodox” commentators that this last section traverses the ground already trodden in the previous 1 Thus, for instance, Ewald in Die Propheten des alten Bundes. chapters, and “refers to the events which took place in the period between the time of the prophet and the day of the Messiah.” The ■■■■■ ■■■, yom ha’hu, the “that day” which is mentioned no less than fourteen times in these last three chapters, is indeed “the day of the Messiah,” but it is the day not of His first advent in humiliation, but of His manifestation in glory. It is, therefore, pre-eminently called ■■■■■■■■ ■■■, yom la-Yehovah—a day for Jehovah—the day set apart and appointed by Him not only for the display of His majesty and vindication of the holiness and righteousness of His character and ways, but it is “the day” of the manifestation of His Divine might and glory in the destruction of Israel’s enemies, and the salvation of His own people. The main theme of Zec_12:1-9 is Israel’s sudden deliverance by the interposition of God and the destruction of the armies of the confederated anti-Christian world-powers in the final siege of Jerusalem. But inasmuch as this siege, or “straitness,” and the solemn events of “that day” synchronise with “the time of Jacob’s trouble,” and covers the period of unparalleled sufferings and “tribulation” by means of which the Jewish nation is itself first purged as in a fiery furnace, the prophecy properly

begins with the words ■■■■■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■, massa debhar Yehovah al Israel—“the burden of the word of Jehovah upon (or ‘over’) Israel”; the word massa, as we have seen, when dealing with Zec_9:1, being as a heading confined entirely to prophecies which contain threatenings and announce judgments. But though it will be a time of unspeakable anguish for Israel, the climax of all their sufferings and tribulations through all the centuries since the commencement of “the times of the Gentiles,” they “shall be saved out of it.” Yea, in their greatest extremity, and in the time of their most dire need, God Himself in the person of their Messiah shall interpose on their behalf, and He will be “jealous for His land, and have pity on His people,” or, in the words of the inspired prophetic song which Moses was commanded to teach the children of Israel, so that it “should not be forgotten out of the mouth of their seed,” and which sets forth in advance all the vicissitudes of their history to the very end—

“Jehovah shall judge His people, And repent Himself for His servants: When He sees that their strength is gone, And that there is none remaining, shut up or left at large.”

Then He will “lift up His hand to heaven” and swear, saying:

“As I live for ever.

If I whet my glittering sword, and Mine hand take hold on judgment;

I will render vengeance to Mine adversaries, And will recompense them that hate Me.

I will make Mine arrows drunk with blood, And My sword shall devour much flesh.”1 For the enemies of His people will then be accounted as His enemies, which in reality they are. But to return to our chapter. To remove all possibility of doubt of the fulfilment of the great and wonderful things which the prophet is about to announce from the mouth of Jehovah, we are reminded of the almighty-creative and sustaining power of the everlasting God. This surely is a sufficient basis for our faith in His word, however great the human improbabilities and natural impossibilities of their ever being literally fulfilled, may appear to us.

“Thus saith (or ‘the saying’ of) Jehovah, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him.” A similar declaration of God’s almighty-creative and

1 Deu_32:36-42. sustaining power is made in Isa_42:5, and with the same purpose, namely, to remove all doubt as to the realisation of the great and mighty things which the prophet there predicts: “Thus saith God, Jehovah, He that createth the heavens and stretcheth them forth; He that spread abroad the earth, and that which cometh out of it; He that giveth breath (■■■■■■■, neshamah—soul) unto the people upon it; and spirit (■■■■, ruach) to them that walk therein.” The participial verbs in our passage in Zechariah 12:1-14.—■■■■■, ■■■■■, ■■■■■—noteh, yosed, yotzer—“stretcheth,” “layeth” (literally, foundeth], and “formeth”—are intended to remind us of God’s omnipotence and the continuous active display of His power and wisdom in the universe which He has created.

Jehovah is altogether a different being from the god of the deist. He not only once for all “in the beginning” created the heavens and the earth, and appointed certain “laws” to regulate their motions, without troubling Himself further about them, or about man, who is admittedly the goal and climax of His creative work on earth. No. “My Father worketh hitherto,” said our Lord Jesus,

“and I work”;1 and this is equally true in the sphere of creation, providence, and redemption. According to the Biblical view, as a Bible scholar well observes, “God stretches out the heavens every day afresh, and every day He lays the foundation of the earth, which, if His power did not uphold it, would move from its orbit and fall into ruin.”2 In like manner, when it is said that “He formeth the spirit of man within him,” it does not refer merely “to the creation of the spirits or souls of men once for all, but denotes the continuous creative formation and guidance of the human spirit by the Spirit of God.”3

Now let us hear what Jehovah, the Author of all being and all life, the Creator of heaven and earth, proceeds to say, and be assured, without any shadow of doubt, that what He hath spoken He will in His appointed time bring to pass: “Behold, I (which is very emphatic) will make

1 Joh_5:17.

2 Hengstenberg.

3 Keil.

Jerusalem a goblet (or ‘basin’) of reeling (or ‘giddiness’) unto all the peoples round about.” The cup of reeling, or giddiness, is frequently used in Scripture as a symbol of the judgment of God which brings man into a condition of helplessness and misery like unto that of the staggering, intoxicated man who is unable to stand, or walk. “For in the hand of Jehovah” we read in the Psalms, “is a cup, and the wine is red (or ‘foameth’); it is full of mixture, and He poureth out of the same; surely the dregs thereof, the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them.”1 In Isa_51:21-23 the figure is used of the judgments which Israel itself first experiences: “Therefore hear now this, thou afflicted, and drunken, but not with wine: thus saith thy Lord the Lord, and thy God that pleadeth the cause of His people, Behold, I have taken out of thine hand the cup of staggering (or ‘reeling’), even the bowl of the cup of My fury; thou shalt no more drink it again: and I will put it into the hand of them that afflict thee; which have said to thy soul, Bow down, that we may go over: and thou hast laid thy back as the ground, and as the street to them that go over.” In those passages, however, it is the ■■■, kos (cup), that is spoken of, but here in Zechariah 12:1-14 it is the ■■■, saph,2 the bowl, or “basin of reeling”; the thought expressed in this instance is that of a vessel large enough for all nations to drink out of it, “either together, or one after another in succession.” And they shall all drink of this intoxicating cup of God’s judgment and stagger and fall, not to rise again. The structure of the second half of the verse presents some difficulty, and has been variously rendered and interpreted by commentators. Literally, the clause in Hebrew reads, “And also upon Judah shall be in the siege against Jerusalem.” The question is, What subject must be supplied to the

1 Psa_75:8.

2 ■■■, saph, has also the signification of threshold, and the LXX, Vulgate, Calvin, etc., have translated it in that sense; but the rendering basin is the only suitable one here. It is used of the vessel containing the blood of the Paschal Lamb; also in 2Sa_17:28 and 1Ki_7:50, etc. verb “shall be”? Ewald and others have rendered it thus: “And also upon Judah shall it be (incumbent to be occupied) in the siege against Jerusalem.” Similarly, already the Targum, Kimchi, Jerome, and many of the modern commentators have explained the passage as “containing a prediction that the people of Judah should be arrayed among the hostile forces marshalled against Jerusalem,

that they should be forced to assume such a position by reason of the enemies round about, but that after a certain time the people should be able to break away from the ranks of the hostile army, and would ultimately assist the beleagured citizens of Jerusalem."

I cannot enter on a minute examination of the critical grounds on which this view has been advocated, but I believe the explanation to be an erroneous one. It is asserted that it is to be inferred from the context that Judah is regarded as in the camp of the enemy,1 but I agree with Keil, who truly observes that in what follows—

"There is no indication whatever of Judah's having made common cause with the enemy against Jerusalem; on the contrary, Judah and Jerusalem stand together in opposition to the nations, and the princes of Judah have strength in the inhabitants of Jerusalem (Zec_12:5), and destroy the enemy to save Jerusalem (Zec_12:6). Moreover, it is only by a false interpretation that any one can find a conflict between Judah and Jerusalem indicated in Zec_14:14. And throughout it is incorrect to designate the attitude of Judah towards Jerusalem in these verses as opposition, a notion upon which Ebrard (Offenb. Joh.) and Kliefoth have founded the marvellous view, that by

1 The following is from Kimchi's commentary: "The sense of the whole passage is, that when Gog and Magog come against Jerusalem after the redemption, they will go up by the land of Judah, for the desire of their faces will be to come against Jerusalem first; and they will not be anxious first to subdue the whole land of Israel, for they will think, when we have subdued Jerusalem, the whole land will fall before us. But they will go up to Jerusalem by the way of the land of Judah, which is their natural route, and they will take with them the children of Judah against their will to go with them to besiege Jerusalem; and so Jonathan has interpreted."

Jerusalem with its inhabitants and the house of David we are to understand the unbelieving portion of Israel; and by Judah with its princes, Christendom, or the true people of God, formed of believing Israelites and increased by believing Gentiles. Judah is not opposed to Jerusalem, but simply distinguished from it, just as the Jewish kingdom or people is frequently designated by the prophets as Jerusalem and Judah. The ■■■, gam, which does not separate, but adds, is of itself inapplicable to the idea of opposition. Consequently, we should expect the words also upon Judah to express the thought that Judah will be visited with the same fate as Jerusalem as Luther, Calvin, and many others follow the Peshito in supposing that they do." The best rendering of the clause in my view is that suggested by a Hebrew student,1 namely: "And also on Judah shall be (or, fall, this reeling) in (or 'during') the siege (which is to take place) against Jerusalem"—the sense being that already expressed by Keil, that Judah, which stands here for all the rest of the people of the land, shall experience the same ordeal of suffering in that siege as the inhabitants of Jerusalem, ere the Lord finally interferes on their behalf as the destroyer of their enemies. The prediction of judgment against the nations who will be gathered against Jerusalem "in that day," is strengthened in Zec_12:3 by the use of another figure: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will make Jerusalem a burdensome stone (lit., a stone for lifting) for all the peoples; all that burden themselves with it (lit., all that lift it) shall be sore wounded (or 'lacerated,' or 'tear rents for themselves'); and all the nations of the earth shall be gathered together against it,"2

1 W. H. Lowe, M.A., in his Hebrew Student's Commentary. Pusey thinks that the "Burden of the Word of the Lord" is the subject to be supplied, i.e., the burden which was to be, or should be, upon Judah, i.e., upon all great and small; but that phrase is too remote from the verb to admit of

its being regarded as the “natural subject.”

2 The figure of the “burdensome stone” is, according to Jerome (died 420) and others, based on a custom which prevailed in Palestine. That “old

It has been pointed out that there is a gradation in the thought, both in the figure of the “burdensome stone,” which cuts and wounds those who try to lift it, whilst the “reeling cup” in Zec_12:2 only makes powerless; and also in the description given of the hosts gathered for the attack. In Zec_12:2 the nations round about Jerusalem are spoken of, but in Zec_12:3 it is “all peoples” and “all nations of the earth.” The magnitude of the danger and of the sufferings of Jerusalem are brought before our minds in the last clause of Zec_12:3, and are to be inferred from the fact that “all nations of the earth” represented, no doubt, by the flower of their armies, “will be gathered against it.”

“The gathering of these hosts is not unfrequently referred to in the Scripture, and always in language calculated to impress the mind with the peculiar magnitude of the power to be displayed in this last great effort of man under Satan. In the Revelation, for example (Rev_16:14), it is said that ‘spirits of devils,’ working miracles, shall go forth to gather the kings of the whole world to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.”1 Joel also speaks of the same mighty confederation: “Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles, prepare war, wake up the mighty usage,” he says, “is kept up to this day throughout Judea, that in villages, towns, and forts round stones are placed, of very great weight, on which young men are wont to practise themselves; and, according to their varying strength, lift them—some to the knees, others to the navel, others to the shoulders and head; others lift the weight above the head, with their two hands raised up, showing the greatness of their strength. In the Acropolis at Athens I saw a brass globe, of very great weight, which I, with my little weak body could scarcely move. When I asked its object, I was told by the inhabitants that the strength of wrestlers was proved by that mass, and that no one went to a match until it was ascertained, by the lifting of that weight, who ought to be set against whom.”

But, as it has been observed, the stone of which the prophet speaks here was not such a round stone, but one with sharp edges by which those who sought to raise it were lacerated. Keil may be more correct in considering that the figure is taken from operations connected with building. Another has suggested that the reference is to “one of the large stones half buried in the earth, which it is the effort of the husbandman to tear from its bed and carry out of his field before he ploughs it.”

1 B. W. Newton. men, let all the men of war draw near, let them come up; beat your ploughshares into swords and your pruning-hooks into spears; let the weak say, I am strong. Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye Gentiles, and gather yourselves together round about” (Joe_3:9-12). But the extremity of Israel’s need, as already stated, will be God’s opportunity for the display of His power in the destruction of their enemies, and His grace in their deliverance. It is to “that day” that the prophetic words in Psalms 118:1-29 refer:

“Out of my distress1 I called upon Jehovah:

Jehovah answered me and set me in a large place.

Jehovah is on my side; I will not fear:

What can man do unto me?

. . . . . .

All nations compassed me about: In the Name of the Lord I will cut them off.

They compassed me about; yea, they compassed me about: In the Name of the Lord I will cut them off.

They compassed me about like bees; they are quenched as the fire of thorns: In the Name of the Lord I will cut them off." The manner of God's interposition on Israel's behalf is described in the verses which follow: "In that day, saith Jehovah, will I smite every horse with astonishment (lit., with 'bewilderment' or 'stupefaction'), and his rider with madness: and upon the house of Judah will I open Mine eyes, and every horse of the peoples (i.e., of their attacking cavalry) will I smite with blindness."

It is interesting to note that the three nouns timmahon, "astonishment" or "bewilderment"; shigga'on, "madness"; and 'ivvaron, "blindness," which here describe God's judgment on the confederated armies of the anti-Christian world-powers which will be gathered against Jerusalem, are used elsewhere only of the judgment which

1 ■■■■■■■ ■■■. The word also means "straitness," "siege," and is the same as is used in Zec_12:2 of the "siege." was to come upon Israel in case of their apostasy. In Zec_12:2 the prophet uses the symbol of the cup, or goblet, of reeling, which, as we have seen, had also been used in the first instance of Israel. Among the other plagues which Israel has had long to drink out of that "cup" are those enumerated in Deuteronomy 28:28, "Jehovah shall smite thee with madness, and with blindness, and with astonishment, or bewilderment." But when Zion's warfare shall be accomplished and her iniquity pardoned, and God's time to favour Zion comes, He says: "I will take out of thine hand the cup of reeling, even the bowl of the cup of My fury: thou shalt no more drink again, and I will put it into the hand of them that afflict thee," and they shall drink to the dregs these very plagues. The effect of the enemies of Israel being smitten with these three plagues has been thus described: "The terrified horses of the cavalry of the assembled hosts (being thus suddenly smitten with bewilderment, or terror, are represented as unable any longer to be guided by bit and bridle. The riders in their madness are described as unable to manage their steeds, while the steeds themselves are portrayed as struck with blindness (or 'blind staggers'), and therefore unable to escape from the dangers around them. And while the enemies of God's people will find themselves in such straits at the very moment when they imagined that they had gained the victory, and while, instead of chasing the vanquished Jews in headlong flight, they themselves are described as rushing upon destruction, Jehovah will 'open His eyes upon the house of Judah,' which stands here for the whole covenant nation." And that look of Jehovah, through the eyes of their Messiah Jesus, upon His long unbelieving and rebellious people—a look of love and pity, not unmixed with tender reproach—will have something of the same effect on stubborn Israel as the look of the Lord Jesus on Peter from the hall of Caiaphas the high priest,1 when that apostle had thrice denied Him. It will at last soften and

1 Luk_22:61-62. melt their hard heart to true repentance, and cause them to "weep bitterly." But this is set forth fully in the last part of this chapter, and for the present we must return to the prophet's description of their outward deliverance and the destruction of their enemies.

While terror and confusion seize the ranks of the assembled hosts as the result of the plagues with which they shall be smitten, unity, confidence, and assurance of victory take possession of the “heart” of the reduced, and till then demoralised, remnant of Judah, from the moment that they become conscious that the eye of Jehovah is upon them for good, and that the “Captain of the Lord’s host” Himself is with them: “And the governors (or ‘princes’1) of Judah shall say in their hearts. The inhabitants of Jerusalem are my strength (or, ‘a strength to me’) in Jehovah of hosts their God.”

“The princes of Judah,” as Keil truly observes, “recognise in the inhabitants of Jerusalem their strength or might—not in the sense that Judah, being crowded together before Jerusalem, expects help against the foe from the strength of the city and the assistance of its inhabitants, as Hoffmann and Koehler maintain, for ‘their whole account of the inhabitants of the land being shut up in the city’ (or crowded together before the walls of Jerusalem, and covered by them) is a pure invention, and has no foundation in the text—but in this sense, that the inhabitants of Jerusalem are strong through Jehovah their God, i.e., through the fact that Jehovah has chosen Jerusalem, and by virtue of this election will save the city of His sanctuary ” (comp. Zechariah 10:12 with Zec_3:2, Zec_1:17, Zec_2:12).

It is the fact that Jehovah hath chosen Jerusalem, and has returned to her with mercies,2 which makes the princes of Judah confident in her invincibility. “God is in the midst of her,” sings the Psalmist, looking on to the solemn

1 ■■■■■■■, alluphei. See the footnote on the meaning of “alluph” in Zec_9:7. The root-idea is expressed in the LXX, which renders “captain of thousands.”

2 Zec_1:16. events of “that day” in the spirit of prophecy—“she shall not be moved; God shall help her” (lit, “at the dawn of the morning,”)1 i.e., after the long night of sorrow and weeping. A slight alteration in the original text of this verse has been suggested already in the Targum, which would read: “The princes of Judah shall say in their heart, The strength of the inhabitants of Judah is in Jehovah their God.” But the “correction” is not needed, for this is not the only instance, even in Zechariah, where a collective body is represented as speaking in the singular as one man. Thus, the inhabitants of Bethel speak to the prophet through the deputation which they sent to him (Zec_7:1-5), saying, “Should I weep, etc.?” The singular pronoun, ■■■, li (“my,” or, “to me”) is meant to express the fact that each individual says, “in their heart” (which is also in the singular), because all are as one in this confidence that there is strength for them in Jehovah their God, whose power is now displayed on behalf of Jerusalem. “And in that day” the prophecy proceeds, “will I make the princes of Judah as a pan (or ‘basin’) of fire among wood, and like a torch of fire among sheaves, and they shall devour all the people round about on the right hand and on the left, and Jerusalem shall yet again dwell in her own place in Jerusalem” (tachteah, lit., “under her place” i.e., “in her place”)—the name “Jerusalem” in this last clause standing in the first instance for the people personified as a woman, and in the second for the city as such. That this great deliverance will be all of grace and by the power of God is brought out in the verses which follow: “And Jehovah shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David, and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, be not magnified against Judah.” The reason that “Judah” (which stands here for the people of the land generally in contrast to those who are within the city of Jerusalem) are saved “first,” is not, as is mistakenly supposed by some, because Judah, having,

1 Psa_46:5. though unwillingly, joined the foe in the siege, “will be found in a place more rebellious and more evil than that of Jerusalem,” but because of their weak and defenceless condition (as indicated by the fact that they dwell in “tents”) as contrasted with those within the city walls. Or, in the words of another, “The defenceless land will be delivered sooner than the well-defended capital, that the latter may not lift itself up above the former, but that both may humbly acknowledge (as Jerome expresses it) that the victory is the Lord’s,” and that both alike may magnify the grace of God in their deliverance. “The glory (or splendour, ■■■■■■■■■, tiphereth) of the house of David” consists in the fact that it is the God-appointed royal line in Israel, which was continued in Zerubbabel, the prince who was Zechariah’s contemporary, and culminated in our Lord Jesus, the true Son and Heir of David; and “the glory” or “splendour” of the inhabitants of Jerusalem may be regarded as consisting in the fact that they may consider themselves as especially privileged and exalted above the rest of the people of the land as dwellers in the city which God has especially chosen as the seat of His earthly throne. But the deliverance of the defenceless people of the land will be only the “first” act of God’s interposition on behalf of Israel in that day. The heart of the great conflict will be in and around the walls of Jerusalem, for on it all the fury of the enemy’s attack will be directed. But “in that day shall Jehovah defend (lit., ‘shield’) the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and he that is feeble among them shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the Angel of Jehovah before them.” Not its walls or bulwarks will constitute the “defence” of the remnant of the people which shall be left in Jerusalem in that solemn day. From Zec_13:8-9 and Zec_14:1-6, which, as we shall see, refer to the same invasion of the land and siege of Jerusalem by the Gentile hosts, we learn that the city, or a great part of it, will actually be “taken” and spoiled, and half of the city (that is, of the population) “go forth into captivity,” and that then, when the enemy lifts his hand for the last blow in order utterly to destroy them, “that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance”—the visible appearance of Jehovah in the person of their Messiah Jesus takes place. The uplifted arm of the adversary becomes suddenly withered; and because Jehovah intervenes as the shield of the remnant that remains, therefore “the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city” (Zec_14:2). “For thus saith the Lord unto me, Like as when the lion growleth, and the young lion over his prey, if a multitude of shepherds be called forth against him, he will not be dismayed at their voice, nor abase himself for the noise of them: so shall the Lord of hosts come down to fight upon Mount Zion, and upon the hill thereof. As birds flying, so will the Lord of hosts protect Jerusalem; He will protect and deliver it; He will pass over and preserve it.”1 And not only shall Jehovah Himself “go forth and fight against those nations,” but when once the weak and broken remnant of the people recognise their Divine Saviour, and hear the shout of the King in their midst, they are suddenly girt with superhuman strength. The feeblest of them, hannikhshal (lit., “he that stumbleth,” i.e., the one so weak that he could not even stand, much less fight), shall in that day be as David the greatest of Israel‘s national heroes, and “to the Jew, therefore, the highest type of strength and glory on earth”—and the house of David shall be as Elohim (i.e., “God” in His might and majesty), and as the Divine “Angel of Jehovah,” who of old went “before them” in the desert and through the Red Sea smiting down their enemies, and therefore, “the highest type of strength and glory in heaven.” No wonder, therefore, that through Him they “will push down their adversaries,” and “through His Name tread them under that had risen up against them”;2 and, if I may venture a brief digression, I would say that there is a message in this scripture for you too, dear Christian reader. It is this, that however weak in yourself and ready 1 Isa_31:4-5 (R.V.)

2 Psa_44:4-5. to “stumble,” you may be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might, and that “more” and “greater” is He that is for us, and with us, than all that can be against us. “Through God,” exclaims the Psalmist, “we shall do valiantly” (or, as it might be rendered, “in God we shall form an host”—however weak and few and insignificant in ourselves), for He it is that shall tread down our adversaries.1 But to return to our chapter. While Jehovah endows the inhabitants of Jerusalem with supernatural strength so that they perform exploits, He will “seek to destroy all nations that come against Jerusalem” (i.e., in martial array to attack, as the phrase in the original implies). The expression “seek to do” is always used in the Bible “of seeking to do what it is a person’s set purpose to do if he can.” Man may seek to do a thing and fail, but “woe indeed to those whom Almighty God shall seek to destroy”; for that on which His heart is once set He will assuredly accomplish, whether it will be in blessing on His people or in vengeance on His enemies. The Great Spiritual Crisis in Israel’s History

Zechariah 12:1-9 describe prophetically, as we have seen, Israel’s great national deliverance and the destruction of the armies of the confederated anti-Christian world-powers which shall be gathered in the final siege of Jerusalem. That will, indeed, be a great and wonderful day in their history, “an hour of triumph such as they have never known before, greater than when they quitted Egypt; greater than when they triumphed; over Pharaoh and his host at the Red Sea; greater than when they entered the Promised Land, and the walls of Jericho fell down before them.” But yet there is something greater, more solemn and more blessed, than mere outward deliverance and triumph over their enemies that Israel is to experience on “that day,” and that is God’s final conquest over them. Ah! yes, Israel

1 Psa_60:12. shall then learn the truth of the saying, that “our only true triumphs are God’s triumphs over us, that His defeats of us are our only true victories”;1 and will learn with the great apostle—whose history and experiences are in many ways a foreshadowing of the history and experience of his nation—to say, “Thanks be unto God, who always leadeth us in triumph in Christ”2—that is, as former enemies who have been vanquished, and whom He is now leading about as manifest trophies of His all-subduing grace and power.

“On former occasions, when Jeshurun had been made to ride on the high places of the earth, he had waxed fat and kicked; then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation. But it will never be so again. He who comes to conquer their foes comes also to subdue their hearts.” Hence, great as their triumph will be, great as will have been their individual might in the last stage of their conflict with the surrounding hosts (so that “he that is feeble among them will be as David”), yet, when they return from their victory, this their glorious day of triumph will end in self-abasement and tears.3 How this wonderful change will be brought about, how the stubborn heart of unbelieving and gainsaying Israel will at last be broken, we are told in Zec_12:10, “And 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: and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born.”

“I think,” said a great master in Israel, “there is nothing in the whole range of scripture more touching than the promise contained in these simple, unadorned words. As they touch the heart they fix themselves on our memory. Who can ever forget them? ‘They shall look unto (or “upon”)

Me whom they have pierced.' "4 And yet there is not another scripture in the Old

1 Dean Alford.

2 2Co_2:14 (R.V.).

3 B. W. Newton.

4 Adolph Saphir.

Testament around which more controversy has raged than around "these simple, unadorned," and, to the Christian, most precious words. Jewish commentators and some rationalistic Christian writers who seem not less biased in their anti-Christological methods in interpreting the Old Testament,1 have tried their utmost to divert this scripture from Him whose rejection and suffering unto death, and yet future recognition and penitent reception on the part of "His own " nation, it foretells. The modern Jewish translation of the passage as given, for instance, in the "Appendix of the Revised Version," issued by the Jewish Community in England for the use of Jews, in 1896, is as follows: "And they (i.e., the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem) shall look up to Me because of Him whom they (i.e., the nations which come against Jerusalem) have pierced." This translation, first suggested by Rashi, adopted by Kimchi in his commentary on Zechariah, was fully elaborated by Rabbi Isaak of Troki2 in his polemical work against Christianity, Chizzuk Emunah ("Strengthening of the Faith"), who thus explains:

"If it should happen that any of the Israelites should be pierced, namely, in that war, even though it should be one of the most inconsiderable, they shall wonder greatly how this could happen, and will think that this is the

1 Thus, for instance, Ewald, one of the fathers of the "Higher Criticism," and who has a very large following among Christian commentators and theological writers in this country, considers the mourning pictured by the prophet in the scripture "as a mourning over the Jews fallen in the defence of their city," as martyrs for their country and faith; those slain in the battlefield he considers to be "those pierced by the heathen." Canon Driver, in his Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament, makes this passage to refer to some "deed of blood" in which the house of David, together with the people, became implicated some time before these chapters were written, which, according to him (and in opposition to Ewald and his school, who assign a pre-exilic origin to the second half of Zechariah) was some time between 518 and 300 B.C., of which deed of blood, as pointed out in my "Introduction to the second half of Zechariah," which could occasion such deep and universal mourning, history knows nothing.

2 Isaac Ben Abraham of Troki, a Karaite Rabbi—born in 1533, died in 1594. His book is still the chief arsenal whence many arguments of modern Jews in their polemics against Christianity are drawn. beginning of a fall and defeat before their enemies, as Joshua did. When the men of Ai smote thirty-six of Israel, he said: 'Alas! O Lord God, why didst Thou cause this people to pass the Jordan?' And again: 'What shall I say when Israel turn their backs before their enemies?' (Jos_7:7-8.). So will it be at that time if they should see any of them pierced, they will be astonished, and look on Me on account of Him whom they pierced." This translation, however, to which English-speaking Jews have, as we have seen, officially committed themselves, only shows the length which modern Judaism will go in misinterpreting the plainest scriptures so as to evade

the Christian argument drawn from them in support of the claims of Jesus of Nazareth.1

It is a rendering which is contrary to grammar and to the natural sense, for, first, the word ■■■■■ ■■■ (eth asher) cannot possibly mean “because of Him whom,” but simply “whom,” emphatically and definitely expressed. And, secondly, the modern Jewish rendering or paraphrase implies that the subject of the second verb of the first verse, ■■■■■■, daqaru—“pierced,” is a different one from that of the first verb, ■■■■■■■■■, v’hibitu—“shall look” in the same short sentence. But it is altogether unnatural to suppose that two

1 An instance of departure not only from the plain sense and grammar, but from the more ancient Jewish traditional interpretations of Messianic passages for controversial reasons, is found in Rashi (Rabbi Solomon Bar Isaac), the most popular commentator on the Bible and Talmud—born at Troys in 1040, died in 1105. In his commentary on this passage in the Bible he says: “They shall look back to mourn because the Gentiles had pierced some amongst them, and killed some of them.” But in his commentary on the Talmud he says: “The words, ‘the land shall mourn,’ are found in the prophecy of Zechariah, and he prophesies of the future that they shall mourn on account of Messiah, the son of Joseph, who shall be slain in the war of Gog and Magog” (Sukkah, fol. 52, col. 1). That this manifest contradiction is not accidental, but intentional, appears from the fact that this writer has dealt similarly by other controverted passages; for instance, Isa. 53., which, in his commentary on the Bible, he expounds of the Jewish people; but in his commentary on the Talmud he explains of Messiah. Indeed, his determination to get rid of any explanation that could favour Christianity is plainly avowed in his commentary on Psalms 21:1-13, where he says: “Our Rabbis have expounded it of the King Messiah, but it is better to expound it further of David himself, in order to answer heretics.” parties were in the prophet’s mind, and that “they” who “shall look” are the Jews, and “they” who “have pierced” are the Gentile nations.

Another “Jewish” rendering of the passage, equally unfair and even less tenable, but contradictory of the above, is that found in the bulky “Jewish Family Bible,” which has also a kind of “official” air about it, inasmuch as it was “printed with the sanction of (the late) Rev. Dr. Adler, the chief Rabbi.”1 The critical passage in question is translated thus: “But I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication, and they whom the nations are piercing shall look upon Me, and shall mourn over it,” etc. But a translation which does not scruple to interpolate words and expressions is not worth noticing, except to point out that it can claim, at best, to be only a polemical Targum, or commentary, the chief aim of which is the elimination of all references to a suffering, atoning Messiah from the pages of the Old Testament. It is not necessary to point out to any one who can read the original that the words, “whom the nations were piercing,” are not found in the Hebrew text, and are an unjustifiable gloss of the “reviser.” But there is a more ancient Jewish interpretation of this prophecy than those to which I referred, which were invented by Jews for controversial reasons; it is that, namely, which applies the passage to Messiah ben Joseph. Thus Aben Ezra,2 who wrote after Rashi, says: “All the heathen shall look to me to see what I shall do to those who pierced Messiah, the son of Joseph”; and Abarbanel,3 after noticing the interpretation of Rashi and Kimchi, says:

1 It claims to be the Authorised or “Anglican” version, revised by Dr. M. Friedlander, Principal of the Jews College, published in 1881. Its honesty as a translation, or “revision,” may be judged from its rendering of this and other Messianic passages.

2 Aben Ezra—Rabbi Abraham ben Ezra—one of the greatest of Jewish commentators and grammarians: born, 1088; died, 1176.

3 Abarbanel (or Abravanel), Rabbi Dan Isaac ben Jehudah, the celebrated Jewish statesman and philosopher, theologian and commentator: born, 1437; died, 1508.

“It is more correct to interpret the passage of Messiah, the son of Joseph, as our Rabbis, of blessed memory, have interpreted it in the treatise Sukkah,1 for he shall be a mighty man of valour of the tribe of Joseph, and shall at first be captain of the Lord’s host in that war (namely, against Gog and Magog), but in that war shall die.” This interpretation is of interest and importance to the Christian student, in so far as it shows that the disciples of Christ, when the New Testament was written, were not alone in interpreting this scripture of the Messiah. The Jewish Rabbis explained it in the same way, only they applied it to Messiah ben Joseph, who does not exist in Scripture, and is an invention of their own brains.

Let me, while dwelling on the Jewish interpretation of this passage, reproduce a striking passage from Alshech,2 1 The passage will be found in Bab. Talmud, Sukk. 52a.

2 Moses Alshech flourished in Safed, Palestine, in the second half of the sixteenth century. The doctrine or theory of two Messiahs—a Messiah ben Joseph, who should suffer and die, and the Messiah ben David, who shall reign in power and glory—can be traced back to the third or fourth century A.D., and very probably originated in the perplexity of the Talmudists at the apparently irreconcilable pictures of a suffering, and yet a glorious Messiah, which they found in the prophecies. Instead of finding the solution in two advents of the one person, they explained the different scriptures as referring to two different persons.

“But whom did the Rabbis mean by the epithet Messiah ben Joseph?” writes a learned Hebrew Christian brother. We do not hesitate to answer: “None other person than Jesus, whom, after their great disappointment in the revolution of Bar-Cochba, they tacitly acknowledged as the suffering Messiah, and denominated Him by the name that He was commonly called in Galilee, in order perhaps to screen themselves against the hatred and persecution of their own followers, or of their Roman masters. This idea has been hinted at by the Rev. M. Wolkenberg in his translation of The Pentateuch according to the Talmud, p. 156, and broadly asserted by Dr. Biesenthal in his Hebrew commentary on St. Luke (Luke 23:48). This accounts for the remarkable fact that on the Feast of Trumpets, before the blowing of the ram’s horn, God’s mercy is besought through ‘Jesus, the Prince of the Presence of God, the Metatron,’ or the One who shares the throne of God. At this same service, verses, mostly from Psalms 119:1-176, are repeated, whose first letters form the name of ‘Christon,’ but so ingeniously chosen, that they should at the same time read ■■■ ■■■, ‘the Bruiser of Satan.’ This name also is written on amulets and in Jewish houses when a child is born, as well as the name of the angel, ■■■■■■, which is mentioned in the said service, with alteration of only one accountable which, barring the mention of Messiah ben Joseph, might almost be accepted as a statement of the Christian view of this scripture.

“I will do yet a third thing, and that is, that ‘they shall look unto Me,’ for they shall lift up their eyes unto Me in perfect repentance, when they see Him whom they pierced, that is, Messiah, the Son of Joseph; for our Rabbis, of blessed memory, have said that He will take upon Himself all the guilt of Israel, and shall then be slain in the war to make an atonement in such manner that it shall be

accounted as if Israel had pierced Him, for on account of their sin He has died; and, therefore, in order that it may be reckoned to them as a perfect atonement, they will repent and look to the blessed One, saying that there is none beside Him to forgive those that mourn on account of Him who died for their sin: this is the meaning of ‘They shall look upon Me’ ”

There is another critical point on which I must very briefly touch before proceeding with the exposition. The reading of the Massoretic text, ■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■, v’hibitu elai (“they shall look unto Me”), has been much disputed by Jews and modern writers, but it is supported by all the ancient versions and extant MSS with very few exceptions, and is the reading which is accepted in all the Rabbinic quotations made above. In a few MSS, however, the marginal correction—■■■■■■, alav—“unto Him,” instead of ■■■■■, elai “unto Me,” was made by Jewish hands; and in several instances this “Keri,” or marginal reading, has, as is sometimes apt to be the case, crept into the text itself. letter, and which stands for the King our Righteousness, ‘the King our Righteousness, Jesus the Messiah.’ To this Metatron is again applied in the Talmud (Sanhed. p. 256), the passage Exo_23:20, and it is added that ‘His name is the name of His Master.’ And in the liturgy of the Feast of Tabernacles reference is made to the glorious and dread Metatron, who was transformed from flesh to fire.

“Who cannot see in these mysterious hints a purposely covered belief in the Messiahship of Jesus, and that in a most orthodox manner?” (From Rays of Messiahs Glory.) But we need not impute any dishonest intention to the Jews in this matter, as some have done,1 and of a desire to corrupt the text; for, as a matter of fact, however much they obscured and perverted the true sense of Scripture, through their misinterpretations, and in their paraphrases and commentaries, they always most jealously guarded the original letter and text of Scripture from alteration or corruption. The marginal reading in the few MSS which is also accepted in the Talmud, is, however, not recognised as a Keri, or proper reading, in the Massoretic text. It originated in the very natural difficulty, from the Jewish point of view, of conceiving how God, who is undoubtedly the speaker in the first part of the verse, since He promises to pour out the spirit of grace and supplication, can be “pierced.” It requires the light which is thrown on Messianic prophecy by the New Testament; and a knowledge of Him in whom dwelt the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and who could say, “I and the Father are ‘One,’ ” for men to grasp this mystery.2 But we are told by Jewish and rationalistic writers that we must not “read the New Testament into these Old Testament prophecies,” but rather ask ourselves what meaning the people in the prophet’s own time would attach to them. To this we reply. First: Though it is true, generally speaking, that the prophets spoke first and primarily to those in their own time, there is, never- 1 As, for instance, Martini.

2 It need not, it seems to me, be supposed that the Apostle John, in Joh_19:37, quoted from a manuscript which read, “They shall look on Him.” It is rather his adaptation and application of the prophecy in the light of fulfilment (as far as the piercing is concerned) to our Lord Jesus. He knew well that in its connection, in Zechariah 12:1-14, it is spoken of God; but this passage, like many other prophecies and promises which in the Old Testament centre in Jehovah, find their fulfilment and realisation in history in the person of the Messiah, whom this beloved apostle depicts to us as “the Word made flesh,” and in whose face he beheld the glory of the only-begotten of the Father. Hence, as he now gazes upon Him on the Cross, and beholds the Roman soldier plunging his spear into His side, he says, “Here, truly, is the One to whom this Scripture applies—they shall look on Him whom they have pierced.” theless, a predictive element in Holy Scripture, and that

many of the prophetic utterances concerning “the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow” were not only not fully comprehensible to the people to whom they spoke, but to the prophets themselves,1 and could only be fully understood after, and in the light of, their fulfilment.

Secondly: Even the Jews in the prophet’s own time, if they pondered on the prophet’s word, must have understood, at any rate this much, that the prediction refers to “a national mourning over some one who stood in an intimate connection with Jehovah, and whose rejection and death was to be bitterly bewailed by the people of Israel. Such would have been the meaning conveyed by the passage to the Jews of the time of Zechariah. Assuming that the prophecy proceeded from the same author as that of the previous chapter—and there are not sufficient grounds on which to deny it—the rejection of the representative of Jehovah (namely, the Good Shepherd, whose rejection is there spoken of as followed by a terrible punishment), and the national mourning described as taking place for one who should be, in some mysterious manner, ‘pierced’ by the nation when acting in the capacity of the representative of Jehovah, must both have been considered by the hearers of the prophet to refer to one and the same event.” But now, to be done with criticism and controversy, let us look into the heart of this great prophetic promise.

We will take the words in the order in which they stand in the Hebrew. “And I will pour”—■■■■■■■■■■■, v’shaphachti—the word expresses the fulness and abundance of the gift of the Spirit which shall then be bestowed upon the people. The promise points back to Joe_2:28-29, “And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My spirit upon all flesh,” etc.; or, as we read in Isaiah: “I will pour My spirit upon thy seed, and My blessing upon thine offspring”—in the same abundance and with the

1 2Pe_1:10-12.

 same blessed quickening and fertilising effects as “waters” and “streams” are poured “upon the dry and thirsty ground.”1

“Upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem.” Jerusalem and its inhabitants are mentioned alone in the text, “not as though the blessing of the gracious outpouring of the spirit was to be confined to them, but because Jerusalem is used as a designation for the whole people, in accord with the custom of regarding the capital as the representative of the whole nation”;2 for it is clear enough from the whole context that, if the great penitential sorrow which is to be the fruit of this out pouring commences in Jerusalem as the centre, and with “the house of David,” which stands for the highest among the people, it extends to “the whole land” (Zec_12:12), and to all “the families of the people.”

“The spirit of grace and of supplication”—■■■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■, ruach ■hen v’thachnunim—is the Holy Spirit of God who conveys grace and brings our hearts into a condition of grace. Just as “The spirit of wisdom and understanding” is the spirit infusing wisdom and understanding, and “the spirit of counsel and might” is that same spirit imparting the gift of counsel to see what is to be done, and of might to do it, and “the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord,” is that same spirit infusing intimate acquaintance with God with awe at His infinite majesty; so “the spirit of grace” is that same spirit infusing grace and bringing into a state of favour with God, and a “spirit of supplication“ is that spirit calling out of the inmost soul the cry for a yet larger

measure of the grace already given.3 But the simplest way to understand the two kindred terms, ■hen and thachnunim “grace and supplication”—is to view them in the light of cause and effect, for grace is that which God bestows and the Holy Spirit conveys, and “supplication” is the fruit of that condition of heart, or soul, which that same spirit creates within us.

1 Isa_44:3; see also Eze_39:29, Eze_36:26-27.

2 Keil.

3 Pusey. The blessed effect of the outpouring of the spirit of grace and supplication on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem “in that day” will be that “they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and mourn.”

(a) They shall look (■■■■■■■■, v’hibitu) with no ordinary or mere passing look, but “with trustful hope and longing,” as one has paraphrased it. Among the other meanings which this particular verb has is that of “to regard,” “to consider,” “to contemplate,” “to look upon with pleasure.” It is used, for instance, in that remarkable story of the brazen serpent in Num_21:9, which, as it seems to me, was in the mind of Zechariah when he uttered this prophecy: “And Moses made a serpent of brass, and set it on a pole (or ‘the standard’), and it came to pass that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld it (or looked unto—■■■■■■■■, v’hibit), the serpent of brass, he lived.” With this same eager look of faith and hope shall Israel in that day behold and contemplate Him, who is the great antitype of the brazen serpent, and who was “lifted up” for us on the Cross, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life. It is this word also which is used in Num_12:8, as describing the beatific view of the very “form” or “similitude” of God, which it was the distinction and privilege of Moses above the other prophets to “behold.” Thus also, not “in a vision” or “in a dream,” but face to face, and with no longer any veil to hide His glory, shall Israel in that day “look upon” Him who came once in humiliation to suffer and die, but who shall be manifested now in the glory of His Father and with His holy angels.1 (b) “Unto Me,” or “Upon Me (■■■■■, elai). This sets forth the character and majesty of Him whom they shall behold as their great Deliverer, for the One who speaks throughout the chapter, as already

1 See also, for instance, Psa_34:5, “They looked unto Him and were lightened”; and Isa_51:1-2, “Look unto the Rock whence ye were hewn”; “Look unto Abraham,” etc.; where the same word is used to express the “look,” not only of faith, but of contemplation. observed, is none other than Jehovah, “which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him” (Zec_12:1); and who in Zec_12:10, “I will pour out the spirit of grace and of supplications.” This, as already observed above, is a great mystery comprehensible only to faith based on the Biblical revelation of the twofold nature of the Messiah; but when perceived it is very precious and beautiful.

“They shall look upon Me.” The Jewish nation has hitherto regarded faith in our Lord Jesus as irreconcilable with faith in God, and have conceived of Him as being in opposition to God. This was the chief ground of the blind hostility to Christ on the part of the scribes and Pharisees during His earthly ministry, and has continued to this day, not knowing that their hatred of Christ was in its essence nothing else than hatred of God, and their opposition to Him nothing else than a fighting against God. But, as Saul of Tarsus (whose experience and history are in many ways a foreshadowment of the history of his people in relation to Christ) was startled and surprised to

learn from that voice on his way to Damascus, “I am Jesus whom thou persecutest,” that those hated Nazarenes whom he was persecuting, even unto death, were one with Him who was now revealed to him as the risen and living Son of God, and that he who was touching them was touching “the apple of His eye”; so shall the Jewish nation in the day when the spirit of grace and of supplication is poured upon them, and “the eyes of the blind are opened” to behold the divine glory of their Messiah, be startled and surprised to discover that their having persecuted and “pierced” Him was equivalent to their having persecuted and pierced God, because of His being one with God, in a higher and deeper sense even than believers are with Christ. But just as the words, “they shall look unto Me,” set forth the essential oneness of the pierced One with Jehovah,

447 448 VISIONS AND PROPHECIES OF ZECHARIAH so does the sudden transition in the same verse from the first person to the third, and the words, “they shall mourn for Him” teach us that, as to His person, He is yet distinct from God. The same mystery and apparent paradox meet us in many other Old Testament scriptures which speak of the Messiah as “Jehovah” the “mighty God,” and yet as one sent by, and coming in the name of God, and is—a mystery which (as already stated above) is solved to all whose eyes have been opened to the Biblical doctrine of the Tri-unity of the blessed Godhead, and to the twofold nature of the promised Redeemer, who is perfect God and perfect Man—the Son of David and the Son of the Highest.

(c) “Whom they have pierced.” The verb ■■■■■, daqar, means “to pierce,” or “thrust through with a spear or lance,”1 and points to “the climax of our Saviour’s mortal sufferings” when, as the Gospel narrative bears witness, “one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and straightway there came out blood and water.”2

It was a Roman soldier who did the actual deed; Roman soldiers also were they who pierced His blessed brow with the crown of thorns, and His hands and feet with those cruel nails; but the guilt and responsibility for

1 See Num_25:7-8, where the same verb is used in connection with ■■■■■, “spear” or lance; the same verb is used also in Zec_13:3.

2 It has been urged that stress must not be laid on the literal fulfilment of this item in the prophecy as recorded in the Gospel narrative, since the prophet uses language in Zec_13:7 “which if its literal signification be insisted on, would imply death by the sword”; but this is a misapprehension. ■■■■■, “sword,” is used frequently, in a general way, as the instrument of death by violence, without in many cases defining that it would be brought about by being literally slain with the sword. In Psa_22:20, e.g., we read: “Deliver my soul from the sword (i.e., from death), my darling (my only one) from the power of the dog”; yet in the immediate connection we read: “They pierced My hands and My feet.” We take it then that in Zec_13:7 we have a prophecy of Messiah’s sufferings unto death in a general way, by the use of a figure well understood as having this signification, but that Zec_12:10 refers to the definite act in process of the infliction of the sufferings unto death on our Lord, on the literal fulfilment of which the Apostle John lays such emphasis (Joh_19:34-37). these actions will be brought home to the heart and conscience of the Jewish nation in that day, and they will then acknowledge that both directly, by delivering Him into the hands of the Gentiles, and indirectly, on account of their sins, it was they who pierced Him.

(d) “And they shall mourn for (or ‘over’) Him”—vesaphedhu alav—not only with the ordinary “mourning,” as those who mourn for the dead (in which sense the verb ■■■■■, saphad, is generally used), but with a deep and intense mourning, namely, “as one that mourneth for his only son” (or, literally, “with the mourning for an only one”), and “they shall be in bitterness for Him as one that is in bitterness for his first-born.” Mourning for an “only son” was proverbial as descriptive of the magnitude of the grief, as we read in Jer_6:26, “O daughter of my people, gird thee with sackcloth, and wallow thyself in ashes: make thee mourning as for an only son, most bitter lamentation.” And again in Amo_8:10, “I will make it as the mourning for an only son.” But not only on account of their proverbial use to express the intensity and bitterness of the sorrow and grief, are these names “the only one” and “first-born” introduced here in connection with Israel’s mourning over the Messiah whom they had pierced, they are peculiarly appropriate designations of Him who is “the First-born of every creature,” and of whom the apostle exclaims: “We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father full of grace and truth.” And He is not only the “first” and “only-begotten” as the Son of God, in relation to the Father, but as the Son of Man, and more particularly in relation to the Jewish nation. He was their child of promise upon whom the hopes and expectations of the nation had been centred through the centuries. He is the “only One” whom this nationally barren woman, who was betrothed unto Jehovah, had brought forth, as it were, miraculously, by the power of God. And it was ordained that He should be “the First-born among many brethren,” first and foremost to them who, according to the flesh, are “His own,” as well as in relation to men generally—and Him they have with wicked hands “pierced” and slain! No wonder that “in that day,” when the spirit of grace and supplication is poured upon them, and their eyes are open to behold Him, and to recognise the fearful national crime which they committed, to their own sorrow and hurt, they shall mourn over Him “with the mourning for an only one,” and shall be in bitterness for Him as he is in bitterness “who mourneth for his first-born.”

It is in that day of their deep sorrow and contrition that they shall, amid their broken-hearted sobs, utter that great national confession and lament contained in that wonderful chapter in Isaiah:

“He was despised, and rejected of men; a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their face He was despised; and we esteemed Him not. Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”

(e) And not only will the mourning be great and intense, it will also be universal and yet individual: “In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of the Shimeites apart, and their wives apart: all the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart.”

One or two points in these verses need explanation:

(1) Israel’s great penitential mourning over their Messiah is likened by the prophet for magnitude to “the mourning of Hadadrimmon1 in the valley of Megiddon.” The reference can be nothing else

than to the national mourning over the pious young king Josiah, who was slain by Pharaoh Necho “in the valley of Megiddon,” as recorded in 2 Kings 23:29-30, and more fully in 2Ch_35:20-27. His death was the greatest sorrow which had till then befallen Judah, inasmuch as he was “the last hope of the declining Jewish kingdom, and in his death the last gleam of the sunset of Judah faded into night.” In that great mourning for Josiah the prophet Jeremiah took part, and wrote dirges for it (2Ch_35:25), and the national lamentations over him continued and became “an ordinance” in Israel, which survived the seventy years’

1 “Hadadrimmon” was, according to Jerome, a city near Jezreel (“in the valley of Megiddo”), which in his day was called Maximianopolis, and has been identified by others with the site of the modern village of Rammaneh, or Rümani, in the same “valley,” or “plain”; but the identification is doubtful.

Hitzig, who first held that the reference might be to some mourning for Ahaziah, king of Judah, who was wounded by Jehu when the latter rebelled against Joram, and who fled to Megiddo, and died there (2Ki_9:27), afterwards, in his commentary, propounded the still more absurd view, which, however, has been adopted by some modern writers, i.e., that the mourning of Hadadrimmon refers to the mourning for the god Adonis, who, according to mythology, was slain by a boar, and whose orgies probably had their origin in Phoenicia. A plausible ground for the conjecture that Hadadrimmon, instead of being a place-name, might rather be the name of the object of mourning—that is, the god Adonis—is advanced by these critics, namely, that according to 2Ch_35:20 &c., Josiah, though mortally wounded in Megiddo, was brought to Jerusalem, where he died, and that the great mourning for him took place there. But to this it has been properly replied that “the mourning may be considered as having commenced at Hadadrimmon, where the good king received his deadly wound, even though the great national mourning took place in Jerusalem, whither his body was brought from the fatal field.”

Moreover, as it has been suggested, “the mourning of Hadadrimmon” may be explained as “the mourning over Hadadrimmon,” i.e., over the national calamity which took place there.

Other suggestions—such as that of Pressel, who considers that the mourning refers to the wailing of the mother of Sisera over her son, the great chieftain of the Canaanites, who was slain by Jael not far from Megiddo—are not worth examining. It is quite wonderful to what absurd theories and conjectures some scholars will resort when the simple and obvious sense of these prophecies is passed over. captivity and continued “to this day,” when the chronicles were closed. It was worthy, therefore, to be referred to by the prophet, and to be compared with the still greater and more bitter mourning of repentant Israel in the future.

(2) In the universal, yet individual, mourning which, commencing in Jerusalem, will spread throughout the whole land, four “families” are especially singled out as being conspicuous. Of these four, two are well known, namely, “the family of the house of David” and “the family of the house of Levi.” But who are meant by “the family of the house of Nathan” and “the family of Shimei” (or of “the Shimeites”)?

It would require a treatise to analyse the various conjectures and explanations which have been advanced on this point by Jewish and Christian commentators.

Let me in the briefest possible manner give here what seems to me the most satisfactory explanation. And first, we may say with certainty that “the family of the house of Nathan” does not

refer to the posterity of Nathan the prophet, as representing the prophetic order, as the Rabbis and some Christian writers have supposed, but to the family of Nathan, the son of David and brother of Solomon (2Sa_5:14), whose name figures also in the genealogy of our Lord in Luk_3:31. Likewise, “the family of the Shimeite” does not refer to the tribe of Simeon, which, according to rabbinic fiction, furnished the teachers of the nation;1 for in that case, apart from other considerations, the name would be differently written in the Hebrew,2 but refers to Shimei, the son of Gershon and grandson of Levi (Numbers 3:18). We have thus two families of the royal and two of the priestly line, and of these one stands for the

1 Jerome sums up the Jewish view, which he seems to have adopted, thus: “In David the regal tribe is included, i.e., Judah. In Nathan the prophetic order is described. Levi refers to the priests from whom the priesthood sprang. In Simeon the teachers of Israel are included, as companies of masters sprang from that tribe. He says nothing about the other tribes, as they had no special privilege or dignity.” But, as stated above, these conjectures rest on no historic basis of fact.

2 ■■■■■■■■■, Simonite—instead of as it is in the text—■■■■■■■. chief (David for the royal, and Levi for the priestly), and the other (Nathan for the royal, and Shimei for the priestly), for the subordinate families of their lines—as including and representing the whole—to indicate, as Hengstenberg suggests, that the mourning spoken of would pervade every family (of these lines) from the highest to the lowest. But though these, as the two aristocratic and privileged lines, the rulers and priests, who, alas! in times past often set an evil example to the whole nation, will now be foremost in their self-contrition and mourning over the great national sin, their example for good will now also be followed by all the rest of the people. This is expressed in the last verse of the chapter, which tells us that “all the families that remain shall mourn, every family apart, and their wives apart.” In the last sentence of the chapter, not only the magnitude and universality, but the depth and intensity, as well as the individual character of this unprecedented mourning, is once again described. It is strikingly pictured as a mourning which shall not only be manifested in public, but be participated in by each family apart. And not only are families spoken of as mourning apart from families, but individuals, compelled by the deep sorrow which shall overwhelm them, shall weep apart by themselves. This depicts a sorrow greater than any previous sorrow. Even husbands shall mourn apart from their wives, and wives apart from their husbands, because each individual man or woman will be overwhelmed with his or her own individual share in the guilt of having slain their Messiah.

It will thus be both a national and individual mourning at the same time, and no mere ceremonial lamentation, but a genuine sorrow of heart. “Each individual shall experience the grief so keenly as to desire to hide himself from the eyes of others”1—even from those nearest to them. The only one who will be able effectually to comfort them in this great mourning will be the Lord Himself, He over whom they shall mourn. And He shall comfort them

1 Wright. in that day as “him whom his mother comforteth,” and they “shall be comforted in Jerusalem.” When once this great but godly sorrow shall have accomplished its blessed end in working a repentance never to be repented of, He shall pour His consolations into their broken hearts, and give unto them the “oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.” Like Joseph to his brethren (in whom the history of Christ and Israel is depicted), He will say unto them: “As for you, ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good, to bring to

pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive: now, therefore, be not grieved nor angry with yourselves."1

We are done with the exposition of this great Messianic prediction. The ultimate literal fulfilment of it lies yet in the future, in the day for which we watch and pray, when our Lord Jesus shall, according to His promise, appear in His glory, and the Jewish nation shall literally look upon Him whom they have pierced, and be, as it were, "born in a day." But there is a forestalment, so to say, in the fulfilment of this prophecy in the case of the individual even now. "And thus," to quote the words of an honoured Hebrew Christian brother and true master of Israel, "every Jew who, by the grace of God since the Day of Pentecost, has been brought to Christ, fulfils this prediction; he looks unto Him whom he has pierced. It is the look of repentance; for only a sight of the crucified Jesus shows us our sin and grief. It is the look of supplication and faith; for He only can bless and save, and He saves all who believe. It is the look of peace and adoration; for His love is infinite, unchanging, and omnipotent. It is the look which never ceases and never ends; for now the veil is taken away, and we with open face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory."2 And as it is with the individual Jew, so it is with the individual Gentile. Yes, thanks be to God, as we all, 1 Gen_45:5, Gen_50:20.

2 Adolph Saphir. whether Jew or Gentile, had our share in the guilt of Christ's crucifixion because of our common sin, so also may all have their share in the salvation which comes through a penitent look of faith on Him whom we have pierced. The Cross has been from the beginning, and must continue to be, the centre of all true Christian devotion, "the security against passion, the impulse to self-denial, the parent of zeal for souls, the incentive to love. This has struck the rock, that it gushed forth in tears of penitence; this, the strength and vigour of hatred of sin—to look to Him whom our sins have pierced."

Let us all then look to Him for our salvation, and have our gaze fixed upon Him for our sanctification, and so have no occasion to dread that awful day when "He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they which pierced Him: and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen" (Rev_1:7).

4.20. Chapter 18 - The Opened Fountain

CHAPTER XVIII THE OPENED FOUNTAIN AND ITS CLEANSING POWER (Zechariah 13:1-6) In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness. And it shall come to pass in that day, saith Jehovah of hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered: and also I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land. And it shall come to pass that when any shall yet prophesy, then his father and his mother that begat him shall say unto him, Thou shalt not live; for thou speakest lies in the name of Jehovah: and his father and his mother that begat him shall thrust him through when he prophesieth. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision, when he prophesieth; neither shall they wear a hairy mantle to deceive: but he shall say, I am no prophet, I am a tiller of the ground; for I have been a bondman from my youth. And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds between thine arms? Then shall he answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.

CHAPTER XVIII THE first six verses of the 13th chapter (Zec_13:1-6) stand in closest connection with the great prophecy in Zechariah 12:1-14.

There the prophet depicts in the last verses the great national repentance and sorrow of Israel over Him “whom they have pierced,” as the result of the pouring out upon them of the spirit of grace and supplication. Here we see how that same blessed Spirit, who shall have wrought in them this godly penitential sorrow on account of their great national sin, shall also bring them into the experience of forgiveness, and open their eyes to the provision God has made for their justification and cleansing.

“In that day”—the goal of prophetic vision in relation to the nation, the great “day” of Israel’s national atonement when “the iniquity of that land shall be removed in one day,”1 and when a whole nation shall, as it were, “be born at once,”2 “shall a fountain be opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.” The word employed here for “fountain” is ■■■■■, maqor, which, according to its etymological meaning, describes a place “dug” out,3 and perhaps originally standing for “well,” or artificially made “cistern,” came to mean spring or fountain. It is the substantive used in Psa_36:9, “For with Thee is the fountain of life”; and in Jer_2:13 and Jer_17:13 it is used as the figure of Jehovah Himself, “the Fountain of living waters.”

Here in Zechariah 13:1 &c., however, it is not primarily as the

1 Zec_3:9.

2 Isa_66:8.

3 From the verb ■■■, qur, “to bore,” “dig,” or “scoop out.” source of life and refreshment, but as the means of purification from sin and moral uncleanness, that the figure of the fountain is

introduced. The background of the figurative language in this prophetic scripture are the Divine appointments in the Levitical ritual. The primary allusion may be to the water used for the purification of the Levites on their consecration, which is called ■■■■■■ ■■■, mei ■hattath, literally, “sin water” or “water of expiation.”1

It is this Levitical ordinance which was very probably also in the mind of the priestly prophet Ezekiel in his great prophecy concerning Israel’s future in Eze_36:25, “And I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you.” In our passage in Zechariah, however, the figure is a much stronger one. Instead of water being sprinkled upon the defiled, a fountain of cleansing water is opened, in which the guilty may wash and be clean. But the words le-■hattath u-leniddah—“for sin and for uncleanness”—seem almost an echo of Numbers 19:9, where these two words are used. The ashes of the red heifer, we read, shall be laid up in a clean place without the camp, “lemai niddah, ■hattath hi■,” literally, “for water of purification, a means of removing sin it is.” The Revised Version renders the words “a water of separation; it is a sin offering.” The fact is that ■hattath means “sin,” and also “offering for sin,” or “means of removing sin.” The same is true of the word niddah, translated “uncleanness” in Zec_13:1-2, and “separation” in the Authorised and Revised Versions in Num_19:9, which means primarily that kind of ceremonial uncleanness which requires “separation,”2 but denotes also the means of the removal of this particular uncleanness.

But, to repeat, it is not for the purification from bodily, or ceremonial uncleanness, that the fountain shall then be opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of

1 Num_8:7.

2 Lev_7:2, Leviticus 15:19-24.

Jerusalem—which in this passage also, as in Zec_12:10, represents the whole nation but for purification from the guilt and the moral defilement of sin, of which bodily uncleanness is often used in the Bible as a figure. Thus, for instance, in Psa_51:7 David prays: “Purge me (literally, if one may invent an expression, ‘unsin me’ or ‘rid me of my sin’) with hyssop”—which is a distinct allusion to the cleansing of the leper from his bodily plague,1 in connection with which a Jewish commentator rightly observes: “What has befallen the soul is like unto the plague of leprosy in the body.”2 To pass from the figure to the reality, from the shadow to the substance, the “fountain” which shall then be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem for the national and individual cleansing from guilt and sin, is nothing else than the blood of their Messiah whom they have pierced. Hence, those are not far wrong who trace a connection between ■■■■■, maqor (“fountain”) in Zec_13:1 and ■■■■■, daqar (“pierced”) in Zechariah 12:10, and say that the opening of the fountain took place when the Roman soldier with his spear pierced our Saviour’s side, and “there came out of it blood and water”—though the basis for the connection is not in philology (the root of the two words not being the same though of cognate significance), but in fact.

Yes, Israel “in that day” shall experience the wonderful and everlasting efficacy of the blood of Jesus their Messiah, God’s Son, which cleanseth from all sin. In quite another and blessed sense shall that fearful prayer once uttered in ignorance, “His blood be on us and our children,” which has haunted the Jewish conscience through all the centuries since, and has, like the blood of Abel,

brought down the curse of Cain on the whole nation, be fulfilled “in that day.” It shall be upon them for life and not for death, for cleansing and not for defilement.

They shall experience then the truth of the inspired words in Heb_9:13, that “if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, 1 See Lev_14:1-9.

2 Aben Ezra. sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge our1 conscience from dead works to serve the living God.”

But, it may be objected, if it is the blood of Christ which constitutes the cleansing stream which shall wash away Israel’s “sins and uncleanness,” then the fountain was “opened” nineteen centuries ago on Calvary; whereas this is a prophecy of the national purification of Israel which is to take place “in that day” which is yet future. For answer, I repeat what I stated in my notes on Zec_3:9, “I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day”—namely, that what is here predicted will assuredly be fulfilled only on the ground and as a blessed consequence of “the day of Golgotha,” when Christ, through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot unto God; but actually and experimentally the great “day” of Israel’s national repentance and of cleansing will take place when the spirit of grace and of supplications shall be poured out upon them, and they shall look upon Him whom they have pierced. The cleansing fountain for sin and for uncleanness was opened once and for all when “the Lamb of God” was slain and His precious blood shed; but to the sinner actually and experimentally the Day of Calvary is the day his eyes are opened to the true meaning to himself of the great redeeming work there accomplished, and when the Spirit of God applies Jesus’ blood and righteousness and high-priestly intercession to his own need. Thus “in that day” it will be with Israel nationally. The fountain will be opened then “to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem,” because “then the eyes of the blind shall be opened”2 for the first time to behold the Lamb of God, and to perceive the atoning value and efficacy of the offering which He once made for the sins of many.

Blessed be God! the fountain once opened shall never

1 Many ancient authorities read “our,” and not “your,” as in the Authorised and Revised Versions.

2 Isa_35:5. be closed, for the force of the Hebrew words1 which are used, is not only “shall be opened,” but “shall remain open”—ever free and accessible to all, and everlastingly efficacious for “sin and for uncleanness.” From the inward cleansing of the people from the guilt and moral defilement of sin, the prophet passes in Zec_13:2-6 to the cleansing of the land and the purification of the environment in which the forgiven and sanctified people shall then live and move. Nothing that defileth shall be permitted in the restored Jewish state in the day when “Jehovah shall inherit Judah, His portion in the holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again.” The two chief sources of moral pollution and the great besetting sin of Israel in the land were idolatry and false prophecy. These shall be utterly purged out of their midst. “And it shall come to pass in that day, saith Jehovah of hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered: and I will also cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land.” Not only shall the idols—the objects of idolatrous worship—themselves be “cut off,” but their very names and remembrance shall perish in the land; and not only shall false prophets disappear, but the unclean spirit—the author and inspirer of false prophecy as well as the

instigator of idolatry—shall be cast out from the midst of the people, whose ears shall then be circumcised to hearken only to words of truth and purity, and whose heart's love and worship shall be centred in Jehovah alone. The evil spirit is particularly designated as the ruach hattumah ("the spirit of uncleanness"), in contrast to "the spirit of grace and of supplications" in Zec_12:10, who is pre-eminently the Ruach Ha-qodesh—the "Holy Spirit"—because He is the representative and revealer of the blessed Godhead, whose chief attribute is that of holiness, and who dwells in the midst of His people to sanctify them and to make them holy, because Jehovah their God is holy.

Some have argued from the mention of idols and false

1 ■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■, Yeeyhe niphtach. prophecy in this passage that these last chapters of Zechariah must have been written in the pre-exilic period when these two great national sins were still prevalent in the land. But there is no real foundation, in fact, for this any more than for the other "proofs" of a pre-exilic authorship of these chapters, as I have already shown elsewhere.1 In reference to this particular point, though it be true that idolatry, and false prophecy, which was usually associated with it, did not exist any more in their gross form among the Jewish people after the Babylonian captivity, such passages as Neh_6:10; Ezr_9:1; Neh_13:23-24, etc., which speak of the lying prophets which existed at that time, and of marriages contracted, even by priests, with Canaanitish and other heathen women, whose children could not even speak the Jewish language—show very clearly, as Keil and others point out, that "the danger of falling back into idolatry was not a remote one." The range of the prophetic vision, however, in the six last chapters of Zechariah does not terminate with the mere immediate future, but finds its goal in the time of the end, when the great sins of idolatry and false prophecy shall reach their climax in the worship of the beast and his image, and in the "unclean spirits"2 which shall go forth upon the earth to deceive the anti-Christian nations. The four verses which follow are an amplification of the announcement in Zec_13:2 that idolatry and false prophecy would be utterly exterminated from the land "in that day." They set forth in realistic—we might almost say dramatic—form the great change which will then come over the Jewish nation, and their zeal against those sins which formerly were the chief causes of their national ruin. The 3rd verse (Zec_13:3) introduces an hypothetical case: "And it shall come to pass that, when any shall yet prophesy, then his father and his mother that begat him shall say unto him, Thou shalt not live: for thou speakest lies in the Name of 1 See the introduction to the second part of this book.

2 2Th_2:4; Rev_13:1-6; Rev_16:13-14. the Lord: and his father and his mother that begat him shall thrust him through when he prophesieth." The allusion is to Deu_13:6-10, where we read: "If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, . . . thine eye shall not pity him; neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him, but thou shalt surely kill him: thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death." The same injunction holds true in relation to the false prophet who either speaks "presumptuously" or falsely in the Name of Jehovah, or in the name of other gods. "That same prophet shall die."1

Now the prophet, to illustrate the zeal for Jehovah and His truth which shall then characterise converted and regenerated Israel, supposes such a case. Even if it should be their own son who should presumptuously "prophesy," either to entice them from their allegiance to Jehovah or to spread error in His Name, his own parents will not spare or pity him; but his father and his mother

that begat him shall thrust him through (ud' qaruhu—the verb is the same as in Zec_12:10 for "pierced") when he prophesieth (■■■■■■■■■■ b'hinnabho), which may mean either when he is in the act of prophesying, or, "because of his prophesying." Zeal for Jehovah and His law will be so strong as to overmaster even parental affection; the people themselves would stop short at nothing in order utterly to exterminate the evil should it be possible once again to assert itself. And not only will false prophets no longer be tolerated in their midst, the pretended prophets themselves will be ashamed of their calling. "And it shall come to pass in that day that the prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision when he prophesieth; neither shall they wear a hairy mantle to deceive." "In former days the false prophets had been bold enough to assert their claims even in the very face of the true prophets raised up by Jehovah. Now, popular feeling will run so strongly in an opposite direction that

1 Deu_18:20.

465 466 VISIONS AND PROPHECIES OF ZECHARIAH persons will be ashamed of making any pretence to supernatural visions, and confounded when charged with having made such assumptions. Instead of being anxious to be considered as prophets, they will rather seek in every way to avoid the reputation of such a dangerous and unpopular profession."1 The "hairy mantle" was the distinguishing garb of some of the great prophets. Some (as Koehler) suppose it to have been made of untanned skins; others think it was a garment formed of camel's hair, such as that worn by John the Baptist. Thus, Elijah was recognised by Ahaziah when described by his messengers as "a hairy man, and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins."2 The "rough garment" was not only the outward sign of "the strict course of life and abstinence from worldly pleasures"—"the frugality alike in food and attire," which marked the true prophets of Jehovah—but, also (on certain great occasions, at any rate), it was the symbol of grief and mourning for the sins of the nation, and the consequent judgments which they were commissioned to announce. In the case of the false prophets it was a cloak of hypocrisy, and was assumed "in order to lie," or "deceive"; for, though outwardly they may be clothed like "sheep," or even like the true prophets of God, inwardly they are "ravening wolves." The prophet having shown the opposition which would be exhibited by the Jewish nation to the false prophets, who in the past were the chief cause of their national undoing—first, by the hypothetical instance of a son who should venture to prophecy falsely being slain by his own parents; and secondly, by the general statement that the pretended prophets would themselves be ashamed of their evil profession and seek in every way to avert suspicion that they ever had to do with such evil practices, with a view to deceive the people—proceeds in the next two verses still more fully to illustrate the condition of the time. In a few but graphic touches he pictures a dramatic

1 Dr. Wright.

2 2Ki_1:8. incident. One who is suspected of being a false prophet is suddenly challenged by a zealous Israelite. He, however, vehemently answers, "I am no prophet"; far from ever having professed to be an inspired teacher of the people, "I am a tiller of the ground (i.e., belonging to the humblest class of the people), and I have been made a bondsman1 (or, 'a man has bought me') from my youth." A certain similarity has been pointed out between the words of this false prophet and those of Amos, when in answer to Amaziah, the priest of the idolatrous worship of Bethel, who warned him to flee to Judah and prophesy there, but to cease prophesying in Bethel, because it

was the chief sanctuary and a royal residence of the kings of Israel, the prophet said: “I was (or ‘am’) no prophet, neither was I a prophet’s son, but I was a herdman, and a dresser of sycamore trees.” But the purport of the two passages is very different. Here, in our passage in Zechariah, the false prophet, when accused with exercising the functions of a prophet, utterly denies the charge; but Amos, though he disclaims having been a prophet by profession and training, is nevertheless conscious of a direct call from God, and boldly asserts his Divine mission in the words which immediately follow: “Jehovah took me from following the flock, and Jehovah said unto me, Go, prophesy unto My people Israel.”2 Far, therefore, from being intimidated by the threats of Amaziah, or his royal master Jeroboam II., he proceeds: “Now therefore hear thou the word of Jehovah.”

1 ■■■■■■■■■—hiqnnani. The verb ■■■■■ in the Kal means to “originate,” “acquire,” “possess”; but since it occurs nowhere else in the Hebrew Bible in the Hiphil there is great difficulty in determining its exact force in this sentence. Some take it as a stronger Kal, “to purchase,” others “to sell.” Some taking it as a denominative from ■■■■■■■, miqneh, “possession,” deduce the same meaning, i.e., “to buy.”

Rashi and Kimchi derive hiqnnani from “miqneh” in the sense of a flock, and translate “made me a shepherd, or set me to keep his flock.” But in the words of W. H. Lowe: “Whatever be the exact meaning of the word it is clear that the person accused here of assuming prophetic powers disavows all such assumption, and claims to be looked on as a simple rustic.”

2 Amo_7:10-14. But to return to the dramatic incident in our passage in Zechariah. Not easily put off by the vehement protestations of the false prophet that he is not at all likely to have performed the functions of a prophet, seeing he is only a simple peasant—in fact, a slave from his youth—his interrogator proceeds: “What are these wounds between thine hands? And he shall say (They are) those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.” The two clauses in Zec_13:6 are to be understood as “speech and reply, or question and answer.” It was very probably these makkoth—“wounds”—which the zealous challenger of the false prophet had observed which first aroused his suspicion. He evidently regards them as self-inflicted on his person in order to arouse his prophetic frenzy, or in connection with idolatrous rites. “It must not be forgotten,” to quote the words of another, “that such rites were sometimes observed even where Jehovah was acknowledged to be the highest object of adoration. In the idolatrous court of Ahab there were hundreds of false prophets who were wont to prophesy in the Name of Jehovah,1 and yet at the same court priests and prophets of Baal cut themselves with knives and lancets until blood gushed out upon them,2 in order to procure answers from their god.” That such practices were common among Israelites in the days of apostasy is plain from the passage referred to, as well as from the prohibition of similar doings in Deu_14:1, in cases of mourning for the dead, which were employed in later times by the Israelites.3 The expression “between thy hands”1 is an idiom which may mean on the palms of the hands, or on the arms, or on the chest between the hands; but the explanation of Rashi that it means “between thy shoulders,” where persons are wont to be scourged, is a very unlikely one. There is difference of opinion among commentators as to the meaning of the answer of the false prophet in the second half of the verse. It greatly depends on the mean- 1 1Ki_22:5-7, 1Ki_22:11-12.

2 1Ki_18:28.

3 Jer_16:6, Jer_41:5. ing we attach to the word ■■■■■■■■■—rendered “of my friends,” in the Authorised Version, but which might more properly be translated “my lover.” Now Hengstenberg and others understood the “lovers” to signify idols, and regard the answer as a humble confession on the part of the false prophet who is thus detected, either that his wounds were received during some idolatrous rites, or, though self-inflicted, he was only the instrument—the real authors of the wounds beings his “lovers,” namely, the idols whom he worshipped. But I agree with Koehler, Keil, Dr. Wright, and others, that, though it be true that the special conjugation of this verb (piel) is used in other cases of dishonourable love, and might therefore be figuratively used of idolatry and idols, “there is nothing in the form of the verb to render that meaning necessary. Intensity of love is all that is expressed in the word; and the expression might, as far as the form is concerned, be used with reference to parents or any friends, whether good or bad.”

It is very probable, therefore, that far from being a humble confession of his guilt, “this answer is also nothing but an evasion, and that he simply pretends that the marks were scars left by the chastisements which he received when a boy in the house of either loving parents, or some other loving relations or friends.”1 This seems to me more in accord with the context, and illustrates the general statement that the false prophets would in that day themselves be ashamed of their former evil profession, and when detected would stop short of no falsehood in order to avert or dispel suspicion.

1 Keil. Kimchi explains as follows: “He shall say these wounds are not on account of prophecy, but my friends wounded and chastised me because I was abandoned, and was not industrious in cultivating the land in my youth; and they beat me that I should cease from the profligacy of young men, and should set to my work. And the reason of the wounds being in the hands is, that they used to bind his hands and feet that he should not go out.”

4.21. Chapter 19 - The Smitten Shepherd

CHAPTER XIX THE SMITTEN SHEPHERD AND THE SCATTERED SHEEP (Ezekiel 13:7-9)

Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, and against the man that is My Fellow, saith Jehovah of hosts: smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered; and I will turn My hand upon the little ones. And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith Jehovah, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part into the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on My Name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is My people; and they shall say, Jehovah is my God.

CHAPTER XIX

INTRODUCTORY WITH Zechariah 13:7 begins a new section in this last great prophecy (Zechariah 12:1-14, Zechariah 13:1-9, Zechariah 14:1-21), which has for its main theme the judgment by means of which Israel will be finally purged and transformed into the holy people of Jehovah. It is in the first instance an expansion and enlargement of what has gone before. But, whereas the preceding section (Zechariah 12:1-14, Zechariah 13:1-6) announces how the Lord will protect Israel and Jerusalem against the pressure of the world-powers, how He will smite their enemies, and not only endow His people with miraculous power which ensures their victory, but also by pouring out His spirit of grace and of supplications upon them, lead them to a knowledge of the guilt they have incurred by putting the Messiah to death, and to repentance and renovation of life; the second half (Zechariah 13:7-9, Zechariah 14:1-21) depicts the judgment which will fall on Jerusalem itself, by means of which the ungodly shall be cut off, and the righteous remnant and the land itself be purified and made fit to be the centre of God’s kingdom on the earth. This second half is divided again into two parts, the former of which (Zec_13:7-9) gives a summary of the contents, whilst the latter (Zec_14:1-21.) expands it into fuller detail.1 THE EXPOSITION From the false prophet “wounded in the house of his friends,” or “lovers,” upon whom his attention had been fixed in the verses immediately preceding, the Spirit of God abruptly turns the prophetic gaze of Zechariah on to 1 Condensed from the valuable remarks of Keil. another and altogether different figure, who is now made to pass before his vision, and whose experience, if not foreshadowed, is at least suggested by the treatment which had been meted out to the false prophet. He was the true prophet, and much more than a prophet, but He also was “wounded,” yea, “smitten” even unto death, in the house of His friends (i.e., “His own” nation), who in their blind and ungodly zeal even thought that they rendered God a service in slaying the Prince of Life; because, having become alienated in their hearts from God, they did not recognise Him Who is the very “image of the invisible God,” and charged Him with blasphemy, because He claimed to speak to them in the Name of God, as one who is “equal with God.” But this great national crime, which has occasioned them unparalleled sorrow and suffering, was nevertheless overruled of God to the greatest good for the world as a whole, and is the very ground of Israel’s future national redemption. The slaying of the Messiah, therefore, which, in Zec_12:10-14, is viewed as being the act of the Jewish nation, of which they shall yet repent with such deep and godly sorrow, is in the passage now before us

described as an act of God. “Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, and against the man that is My Fellow.” This aspect of Messiah’s sufferings and death, namely, that they were inflicted upon Him by God in order to make His soul “an offering for sin,” is set forth more fully in Isa_53:10., where we read that “it pleased Jehovah to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief,” etc. It was indeed by the hand of man that “He was led as a lamb to the slaughter”; but, “human malice acting freely” could do no more than what “His hand and His counsel had fore ordained to come to pass.”1 Yes, “the envy and hatred of Satan, the blind fury of the chief priests, the contempt of Herod, the guilty cowardice of Pilate, freely accomplished that death which God had before decreed for the salvation of the world.”2

1 Act_4:28.

2 Pusey. But let us look more carefully at this remarkable passage: “O sword, awake!” (■herebh uri)—the sword being addressed as a person, and called upon to rouse itself, as it were, from sleep in order to execute Divine justice.1 But upon whom shall it fall? Not, in this instance, upon the wicked and the ungodly, but, mystery of mysteries! upon Him who is not only absolutely innocent and holy, but who stands in the nearest and closest relationship to Jehovah. This would be the most inexplicable thing in God’s moral government of the universe were it not for the wonderful counsel of God in the salvation of man revealed in the Scriptures, according to which the Messiah willingly becomes the Lamb of God in order to save a lost world, and is “wounded (lit, ‘pierced through’) for our transgressions, bruised (or ‘crushed’) for our iniquities,” and “pours out His soul unto death,” in order that sinners might not only be saved from the penalty of their sin, but obtain eternal life.

“Against My Shepherd”—Jehovah Himself is “the Shepherd of Israel,” but He fulfils all that is implied in this relationship and office mediately, in and through the Messiah. This is fully set forth in Ezekiel 34:1-31, where, after announcing that He will Himself “seek” and “save,” “heal” and “strengthen,” “feed” and “satisfy,” His now scattered flock, He says: “I will set up one shepherd over them, and He shall feed them, even my servant David” (whom the Jewish commentators themselves identify with the Messiah, “David’s greater Son”). “He shall feed them, and He shall be their Shepherd.” God, therefore, calls Him “My Shepherd,” for He is not only specially called and appointed by Him to this office, but because He is in the fullest sense His Representative, in and through whom the shepherd relationship between God and His people is realised.

1 Compare for a similar personification of the sword of Jehovah Jer_47:6-7. As already explained in a note on Zec_12:10, the sword is used in a general way as an emblem of death, or as a weapon used for killing, and is not intended to describe the manner of Messiah’s death. The unique and peculiar relationship between this “Shepherd” and Jehovah is fully brought out in the words which follow: ■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■ (■al gebher ■amithi)—“the man that is my Fellow.” The word ■■■■■■ (■amith) is found elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible only in Leviticus. It seems to be a substantive, and denotes “fellowship,” “neighbourship,” in the abstract. But the only other place in the Hebrew Bible where this word is found, namely, in Leviticus, it is used only as the synonym of ■■■ (“brother”), in the concrete sense of the nearest one.1 The two words gebher (“man”) and “■amithi” (“my Fellow”) must therefore be regarded as apposites, and have been properly so rendered in the English Bible.

Some rationalistic writers have sought to identify the smitten Shepherd in this passage with “the foolish shepherd” in Zec_11:15-17, who is permitted to destroy the flock in punishment for their rejection of the Good Shepherd, and who is himself in the end smitten with a sword on his right arm and his right eye.2 If the expression, “My Shepherd,” stood alone, there might be some slight plausibility for this view, for the “foolish,” or evil shepherd is, in a sense, also raised up of God as a scourge on the “sheep of slaughter” after their rejection of the Good Shepherd; but the further description of the Shepherd in this passage as gebher ■amithi—“the man who is my Fellow,” or “my nearest one”—implies much more than mere appointment to this office by Jehovah. More also than mere “unity or community of vocation,” or that he is so styled because he had to feed the flock like Jehovah, and as His representative.

“No owner of a flock, or lord of a flock, would call a hired or purchased shepherd his ■amith. And so God would not apply this epithet to any godly or ungodly man whom He might have appointed shepherd over a nation.

1 Comp. Lev_25:15. It occurs altogether eleven times in Leviticus. Pusey observes: “It stands alone in the dialects, having probably been formed by Moses to express more than “neighbour” “our common nature,” as we speak.”

2 See the exposition of that passage, page 414, &c. The idea of nearest one (or fellow) involves not only similarity in vocation, but community of physical or spiritual descent, according to which he whom God calls His neighbour cannot be a mere man, but can only be one who participates in the Divine nature, or is essentially Divine. The Shepherd of Jehovah, whom the sword is to smite, is therefore no other than the Messiah, who is also identified with Jehovah in Zec_12:10; or the Good Shepherd, who says of Himself, ‘I and My Father are one’ (Joh_10:30).”

No, the Shepherd of this passage is the Good Shepherd, who, in Zec_11:4-14, is mysteriously identified with Jehovah, the same over whom the nation will mourn with a deep universal mourning in the day when the spirit of grace and of supplication is poured upon them, and their eyes are opened to perceive that in piercing Him they pierced Jehovah.1 The Jews accused our Lord Jesus of blasphemy, because He claimed not only to have come from God, but that He was “equal with God”; or because when speaking of Himself as “the Good Shepherd” who layeth down His life for the sheep, He said (with probable allusion to this very passage in Zechariah): “I and My Father are one.”

It was indeed a mystery passing mere human comprehension how this could be true of a man who stood in their midst. But this mystery faces us, not only in the pages of the New Testament, but in the inspired Scriptures of the prophets. There, too, the promised Redeemer is depicted as a babe born in Bethlehem, “whose goings forth are from everlasting,”2 “a child born” in the midst of the Jewish nation, whose name is “Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Father of Eternity, Prince of Peace,”3 a son of David, yet Jehovah Tzidkenu,4 a “man,” and yet Jehovah’s “Fellow,” or equal. This mystery, like others in the pages of the Old and New Testaments, can be solved only by faith in things which are revealed, to the knowledge of

1 Zec_12:10.

2 Mic_5:2.

3 Isa_9:6.

4 Jer_23:6. which man can never attain by a mere process of reasoning. But when thus laid hold of with a pure heart and in childlike simplicity, we are brought also to understand that the doctrine of the twofold nature of the Messiah—the fact that He is Man according to His human nature and, according to His Divine nature “God blessed for ever,” is a necessary part in the Divine philosophy of Redemption unfolded in the Scriptures, for it is only a Divine Saviour who could redeem man from sin and death; only one in whose person the human and the Divine meet who can be the true Mediator between God and man, in and through whom the broken fellowship between heaven and earth, between the Holy God and fallen man, can be fully restored. Only as man, and one who in all points was tempted even as we are, could He become the compassionate High Priest touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and able with a perfect human sympathy to enter into all our griefs and sorrows; but only as the Holy One, who Himself was pure from sin the everlasting Son of the Father in whom dwelt “the fulness of the Godhead bodily,” could He effectually succour and deliver us, and lift us out of our own innate wretchedness and sin.

Therefore, this doctrine of the twofold nature of the Messiah, which to the unbelieving is such an occasion of stumbling, is to the child of God a source of unspeakable comfort, and an occasion for unceasing praise. But this is somewhat of a digression. To return to the passage immediately before us, it is interesting to observe that Jewish commentators themselves have admitted that the word “■amithi” (“my Fellow”) implies equality with God; “only since they own not Him who was God and Man they must interpret it of a false claim on the part of man,” overlooking that it is God Himself who thus speaks of the shepherd of his text.1

1 Aben Ezra (1088-1177) interprets it of the Gentile kings, who in their arrogance are styled Divine, and thus called themselves “God’s fellows.” Kimchi adopts the same interpretation, adding, “thinks himself my Fellow.” Rabbi The immediate consequence of the smiting of the Shepherd is that “the sheep shall be scattered” or, as the Hebrew verb more accurately expresses it, “that the sheep may be scattered.” For, although the slaying of the Messiah is (as stated above) overruled of God to the eventual gathering and blessing, not only of the Jewish nation, but of those many millions of “other sheep” from among the Gentiles, who are, as the result of Messiah’s death, brought into the one fold—yet the fact of the removal by a violent death, as the direct consequence of national sin and rebellion against God, of Him who was appointed to be their Shepherd, could not but bring calamity on the flock. And this—the consequent disaster which it would bring on the people—is the primary thought associated with the slaying of the Messiah in this particular passage. It announces the fact that Jehovah will scatter the flock by smiting the shepherd: “That is to say, He will give it up to the misery and destruction to which a flock without a shepherd is exposed.” The flock which is to be thus “scattered” is neither the human race nor the Christian Church, as some commentators would have us think, but the Jewish nation, or those which the Good Shepherd was appointed to feed, according to Zec_11:1-14, but who, because of their wilful obduracy, are designated “sheep of slaughter.”

It was primarily fulfilled when, after the crucifixion of our Lord, “the people of the prince that shall come”1 that is, the Romans—destroyed the city and the sanctuary,

Izaak of Troki, in the Chizzuk Emunah, interprets the whole of the King of Ishmael, “called also the King of Turkey,” who in his pride and greatness of his heart “accounts himself like God.” This is a

modification and enlargement of the interpretation given by Abrabanel, who explains the words “My Shepherd” of Mohammed, and the words “the man my Fellow” of our Lord Jesus, in a bitter controversial spirit, thus: The words, “the Man my Fellow,” are spoken of Jesus the Nazarene, for, according to the sentiment of the children of Edom (i.e., the Christians) and their faith, He was the Son of God, and of the same substance, and therefore He is called, according to their words, “the Man my Fellow,” overlooking the fact pointed out above that it is not man but Jehovah Himself who calls Him “My Shepherd” and “My Fellow.”

1 Dan_9:26. and brought about the new and more universal phase of the dispersal of the Jewish people among all the nations of the earth, which is continued to this day. But while this terrible judgment would fall on the nation, a little remnant would remain the object of His compassion and care. This is expressed in the words ■■■■■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■ (vehashibhothi yadi al hatsoarim)—“I will turn My hand upon (or ‘back upon’) the little (or ‘small’ ones).” The idiomatic phrase, “to turn (or ‘bring back’) the hand over a person,” is usually used in connection with the infliction of judgment; as, for instance, in Amo_1:8, “I will turn My hand over (or ‘against’ Ekron”; or Psa_81:14, “I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned My hand over (‘against’) their adversaries.” But I agree with Keil, Hitzig, Dr. Wright, and others, that the phrase is used here in a good sense, namely, that God will turn His hand upon “the little ones,” for salvation, though that salvation may be brought about by means of chastisement. It occurs in this sense in Isa_1:25, “in relation to the grace which the Lord will manifest towards Jerusalem by purifying it from its dross”; and it is used here in Zechariah 13:1-9, also in that same sense as Zec_13:8-9 clearly show, according to which the judgment which is to come upon Israel in consequence of the Shepherd being smitten, will only be the cause of ruin to the greater portion of the nation, whereas it will bring salvation to the remnant. The particular form of the word translated “little ones” (tsoarim) does not occur elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible. Its true signification is, “those who appear as little” “those who make themselves small, or,” the patient, the humble ones.1

They are to be identified with “the poor of the flock” of Zec_11:7, namely, the poor and righteous in the nation who suffer oppression from the godless majority.

1 ■■■■■■■■ is not equivalent to the adjective ■■■■■■■■■. It is the active participial form of the verb ■■■■■, and is found only in this passage. The prophetic message, then, in the whole of Zec_13:7 is briefly this: The Shepherd would be smitten on account of the sin of the people, who would in consequence be scattered, but Jehovah would remember in mercy a little remnant of the flock, namely, the poor in spirit, the humble ones who are little in their own eyes, and who give heed to the word of the Lord.1 The prophecy finds its fulfilment in Christ: “The Shepherd was slain”; as another writer truly observes: “When Jesus of Nazareth was crucified—an act ascribed in the New Testament no less to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, on the one hand, than to the malice of men on the other.” And there, in the same inspired narrative which tells of the smiting of the Shepherd, we read also of another fulfilment of the scattering of the flock, which is, so to say, additional to the primary meaning of the prophecy, but is not altogether unconnected with the scattering of Israel and the saving of the remnant. On the night of His betrayal, after He had partaken for the last time of the Paschal Supper, and transformed it to be henceforth the memorial supper of His death “till He come,” our Lord Jesus said to His disciples: “All ye shall be offended in Me this night, for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. But, after I am raised up, I will go before you into Galilee.”2

The reference is to this passage in Zechariah, though the quotation is a free one, and does not in every detail correspond with the words in the Hebrew. The meaning of the passage is, however, preserved intact. Where the words are slightly modified, it is (as is usually the case with free quotations from the Old Testament in the pages of the New) designedly so, with a view to throw a new, or additional, meaning on Old Testament prophecy in the light of the fuller unfolding of God's purpose brought about by the actual advent of the Messiah. Thus, the address to the sword to awake and smite, resolves itself in the quota-

1 Zec_11:11.

2 Mat_26:31-32; Mar_14:27 (R.V.). tion into its actual meaning, "I will smite." The offending of the disciples took place when Jesus was taken prisoner, and they all fled. This flight was a prelude to the dispersion of the flock at the death of the Shepherd. The closing words of our Lord, "I will go before you into Galilee," is, I think, rightly taken by Keil and others as a practical exposition of the words of the prophet, "I will turn My hand upon the little (or 'humble') ones," inasmuch as it was a promise of their re-gathering to Him and of His care for them after His resurrection.

But, to repeat, this special fulfilment did not exhaust the meaning of the prophecy as some erroneously think. "The correct view," to quote again from an English writer, "appears to be that the desertion of Christ in the hour of trial by His most faithful followers, whereby they were scattered every man to his own, and left the Saviour alone1—a desertion which added so much to the bitterness of that 'hour of darkness'—was indeed of importance in itself, but still more so as prefiguring the rejection of Christ by the Jewish nation, and the terrible scattering of the flock of Israel."2 That the primary reference of the words, "the flock shall be scattered," etc., is to the Jewish nation, is placed beyond a doubt by the verses which follow, for Zechariah 13:8 sets forth the misery which the dispersion of the flock brings upon Israel, and Zec_13:9 shows how the words, "I will turn My hand upon (or, 'back upon') the little ones," would be realised in the final deliverance and salvation of the remnant: "And it shall come to pass that in all the land, saith Jehovah, two parts therein shall be cut off, shall die, and the third part shall remain therein. And I will bring the third part through (lit., 'into') the fire, and refine (or 'melt') them as silver is refined." The idiomatic expression ■■■■■■■ ■■■ (pi sh'nayim) is found in Deu_21:17 and 2Ki_2:9, and is primarily used of the "double portion" inherited by the first-born; but here, in Zechariah, it means two-thirds, as is shown by the

1 Joh_16:32.

2 C. H. H. Wright. use of the word ha-shelishith ("the third part") in the second half of the verse. A parallel to this scripture is found in Eze_5:12, where the nation is also divided into three parts: "A third part of thee (shelishith) shall die with the pestilence, . . . and a third part shall fall by the sword, . . . and a third part I will scatter unto all the winds."

"The whole of the Jewish nation," observes Hengstenberg, "is introduced here as an inheritance left by the Shepherd who has been put to death, which inheritance is divided into three parts: death claiming the privilege of the first-born, and so receiving two portions, and life one—a division similar to that which David made in the case of the Moabites."1 The literalness of this division must not, however, be pressed. Isaiah, for instance,2 speaks of only a tenth part as escaping from the great purging judgment. Both expressions, as Dr. Wright properly observes, are to be regarded as

emblematic for a comparatively small number, and not as describing the exact proportion of the remnant that should escape. The emphatic word, ■■■ (“therein”), or literally, “in it,” which is twice repeated, refers to the land and not to the flock, as some interpreters explain: “In all the land . . . two-thirds in it shall be cut off, shall die.” It seems to me, therefore, that, though the fulfilment may not be entirely limited to it, yet, that the reference is chiefly to the judgments which would come on the people in the land, namely, immediately after the “smiting of the Shepherd,” while they were yet recognised as a nation in Palestine, though no longer in a nationally independent condition; and again after the restoration of a representative remnant in unbelief at the end of the long parenthetical period, when God’s national dealings with them shall be resumed, and His long controversy with them as a nation on account of their great sin finally settled on the same soil where it originated. And with what terrible literalness has this Divine fore-

1 2Sa_8:2.

2 Isa_6:13. cast been verified! During the futile, but heroic, struggle with the great Roman power, which commenced so soon after the crucifixion of the Messiah, and lasted seven years, about one million and a half Jews perished in the land by the sword and by famine and pestilence. Great numbers of Jews were crucified by the Romans outside the walls of Jerusalem, while many thousands were taken in ships to Egypt and sold as slaves. Then, not to speak of the great numbers of Jews who were during the same time done to death in different parts of the Roman Empire, only some sixty years after the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, a calamity of almost equal magnitude overtook the Jewish people “throughout all the land,” consequent on their renewed rising under the false Messiah, Bar Cochba.1

Then, after the “two-thirds” in the land were “cut off,” the remainder of “the sheep of the flock” were “scattered”; for a new stage—the universal phase in the dispersion of the Jewish nation took place consequent on the culmination of Israel’s apostasy in the rejection of their Messiah.

Throughout all these centuries the Jews have suffered as no other nation on earth. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, according to reliable computations, there were only about one million Jews left in the whole world after the centuries of oppression and unparalleled sufferings which they had had to endure, especially throughout the dark Middle Ages. And there is yet a climax to all their sufferings to be reached in the “Day” of Jacob s final great “trouble,”2 when they are once again “in the land” and God’s “fire” is kindled in Zion, and His “furnace” set up in Jerusalem3

1 Five hundred and eighty thousand Jews are said, by Jewish historians, to have perished by the sword in the siege at the fall of Bithar, besides those who perished by famine and sickness. “Judea was almost wholly a wilderness.” Fifty castles and two hundred and eighty-five villages were entirely destroyed. At the yearly market, by Abraham’s Oak, at Hebron, Jewish slaves were sold at a nominal price; a Jew was worth no more than a horse. See the summary of Jewish History since the Dispersion, in The Shepherd of Israel and His Scattered Flock.

2 Jer_30:7.

3 Isa_31:9. for the final purging of the nation. And yet in this very prophecy we see mercy blended with judgment.

Two-thirds may be “cut off” and die, but the nation can never be utterly destroyed. There is always “a third,” or “a tenth,” which forms the indestructible “holy seed,”1 which God takes care to preserve as the nucleus of the great and blessed nation through whom His holy will and His wonderful purposes in relation to this earth shall yet be realised. “I will make a full end,” He says, “of all nations whither I have scattered thee, but I will not make a full end of thee.”

Hence, no fires of tribulation, however hot, have been able utterly to consume them; and no waters of affliction, however deep, to drown them. And the end of the Lord in all the chastisements and judgments with which He has to visit His people on account of their great and manifold sins, is not their destruction, but that they may, by these very judgments, as well as by the abundant mercy which He will reveal to them “in that day,” be brought as a nation fully, and for ever, to know Him, in all the Divine perfections of His glorious character, so as to be able to fulfil their foreordained mission to show forth His praise, and to proclaim His glory among the nations.

Hence the “refining” and the “trying,” or “testing,” of even “the third part,” or little remnant, as set forth in Zec_13:9. This, I believe, refers more particularly to the remnant in the land at the time of the very end, immediately before their final glorious deliverance. Then, particularly, He will “refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried,” for in the words of Malachi, “He will be like a refiner’s fire, and like fullers’ sope.” He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, “and shall purge and purify them that they may offer unto Jehovah offerings in righteousness.”2 But from the midst of this fiery furnace of tribulation “they shall call on My Name and I will hear them: I will

1 Isa_6:13.

2 Mal_3:2-4. See also Psa_66:10-12. say, Ammi-hu. It is My people; and they shall say, Yehovah Elohoi, Jehovah is my God.”1

Blessed and most glorious consummation! The covenant relationship between God and His people, so long interrupted though never broken, is restored again; she that was, during the time of her wanderings from her God, Lo-ammi—“not My people,” is “Ammi”2—“My people” again; the national vow of Israel by which they avouched Jehovah to be their God, to walk in His ways, and ever to hearken to His voice, is now renewed, never to be broken again.3 Well might the prophets—contemplating the day when restored and converted Israel shall once again be, as it were, pressed to God’s own heart, and in view of the glorious issues which shall result to the whole world from this restoration of covenant relations between God and “His own” people—call upon the whole creation to join in a grand chorus of praise.

“Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; And break forth into singing, O mountains: For Jehovah hath comforted His people, And will have compassion upon His afflicted.”4

1 See Jer_32:38-42; Eze_37:23-28, and other places in the former prophets, of which this is an inspired echo and reiteration.

2 Hos_1:9-11.

3 Deu_26:17-19.

4 Isa_49:13.

4.22. Chapter 20 - The Glorious Consumation

CHAPTER XX THE GLORIOUS CONSUMMATION MESSIAH'S VISIBLE APPEARING AS THE DELIVERER OF ISRAEL AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF GOD'S KINGDOM ON EARTH (Ezekiel 14:1-21)

Behold, a day of Jehovah cometh, when thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished: and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall Jehovah go forth, and fight against those nations, 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 be cleft 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. And ye shall flee by the valley of My mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azel: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and Jehovah my God shall come, and all the holy ones with Thee. And it shall come to pass in that day, that there shall not be light: the bright ones shall withdraw themselves: but it shall be one day which is known unto Jehovah; not day, and not night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time there shall be light. And it shall come to pass in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the eastern sea, and half of them toward the western sea: in summer and in winter shall it be. And Jehovah shall be King over all the earth: in that day shall Jehovah be one, and His name one. All the land shall be made like the Arabah, from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem; and she shall be lifted up, and shall dwell in her place, from Benjamin's gate unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananel unto the king's winepresses. And men shall dwell therein, and there shall be no more curse; but Jerusalem shall dwell safely. And this shall be the plague wherewith Jehovah will smite all the peoples that have warred against Jerusalem: their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their sockets, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth. And it shall come to pass in that day, that a great tumult from Jehovah shall be among them; and they shall lay hold every one on the hand of his neighbour, and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbour. And Judah also shall fight at Jerusalem; and the wealth of all the nations round about shall be gathered together, gold, and silver, and apparel in great abundance. And so shall be the plague of the horse, of the mule, of the camel, and of the ass, and of all the beasts that shall be in those camps, as that plague. And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations that came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, Jehovah of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be, that whoso of all the families of the earth goeth not up unto Jerusalem to worship the King, Jehovah of hosts, upon them there shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, neither shall it be upon them; there shall be the plague wherewith Jehovah will smite the nations that go not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and

the punishment, of all the nations that go not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, Holy unto Jehovah; and the pots in Jehovah's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holy unto Jehovah of hosts: and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and boil therein: and in that day there shall be no more a Canaanite in the house of Jehovah of hosts.

CHAPTER XX

INTRODUCTORY

PERHAPS in connection with no other scripture do the contradictions and absurdities of the allegorising commentators appear so clearly as in their interpretations of Zechariah 14:1-21. Thus, according to Hengstenberg, Keil, and others of the older German expositors, who are followed by such English scholars as Pusey and C. H. H. Wright, to whose works I have so often referred in this exposition, "Israel," in this last section of Zechariah, "denotes the people of God in contradistinction to the peoples of the world; the inhabitants of Jerusalem with the house of David, and Judah with its princes, as the representatives of Israel, are typical epithets applied to the representatives and members of the new-covenant people, namely, the Christian Church; and Jerusalem and Judah, as the inheritance of Israel, are types of the seats and territories of Christendom."1 And yet, when it is a question of judgment, as, for instance, the statement that "two thirds shall be cut off and die in the land," then, of course, they are agreed that those "cut off" are literal Jews, and "the land" Palestine. Or again, when it is a prediction which has already been fulfilled, such as the piercing of the Messiah in Zec_12:10, or the smiting of the shepherd and the scattering of the flock in Zec_13:7, then it is to be understood literally; but when the prophet speaks of things of which no fulfilment can yet be found in history, then the words, however definite and particular, must be spiritualised, and "Jerusalem" is no longer the capital of the Promised Land, but

1 Keil.

"the Church," and "Israel" no longer the literal descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but "the people of God," by which, as is seen in the quotation given above, is meant "Christendom." But that is not really a spiritual way of interpreting Scripture, which robs it of its simple and obvious sense.

Kliefoth, Keil, etc., speak of the views expressed by Koehler and Hoffmann in their works on Zechariah, that this chapter refers to a yet future siege of Jerusalem after the return of the Jews in a condition of unbelief, and of their deliverance by the appearing of Christ, as "Jewish Chiliasm," but Jewish Chiliasm was not all wrong. There is a Messianic Kingdom—a literal reign of peace and righteousness on the earth, with Israel as its centre; but where Jewish Chiliasm erred was that it overlooked, or explained away, the sufferings of the Messiah which precede the glory. The question is if these allegorising commentators are not as much in the dark in relation to the Second Coming and the glory that should follow, as the Jews were in relation to His First Advent and His atoning suffering and death. In the words of a true master in Israel: "The literal fulfilment of many prophecies has already taken place. It belongs to history. But the Christian has no more difficulty in believing the future fulfilment of prophecy than in crediting the record of history. He believes because God has spoken, because it is written. To believe that the Jews are scattered

among all nations, that Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans, that of the Temple not one stone was left upon another, requires no spiritual faith—it requires only common information. But to believe that Israel will be restored, Jerusalem rebuilt, and that all nations shall come up against the beloved city and besiege it, and that the Lord Jehovah shall appear and stand on the Mount of Olives, requires faith, for it is as yet only written in the Bible. But what difference does it make to the child of God whether the prophecy is fulfilled or not? Can he for a moment doubt it?

“And when we remember how literally prophecy has been fulfilled, we cannot but expect as literal a fulfilment in the future.

“How natural it would have been for those who lived before the First Advent, to think that only the spiritual features of the Messiah’s Coming and Kingdom could be the object of inspired prophecy, and that the outward and minute circumstances predicted were either allegorical and figurative, or only the drapery and embellishment of important and essential truths. And yet the fulfilment was minute even in subordinate detail.”1 For our own part, it is unnecessary to say, after what we have already written on Zechariah 12:1-14 and Zechariah 13:1-9, that we have here a great and solemn prophecy which will yet be literally fulfilled in the future. And when it is objected by some of the modern writers that the literal fulfilment is “impossible,” because it would involve not only national upheavals, but physical convulsions of nature, our answer is that this is just what the prophet declares as most certainly to take place; and, as if to anticipate the objection on the ground of its being naturally “impossible,” or, according to human judgment, “improbable,” he reminds us at the very outset of this section of his prophecy that it is the word of Jehovah, “Who stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him”2 with whom nothing is impossible. THE EXPOSITION3 The first verses of this fourteenth chapter, which are an expansion and amplification of the last three verses of the preceding chapter, lead us back, I believe, to the point of time with which the twelfth chapter opens, and tells us 1 Adolph Saphir.

2 Zec_12:1.

3 The exposition of Zechariah 14:1-7—now slightly altered—was originally written out and read as “a paper” at a meeting of the “Prophecy Investigation Society,” which also printed it for private circulation among the members. This will account for its being slightly different in form and style from my exposition generally. of the judgment which is first allowed of God to be inflicted on Jerusalem in the final great siege by means of the marshalled Gentile armies, whose subsequent sudden destruction these chapters prophetically set forth with all the vividness of an historic event depicted by an eye-witness. Nor need we be surprised to find in this chapter a partial reiteration of events which had already been announced by the prophet in Zec. 12. and 13.; for, to quote a few sentences from a writer with whose interpretation of the last chapters of Zechariah I am utterly at variance, “the prophets frequently speak generally of the final results of an event, and afterwards proceed to give further details. Any attempt to regard all the statements of the prophets as necessarily succeeding one another in chronological order, would reduce many of these prophecies to a mass of confusion.” This observation is true. But it is necessary briefly to summarise the probable events which lead up to the supreme crisis into the midst of which we are introduced in this last chapter of Zechariah.

First of all we have to suppose a restoration of the Jews in a condition of unbelief—not a complete restoration of the whole nation, which will not take place till after their conversion, but of a

representative and influential remnant.

It seems from Scripture that in relation to Israel and the land there will be a restoration, before the Second Advent of our Lord, of very much the same state of things as existed at the time of His First Advent, when the threads of God's dealing with them nationally were finally dropped, not to be taken up again "until the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled."

There was at that time a number of Jews in Palestine representative of the nation; but compared with the number of their brethren, who were already a diaspora among the nations, they were a mere minority, and not in a politically independent condition. So it will be again. There will be at first, as compared with the whole nation, only a representative minority in Palestine, and a Jewish state will be probably formed, either under the suzerainty of one of the Great Powers, or under international protection. The nucleus of this politically independent Jewish state is already to be seen in the 120,000 Jews who have wandered back from all regions of the earth to the land of their fathers.

Already Jerusalem before the war was almost a Jewish city, while the thirty and more Jewish colonies which dotted the land were described by a prominent English Jew as "so many milestones marking the advance which Israel is making towards national rehabilitation." And in no other country in the world do the Jews, to the same extent, represent the nation. In Jerusalem and in the other Jewish settlements in Palestine I have personally, in the course of my seven different visits to the land since 1890, met Jews from all parts—from the east and the west; from India and the burning plains of Southern Arabia, and from the extreme north of Siberia and the Caucasus; and have heard them speaking in nearly all languages under heaven.

Around this nucleus a large number more from all parts of the world will in all probability soon be gathered; but we shall only be able to speak of a restoration of the Jews as an accomplished fact when Palestine becomes by international consent (to quote from the Zionist programme) the "openly recognised and legally assured home" of the Jews, i.e., when the Jews are once more acknowledged as a nation with a land of their own to which they might go.1 But what follows? After a brief interval of prosperity there comes a night of anguish. What occasions the darkest hour in the night of Israel's sad history since their rejection of Christ is the gathering of the nations and the siege predicted in this chapter.

1 How rapidly things have developed on the lines here forecast since the above was originally written four or five years ago. The "Declaration" of the British Government recognises the Jews as once more a nation, and promises to facilitate their re-establishment in Palestine; while Jerusalem has been captured by the victorious British Army!

If we interpret Scripture rightly, they shall have entered into covenant and sworn allegiance to a false Messiah, thus culminating their national apostasy, and fulfilling the word of Christ, "If another shall come in his own name, him ye shall receive." But the covenant of iniquity based upon apostasy will not stand. Infuriated, probably by the faithfulness to the covenant God of their fathers on the part of the godly remnant who shall then be found in the land, the Anti-christ forms the purpose of utterly and finally exterminating this people, who can never cease, even in apostasy and unbelief, to be witnesses for the living God and His truth. The armies of the confederated nations, the very flower of their strength, are marshalled together in Palestine, their watchword

being, “Come, let us cut them off from being a nation, that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance.” The dreadfulness of these hosts I have already dwelt on in my notes on Zechariah 12:1-14. They march in triumph through the land, easily treading down all opposition. And now the enemy in overwhelming force and irresistible fury attacks Jerusalem, which is soon at his mercy. The city is taken, and the “spoil” or booty leisurely “divided in the midst” of her, without any fear on the part of the enemy of interruption or molestation. There ensue scenes of cruel brutality, and lust, and horrors, which usually accompany the sack of cities by enraged enemies, only intensified in this particular case by the accumulated hatred of these confederated hosts against this land and people. Half of the remaining population in the city is dragged forth into captivity, and there is but a small and wretched remnant left, which probably, in the intention of the enemy, are also devoted to destruction.

Well might another prophet exclaim, “Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it; it is even the time of Jacob’s trouble.” But though it is a day which begins with calamity and judgment to Israel, it is not going to end in triumph to Israel’s enemies. It is pre-eminently the ■■■■■■■■ ■■■ (yom la-Yehovah)—“a day for Jehovah”—the day set apart and appointed by Him, not only for the display of His majesty and the vindication of the righteousness of His character and ways, but it is the day of the manifestation of His Divine might and glory in the destruction of Israel’s enemies, and the salvation of His own people. “Then shall Jehovah go forth, and fight against these nations, as when He fought in the day of battle”; or, “as in a day of His fighting in a day of conflict”—as the words in the original may more properly be rendered.

There are many instances recorded in the Old Testament when Jehovah manifestly fought for His people. In Joshua 10:14, for instance, we find words which seem echoed in this prophecy. “And there was no day like that before it or after it.” we read there, “for Jehovah fought for Israel.” But I think we must agree with the Jewish Targum and those commentators who regard the reference as being particularly to the conflict between Jehovah and the Egyptians at the Red Sea; for, “of all the wars in which human insolence could claim no part of the glory,” to quote the words of a well-known writer, “none was more wondrous than that in which Pharaoh and his army were sunk in the deep.” It was after that great act of judgment on Israel’s enemies on the part of God that Israel sang, “Jehovah is a man of war; Jehovah is His Name” (Exo_15:3). The reference is more likely to be to this outstanding event in the past history of the Jewish people, since we know that the prophetic Scriptures generally regard the deliverance from Egypt as typical, not only of the greater spiritual redemption accomplished by Christ, but of the future greater national deliverance of Israel; and the overthrow of Pharaoh and his hosts as a foreshadowment of the final overthrow of the enemies of God and of His people at the time of the end. And it will be no other than Jehovah-Jesus, the El Gibbor, “God the Mighty Man,” who will thus suddenly appear as Israel’s deliverer in the hour of their sorest need:

“And His feet” we read, “shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east.” The mountain which is so clearly defined and located in this prophecy is already associated with many events and crises in Israel’s history. We especially remember that before the final overthrow of the Davidic throne and the commencement of the Times of the Gentiles, it was from this mountain, which is before Jerusalem on the east, that the prophet Ezekiel saw the glory of Jehovah finally taking its departure.

It was from this mountain also that He, who was not only the symbol, but the living personal revelation of the glory of Jehovah, finally took His departure from the land, after He had already been rejected by the nation. He led His handful of disciples out as far as Bethany (on the Mount of Olives), and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. “And it came to pass while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven”;1 since when a still darker era in the long Ichabod period of Israel’s history commenced. But from the same direction whence he saw the departure of the Glory of Jehovah, the prophet Ezekiel saw also its return. “Afterwards” we read, “He brought me to the gate that looketh toward the east, and behold, the Glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east, and His voice was like the noise of many waters, and the earth shined with His glory.” And what is this but a prophecy in symbolic language of the same event which the heavenly messengers announced to the men of Galilee, that “this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go up into heaven.” And not only “in like manner”—that is, bodily, visibly—but He shall come to the same place whence He finally departed.

We love to think that this same mountain on which He once shed tears of sorrow over Jerusalem, the slope of which witnessed His agony and bloody sweat, shall be the

1 Luk_24:50-51 first also to witness His manifestation in glory; and that His blessed feet, which in the days of His flesh walked wearily over this mountain on the way to Bethany shall, “in that day,” be planted here in triumph and majesty. In response to the actual presence of the Divine majesty of the Son of God on this earth, the Mount of Olives, on which He shall descend, shall be cleft in two from east to west; half of it moving to the north and half to the south, forming “a very great valley.”

Into this valley the remnant still remaining in Jerusalem will flee,1 “like as ye fled from before the earthquake the days of Uzziah king of Judah.” of which earthquake there is no other mention in Scripture except in Amo_1:1. But it must have been very terrible indeed, since the memory of it survived for more than two centuries, and could still be referred to by the prophet as an occurrence fresh in the minds of the people. “Ye shall flee,” as the Hebrew Text reads, “into MY mountains”—the lofty precipitous sides of this newly-formed chasm, or valley, being called His mountains, because they were formed by an act of His power. This may, in a sense, be regarded as a parallel to the passage through the Red Sea after it was divided by the power of God, and “the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left” (Exo_14:22). The occasion of this flight will not only be fear of the destroying enemy, and the terror inspired by the earthquake, but they shall flee most of all “for fear of Jehovah, and the glory of His majesty,” when thus suddenly and unexpectedly “the Lord my God shall come” in the person of their long-rejected Messiah, “and all the holy ones with Thee”—by which are meant, not only the myriads of His holy angels, but His saints, who are also called ■■■■■■■, qedoshim (“holy ones”), and who shall have been caught up to meet the Lord in the air.

1 The Massoretic reading, ■■■■■■■■■■, venastem, “Ye shall flee,” is doubtless the correct one, and not ■■■■■■■■■■, venistam, “shall be stopped up,” which is found in several MSS, and adopted in the Targum, the Septuagint, and other versions.

It is at this point, I believe, that the solemn events announced from Zechariah 12:4-14, Zechariah 13:1-2 will transpire. The first proof of the Lord’s interposition on behalf of His people and land, will

be His act of judgment on the besieging hosts. The pride of the glory of the marshalled armies will probably be in the mounted squadrons, which will no doubt include the finest horsemen of Europe and Arabia, and against them the Captain of the Lord's host shall first direct His hand: "In that day I will smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness."1

Then the extended ranks of infantry shall be visited with the plague described in Zec_14:12, and a great tumult from the Lord shall ensue among the confederated hosts, as happened in the past, when Jehovah fought for Israel; so that each man's hand shall be against his neighbour. And not only by the direct act of God shall the enemy be destroyed, but, as already shown in my Notes on Zechariah 12:1-14, with the shout of a king in their midst, and conscious that Almighty power is now on their side, the remnant of Judah, too, will do valiantly, and tread down their enemies under their feet: "He that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David, and the house of David shall be as God, as the Angel of the Lord before them." But suddenly the noise of war and the shout of triumph is turned into wailing and lamentation as the spirit of grace and supplication takes possession of the heart of the remnant of Israel, and the eyes of the blind are opened, and they behold in the King of Glory, at whose presence the earth trembles and the mountains are cleft, and who has so marvellously delivered them in the hour of their greatest need, none other than the one whom they have pierced, and whom for so many centuries they have rejected and despised. This look of recognition, as we have seen in Zechariah 12:1-14, will break Israel's heart, and "they shall mourn for Him as one mourneth for his only son, and

1 Zec_12:4. shall be in bitterness for Him as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn." And not only will the sorrow and mourning spread from Jerusalem to the whole land, but also to the whole earth; for, though Jerusalem and Palestine will be the centre of these awful and solemn events, the whole world will be more or less involved in them. When the final judgments of God are abroad in the earth, and when the anti-Christian rage and persecution will be everywhere directed not only against the confessors of Christ, but against those in Israel who are faithful to the God of their fathers, there will be weeping, and mourning, and heart-searching among the scattered tribes of Israel in all the lands of their dispersion. And when at last, in the hour of their deepest need, their long-rejected, crucified Messiah appears for their deliverance—when His blessed feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives—they will almost simultaneously be made aware of it; for, though they may not all at once behold Him with their eyes, the whole world, and nature generally, will be conscious of, and respond to, the visible appearing and presence of the Son of God. And the spared remnant of the dispersed of Israel will, like their brethren in Jerusalem, hail Him—though at first it may be from a distance—whom they crucified, and turn to Him in true repentance. But to proceed to Zec_14:6. In keeping with the awful solemn events shall be the outward natural phenomena and physical characteristics of that fateful day. It shall be a day of preternatural gloom. "There shall be no light," the "precious ones" (i.e., the stars, "the splendid heavenly bodies") will contract themselves (or "wane"), which I believe to be the true meaning of the two last, somewhat difficult Hebrew words of Zec_14:6, which have been variously rendered and interpreted by commentators.1 This is in harmony with the plain declara-

1 The words in the Hebrew text are ■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■, yeqaroth yeqipa'tun: ■■■■■, yaqor ("precious," "rare," "splendid") is applied to the moon in Job_31:26, tions of other prophetic announcements concerning that day; as, for instance, "The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining,"1 or, in the words of Isaiah: "The moon shall be

confounded and the sun ashamed when the Lord of Hosts shall reign in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before His ancients gloriously";2 and again: "The stars of heaven, and the constellations thereof, shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine."3

"But in those days after that tribulation the sun shall be darkened and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall be falling from heaven, and the powers that are in the heaven sliall be shaken."4 And it shall be yom echad, "one day," we read in our prophecy—"one" primarily in the sense of its being unique which is described as "sailing resplendent" and it seems most probable that the plural yeqaroth is used here of "the resplendent heavenly bodies," i.e., the stars. The verb ■■■■■, qapha ("thicken," "condense," "congeal") is found in Exo_15:8, and describes the depths as becoming congealed, or consolidated, in the midst of the seas. But the difference of the gender in the combination of the feminine substantive yeqaroth with the masculine verb yeqipa'un, the irregularity of construction, and the rarity with which these words are met with in the Hebrew Bible, have occasioned many conjectural readings and explanations. The "keri" (marginal alternative reading in the Massoretic text) has ■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■, yeqaroth v'qipa'un—the meaning of which is also not quite clear, but may be rendered "intense brightness, and waning." But it is pretty generally agreed by all scholars that the kethib (the Hebrew text) and not the keri, or margin, has the true reading. The "Jewish" explanation is embodied in Kimchi's comment, which is as follows: "In that day in which he says that this miracle shall occur, there shall also be this circumstance, that the light shall neither be yeqaroth ("precious") nor yeqipa'un ("thickness"). The meaning is figurative, that the light of that day shall not be bright, which is the meaning of "precious lights," or "the moon walking in brightness" (Job_31:26), nor light of thickness, i.e., dense and thick, which is like darkness. The sense is, the day shall not be entirely light nor entirely dark, i.e., it shall not pass entirely in tranquillity nor in affliction, for they two shall be in it; and so he says afterwards, not day nor night. Jonathan has interpreted, "There shall be nothing that day but privation and coagulation." The LXX reads κα■ ψ■χη κα■ π■γος, "and cold and frost." The translation which I have given in the text seems to me the most satisfactory.

1 Joe_3:15.

2 Isa_24:23.

3 Isa_13:10.

4 Mar_13:24-25. and different to all other days in the world's history, "so that none is like it," as Jeremiah expresses it, "and it shall be known to Jehovah," which phrase certainly reminds us of the words of our Lord: "Of that day and hour knoweth no man, not even the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father"1—"Not day nor night"—"like mysterious light when day and night are contending together." It shall not be day, for the natural sources of light will be withdrawn; but it cannot be like the darkness of night, for there will be the transplendent light of the glory of the Lord, and the myriads of His holy angels, and of the glorified saints reflected on the earth.

"And it shall come to pass that at evening time"—when in the order of nature everything should sink into darkness—"there shall be light"; out of the contest between light and darkness on that eventful day light shall emerge victorious—"the light of salvation breaking its way through the night

of judgment," as Von Orelli observes; and out of the apparent chaos beauty and order. As far as its primary literal significance is concerned, the statement that "at evening time there shall be light," may perhaps be explained by the words of Isaiah: "The light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that Jehovah bindeth up the hurt of His people and healeth the stroke of their wound."2 But this literal physical phenomenon will answer also to the spiritual condition of the spared remnant. "At evening time" of that great and most solemn day—the great Atonement Day for the nation—when the long dark period of their national history shall end in bitter sorrow and universal mourning, not on account of their suffering, but for their sin; when the glorious Sun of Righteousness shall at last rise upon them with healing in His wings, "there shall be light"—the light and the joy of forgiveness and eternal reconciliation; the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ which shall shine upon them.

1 Mar_13:32.

2 Isa_30:26.

"We can in part conceive the feelings with which the spared remnant of Israel will behold the light of that evening—the evening which is to introduce the new order of God. They have been described in Zechariah 12:1-14 as subdued, contrite, and mourning. And no marvel: carried as they will have been by a power that they knew not, through such a day of terror, strengthened for the Lord in it, and left at last in a scene of tranquil blessing received from the hands of One whom they had despised, but to whom they have now learned to say 'My Lord, and my God'; it would be strange indeed if they should not, numbering such mercies, be bowed in contrition of spirit. And when they shall at last be comforted, and the Spirit be poured out upon them from on high, when the knowledge of their own past history and of the Church's history will all be opened to them in the light of God, then, like so many Pauls, monuments of Sovereign grace, they shall go forth to the dark places of the earth, rich in experience and in the knowledge of God, and from them shall flow rivers of living waters."1 The blessed issues of the great and solemn events of "that day," as set forth in the first seven verses, are described in the verses that follow:—

I. By means of the great earthquake spoken of in Zec_14:4-5, and other convulsions of nature which are immediately to precede and to accompany the visible appearing of the Messiah, when His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives—great physical changes will take place in Palestine and the whole land, but particularly the position of Jerusalem will be greatly altered and transformed.2 "And it shall come to pass in that day that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea, and half of them toward the western sea; in summer and in winter shall it be." The "eastern" (haqqadmoni, which has sometimes also the meaning of "ancient") is the Dead Sea, which shall then be healed by the streams of fresh, or "living,"

1 B. W. Newton.

2 Isa_30:25-26. water which will flow through it; and the western ha-acharon (literally, the "last" "or hindermost") is the Mediterranean. And these waters will never run dry, as the streams in the south1 are apt to do now: "summer drought shall not lessen them, nor winter cold bind them," but they shall ceaselessly flow "in summer and in winter." To these perennial waters flowing from the "river of God,"2 primarily so called, because it is formed, as it were, by a direct act of His power,

there are many references in the prophetic Scriptures.

Thus Joel, speaking of the time when Jehovah shall manifestly dwell in Zion, and “Jerusalem shall be holy,” into which nothing that defileth shall enter, says, “And a fountain shall come forth from the house of Jehovah and shall water the valley of Shittim”;3 and in Psalms 46:1-11, which is a great prophecy of the same solemn events which are described in these last chapters of Zechariah, the inspired Psalmist beholds in vision “a river the streams whereof make glad the city of God”4 namely, restored and renewed Jerusalem, the vestibule, as it were, during the millennial period of the Jerusalem which is above—which shall emerge from the catastrophe described in the first verses, when the earth shall “be removed,” or “changed,” and the “mountains shaken into the heart of the seas, and the waters roar and be troubled.” The allusion in all these scriptures, which speak of the river of living waters dividing themselves into streams flowing in different directions, is probably to Gen_2:10. There we read: “And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted and became four

1 Psa_126:4.

2 Psa_65:9.

3 Joe_3:18. Some modern writers understand this as referring to a valley somewhere in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem (“a valley in connection with the Kidron Valley”—Von Orelli), but I am inclined to think that the reference is to the Shittim of Num_25:1, the last encampment of the Israelites on the steppes of Moab before their entrance into Canaan—the barren valley of the Jordan above the Dead Sea. Shittim means acacias, which grow only in arid regions, and the words of the prophecy imply that even the arid desert shall be fertilised by the waters issuing from this fountain.

4 Psa_46:4. heads” or streams. Now, since for beauty and fertility, and as the earthly centre of God’s dwelling and worship, Jerusalem and Palestine will, in the millennial period, answer, as it were, to the garden of Eden—there is again the River, the streams whereof make glad the city of God, and flowing thence fertilise other parts of the earth.

Now, to repeat, we believe, in a literal fulfilment of this prophecy in Zechariah, and when we are told by a scholarly English writer that a literal fulfilment is out of the question because “the physical nature of the whole land would have to be changed to permit literal rivers to flow forth from Jerusalem,”1 our answer is, “Certainly; this is just what the prophecy says will be the case.” The physical nature of the whole land will be changed through the convulsions of nature, which are described here and in other scriptures, and which will be brought about by the Almighty power of God, with whom nothing is impossible. But while this literal fulfilment cannot be emphasised too strongly in order to a true understanding of these prophecies, it is important also to note that the literal, material river will be at the same time the visible symbol of the mighty river of God’s grace and salvation, which, during the millennial period dividing itself into full streams of Messianic blessings, will start from Jerusalem as its source and centre, and carry life and salvation to all nations.

“We read in many parts of the Scripture that the land of Israel will in that day teem with evidences of the miraculous power of God in dispensing blessings. On the sides of Zion, for example, the wolf and the lamb, the leopard and the kid, shall be seen together, and a little child shall lead them.

Nothing shall hurt or destroy throughout God s holy mountain. These will be sights

1 Dr. C. H. H. Wright, Zechariah and his Prophecies. His long chapter of nearly one hundred pages on “The Eschatology of Zechariah, or the Last Things as seen in the Light of the Old Dispensation,” is an illustration and specimen of the phantomising method of interpreting Old Testament prophecy, to which I referred in the introductory remarks to this chapter. But though very dogmatic in his style, Dr. Wright succeeds, not in explaining, but in explaining away, these great prophecies. that no one will deny to be in themselves blessed. But they are symbols also, living symbols, speaking of higher blessings; for they indicate the peace and harmony and love that shall pervade all hearts and all peoples whom the power of Zion shall effectually reach. And if God has appointed that the spiritual influence of which I have spoken above should go forth from His forgiven and privileged nation in Jerusalem, we might expect to find some outward symbol of this, its relation. And, accordingly, a symbol is given in the perennial flow of those streams which, going forth from the sanctuary in Jerusalem, shall heal waters, which, like the Dead Sea, have been accursed, and spread life and refreshment in the midst of desolation.”1 As the symbol of the greater spiritual reality, let us pause and contemplate for a moment this “river of God.” Its source is God Himself. “There” exclaims the prophet Isaiah—that is, in renewed and glorified Jerusalem—“The glorious Jehovah” (or, “Jehovah in His Majesty”) “will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams.”2 Or, in the language of the beloved John in the Apocalypse, “He showed me a river of water of life bright as crystal proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.”3 Yes, “and of the Lamb” for though God is the Source, the Eternal Fountain of this pure Water of Life, the Lamb slain is the channel through which it flows.

Another glorious fact emphasised in the Scriptures in connection with these living waters is their fulness—indicative of the abundance of God’s grace and salvation, which shall go forth during the period of Messiah’s reign, from Jerusalem as its centre, into all parts of the world. The “River of God,” we read, “is full of water”4 and Ezekiel beholds it in vision “as a river which he could not pass through, for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed through.”5 And as they are abundant in quantity, so also is the

1 B. W. Newton.

2 Isa_33:21.

3 Rev_22:1.

4 Psa_65:9.

5 Eze_47:1-12. healing, life-giving efficacy of the living waters wonderful. The very desert shall be transformed by them, and the stagnant waters of the Dead Sea healed. “Everything,” says Ezekiel, “and every living creature which swarmeth in every place whither the river shall come, shall live; . . . and by the river upon the bank thereof on this side, and on that side, shall grow every tree for meat, whose leaf shall not wither, neither shall the fruit thereof fail; it shall bring forth new fruit every month, because the waters thereof issue out of the sanctuary; and the fruit shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for healing.” Yes, “for the healing of the nations,”1 as the beloved Apostle adds in the last chapter of the Apocalypse, where Ezekiel’s imagery of the earthly but glorified Jerusalem during the millennial period is transferred also to the heavenly Jerusalem. A foretaste of the great spiritual realities, which in the age to come will be symbolised also by literal and visible

objects, we have indeed in the present dispensation, for those are not wholly wrong who point to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ as embodying the very qualities ascribed to these “living waters,” and many there be who can testify from experience to its life-giving, healing, sanctifying power, and to the great and glorious transformations which it has effected in the world since Christ’s first Advent. But, whereas its course now and all through the present period is an intermittent, chequered one, and its quickening power has been experienced only by individuals, by-and-by, when Israel as a nation is first quickened and transformed by it, and the national Saul of Tarsus is turned into a nation of Pauls, with the same burning love and self-consuming zeal for their Redeemer-King, which characterised the great Apostle to the Gentiles—the blessings of Messiah’s Gospel, and the beneficent effects of His reign will flow from Jerusalem as mighty rivers and streams into all parts of the world, so that it will not be long before “the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Jehovah as the waters cover the sea.”2

1 Rev_22:2.

2 Hab_2:1.

II. Another glorious issue of the solemn events described in Zec_14:1-7 will be the establishment of Messiah’s righteous and beneficent rule on earth, and the fulfilment of the prayer which has ascended from the yearning hearts of the faithful in all ages: “Thy Kingdom come.” This is announced in Zec_14:9, “And Jehovah shall be King over all the earth: in that day shall Jehovah be one and His Name one.” In this great and comprehensive prophecy we note especially two or three points: (a) “Jehovah shall be King”—but according to the united and harmonious testimony of the prophetic Scriptures it will be Jehovah in the person of the Messiah, Jehovah-Jesus, Immanuel—He whose feet shall in that day stand on the Mount of Olives which is before Jerusalem on the east—who will thus set up His Kingdom and rule on this earth. And He will be King, not only in virtue of His being the Son of God, in whose coming and reign the long-promised rule of God Himself on this earth shall at last be realised in the fullest possible measure, but by reason of His being the Son of Man—the second Adam—the appointed Lord of creation, in whom the original purpose of God in the creation of man and of the world shall be fulfilled, and as the Son of David, in whom all the promises of the Messianic Kingdom are centred, before whose birth it was announced by the angel from heaven, “He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto Him 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.”

All that is implied in the blessed announcement that Jehovah Himself shall at last be King over this earth, and in the person of His own Son, who is at the same time the man after His own heart, visibly rule among the nations, we cannot yet fully conceive. “Our ideas of kingship,” to quote the words of a master in Israel, “are limited, and do not come up to the Divine conception.”1 Man has had experience of rule, or kingship on earth, but “the true or 1 Adolph Saphir. real king among men has not appeared yet.” The nearest approach to His rule was David’s; but what are the last words of the son of Jesse, the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Israel and the sweet Psalmist of Israel? His last testimony was that the Spirit of the Lord had spoken by him, and that he had heard the Rock of Israel, and that the sum and substance of these Divine revelations was the coming of the perfect King: “One that ruleth over men righteously, that ruleth in the fear of God, He shall be as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, a morning without clouds, when

the tender grass springeth out of the earth through clear shining after rain."1 For this ideal King, for this glorious "Sun" to usher in "the morning without clouds" on this groaning earth, the nations have long waited; but He shall come, and the world will experience the blessedness of His righteous and beneficent sway.

(b) The extent of His rule—"over all the earth." As explained more than once in the course of these notes, ■■■■■, eretz, translated "earth," means both "land" and "earth"; and the primary reference in this prophecy is doubtless to "the holy land,"2 as the enlarged and purified Land of Promise shall then be called. The word is used in this more restricted sense in the very next verse of our chapter, where it is rightly translated "land." But while the holy hill of Zion shall be the seat of His throne, and Palestine, with restored and converted Israel, the centre of His blessed rule, "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth"; yea, all kings shall fall down before Him, all nations shall serve Him,3 for all the kingdoms of this world shall then become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever. That the prophet's vision of the theocratic kingdom ranged beyond even the enlarged boundaries of the "land," and extended to the whole "earth" is seen also from Zechariah 14:16, where he speaks of all the nations coming up 1 2Sa_33:1-4 (R.V.).

2 Zec_2:12.

3 Psa_72:8-11. to Jerusalem "to worship the King-Jehovah of Hosts," whose sole rule they will then acknowledge. Yes, Messiah's kingship is to extend over the earth. God's will, according to the petition which He teaches His disciples, is to be done on earth as it is in heaven.

"It is on earth, where God has been denied and forgotten; where His honour has been disregarded and His commandments have been transgressed; where nations and kingdoms, instead of seeking His glory and showing forth His praise—have not bowed to His authority and reverenced His law; it is on earth that the Lord shall reign; injustice, cruelty and war shall be banished; and instead of idolatry, selfishness and sin, the fear and love and beauty of God will be manifest. Christ and the glorified saints shall reign over Israel and the nations. The appearings of the risen Lord to His disciples during the forty days seem to be a prophetic parallel of the relation of the transfigured Church to the earth. Jerusalem is the centre of the world; the land of Israel is restored to wonderful fertility and blessedness. We may not be able clearly to conceive the fulfilment of the predictions concerning this earth during the Christocracy, but our danger does not lie in believing too implicitly or too literally what is written."1 And this kingship over the "earth" is due to our Lord Jesus as an answer to His humiliation. "It is not sufficient that He is glorified in heaven it is a perfect delight to His own that He is to be glorified and adored in the very scene of His rejection and shame. God will see to this. Here, where His royal claims were scorned, every knee shall bow to Him; here, where He was reviled and insulted, every tongue shall own that "He is Lord to the glory of God the Father. His Name shall be excellent in all the earth."

III. "In that day" the prophet adds, "shall Jehovah be One"—that is, recognised and acknowledged as such, and be known and called the "God of the whole earth,"2 the only 1 Adolph Saphir, Lectures on the Lord's Prayer.

2 Isa_54:5. and blessed Potentate;1 for the false gods of the nations, to whom even Israel was tempted in former days of apostasy to render worship, shall be "cut off," and all idols utterly

abolished.

“And His Name”—which embodies His revealed character as the God of Redemption, the faithful covenant- keeping God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, now fully made known to us by our Lord Jesus Christ, who is Himself the fullest revelation of the Name, shall be “One”—to the exclusion of all others—as the only object of reverence, praise, and worship, “so that he who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth; and he that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of truth;”2 and the nations, even from “the ends of the earth,” confess that the gods which they had formerly worshipped were “no gods,” and the idolatries which they had inherited from their fathers were “nought but lies, even vanity, and things wherein there is no profit.”3

IV. As “the city of the great King” (Psa_48:2), whose dominion extends to earth’s utmost bounds, and as the centre whence God’s light and truth shall go forth among all the nations, Jerusalem is also to be physically exalted above the hills by which she has hitherto been surrounded and overshadowed. This is the announcement in Zec_14:10, “All the land shall be turned” (or “changed” so that it shall become “as” or) “like the Arabah.” Then the district to be thus transformed is more closely

1 1Ti_6:15.

2 Isa_65:16.

3 Jer_16:19-20 (R.V.). Von Orelli thinks that by the unity of the name Jehovah “is to be understood primarily unity of designation, which is important as the plurality of designations of the one God has led in various ways to plural conceptions of the Godhead,” and refers to Hos_2:16. Lange, by simply referring his readers for an explanation of this clause to Hitzig, seemingly adopts it as his own—namely, “that in consequence of the display of Jehovah’s glory, the heathen who had hitherto worshipped God under other names, such as Moloch, Baal, etc., should from henceforth honour and adore Him as Jehovah, under which Name He had made Himself known to the people of Israel.” But, as another has observed, “The idea that the heathen under the various names of their gods really meant to worship Jehovah, appears to be an attempt to engraft modern ideas (which I venture to add, have no basis in fact) upon those of the Old Testament prophets.” defined, namely, “from Geba to Rimmon, south of Jerusalem” Geba, probably the same as Gibeah of Saul, was in the tribe of Benjamin,1 and is mentioned in 2Ki_23:8 as one of the northern border towns of the land of Judah. Rimmon was on the southern border of Palestine, and is identified by some scholars with the modern Umm-er-Rummamin, north of Beersheba. The words “south of Jerusalem” are added, to distinguish this latter place from the town Rimmon in Galilee2 (identified with Rummaneh), and from the rock Rimmon in the hill range of Benjamin.3

All this district from Geba to Rimmon is to be changed and become “as the Araba” (■■■■■■■■■). This word, translated “plain” in the A.V., is the proper name of the Jordan valley—“that remarkable depression which runs from the slopes of Hermon to the Red Sea, known as the deepest depression in the surface of the globe”; the sea of Galilee situated within it being 652 feet below the level of the Mediterranean, while the Dead Sea, which is also included in its course, is 1316 feet below that level, or the level of the Red Sea. Parts of this valley were distinguished for their luxurious vegetation, but the reference here is not to its fertility nor to its deep depression, which probably will itself undergo modification in that day of great physical as

well as moral upheavals, but to the fact of its being a plain. The whole hill-country specified shall be levelled or become a plain, “and she” (i.e., Jerusalem) “shall be lifted up” (or “exalted”) “and shall dwell” (or “become settled”) “in her place” literally, “upon that which was under her,” upon her own tel, or mound, as Jeremiah expresses it.4 In this brief statement about the towering position of Jerusalem in that day the prophet Zechariah gives us also, as is his wont, a terse summary of the longer predictions of the former prophets; for already Isaiah and Micah, as well as Ezekiel, announced that “it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of Jehovah’s house shall be

1 Jos_18:24.

2 Jos_19:13.

3 Jdg_20:45-47.

4 ■■■■■ ■■■, Jer_30:18. Translated in the A.V., “Upon its own heap.” established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills”1 And here again, as in the case of the “living waters” in Zechariah 14:8, the literal fact will at the same time be emblematic of a great spiritual truth. Zion in the millennial age will be the city of truth, “the habitation of righteousness and mountain of holiness” and therefore will be raised conspicuously aloft in the view of all the nations; it will be the source whence the living waters of God’s grace and salvation are to issue in all directions, and therefore every obstacle which might hinder their flow shall be “changed” and turned into a plain. It will be the centre of God’s governmental rule of the world, and the place to which “all nations shall flow” for instruction and guidance, and therefore it must be lifted high, and approach to it rendered easy. In the words of the beautiful paraphrase of the prophetic announcement by Isaiah and Micah:

Behold! the mountain of the Lord In latter days shall rise On mountain-tops above the hills, And draw the wondring eyes. To this the joyful nations round, All tribes and tongues, shall flow;

“Up to the hill of God,” they’ll say, “And to His house we’ll go!” The beam that shines from Zion’s hill Shall lighten ev’ry land; The King who reigns in Salem’s towers Shall all the world command.

Among the nations He shall judge— His judgments truth shall guide; His sceptre shall protect the just And quell the sinner’s pride. The second half of Zec_14:10 describes the bounds of the restored and enlarged city, which shall thus be “lifted up” and settled down to dwell safely “in her own place.”

“From Benjamin’s gate unto the place of the first (or

1 Isa_2:2.

‘former’) gate, unto the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananel unto the king’s winepresses.”

I shall not trouble my readers with topographical details, all the more as by general confession the gates and owers here named cannot with any certainty be identified, suffice it here to say that “Benjamin’s gate,” which is very probably the same as “the gate of Ephraim,” mentioned in 2Ki_14:13, was in the north wall of the city through which the road to Benjamin, and thence to Ephraim, ran. The first (or “former”) “gate,” which no longer existed in Zechariah’s time, since only

the place where it once stood is referred to, is supposed to have been at the north-eastern corner, and the “corner gate” (which is also mentioned in 2Ki_14:13 as well as in Jer_31:38) at the north-western corner.

If these suppositions be correct, this line would describe the whole breadth of the city from east to west, while the ower of Hananel,1 which stood at the north or north-east corner, and “the king’s winepresses,” which all are agreed were in the king’s gardens south of the city, would indicate the northern and southern boundaries. But the chief importance of these local and topographical details in this great prophecy is the proof which they afford that it must be literally understood, and that it is of Jerusalem and Palestine that the prophet primarily speaks, or what can the allegorising commentators make of these physical landmarks and boundaries, such as “the gate of Benjamin” and “the corner gate”? And in what part of the heavenly Jerusalem can “the tower of Hananel” and “the king’s winepresses” be located?

V. Zec_14:11 us in three brief sentences glimpse of the blessed condition of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, which shall be thus renewed and established.

(a) “And they shall dwell in her” that is, permanently and at peace, “nevermore to go forth from it either in captivity or in flight.”2 In the words of one of the former prophets, 1 See Jer_31:38; Neh_3:1, Neh_12:39.

2 Koehler.

Jacob then “shall be quiet and at ease, and none shall make him afraid.”1

(b) “And there shall be no more curse” (or “ban,” or “sentence of destruction,” as the word may be rendered), because the causes which previously provoked the Holy One to inflict desolating and destructive judgments upon the land and people shall be no more.2 Another glorious and blessed contrast with the past, when on account of manifold and continuous transgressions He had to “profane the princes of the sanctuary, and give Jacob over to the curse (■■■■■, ■herem) and Israel to reproaches” (or “reviling”).3

(c) “And Jerusalem shall dwell (or ‘shall be inhabited’) safely, or literally, in conscious security” (■■■■■■■, labhetach) or “in confidence”; for, though it shall be surrounded neither by walls, nor fortifications, it shall have nothing to fear. “For I, saith Jehovah, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and the glory in the midst of her,”4 and “salvation” will Jehovah appoint for walls and bulwarks.5 This outline picture of the blessed condition of restored and purified Jerusalem, which in the millennial period will be, so to say, the earthly vestibule and the reflection of the glory

1 Jer_30:10.

2 The word ■■■■■, ■herem (which is a masculine noun), describes primarily something devoted—usually for utter destruction, but occasionally also for sacred uses. Thus, for instance, the cities and inhabitants of Canaan were devoted by God to utter destruction, and of Jericho particularly we read: “And the city shall be ■■■■■, ■herem (devoted)—even it and all that is therein to Jehovah” (Jos_6:17). Achan, by taking ■■■■■■■ ■■■, min hacherem, “of the devoted thing,” made the whole camp of Israel ■■■■■, “accursed,” or devoted to destructive judgment, until it was purged by the discovery and stoning of the transgressor, who became himself ■herem, like the “devoted” thing which he had stolen (Jos_6:18, Jos_7:11-13). If an

individual or a whole city in Israel forsook Jehovah and turned to serve other gods, they became ■herem, devoted to utter destruction (Deu_7:25-26, Deu_13:12-17). In Lev_27:29, where we read, “All devoted (■herem), that shall be devoted from among men, shall not be ransomed, he shall surely be put to death,” it is such cases which are contemplated, i.e., those devoted by God “from among men” for utter destruction, either on account of apostasy or because of some special crime. Thus Benhadad is called ■■■■■■■ ■■■■, “a man under my ■herem, or ban,” “one whom I have devoted to utter destruction” (1Ki_20:42). So likewise were the Amalekites, etc. The Septuagint properly renders ■■■■■ in Zec_14:2, by anathema.

3 Isa_43:28.

4 Zec_2:4-5.

5 Isa_26:1. of the new or heavenly Jerusalem, which shall come down from God out of heaven, is filled in by the inspired utterances of the “former” prophets (on which the prophecies of Zechariah are more or less based), but particularly in the last chapters of Isaiah: “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former things shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old, and the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed. . . . They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for calamity: for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them. And it shall come to pass that, before they call, I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox: and dust shall be the serpent’s meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, saith the Lord.”1

1 Isa_65:17-20, Isa_65:23-25. Some have professed to find a contradiction between the words of Zechariah, “There shall be no curse,” and this statement of Isaiah that “the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed.” But first the passage in Isaiah instances what are probably two hypothetical cases illustrative of the general longevity and the very rare occurrence of sin in renewed Jerusalem. He that should happen to die “a hundred years old” will be regarded but as a mere “child,” compared with the average length of days to which man shall then attain; and “the sinner” who is visited with God’s curse and overwhelmed with the punishment, will not be swept away before the hundredth year of his life. Secondly, the words in the original are not the same. There will be rare, or isolated, instances of sin in the Millennium, and God’s curse, ■■■■■■■, qelalah (Isa_65:20 literally, “a reviling” “a thing lightly esteemed”), will descend on individuals; but there shall be no more ■■■■■, ■herem (Zechariah 14:11), i.e., a ban, or a devoting to utter destruction of the city and people, which shall then in the aggregate be cleansed and holy. Isa_25:8 carries us on to the glorious consummation. Before millennial dawn finally merges into the Eternal Day, every vestige of sin and death shall be swept away. “He will swallow up death for ever, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces, and the reproach of His people shall He take away from off all the earth: for Jehovah hath spoken it.” The glorious picture of salvation in Zec_14:8-12 has its obverse side, namely, the judgments which will be inflicted on the enemies of God and His people. Chronologically, Zec_14:12-15 follows Zec_14:3, for the terrible punishment

of the confederated anti-Christian hosts which they describe (and which are an amplification and supplement to the prophetic announcement of the destruction of these same Gentile hosts in Zec_14:4-10) are the immediate consequence of the manifest interposition of Jehovah in the person of the Messiah as the Deliverer of His people, when He shall “go forth and fight against those nations as when He fought in the day of battle”; but the detailed description of the judgments on Israel’s enemies is passed over by the prophet for a time in order that the wonderful deliverance of God’s people and the glorious transformation of Jerusalem and the “Holy Land” might be first fully described.

Three weapons will be used by God for the destruction of the enemies of His Kingdom: (1) The fearful plague described in Zec_14:12; (2) mutual destruction in consequence of a great panic of terror “from Jehovah”; and (3) the superhuman strength of the saved remnant of Judah, who shall suddenly become like “a pan of fire” among wood, and like “a flaming torch among sheaves”1 and shall devour their enemies round about, on their right hand and on their left. Of these three simultaneous judgments, the first two are spoken of as being inflicted by God’s own hand, for maggepha, rendered “plague” (which is used in the Hebrew for “infliction,” “slaughter,” “plague,” “pestilence”), always denotes a plague or judgment sent direct by God.2 The description of the “plague” is terribly realistic. Literally, “He (Jehovah) makes his flesh to rot (or consume away), while he standeth on his feet” (■■■■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■, vehu omed al raglav), which is perhaps intended to express the suddenness with which God’s stroke will alight upon him: “And his eye (singular) shall consume away in their sockets

1 Zec_12:6.

2 See Exo_9:14; Num_14:39; 1Sa_6:4.

(plural); and his tongue (singular) shall consume away in their mouth (plural).” The thought which the prophet probably intends to express, by the use of the singular suffix, is that this terrible catastrophe shall overtake each one and the whole company. “It is,” as another has expressed it, “the act of God in His individual justice to each one of all those multitudes gathered against Him.” One by one their eyes, of which they said, “Let our eye look (or ‘gaze’) upon Zion”1 (i.e., with joy at her desolation), shall consume away in their sockets, and their tongue, with which (like Rabshakeh and the Assyrians in a former siege of Jerusalem2) they blasphemed God, shall consume away in their mouth—a truly terrible judgment, intended as a warning to men that it is a fearful thing to be arrayed against Jehovah and His Anointed, or against the people and the city with which He and His cause shall in that day be identified. The ■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■, m’humath Yehovah—literally, a “tumult of Jehovah,” with which the gathered hosts shall also be seized in that day, is the supernatural panic and “confusion” which Jehovah sends among His enemies, with a view to their utter discomfiture and self-destruction. It is the same as the “astonishment” and “madness” with which the horses and the riders of these same hosts are spoken of as smitten in Zec_12:4, and as a consequence “they shall lay hold” (■■■■■■■■■■, hech’ziqu, a verb which is used generally but not exclusively of “laying hold,” or “seizing violently” with evil intent) “every one on the hand of his neighbour.” Each in that tumultuous, panic-stricken throng shall seize the other’s hand, “mastering him powerfully,” with a view to his destruction—“and his hand (i.e., each man’s hand) shall be lifted up against the hand of his neighbour,” with a view to deliver a deadly blow.

Such “confusions” or tumult the Lord had sent before in the midst of Israel’s enemies. Thus the hosts of Midian were discomfited before Gideon and his little band,

1 Mic_4:11.

2 Isa_36:18-22, Isa_37:4. and the multitude of Philistines at Michmash “melted away” before Jonathan and his armour-bearer.1 But the historical instance of the self-destruction of the enemies of God’s people by means of such a “confusion” or panic sent by the Lord, to which the prophet seems specially to allude as an illustration of what will overtake the confederated anti-Christian hosts in the future, is that recorded in 2 Chron. 20., when, in answer to the prayer of Jehoshaphet, the hosts of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, which were gathered against Judah, suddenly fell on one another. “And when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set liers in wait against the children of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten. For the children of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir, utterly to slay and destroy them: and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, every one helped to destroy another.” The first clause of Zec_14:14 has been rendered by some, “And Judah also shall fight against Jerusalem,” but there is no justification for it in grammar, and it is altogether contrary to the context:2 literally, “And Judah also”—which stands here for the whole remnant of the people—“shall fight at (or ‘in’) Jerusalem.” It indicates the third weapon which (in addition to the “plague” and the “tumult”) will be used by God for the destruction of 1 Jdg_7:22; 1Sa_13:16-20.

2 The Targum has the mistranslation “against,” and so also the Vulgate; but the Septuagint and the Syriac render properly “at” or “in.” Luther, Calvin, Ewald, etc., follow the Vulgate; but Koehler, Hengstenberg, Keil, Von Orelli, Pusey, Dr. Wright, and almost all competent modern Hebrew scholars, translate “in” or “at Jerusalem.” After the verb ■■■■■■■ (fight) the preposition ■ (be) is often used in a local sense, especially when used in relation to places. The very same idiom as in this passage in Zec_14:14 (■■ ■■■■■■■) is found in Judges 5:19, where it certainly means “fought in Taanach,” and Exodus 5:8. Then came Amaleh and fought with Israel, ■■■■■■■■■■—“in” or “at” (certainly not “against”) Rephidim, and so in other places. The English Revised Version is very inconsistent; for whereas it renders “against” in Zec_14:14, it has translated the same proposition “at” or “in” in the other passages just quoted, and in other places. It is properly rendered “at Jerusalem” in the “American Standard Edition.” the confederated hosts, which had all but succeeded in utterly exterminating the remnant of His people.

While their foes are consumed by the “plague” and engaged in fighting with one another in consequence of the “confusion” or tumult sent among them by the Lord, the remnant of Judah, “also” conscious now that the Captain of the Lord’s host is with them, and that Almighty power is now on their side, are suddenly stirred up to do valiantly and have a share in utterly destroying them.

One consequence of the utter discomfiture of these hosts around Jerusalem is that “the wealth of all the nations round about shall be gathered together, gold and silver and apparel in great abundance”; where again we have an allusion by the prophet to historical incidents in the past history of the nation as foreshadowments of the future.

Thus, in 2 Chronicles 20:1-37, to which reference has already been made, after the overthrow of the hosts of Ammon and Moab and the inhabitants of Mount Seir, we read that Jehoshaphat and his people gathered into Jerusalem “spoil in abundance, both riches and garments and precious jewels”; and thus also, when the hosts of Syrians, who were besieging Samaria, were suddenly seized with panic, fled because the Lord had made them “hear a noise of chariots and horses and of a great host”—they left behind abundance of silver and gold and raiment.1 And inasmuch as these hosts, by their enmity against God and His people, have brought themselves under His ban for utter destruction, the animals which they have brought with them for this campaign against the holy land and city, will also be overtaken with the same fate as their masters.

“And so shall be the plague of the horse, of the mule, and of the camel, and of the ass, and of all the beasts that shall be in those camps as their masters.”

This, as Hengstenberg points out, is in accord with the Mosaic law in reference to the ■herem, or “ban.” When a whole city had committed the crime of idolatry, not only

1 2Ki_7:2-8. the inhabitants, but the animals also, were put to death; in which case the same law affecting the relation between the irrational and rational portions of the creation was repeated on a small scale as that which caused the animal creation to be “subject to vanity,” not willingly, “on account of the sin of man.” An instance of this we have in the case of Achan, whose oxen, asses, and sheep were stoned and burned, along with himself and his children.1

Blessed be God, “creation,” which has become involved in the sin and consequent suffering and death of man, is to participate also in the benefits of the great redemption which has been accomplished by our Lord Jesus Christ, and shall yet be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.2 But there is a beneficent end in the very judgments of God, for through them the nations will at last learn righteousness, and the fruit will be “universal homage to the Universal Ruler,”3 Jehovah of Hosts, and in the person of the Messiah, under whose sway all nations shall then be blessed. “And it shall come to pass that every one that is left of all the nations that come up against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, Jehovah of Hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.”

First, it should be observed that when it is said that all nations and families of the earth shall come up to Jerusalem from year to year to worship Jehovah, and in acknowledgment of Israel’s national supremacy in the millennial earth, it is not meant that every individual in each nation shall come up, but that the nations shall come up representatively. “The actions of nations and all corporate bodies is always spoken of in Scripture with reference to those who are officially appointed to express or carry out their will. Thus in the great gathering against Jerusalem the nations concerned therein are represented by their armies. Every individual in each nation will not be present, yet each nation is said to be there.”4

1 Jos_7:24-25.

2 Rom_8:20-22.

3 Von Orelli.

4 B. W. Newton. The commentators differ as to why the Feast of Tabernacles is singled out as the one which all the nations are represented in this prophecy as coming up to Jerusalem to celebrate;

and very few see the deep typical and spiritual truth set forth by this “Hag-Yehovah”—the “Feast of Jehovah,”1 as it is emphatically called in Leviticus 23:1-44, which has been properly styled “The Sacred Calendar of the History of Redemption,” because it sets forth, by a series of striking types, not only the great facts, but the very order in which the various stages of God’s great redemption scheme for the world were to unfold themselves in the course of time. Briefly, it may be said that the nations are represented as coming up to Jerusalem to keep the Feast of Tabernacles because the spiritual truths set forth by this particular type shall then be realised—for Jerusalem shall then be the metropolis of God’s Kingdom on earth, and the joy and blessedness foreshadowed by that feast will then not only be the portion of saved Israel, but shall also pervade all nations of the earth. But to understand this more clearly we must examine a little more fully the historical and prophetic character of this feast. Primarily2 Tabernacles was, above all the other

1 Lev_23:39. Dr. Wright and others have built an argument against the literal interpretation of this prophecy on Isa_66:23, which, according to them, represents the Gentile nations as going up to Jerusalem to worship, not only once a year, but at all the festivals, and even on the new moons and Sabbaths. But the words of Isaiah are these: “And it shall come to pass that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before Me, saith Jehovah.” He says nothing about their going up to Jerusalem to keep these weekly and monthly festivals. Even Israel in the land did not go up to Jerusalem to celebrate their Sabbaths and their new moons, but worshipped God wherever they were. And so “all flesh” in that renewed earth, in which shall dwell righteousness, shall come together (in their own lands) to worship Jehovah on these frequent regular occasions. Zechariah, however, speaks distinctly of their going up to Jerusalem at the annual Feast of Tabernacles—not at all an impossible thing. An argument has been based on the opinion that the more distant nations could not obey this command because of the time required for the journey, but we do not yet know what the facilities of travel will be in the Millennium.

2 This section on the Feast of Tabernacles is quoted here from the 1st chapter of Types, Psalms, and Prophecies, entitled “The Sacred Calendar of the History of Redemption.” feasts, “the harvest festival of joy and thanksgiving, in celebration not only of the full ingathering of the ‘labours of the field,’ but also of the fruit and of the vintage, and is therefore pre-eminently styled the ‘Feast of Ingatherings’ ” (Exo_23:16; Exo_34:22; Deu_16:13).

It had, moreover, a clear retrospective or commemorative significance, as is plainly stated in the command that they should dwell in booths: “And ye shall take you on the first day the fruit of the goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook, and ye shall rejoice before Jehovah your God seven days; . . . ye shall dwell in booths seven days, . . . that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt; I am Jehovah your God” (Lev_23:40-43) an ordinance well calculated indeed to keep alive in their mind the grateful remembrance of the God of Israel, who sustained them miraculously in the wilderness, and led them by the hand of Moses, Aaron, and Joshua, safely into the promised land. The Rabbis in later times regarded the Sukkah (tabernacle), in which they dwelt during the feast, as more especially symbolical of the cloud of glory which hovered over the Tabernacle, and which led and shielded Israel by day and illumined them by night in their forty years wilderness wanderings; but even the Mishna and the Talmud single out this feast from all the others as being of an anticipative or prophetic character, while Christian

scholars and Bible students are in agreement that there is nothing in this dispensation to answer to the Feast of Tabernacles. No, its fulfilment is yet in the future, when, after Israel's national Day of Atonement shall have come to pass, and the nation which was destined of God from the beginning to be the channel of blessing to the world shall have been reconciled and cleansed, and equipped by the power of God to go forth on its mission of spreading the knowledge of their Messiah over the whole earth, the great "Feast of Ingathering" shall take place, and "all peoples" shall sit down to the "feast of fat things, yea, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow," which Jehovah of hosts has prepared for them on Mount Zion.1

Though not part of the original Mosaic appointment, the ceremonial service of this feast, which was in practice in the Temple, was also designed to point and emphasise its symbolic and prophetic significance. I will mention only two or three features of that ritual.

I. Simchat-bet-ha-Sho'ebhah—literally, "Joy of the House of Drawing (the water); or, the Ceremonial of Water Libation."

Every morning of the feast, a joyous procession, accompanied by music and headed by a priest bearing a golden pitcher, measuring just a little over two pints, made its way from the Temple courts to the Pool of Siloam. At the same time another procession went to the place in the Kedron valley called Moza, or Colonia, whence they brought willow branches, which they bound on either side of the altar of burnt-offering, "bending them over towards it so as to form a kind of leafy canopy."

Then the ordinary sacrifice proceeded, "the priest who had gone to Siloam so timing it that he returned just as his brethren carried up the pieces of the sacrifice to lay them on the altar. As he entered by the 'Water Gate,' which obtained its name from this ceremony, he was received by a threefold blast from the priests' trumpets." Amid great demonstrations of excitement and joy this water was poured into a silver basin, or tube, on the altar, simultaneously with the prescribed libation of wine, which was poured into another tube. On the seventh day, called the "Hoshanna rabba," the

1 Isaiah 25:1-12. "That these are not ideal comparisons, but the very design of the Feast of Tabernacles, appears not only from the language of the prophets and the peculiar services of the feast, but also from its position in the Calendar, and even from the names by which it is designated in Scripture. Thus in its reference to the harvest it is called 'Feast of Ingathering'; in that to the history of Israel in the past, the 'Feast of Tabernacles'; while its symbolic bearing on the future is brought out in its designation as emphatically 'the feast' and 'the Feast of Jehovah.' "—Edersheim.

great Hosanna, the joy and excitement of the people reached their climax. The joyous crowds of worshippers on that day, seen from one of the flat roofs of Jerusalem overlooking the Temple area, would resemble a forest in motion, for all carried palm branches in their hands which were more than a man's height in length. Great silence would fall on the assembled throng as the choir of Levites commenced to sing the Hallel (the specially prescribed "Praise" for the great festivals, consisting of Psalms 113:1-9, Psalms 114:1-8, Psalms 115:1-18, Psalms 116:1-19, Psalms 117:1-2, Psalms 118:1-29), to each line of which the people had to respond with "Hallelujah." Soon the whole crowd fell into order, and, led by the priests, marched in procession round the altar. Seven times they encompassed it. As the singers reached Psalms 118:25-29, and joined in the words, "Ana Adonai Hoshio-na!" ("Hosanna, make Thy salvation now manifest, O Lord!"), "Ana

Adonai Hatslicha-na!" ("O Lord, send now prosperity!"), the people waved their palm branches and accompanied the song with loud exclamations of joy. And as they reached the words, "Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of Jehovah," the godly and spiritual among them would in their hearts greet the coming Messiah and King, to whom they well knew these words applied. The joy accompanying this ceremonial was so great that it became a proverb. "He that hath not seen Simchat-bet-ha-Sho'ebhah, the joy of the drawing (and the pouring) of the water, hath not seen joy in this life." Now, though the Rabbis attached a symbolic significance to the ceremonial in connection with the dispensation of the rain, the amount of which for the year they imagined was determined by God at this feast; and perhaps also a commemorative sense, as reminding them of the wonders God wrought in the wilderness in giving them water out of a rock, the main reference according to themselves, as already said, was to the future blessings to be bestowed on them in Messiah's time, and especially pointed to the pouring out of the Spirit; as is to be inferred from the singing by the multitude of Isa_12:3, and from the distinct statement in the Talmud (Jer., Sukkah v., also Tosefta Sukkah iv.). "Why is it called Bet-ha-Sho'ebhah? (the joy of drawing or pouring). Because of the pouring of the Holy Spirit, according to what is said: 'With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.' " Now, in a limited though very blessed degree, this has already been fulfilled, for it was in reference to this ceremonial of the pouring of water that our Lord Jesus "on the last day—the great day of the feast"—stood and cried, saying, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of His belly shall flow rivers of living-water: and his He spake of the Spirit which they that believed were about to receive"; in accordance with which, when once Jesus was glorified, on being raised from the dead and taken up to the right hand of God, the Spirit came down from heaven like a rushing mighty wind, and the Church of this dispensation was formed, every living member of which knows experiment ally of the indwelling of this blessed heavenly Paraclete. In its fulness, however, such a prophecy as Isaiah 12:1-6 and the wonderful prediction of Joel—"And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh"—will only be realised subsequent to Israel's great national Day of Atonement. Then "the ransomed of Jehovah shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Isa_35:10). Then shall Israel nationally experience the truth of Christ's word, "But the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into eternal life"; and then also "shall living waters go out from Jerusalem" for the quickening and refreshing of the whole world (Zec_14:6).

2. Another feature in the Temple service of the Feast of Tabernacles also deserves mention, because of its rich symbolic import. At the conclusion of the first day of the feast the worshippers congregated in the Court of the Women, where a great illumination took place. Four huge golden lamps or candelabras were there, each with four golden bowls, against which rested four ladders. Four youths of priestly descent ascended these with large pitchers of oil from which they filled each bowl. The old worn breeches and girdles of the priests served for wicks for these lamps. So great and brilliant was the light that, according to a saying, "There was not a court in Jerusalem that was not lit up by it." Around these great golden burning lamps a sacred dance took place, in which even the ■hassidim (saints) and "the men of deed," or prominent leaders of the people, with flaming torches in their hands, danced before the people and sang before them hymns and songs of praise. "The Levites also, with harps, and lutes, and cymbals, and trumpets, and with instruments of music without number, stood upon the fifteen steps which led down from the Court

of Israel to that of the Women, according to the number of the fifteen ‘Songs of Degrees’ in the Book of Psalms.” This illumination, too, was regarded as of the same twofold symbolic significance as the pouring of the water. It reminded them of the past when God led them in the wilderness with the cloud of glory and the pillar of fire—of the Shekinah glory which dwelt in the first Temple, but was, alas! already absent in the second; but it also, and chiefly, was meant to remind them of the Messianic promises in the future when the light of Jehovah should arise upon their land and people.

Now this, too, has, in a partial degree, been already fulfilled, for He who cried, “If any man thirst let him come unto Me and drink,” at this same feast, and in reference to this illumination, again spake unto them, saying, “I am the Light of the world; he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the Light of Life”; and since then hundreds of millions who have heard His voice, and have followed in His steps, have had their hearts and souls, their present and their future eternity illumined by His Gospel. But while this is so, Israel, as a nation, still walks in darkness, and the other peoples of the earth are still covered by the shadow of death—until the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings, and the word shall go forth: “Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of Jehovah is risen upon thee.” Then “nations” as nations, “shall come to thy light; and kings to the brightness of thy glory” (Isa_60:13); and the promise confirmed by the oath of Him who cannot lie shall be fulfilled: “As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of Jehovah” (Num_14:21). The Feast of Tabernacles was the only one that had an octave, “the last and great day of the feast,” the Azereth—“conclusion,” or “crowning feast of all the feasts of the year,” as Philo, the Alexandrian, called it; on which Israel dwelt no longer in booths to remind them of the wilderness but returned to their homes to rejoice there, and to begin, so to say, a cycle beyond the one of seven which they had just completed.

Now the eighth day in Scripture is the Resurrection Day, and points, I believe, to the Eternal Day, after the cycle of time in which the history of the earth, as set forth in the Sacred Calendar of the History of Redemption, shall have been finished, when the consummation of earthly rest shall synchronise with the commencement of heavenly glory—“when a great voice out of the throne shall go forth, saying: Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them, and they shall be His people. And God Himself shall be with them and be their God. And God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things have passed away” (Rev_21:1-8).

“Then,” to conclude with the words of an old divine, “the mystery of the water which was poured upon the sacrifices shall be fulfilled, when He who is the Alpha and the Omega shall proclaim, It is done. ‘I will give to him that is athirst of the water of life freely.’ Then He who, at the Feast of Tabernacles, invited sinners to come to Him and drink, shall lead His redeemed people by living fountains of water; and make them drink of the river of His pleasures. Then, too, the symbol of the palm branches shall be accomplished in the final victory of the redeemed over Death and Hades; and they shall realise the blessed fulfilment of the promise, ‘He that overcometh shall inherit all thing’s; and I will be his God, and he shall be My Son!’

“Then, too, shall be the great Hosanna, when that great multitude, which no man could number, out of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, shall stand before the throne of God, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands, and shall ‘cry with a loud

voice, saying: Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb' (Rev_7:9-10)."

During that blessed millennial period the knowledge of the glory of Jehovah shall indeed cover the earth, and all nations shall walk in His light. Sin and iniquity will no longer be allowed to lift up their head, and apostasy and rebellion will be visited with instant punishment whenever they manifest themselves. Yet we know from prophetic Scripture that the hearts of multitudes among the Gentile nations will not be fully subdued to God and His truth, even in the Millennium, and that many of them will render only a feigned submission to the Divine King, whose throne shall be on Mount Sion. There follows therefore the warning to the nations against disobedience to His command to come up to Jerusalem to render homage to the King, Jehovah of hosts. "And it shall be that whoso of the families of the earth goeth not up unto Jerusalem to worship the King, Jehovah of Hosts, upon them there shall be no rain," which commentators take to mean the "early rain," which generally falls in Palestine about the end of October and the beginning of November soon after Tabernacles, but ■■■■■ (geshem—the word here used) usually stands simply for heavy, torrential rain, ■■■■■ (yoreh), being the special word for the "early rain." Besides, this is a threat uttered, not against Israel and Palestine, but the Gentile nations, whose seasons and climates may be altogether different. The word is to be taken first of all in its literal sense. The withholding of rain was one of the ways by which God was wont to punish the apostasy of His own people in the days of the theocracy,1 and He now threatens to inflict it on the Gentile nations in case of disobedience. At the same time, there is also here a blending of the literal and the spiritual, and the punishment threatened includes also the withholding from the disobedient nations, or "families," of the showers of God's grace and blessing, of which the literal rain is often used in Scripture as an emblem. For this punishment, in case of disobedience, there will be no exception and escape. This is the thought expressed in the two following verses: "And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, then also not upon them; there shall be the plague wherewith Jehovah will plague the nations that go not up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles." This is the literal rendering of the words as they stand in the Hebrew text, but the actual meaning is not absolutely certain.2

Egypt is especially named according to Von Orelli, Koehler, and others, because of its peculiar conditions and climate—for however it ultimately depended on the equatorial rains, which overfilled the lakes which supply the Nile, it did not need that fine arrangement of the rains of autumn and spring which were essential to the fruitfulness of Palestine. Hence it may perhaps encourage itself in the thought that the threatened infliction in case of disobedience would be no punishment to them. The prophet therefore 1 Comp. 1 Kings 17:1-24, 1 Kings 18:1-46.

2 Most commentators supply the words ■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■, yihyeh haggashem, "and not upon (or 'neither upon them') shall be the rain." It is possible, however, that the adverb, ■■■ ("not") before the word ■■■■■■■■, "upon them," has crept in by mistake from the previous line, and that the Septuagint is in this case likely to be correct. By omitting one of the negatives, it reads simply, "And if the tribe of Egypt does not go up nor come, the plague will be upon them with which Jehovah will smite all the nations." Lange, following Hitzig and Bunsen, renders the passage interrogatively: "And if the family of Egypt will not go up and will not come, then will the plague not fall upon them with which Jehovah shall smite the nation which will not go up in order to keep the Feast of Tabernacles?" to which question Zec_14:19 is, according to this rendering, supposed to

be the answer. But this translation is rejected by most scholars on grammatical grounds. emphasises the fact that, notwithstanding Egypt's apparent independence of rain, it would suffer the consequences that follow the withholding of rain, as much as the other nations that are dependent on it. It may be also, as Pusey suggests, that the words are left undefined "with a purposed abruptness" (the word rain not being mentioned in the Hebrew in Zec_14:18), "there shall not be upon them" namely, "whatever they need."1 The thought that Egypt if disobedient will be overtaken in the same judgment is solemnly repeated in Zec_14:19, "This shall be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that go not up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles." The word used ere for punishment is ■■■■■■, ■hattath, which primarily means "sin"; but it signifies also sin in its effects, as bringing punishment in its train. The word stands also sometimes for "sin-offering," which reminds us of the intimate relation that exists in God's moral government of the world between sin and its punishment, and helps us to understand such a statement as that Christ, who knew no sin, was made sin for us—namely, a sin-offering, enduring and bearing the consequence of sin on our behalf. In the last two verses we reach the glorious goal and climax of vision and prophecy. God's original purpose in the calling and election of Israel—"Ye shall be unto Me a Kingdom of priests, an holy nation"—shall at last be realised; the aim and purpose of the whole law,—namely, that His people might learn the meaning of holiness and become holy because Jehovah their God is holy; but to which, so long as they were in bondage to the law, they could not attain, shall at last be fulfilled when they are brought into a condition of grace, and when God shall put His law into their inward parts and write it on their hearts.

1 Keil, Breclenkamp, and others contend, however, that the prophet mentions Egypt especially, not because of the fact in natural history that this land owes its fertility not to rain, but to the overflowing of the Nile but as the nation which showed the greatest hostility to Jehovah and His people in the olden time, and for the purpose of showing that this nation was also to attain a full participation in the blessings of salvation bestowed upon Israel (comp. Isa_19:19-25).

Then the world shall witness for the first time the glorious spectacle of a whole nation, and every individual member it, wholly consecrated to Jehovah, and an earthly capital which shall truly answer to its name, "The Holy City," because it shall in many ways be the earthly counterpart and reflection of the glory of the New Jerusalem, which will come down out of heaven from God. And not only shall ■■■■■■■ ■■■■■, Qodesh la-Yehovah—"Holiness (or holy) unto the Lord" be written on their persons, and on all the outward and inward life of the whole community, but on everything they possess. "In that day shall there be (engraven) on the bells of the horses, Holy unto Jehovah: and the pots in Jehovah's House"—which were used for the boiling of the sacrificial flesh, of which the common people, as well as the priests, could eat, and were therefore regarded as less holy—"shall be like the bowls before the altar"—in which the blood of the sacrifices was received, and out of which it was sprinkled, or poured, upon the altar, and therefore regarded as most holy. In the words of a deep student of Scripture, "The whole external character of life—that which is exhibited in the streets of a city (represented by the tinkling sound of the bells of the passing horses) shall bear in all its parts, throughout all its detail, the impress of holiness unto the Lord. Religious life and fellowship shall be holy also; for the pots in the Lord's House, vessels which of old the priests had so often defiled, shall be like the bowls of the altar. Private and domestic life shall be hallowed too; for 'every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah (that is, throughout

the holy land) shall be holy unto Jehovah of Hosts: and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them and seethe (or boil) in them.' For everything alike shall be holy, and all such distinctions as 'profane,' 'holy,' and 'most holy,' shall completely cease 'in that day.' "

"The distinction between holy and profane can only cease, however," to quote yet another writer, "when the sin and moral defilement which first evoked this distinction, and made it necessary that the things intended for the service of God should be set apart and receive a special consecration, have been entirely removed and wiped away. To remove this distinction, to prepare the way for the cleansing away of sin, and to sanctify once more that which sin had desecrated, was the object of the sacred institutions appointed by God. To this end Israel was separated from the nations of the earth; and in order to train it up as a holy nation, and to secure the object described, a law was given to it, in which the distinction between holy and profane ran through all the relations of life. And this goal will be eventually reached by the people of God, and sin with all its consequences be cleansed away by the judgment. In the perfected Kingdom of God there will be no more sinners, but only such as are righteous and holy."1

Finally, "there shall be no more a Canaanite in the House of Jehovah of Hosts in that day." The Hebrew word ■■■■■■■■■, Khena■ani, means also "trader," or "merchant," because in early times the Canaanites, especially the Phœnicians, were known in the world as traders. Some therefore prefer to render the clause, "There shall no more be a trafficker in the House of the Lord," which is also the rendering of the Jewish Targum. But whether we take the term Canaanite to stand for the unclean and the godless, or understand it as meaning merchant or trafficker, the sense is practically the same. Nothing that defileth, or that maketh an abomination or a lie, or that could disturb the peace or mar the holiness, shall in anywise be permitted to enter that House, which "in that day" shall be the House of Prayer for all nations.

"For this shall be the law of the House: upon the top of the mountain the whole limit thereof round about shall be most holy. Behold, this is the law of the House."2

1 Keil.

2 Eze_43:12.

4.23. General Index

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5.00. The Servant of Jehovah

THE SERVANT OF JEHOVAH The Sufferings of the Messiah and the

Glory That Should Follow AN EXPOSITION OF Isaiah 53:1-12 BY

DAVID BARON

(1922) Fig Tree Institute

5.000. Preface

Preface

It is, I can sincerely say, with unfeigned diffidence that I send forth this little work on its mission, for I am deeply conscious of the greatness and sublimity of the theme and of the inadequate way in which I have been able to deal with it. I felt inwardly impelled to write it, and gave gladly devoted to it what days and hours could possibly be spared in a life of strain and pressure on account of many other tasks and responsibilities. But though sensible of the shortcoming and imperfection of my effort, I have the heart assurance that there is a blessing in it, and if the reader receives only a fraction of the spiritual help and enjoyment which the writer found in the course of his meditation and exposition of this truly wonderful Scripture he will be amply rewarded. It has confirmed his faith in the supernatural character of prophecy and made him feel as never before that Holy Scripture has upon it "the stamp of its Divine Author—the mark of heaven—the impress of eternity."

It has, if possible, wrought deeper conviction in his heart that Jesus of Nazareth is indeed the Christ, the promised Redeemer of Israel—He "of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write"; for it is beyond even the wildest credulity to believe that the resemblance in every feature and minutes detail between prophet portraiture drawn centuries before His advent and the story of His life, and death, and the glorious resurrection as narrated in the Gospels, can be mere accident or fortuitous coincidence. It has also strengthened my hope for the future blessing of the nation from which I have sprung, and for which I have not ceased to yearn with the yearnings of Him who wept over Jerusalem, and even on the Cross prayed for them: Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do"; for, in the words of Franz Delitzsch, "we must not overlook the fact that this golden passional is also one of the greatest prophecies of the future conversion of the nation which rejected the Servant of God, and allowed the Gentiles to be the first to recognize Him. At last, though very late, it will feel remorse. And when this shall once take place, then, and not till then, will this chapter—which, to use an old epithet, will ever be carnificina Rabbinorum—receive its complete historical fulfillment." As will be seen, the book consists of two parts. In the first part it has been impossible to avoid controversy and criticism in order to clear the ground, and to demonstrate the firm foundation on which the Messianic interpretation of the prophecies concerning the Servant of Jehovah in the Book of Isaiah is based; which in the second part, which is a continuous exposition of the great Scripture which forms the subject of the whole, I have tried as much as possible to avoid controversy and criticism, but to make it spiritually helpful to believers.

There is nothing in these pages which should be too difficult or abstruse for the ordinary intelligent reader who knows no other languages than English; the Hebrew words and phrases where they occur being all transliterated as well as translated. To those, however, who have no interest in the history of interpretation, and do not care to follow Jewish and rationalistic misinterpretation, I would recommend to read the exposition first, or to pass over Chapters II and III of the first part.

David Baron

5.0000. Scripture

THE SCRIPTURE Behold, my servant shall deal wisely, He shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high.

Like as many were astonished at thee (His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men), So shall He sprinkle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths at Him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they understand. Who hath believed our message? and to whom hath the arm of Jehovah been revealed? For He grew up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him.

He was despised, and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and as one from whom men hide their face He was despised; and we esteemed Him not.

Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and Jehovah hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed, yet when He was afflicted He opened not His mouth; as a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth. By oppression and judgment He was taken away; and as for His generation, who [among them] considered that He was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people to whom the stroke was due? And they made His grave with the wicked, and with a rich man in His death; although He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth.

Yet it pleased Jehovah to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief: when thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in His hand.

He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied: by the knowledge of Himself shall My righteous servant justify many; and He shall bear their iniquities.

Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong; because He poured out His soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors: yet He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

5.00000. Contents

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5.01. PART I - A Critical Examination of the Non-Messianic Interpretations of Isaiah 53

PART I A Critical Examination of the Non-Messianic Interpretations of Isaiah 53:1-12 "I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other?"—Act_8:34

5.02. Chapter 1 - The Prophetic Gen and Its Setting

Chapter 1 The Prophetic Gen and Its Setting The great Scripture we are about to consider has sometimes been called “the fifth Gospel.” “Methinks,” said Augustine, “Isaiah writes not a prophecy but a gospel.” This he said of the whole book, but it is especially true of this chapter. Polycarp, the disciple of John, called it “the golden Passional of the Old Testament”; and a great German scholar writes: “It looks as if it had been written beneath the cross of Golgotha and was illuminated by the heavenly brightness of the ■■■■■■ ■■, shebh limini (‘Sit Thou at My right hand’). It is the unravelling of Psalms 22:1-31 and Psalms 110:1-7. It forms the inmost centre of this wonderful book of consolations (as the Rabbis called the second half of Isaiah), and is the most central, the deepest, and the loftiest thing that Old Testament prophecy, outstripping itself, has ever achieved.” Luther said that every Christian ought to be able to repeat it by heart.

“It is prelude to much that is most distinctive in New Testament doctrine, and is the root from which not a little of the thinking of Christian ages has grown. Its phraseology has entered largely into Christian speech, and it has supplied more texts to the gospel preacher than any other portion of the Old Testament. There are individual phrases in it resembling peaks, from which we faintly descry vast realms of truth which we cannot yet explore, but which shine with a mystic light whose source is Divine. Beyond question, this chapter is the heart of the Hebrew prophetic writings. It embraces and harmonizes the ideas contained in such seemingly discordant predictions as Psalms 2:1-12, Psalms 22:1-31, Psalms 72:1-20, and Psalms 110:1-7; and from the standpoint which it furnishes we are enabled to see the consistency of Messianic prophecy throughout.

“Elsewhere, indeed, we find greater splendour of language, force of passion, wealth of imagery, and imaginative elevation, but nowhere so full, minute, and vivid forthshowing of God’s purpose. Truths elsewhere seen in twilight and transitory glimpses here stand forth for calm inspection in the light of day. Elsewhere we find line or touch or feature in keeping with what is here; but nowhere so finished and complete a portraiture. It is as if the prophet had shaded and filled up with colours the outlines elsewhere given. The hints of One passing through shame and suffering to victory, which elsewhere appear as ‘dark sayings,’ here kindle into a great life-filled picture, in which we see not only His surpassing sorrow, but also the mystery of its meaning, and the glory which finally comes of it. Not merely is there broad outline, but those more delicate lines and contours which give perfect individuality to the portrait.

“The chapter holds much the same place in Old Testament prophecy that the narrative of Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection holds in New Testament history; and with this chapter all Hebrew prophecy as a Divine thing stands or falls.”1

1 The Man of Sorrows and the Joy that was Set before Him—a very excellent booklet by the late James Culfoss, D.D., published by the Drummond Tract Depository, to which I shall have occasion to make many references in the exposition. But most precious and beautiful as this Old Testament prophetic gem is in itself, its lustre is greatly intensified by its setting. The second half of the Book of Isaiah, consisting of the last twenty-seven chapters, is the sublimest and richest portion of Old

Testament revelation. It forms a single continuous prophecy which occupies the same position in the prophetic Scriptures as the Book of Deuteronomy in the Pentateuch, and the Gospel of John in relation to the Synoptic Gospels. It is true that “it does not flow on in even current like a history,” and to the superficial reader it may have a desultory appearance, but “after patient study the first sense of confusedness is got over, and we perceive its magnificent and harmonious completeness as it rounds itself into one glorious vision.”

It may be called the prophetic Messianic epic of the Old Testament. It is sublime in its very style and language, and wonderful in its comprehensiveness—anticipating, as it does, the whole order of the New Testament. It begins, where the New Testament begins, with the ministry of John the Baptist—“the voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord” and it ends, where the New Testament ends, with the new heavens and a new earth, wherein shall dwell righteousness (Isa_65:17-20, Isa_66:22). On examining the glorious prophecy closely, we find that the [last] twenty-seven chapters range themselves into three equal division of nine chapters each, all ending with nearly the same solemn refrain, “There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked” (Isa_48:22; Isa_57:21; Isa_66:24).

One great line of thought unfolded in the whole prophecy is the development of evil and the final overthrow of the wicked, who are excluded from the blessings of Messiah’s Kingdom; and the sufferings but final glory of the righteous remnant who are the subjects of that Kingdom, and whose King is described as leading the way along the same path of suffering into glory. This subject becomes developed and intensified as we go on, until it reaches its climax in the last chapter. The first section is brought to a close at the end of chapter 48, where the blessedness of the righteous who are “redeemed” (Isa_48:20), and peacefully led and satisfied even in the desert, is contrasted with the state of the wicked to whom “there is no peace.” In the second division the same subject becomes intensified; there is development of both evil and good, righteousness and wickedness, and it ends with Isaiah 57:1-21, where “Peace! peace!” is announced to the righteous, but the wicked have not only “no peace”, but have become “like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.” In the last division the destiny of both is brought to a climax and becomes fixed for ever. “Therefore thus saith Jehovah God, Behold, My servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry; behold, My servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty; behold, My servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed; behold, My servants shall sing for joy, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart and shall howl for vexation of spirit. And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto My chosen, for the Lord God shall slay thee, and call His servants by another name.” This contrast is continued until finally we find the righteous dwelling for ever in the new heavens and the new earth, wherein shall dwell righteousness; while as to the wicked who have transgressed against God, “there worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring to all flesh.” In the first section (Isaiah 40:1-31, Isaiah 41:1-29, Isaiah 42:1-25, Isaiah 43:1-28, Isaiah 44:1-28, Isaiah 45:1-25, Isaiah 46:1-13, Isaiah 47:1-15, Isaiah 48:1-22) the restoration from Babylon (which, however, is portrayed in terms which far exceeded what actually took place at that restoration, and which will only be exhaustively fulfilled in the greater restoration of Israel “from the four corners of the earth”) is the starting-point, and the appointed instrument in God’s hand to bring about that restoration, Cyrus, is the central figure. In the second or central section (Isaiah 49:1-26, Isaiah 50:1-11, Isaiah 51:1-23, Isaiah 52:1-15, Isaiah 53:1-12, Isaiah 54:1-17, Isaiah 55:1-13, Isaiah 56:1-12, Isaiah 57:1-21) the grand

redemption to be accomplished by One greater than Cyrus—even by Him, who in this series of chapters is pre-eminently the Ebhed Yehovah—the “Servant of Jehovah,” who is sent not only to raise up “the tribes of Jacob,” and to restore “the preserved of Israel,” but to be “a light also to the Gentiles,” and God’s salvation “unto the end of the earth,” is the theme with which the prophet’s heart overflows; and in the third or last section the blessed condition of restored and converted Israel, who shall then be the channel and active propagators of the blessings of Messiah’s gospel among all nations, is the outstanding subject. The heart and climax of the whole prophecy is to be found in the brief section which forms its inmost centre (Isaiah 52:13-15, Isaiah 53:1-12), which, instead of a prophecy uttered centuries in advance, reads like an historic summary of the Gospel narrative of the sufferings of the Christ and the glory that should follow.

Taking our position at this central point, we are almost overwhelmed with the evidence of design in the very structure of this prophecy, for on closer examination we find that each book is subdivided into three sections of three chapters each, nearly corresponding to the divisions in the Authorized Version. Thus the middle book is Isaiah 49:1-26, Isaiah 50:1-11, Isaiah 51:1-23, Isaiah 52:1-15. The middle section of the middle book is Isaiah 52:1-15, Isaiah 53:1-12, Isaiah 54:1-17, and Isaiah 53:1-12 is the middle chapter of the middle section of the middle book—forming, as it were, the heart and center of this wonderful Messianic poem, as well as the heart and centre of all Old Testament prophecy. The central verse of this central paragraph, which begins properly with Isa_53:5, is: “He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement with a view to our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.” The doctrine it enshrines, namely, substitution, is one of the leading truths unfolded in Old and New Testaments, and it forms the central thought in this great prophecy. It is, moreover, the essence of the message of comfort with which the prophet begins (Isa_40:1-2), solving the problem as to how “her iniquity is pardoned.”

5.03. Chapter 2 - The Ancient Jewish Interpretation of Isaiah 53

Chapter 2 The Ancient Jewish Interpretation of Isaiah 53:1-12

There is truth in the observation of a scholarly writer that this great prophecy was “an enigma which could not be fully understood in the days before Christ, but which has been solved by the sufferings, death, resurrection, and exaltation of Him who was both Son of Man and Son of God.”1 1 Dr. C. H. H. Wright, The Servant of Jehovah.

It is therefore not surprising to find that in the Talmud and Rabbinic Midrashim there is much confusion and contradiction in the various interpretations advanced by the Rabbis. But though is may be true, as Professor Dalman observes,2 that the Messianic interpretation was not the general one, or the one officially recognized in Israel (any more than any of the other interpretations can be said to have been either generally or officially recognized), yet from most ancient times there have not been wanting authoritative teachers who interpreted the chapter of the Messiah—in spite of the fact that the picture of the Redeemer which is here drawn is utterly opposed to the disposition and to the perverted hopes and expectations in reference to the Messiah which have developed in Rabbinic Judaism.

2 Jesaja 53, Das Prophetenwort, vom Sühnleiden des Heilmittlers. In proof of this, the following few brief extracts from ancient Jewish interpretations will interest the Christian reader:

First, let me quote Jonathan ben Uzziel (first century A.D.), who begins his Targum with, “Behold, my Servant Messiah shall prosper; He shall be high and increase, and be exceeding strong.” And then, to reconcile the interpretation of this scripture of the Messiah with his reluctance to recognize that the promised Deliverer must suffer and die for the sins of the nation, he proceeds to juggle with the scripture in a most extraordinary manner, making all the references to exaltation and glory in the chapter to apply to the Messiah, but the references to tribulation and sufferings to Israel. In illustration of the method by which this is accomplished I need quote only his paraphrase of the very next verse (Isa_52:14), which reads: “As the House of Israel looked to Him during many days, because their countenance was darkened among the peoples, and their complexion beyond the sons of men.” In the Talmud Babylon,3 among other opinions, we find the following: “The Messiah—what is His name? . . . The Rabbis say the ‘leprous one’;4 (those) of the house of Rabbi (say), ‘the sick one,’ as it is said, ‘Surely He hath borne our sicknesses.’”5 3 Sanhedrin, fol. 98b

4 This is based on a wrong interpretation of the word ■■■■, nagua‘—“stricken” or “plagued,” as meaning “leprous.”

5 The other names of the Messiah mentioned in this passage are; “Shiloh,” with reference to Gen_49:10, “until Shiloh come”; “Yinnon,” with reference to Psa_72:17, “His name shall endure for ever; before the sun (was created) his name was Yinnon”; “Chaninah,” in reference to Jer_16:13, “where no chaninah (favour) will be given to you”; “M’nachem,” son of Hezekiah, in reference to Lam_1:16, “the Comforter (M’nachem) that should restore my soul is far from me.” That the generally received older Jewish interpretation of this prophecy was the Messianic is admitted by

Abrabanel, who himself proceeds in a long polemic against the Nazarenes to interpret it of the Jewish nation. He begins: “The first question is to ascertain to whom (this scripture) refers: for the learned among the Nazarenes expound it of the man who was crucified in Jerusalem at the end of the second Temple, and who according to them was the Son of God and took flesh in the virgin’s womb, as is stated in their writings. Jonathan ben Uzziel interprets it in the Targum of the future Messiah; and this is also the opinion of our learned men in the majority of their Midrashim.”

Similarly another (Rabbi Mosheh el Sheikh, commonly known as Alshech, second half of the sixteenth century), who also himself follows the older interpretation, at any rate of the first three verses (Isa_52:13-15, which, however, as we shall see when we come to the interpretation, contain a summary of the whole prophecy), testifies that our Rabbis with one voice accept and affirm the opinion that the prophet is speaking of the King Messiah.6

6 ■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■ ■■ ■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■ ■■ ■■■■■ ■■■ In fact, until Rashi7 (Rabbi Solomin Yizchaki) applied it to the Jewish nation, the Messianic interpretation of this chapter was almost universally adopted by Jews, and his view, which we shall examine presently, although received by Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and others, was rejected as unsatisfactory by Maimonides, who is regarded by the Jews as of highest authority, by Alshech (as stated above), and many others, one of whom8 says the interpretation adopted by Rashi “distorts the passage from its natural meaning,” and that in truth “it was given of God as a description of the Messiah, whereby, when any should claim to be the Messiah, to judge by the resemblance or non-resemblance to it whether he were the Messiah or no.” And another9 says: “The meaning of ‘He was wounded for our transgressions, . . . bruised for our iniquities,’ is that since the Messiah bears our iniquities, which produce the effect of His being bruised, it follows that whoso will not admit that the Messiah thus suffers for our iniquities must endure and suffer for them himself.”

7 Rashi, 1040-1105

8 R. Mosheh Kohen Iben Crispin, of Cardova, and afterwards of Toledo (fourteenth century). He rightly says of those who for controversial reasons applied this prophecy to Israel that by so doing “the doors of the literal interpretation of this Parashah were shut in their face, and that they wearied themselves to find the entrance, having forsaken the knowledge of our teachers, and inclined after the stubbornness of their own hearts and of their own opinions.”

9 R. Eliyya de Vidas, 1575 A.D.

Before proceeding to an examination of the modern Jewish interpretation of this chapter, let me add two further striking testimonies to its more ancient Messianic interpretation—taken this time, not from any Targum, or Midrash, or Rabbinical Commentary, which might be said to express the individual opinion of this or that Rabbi, but from the Jewish liturgy, which may be said to bear upon it the seal of the authority and usage of the whole Synagogue. The first is taken from the Liturgy for the Day of Atonement—the most solemn day in the Jewish year—and reads as follows: “We are shrunk up in our misery even until now! Our Rock hath not come nigh to us; Messiah our righteousness (or ‘our Righteous Messiah’) has departed from us: Horror hath seized upon us, and we have none to justify us. He hath borne the yoke of our iniquities and our transgressions, and is wounded because of our transgression. He beareth our sins on His shoulder, that He may find pardon for our iniquities. We shall be healed by His wound at the time the Eternal will create Him

(Messiah) as a new creature. O bring Him up from the circle of the earth, raise Him up from Seir to assemble us the second time on Mount Lebanon, by the hand of Yinnon."10

10 This prayer or hymn forms part of the Musaph Service for the Day of Atonement. The author, according to Zunz (Literatur geschichte der Syn. Poesie, p. 56, etc.), was Eleazer ben Kalir, who lived in the ninth century. Yinnon, as will be seen from the quotation from Talmud Sanhedrin on p. 12, was one of the names given by the Rabbis to the Messiah, and is derived from Psa_72:17, which the Talmud renders, "Before the sun was, His name"—a rendering and explanation which implies a belief in the pre-existence of the Messiah. The other passage is also from the Machsor (Liturgy for the Festival Services) and will be found among the prayers on the Feast of Passover. It is as follows: "Flee, my beloved, until the end of the vision shall speak; hasten, and the shadows shall take their flight hence: high and exalted and lofty shall be the despised one; he shall be prudent in judgment, and shall sprinkle many! Lay bare thine arm! cry out, and say: 'The voice of my beloved; behold he cometh!'"11

11 David Levi, the English translator of the Machsor, a Jew, says in a note that this verse referred to "the true Messiah."

5.04. Chapter 3 - The Modern Jewish and Rationalistic Christian Interpretation of Isaiah 53

Chapter 3 The Modern Jewish and Rationalistic Christian Interpretation of Isaiah 53:1-12 On examining the different non-Messianic and controversial interpretations of this great prophecy, given by Jewish and unbelieving Christian Rabbis, it is an important fact to be borne in mind, as Pusey points out, that next to nothing turns upon renderings of the Hebrew. “The objections raised by Jewish controversialists (and I may add by the non-Messianic Christian interpreters) in only four, or at most five, words turn on the language.” It is not then a question of knowledge of Hebrew Grammar, or Philology; and ordinary intelligent English readers, with the Authorized or Revised Version of the Scriptures in their hands, are well able to judge of the merits of the different interpretations which are advanced.

“The characteristics in which all agree are, that there would be a prevailing unbelief as to the subject of the prophecy, lowly beginnings, among circumstances outwardly unfavourable, but before God, and protected by Him; sorrows, injustice, contempt, death, which were the portion of the sufferer; that he was accounted a transgressor, yet that his sufferings were, in some way, vicarious, and the just for the unjust; his meek silence; his willing acceptance of his death; his being with the rich in his death; his soul being (in some way) an offering for sin, and God’s acceptance of it; his prolonged life; his making many righteous; his continued intercession for transgressors; the greatness of his exaltation, in proportion to the depth of his humiliation; the submission of kings to him; his abiding reign.”1 1 Pusey in his Introduction to The Jewish Interpreters of Isaiah 53:1-12.

Now these characteristics stand out in all literal translations (as distinguished from mere paraphrases) whether made by Jews or Christians, in the east or in the west. “The question,” as the writer whom I have just quoted observes, “is not, ‘What is the picture?’—in this all are agreed—but ‘Whose image or likeness does it bear?’”

It is not necessary for us to examine those Jewish interpretations which apply this chapter to Jeremiah, Isaiah himself, Hezekiah, Josiah, or Job, etc., for they have been sufficiently refuted by Jewish writers themselves, but I may quote Hengstenberg’s observation in reference to those Christian writers who have followed in the same lines.

“Among the interpretations which refer the prophecy to a single individual other than the Messiah,” he says, “scarcely any one has found another defender than its own author. They are of importance only in so far as they show that the prophecy does most decidedly make the impression that its subject is a real person, not a personification; and further, that it could not be any means be an exegetical interest which induced rationalism to reject the interpretation which referred to Christ.” The most generally accepted modern Jewish interpretation of this prophecy is that which makes it apply to the Jewish nation. The first mention we have of this explanation is by Origen,2 who, in his work against Celsus, says, “I remember once having used these prophecies

in disquisition with those called wise among the Jews, whereon the Jews said that these things were prophesied of the whole people as one which was both dispersed abroad and smitten." But this may then have been the opinion of that particular Rabbi, or the counter-explanation may have been advanced by him (as has been done by later Rabbis and Jewish commentators) as a device, "in order to answer heretics" who were pressing them with the remarkable resemblance between the prophecy and its fulfillment in Jesus of Nazareth.

2 Born, 185 or 186 A.D.; died 253. The first of the authoritative Jewish commentators who applied this chapter to the Jewish nation was Rashi, and since his time it has become more and more that "generally received" interpretation among the Jews. And that unbelieving Israel should have departed from the ancient interpretation which applied this prophecy to the Messiah is really not to be wondered at, for first the idea of a suffering expiatory Messiah became more and more repugnant to Rabbinic Judaism, which lost the knowledge of sin and the consciousness of the need of salvation, such as alone could make the doctrine of a vicariously suffering Redeemer acceptable. "Not knowing the holiness of God, and being ignorant of the true import of the Law," as Hengstenberg observes, "they imagine that in their own strength they can be justified before God. What they longed for was only an outward deliverance from their misery and oppressors, not an inward deliverance from sin. For this reason the Synagogue occupied itself exclusively with those Scriptures which announce a Messiah in glory, which passages also it misinterpreted."

Secondly, lacking or rejecting the key to the true understanding of this prophecy, namely, its fulfillment in Jesus of Nazareth, Jewish commentators were encountered by great difficulties and inexplicabilities in their attempts to expound it. This picture of a Messiah, which represented Him as passing through the deepest humiliation and suffering, and pouring out His soul unto death, appeared to them irreconcilable with those prophecies which speak of the Messiah as coming in power and glory.

And, thirdly, this explanation was not only "too flattering to the national feeling not to be extensively adopted,"3 as Pusey observes, but it has really something plausible from their point of view as its basis. Is not Israel called Ebhed Yehovah—the Servant of Jehovah—in this very Book of Isaiah? And has not Israel among the nations suffered humiliations, and wrongs, and tortures, and massacres, such as have been the lot or experience of no other people? In this connection it is an interesting fact that the explanation of this chapter, which made the Jewish nation to be the innocent sufferer for the guilt of the other nations, originated in what has been described as "the iron age of Judaism." Its author, Rashi, at an earlier period of his life—when he wrote his Commentary on the Talmud—actually followed the older interpretation, which applied Isaiah 53 to the Messiah, but he very probably wrote his Commentary on the Bible (in which the new interpretation is first introduced) after the second Crusade, when the hideous massacres of Jews in Spire, Worms, Mainz, Cologne, by the wild profligate swarm which gathered, after the first Crusaders were gone, might well have occasioned it. "Before the time of the first Crusade, the Jews in Germany" (says the Jewish historian and apologist Graetz, who counts as oppression any disparity of condition between them and any people among whom they sojourned) "were neither in a condition of oppression nor contempt, nor were shut out from holding property. In what has been called 'the iron age of Judaism,' there was too much occasion for representing them (as far as man was concerned) as guiltless sufferers."

3 “Every truly Christian reader feels humbled as he reads this portion of Scripture, because he sees in it a description of his Saviour, and the cost of his redemption; almost every Jew is likely to feel lifted up, because he sees in it a description of the value of Israel to the nations of the world, and of his own sufferings as a means of peace and prosperity to Gentiles. There is thus a fundamental difference in the two interpretations of the chapter, answering to the fundamental difference that there is between Judaism and Christianity—the one a religion which magnifies human efforts, the other one which makes humiliation of soul necessary to true exaltation.”—Canon A. Lukyn Williams in Christian Evidence for Jewish People. To give Christian readers a good idea of what this modern Jewish interpretation involves and how consistently it is carried through, I reproduce the exposition of Manasseh-ben-Israel,4 which is an embodiment of practically all that Jewish controversialists and rationalistic Christian writers who have followed on the same lines, have to say on this subject. He calls his Commentary the Reconciliation, or an answer to the question, “If this chapter is to be interpreted of the people of Israel, how came Isaiah to say that it bore the sin of many, whereas every one, according to the testimony of Eze_18:20, pays only for his own guilt?” and proceeds:

4 Born about 1604; died 1657; Rabbi at Amsterdam; advocate before Cromwell and his Parliament for the readmission of Jews into England.

RECONCILIATION

“The subject of this question demands long argument, and for our verses to be perfectly understood it will be necessary to explain the whole of the chapter, which we shall do with all possible brevity, without starting any objections which may be made against other expositions, as our intention is solely to show what our own opinion is. Accordingly, for greater clearness I shall set down the literal text with a paraphrase of my own, and then illustrate it by notes.

“Isaiah prophesies: (1) The extreme prosperity of Israel at the time of the Messiah. (2) The wonder of all the nations at seeing the rise from such a low state to grandeur. (3) How they will perceive their mistake, acknowledging themselves to be the sinners and Israel to be innocent. (4) What they will think of their various sects. (5) The patience of the people in suffering the troubles of the captivity; and the reward they will receive for their suffering.

Literal Translation

Paraphrase

Behold, my servant shall prosper; he shall be exalted and shall be extolled, and shall be raised very high.

Behold, my servant Israel shall understand; he shall be exalted, extolled, and raised very high, at the coming of the Messiah.

As many were astonished at thee, his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of man:

As many of the nations were astonished at thee, O Israel, saying at the time of the captivity, Truly he is disfigured above all mankind in his countenance and form

So will he cause many nations to speak; kings shall shut their mouths at him; what had not been told them they shall see; and what they had not heard they shall understand.

So at that time they shall speak of thy grandeur; even kings themselves shall shut their mouths in astonishment: for what they had never been told they shall see, and what they had not heard they shall understand.

Who will believe our report? and upon whom hath the arm of Adonai been manifested?

Who would have believed (the nations will say) what we see, had it been related to them? And look upon what a vile nation the arm of the Lord has manifested itself.

And he came up before him as a branch, and as a root out of a dry ground; he had no form nor comeliness; and we saw him, and there was no appearance that we should covet it.

He came up miraculously as a branch and a root out of a dry ground, for he had no form nor comeliness; we saw him, but so hideous, that it did not seem to us an appearance, for which we should envy him.

He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, accustomed to sickness; and as they hid their faces from him, he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

He was despised and rejected from the society of men, a man of sorrows, accustomed to suffer troubles; we hid our faces from him, he was despised and unesteemed among us.

Surely he bare our sicknesses, and endured our sufferings; and we esteemed him wounded, smitten by God, and afflicted.

But now we see that the sicknesses and troubles which we ought in reason to have endured, and we thought that he would justly smitten by God and afflicted.

But he was pained by our transgressions, was crushed by our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his wounds we were healed.

Whereas he suffered the sicknesses and sufferings which we deserved for our sins. He bore the chastisement which our peace and felicity deserved; but his troubles appear to have been the cure of ourselves.

All we like sheep went astray, we turned every one to his own way; and Adonai (God) caused the sin of all to meet upon him.

All we like sheep went astray: we followed every one his own sect, and so the Lord seems to have transferred on him the punishment of us all.

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, and he opened not his mouth; he was carried as a lamb to the slaughter and was dumb as a sheep before its shearers; and he opened not his mouth.

He was oppressed and afflicted: he was taken by us as a lamb to the slaughter and as a sheep before its shearers, depriving him of life and property: and he was dumb and opened not his mouth.

He was taken from imprisonment and judgment, and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off from the land of the living: for the transgression of my people they were stricken.

From prison and these torments he is now delivered: and who would have thought of this his happy age when he was banished from the holy land? Through the wickedness of my people (each nation will say) this blow came upon them.

And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his deaths, although he had not acted falsely and there was no deceit in his mouth.

He was buried with malefactors, and suffered various torments with the rich, without having committed crime or used deceit with his mouth.

And Adonai wished to crush him, made him sick: if he offer his soul as an expiation, he shall see seed, he shall prolong days, and the will of Adonai shall prosper in his hand.

But it was the Lord (the prophet says) who wished to make him sick and afflict him, in order to purify him: if he offer his soul as an expiation, he shall see seed, he shall prolong his days, and the will and determination of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.

From the trouble of his soul he shall see, shall be satisfied: by his wisdom my righteous servant shall justify many: and he shall bear their iniquities.

For the trouble which his soul suffered in captivity, he shall see good, shall be satisfied with days: by his wisdom my righteous servant Israel shall justify the many, and he will bear their burdens.

Therefore I will distribute to him with many, and with the strong he shall divide the spoil: because he gave up his soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors, and he bare the sin of many: and he prayed for the transgressors.

Therefore I will give him his share of spoil among the many and powerful of Gog and Magog, because he gave himself up unto death for the sanctification of my name; and was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the offence of many, even praying for the very transgressors from whom he received injuries.

Of his “Commentary” I am only able, for lack of space, to reproduce his notes on those verses which speak particularly of the vicariousness of the sufferings of Jehovah’s righteous servant. He says, on Isa_52:13 :

‘Servant’ was one of the many titles of honour with which the blessed God honoured Israel (Isa_41:8; Jer_30:10; Eze_37:25; Psa_136:22). And as the prophet in this chapter praises the fidelity with which Israel, as loyal servants, were ever in the service of the blessed Lord, suffering innumerable persecutions in this captivity, he therefore applies this title to them here. Whence it appears that the sole subject of this prophecy is the people of Israel; and that is the true meaning of it; and the certainty of this is further proved by its connection with the preceding chapter, where the prophet says, ‘Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion,’ etc. (Isa_52:1-15); and then he continues (Isa_52:13), ‘Behold my servant shall prosper, or understand, etc.’

“The prophet addresses himself to the people, and shows that in the same manner as the nations of the world wondered at their low estate and fortunes, even going so far as to change them with

being disfigured, having a form unsuitable to man, and unlike other mortals, so at that period will they wonder at their prosperity and elevated state; for, seeing the sudden change in the fortune of Israel, rising from such extreme meanness to such extensive empire, all the kings of the earth will wonder and discourse on the subject. And he gives the reason of this, namely, because what had never been told them of any nation they see in the people of Israel, whose grandeur none ever equaled, and what they had never heard from their false teachers, they now understand. Or ■■■■■, yiqp'tsu, signifies they will shut their mouth, speaking with great respect and modesty of that people which they had shortly before known as captives, subject to the will of their tyrannous power (Mic_7:15-16)." On Isa_53:4-7 he puts the following words into the mouth of the Gentile nations: "We unbelievers more justly merited the troubles and calamities which this innocent people suffered in their captivity. But we were so blind that we considered him to be wounded, smitten, and afflicted by God, and not through ourselves, and that all this came on them for keeping themselves apart from the truth, and not joining with us in our religion.

"But it was quite the contrary, for our wickedness alone was the cause of his troubles; did they not arise from any hatred God bore them. The punishment (■■■■, musar) or discipline of our peace, was upon him, for, as grief always accompanies pleasure, the chastisement of this happiness appears to have fallen on him. Or it may also mean, when in the enjoyment of peace adversaries were wanting, we immediately turned our arms against this people, and what we established for the discipline and good government of our states all redounded in measures against him, decrees of death, banishment, and confiscation of property, as experience daily shows. or otherwise, the doctrine (■■■■, musar) taught by our preachers was that our tranquility depended upon our being irritated against him, and ultimately we should find health in wounding him.

"But all we like sheep went astray, etc. That is, they will not only acknowledge the ill-treatment and bodily inflictions they had made Israel suffer, but at the same time their errors, attributing their wickedness thereto; for many will say, We all (Ishmaelites and Idumeans) like sheep went astray, each in his own way following a new sect, just as the prophet Jeremiah says (Jer_16:19). And the Lord made to fall on him the wickedness of us all. That is, we erred; they followed the truth; consequently they suffered the punishments which we deserved.

"We deprived them of their property as tribute, and afflicted their bodies with various kinds of torture, yet he opened not his mouth, etc. The experience of this is seen every day, particularly in the cruelties of the Inquisition, and the false testimony raised against them to take their wool and rob them of their property. And it is exactly this that the Psalmist says, 'Thou hast given us, O Lord, like sheep appointed for meat' (Psa_44:11); and further on, 'For thy sake are we killed every day; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter' (Psa_44:22), suffering daily with the greatest patience these acts of tyranny and fearful calamities." On Isa_53:9 he says: "The nations continue, We have frequently condemned this people to death, and buried them with malefactors, and with the rich, ■■■■■, in their various deaths, though it is certain that, in order to take away their property, we raised against them innumerable false testimonies, and martyred them, without them having committed any crime or our having any charge against them, except of having accumulated weather, although he had committed no ■■■, robbery, and there was no deceit in his mouth, that is, allowing themselves to be robbed of the property they had not robbed, and to be killed for the sanctification of the Lord, and refusing to acknowledge with their mouth any other religion.

“From Isa_53:10 onward the prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, and relates the reason why these troubles were suffered, and the reward to be hoped from them. And, firstly, he says that the will and determination of the Lord has been to crush them and to make them sick by so many different calamities, that, being purified by these means, they may become worthy of such great felicity. If he offer his soul as an expiation, ■■■, surrendering it for the sake of the Law; or, if he give himself up and acknowledge himself guilty, becoming repentant, as Joseph’s brethren, who said, ‘But we are guilty’ (Gen_42:21), he shall see seed, that is, they shall multiply infinitely (Eze_36:37; Zec_10:10; Deu_30:5). He shall prolong days. The same prophet confirms this where he says, ‘As the days of the tree,’ that is, the tree of life, ‘are the days of my people’ (Isa_65:22); and Zechariah, ‘And every man with his staff in his hand from multitude of days’ (Zec_8:4). Lastly, and the will of the Lord, which is to oppress him and make him sick with punishments for his greater glory, shall prosper in his hand, for the purpose and end to which they are directed will be attained. Or, the will of the Lord, which is that all should be saved and come to the holy knowledge of himself, will prosper through his hand and means and take effect.

“By his knowledge my righteous servant shall justify many. This is, Israel, who is termed ‘a righteous people and holy nation,’ justifies many by his knowledge and wisdom, bringing them with brotherly love over to the true religion, and separating them from their vain sects; and this at the very time that he bears their iniquities, patiently suffering the tyranny of their wickedness. Or it may otherwise means, At that time my servant Israel will justify and make many nations meritorious (Mic_4:2; Zec_8:23).

“And he shall bear their iniquities. For, being a most religious and holy people, he will take charge of the spiritual administration of the observance of the Law as Moses says to Aaron, ‘Thou and thy sons with thee shall bear the iniquity of the sanctuary’ (Num_18:1).

“Because he poured out his soul unto death, etc. The prophet here attributes four merits to them, for which they justly deserve the reward of that happiness; and again in the form of a compendium he recapitulates the contents of the chapter, (1) Because he delivered himself up to death, allowing himself to be killed for the sanctification of the Lord’s name and the observance of His most holy Law. (2) Because he was reckoned among the wicked, patiently enduring to be called a heretic. (3) For having borne the sin of many, the wickedness and tyranny of others falling on his shoulders. (4) Lastly, in having observed the precept of Jeremiah, ‘Seek the welfare of the city whither I have caused you to be carried captive’ (Jer_29:7); and this, too, so carefully that in all their prayers they pray for the health of the prince, and the peace of the kingdom or province wherein they reside; and, what is more, it may be even for the welfare of those from whom they are receiving insult and wrong, which is highly meritorious, and a convincing proof of the constancy and patience with which they receive from the Lord’s hand the yoke of captivity and sufferings of its misfortunes.”

This, then, is the modern Jewish view of this prophecy. “Among Christians,” to quote the words of a great German Bible student, “the interpretation has taken nearly the same course as among the Jews. Similar causes have produced similar effects in both cases. By both, the true explanation was relinquished, when the prevailing tendencies had become opposed to its results. And if we descend to particulars, we shall find a great resemblance even between the modes of interpretation proposed buy both. Even a priori, we could not but suppose otherwise than that the

Christian Church, as long as she possessed Christ, found Him here also, where He is so clearly and distinctly set before our eyes—that as long as she in general still acknowledged the authority of Christ and of the Apostles, she could not but, here too, follow their distinct, often-repeated testimony. And so, indeed, do we find it to be. With the exception of a certain Silesian called Seidel—who, given up to total unbelief, asserted that the Messiah had never yet come, nor would ever come—and of Grotius, both of whom supposed Jeremiah to be the subject—no one of the Christian church has, for seventeen centuries, ventured to call in question the Messianic interpretation.

“On the contrary, this passage was always considered to be the most distinct and glorious of all the Messianic prophecies. It was reserved to the last quarter of the eighteenth century to be the first to reject the Messianic interpretation. At a time when Naturalism exercised its sway, if could no longer be retained. For, if this passage contains a Messianic prophecy at all, its contents offer so striking an argument with the history of Christ that its origin cannot at all be accounted for in the natural way. Expedients were therefore sought for; and these were so much the more easily found that the Jews had, in this matter, already opened up the way.

“All that was necessary was only to appropriate their arguments and counter-arguments, and to invest them with the semblance of solidity by means of a learned apparatus.”

5.05. Chapter 4 - The Untenableness of the Modern Interpretation

Chapter 4 The Untenableness of the Modern Interpretation

I shall now proceed to show the untenableness of this modern interpretation; but before doing so it is necessary to point out that, like most of the false teaching of the present day, it contains a germ of truth which lends plausibility to the error. The germ of truth contained in this explanation is that, as has already been observed above, the term “Servant of Jehovah” is indeed again and again applied to Israel in the second half of the Book of Isaiah. Thus, in the very first instance where the phrase occurs, we read: “But thou, Israel, art My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham My friend.”1 Again: “Ye are My witnesses, saith Jehovah, and My servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe Me, and understand that I am He.”2

1 Isa_41:8

2 Isa_43:10 “Yet now hear, O Jacob My servant; and Israel, whom I have chosen,” etc.3

3 Isa_44:1 This is Israel’s high calling, but, alas! in this, as in the other great relationships to God, to which he was called, namely, that of a son to his father, and of a wife to her husband, Israel has failed and proved himself unfaithful.

Israel’s failure to apprehend that for which he was apprehended of God, and his unfaithfulness as Jehovah’s Servant, is forcibly depicted in many passages in these very chapters of Isaiah. “Hear, ye deaf” God complains in Isaiah 42:1-25; “and look ye blind, that ye may see. Who is blind, but My servant? or deaf, as My messenger that I send? Who is blind as he that was called to be perfect (or ‘as he that is at peace’), and blind as Jehovah’s servant? Seeing many things, but thou observest not; his ears are open, but he heareth not.”4

4 Isa_42:18-20 But Israel’s sins and disobedience cannot frustrate the purpose of God. The ideal to which the nation could not rise is gloriously realized in Him who is both the Head and Heart of Israel. In the words of Von Orelli, “The idea, Servant of Jehovah, which was united from the first in God’s purpose with the people of Israel, outgrew this national limit, even as the idea, ‘Son of God,’ which was likewise at first attributed to the people, also became a separate Person and was definitely assigned to the Messiah—i.e., the Lord’s Anointed” (as, for instance, in Psalms 2:1-12). It is true that both these designations (“Servant” and “Son”) remain as marks of the character indelebilis impressed by God’s grace on this nation, and in and through their Messiah, and in union with Him, will yet become true of their actual condition and experience; hence, wherever this grace speaks, and restored and converted Israel in the future is prophetically contemplated, the nation still wears these names of honour, as, for instance, in the passages from Isaiah 41:1-29, Isaiah 43:1-28, and Isaiah 44:1-28, quoted above. “But the more the nation as a whole shows itself incapable of rising to the high calling implied in it, and the less the Lord is willing to renounce the realizing of this high idea, the more plainly the term ‘Servant of Jehovah’ detaches itself from the national multitude and becomes a personally conceived ideal, which acquires such independence that the nation itself becomes the object of the Servant’s redeeming work.”5 In Isaiah 49:1-26

especially we see this One Individual who is out of the nation, and yet towering high above it, invested with the name and the mission to which the whole people was called in the first instance.

5 The following suggestive note is from Franz Delitzsch on Isaiah: “The idea of the Servant of Jehovah assumed, so to speak, figuratively, the form of a pyramid. The base was Israel as a whole; the central section was that Israel which was not merely Israel according to the flesh, but according to the spirit also; the apex is the person of the Mediator of Salvation springing out of Israel. And the last of the three is regarded (1) as the centre of the circle of the promised kingdom—the second David; (2) the centre of the circle of the people of salvation—the second Israel; (3) the centre of the human race—the second Adam. Throughout the whole of these prophecies, in chapters 40-46, the knowledge of salvation is still in its second stage, and about to pass into the third. Israel’s true nature as a servant of God, which had its roots in the election and calling of Jehovah, and manifested itself in conduct and action in harmony with its calling, is all concentrated in Him the One, as its ripest fruit. The gracious purposes of God toward the whole human race, which were manifested even in the election of Israel, are brought by Him to their full completion.

“Listen, O isles, unto me and hearken, ye peoples, from far; Jehovah hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath He made mention of my name.

“And He hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of His hand hath He hid me, and He hath made me a polished shaft; in His quiver hath He kept me close;

“And He said unto me, Thou art My servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified.

“But I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and for vanity: yet surely my judgment is with Jehovah, and my recompence with my God.

“And now, saith Jehovah that formed me from the womb to be His servant, to bring Jacob again to Him, and that Israel be gathered unto Him: (for I am honourable in the eyes of Jehovah, and my God is become my strength;)

“Yea, He saith, It is too light a thing that thou shouldest be My servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will give thee for a light to the Gentiles, and that thou mayest be My salvation unto the end of the earth.”6

6 Isa_49:1-6 That it is not of the nation of Israel that this prophecy speaks is clear, and manifest to every unbiased mind, since the One who is here thus dramatically introduced as proclaiming His own call and enduement for His office, and whom Jehovah addresses, is the One who is sent as the Redeemer of Israel, namely, “to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved of Israel,” i.e., not only to their land, but to their God.

Here God says to him, “Thou art My servant, O Israel” (or, “Thou art Israel”). He is invested with the name of Israel because He, “as Israel’s inmost centre, as Israel’s highest head,” realizes the idea and carries out the mission to which the nation which had originally been called to the task of carrying out God’s saving purpose in relation to the world does not respond.

Here, too, as in Isa_42:1-9, where the ideal personal Servant of Jehovah is contrasted with the nation whose failure and unfaithfulness is depicted in Isa_42:18-25, His mission extends, not only

to Israel, whom He is to raise up and restore, and to whom He is to be, not only the mediator, but the very embodiment of “the covenant” which shall be everlastingly established between them and their God, but is to be the light also of the Gentiles, and God’s salvation unto the very ends of the earth. And as in Isaiah 42:1-25 and Isaiah 49:1-26, so also in Isaiah 53:1-12 itself, “where the figure of the Servant of Jehovah unfolds its entire fullness of meaning,” He is clearly and definitely distinguished from the nation. thus, for instance, we read in Isaiah 53:8, “For the transgressions of my people was He stricken.” The speaker is either Jehovah or the prophet, but in either case ■■■, ‘ammi, “my people,” can apply only to Israel, and if the servant is stricken for Israel he cannot be Israel. But, apart from the fact that in Isa_42:1-9, Isa_49:1-7, Isa_50:4-11, Isaiah 53:1-12 (which begins Isa_52:13), and Isaiah 61:1-11, this ideal Servant stands out clearly distinguished from the nation, there are other conclusive reasons why the 53rd chapter in particular cannot be applied to Israel, for (1) the subject of the prophecy is an absolutely innocent sufferer who suffers for the guilt of others—one who has Himself “done no violence, nor can deceit be found in His mouth,” but is “stricken,” “smitten,” and “afflicted of God” for others. (2) He is a voluntary sufferer—one who willingly “pours out His own soul unto death.” (3) He is an unresisting sufferer—one who is “led as a lamb to the slaughter and as sheep before her shearers is dumb, He openeth not His mouth”; and (4) His sufferings end in death.

Now, none of these points is found in the Jewish nation. Israel has been suffering, and is suffering as no other nation has suffered. Truly “under the whole heaven,” to use the words of Daniel, “hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem” (Dan_9:12) and upon her people during the many centuries of their dispersion. I have elsewhere given a condensed summary of the terrible story of Israel’s sufferings since the destruction of the second Temple,7 and of the guilt incurred by the nations by their cruel conduct towards them, but Israel is not an innocent sufferer. Israel’s sorrows and sufferings are the direct consequence of his sins.

7 See The Shepherd of Israel and His Scattered Flock.

Modern Rabbis, in spite of the definite statement in the chapter itself, that it was “for the transgressions of My people” (Israel) that the righteous servant was stricken, put Isa_53:1-9 into the mouth of the Gentile nations, and make them say that “he (i.e., Israel) suffered the sickness and sufferings which we Gentiles deserved”; but this is only part of the self-deception which characterizes the modern teachers and leaders of the Synagogue, and which has led them to perversive views of their own Scriptures and facts of history. It is this same spirit of pharisaic self-satisfaction which regards the dispersion among the nations as a blessing, and denies the necessity of atonement and of a mediator between God and man. But whether we will heed or not, the solemn fact remains that Israel’s dispersion among the nations, and their many sufferings during the long period of their wanderings from the presence of God, are the direct consequences of their apostasy and sin. At the very beginning of their history Moses foretold what the consequences would be if they departed from their God. “If ye will not for all this hearken unto Me, but walk contrary unto Me, then I will walk contrary unto you in fury: and I also will chastise you seven times for your sins. . . . And I will make your cities a waste and your sanctuaries a desolation. . . . And you will I scatter among the nations, and I will draw out the sword after you, . . . And you shall perish among the nations, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up. And they that are left of you (far from atoning by their sufferings for the sins of the Gentile nations) shall pine away in their iniquity in your enemies’ lands. And also in the iniquities of their fathers shall they

pine away with them." And this is to last until "they shall confess their iniquities, and the iniquity of their fathers in their trespass which they trespassed against Me, and also that because they walked contrary unto Me. . . . If then their uncircumcised heart be humbled and they accept of the punishment of their iniquity, then will I remember My covenant with Jacob; and also My covenant with Isaac, and also My covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land."8

8 Lev_26:14-45 And what Moses announced in advance in Leviticus 26:1-46 and Deuteronomy 28:1-68, etc., is repeated and confirmed by all the prophets. We need only contemplate the picture of Israel as a nation given in this Book of Isaiah itself to be convinced that it cannot be of it that the prophet speaks in Isaiah 53:1-12. Far from being itself absolutely innocent (as the Servant of Jehovah in Isaiah 53:1-12 is described as being) and suffering for the guilt of others, the prophet speaks of them as "a sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers,"9 whose iniquities have separated between them and their God, and whose sins have caused His face to be hid from them that He will not hear.10

9 Isa_1:2-9

10 Isa_59:2-15 In Isaiah 42:1-25 Israel's suffering condition among the nations is described in graphic style and language. "But this is a people robbed and plundered; they are all of them snared in holes, and they are hid in prison houses: they are for a prey, and none delivereth; for a spoil, and none saith, Restore." But the prophet proceeds immediately to declare that Israel's sorrows and sufferings are not the result of mere chance, but are due to the direct acts of God in judgment on account of Israel's sins. "Who is there among you that will give ear to this, that will hearken and hear for the time to come? Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? Did not Jehovah? He against whom we have sinned, and in whose ways they would not walk, neither were they obedient unto His law."11

11 Isa_42:23-25 To evade the force of this truth, that the nation could not be the innocent sufferer set forth in the person portraiture of the of the Servant of Jehovah in Isaiah 42:1-25, Isaiah 49:1-26, Isaiah 50:1-11, Isaiah 53:1-12, Isaiah 61:1-11, some Jewish and rationalistic writers have interpreted this great prophecy of the godly remnant in the nation. But, though relatively the pious in the nation may be spoken of as righteous when compared with the godless majority, they are not absolutely righteous, and, far from being able to render a vicarious satisfaction for others, they cannot even stand themselves before God on the ground of their own righteousness.

It is indeed the godly remnant in the nation which is described in the second part of Isaiah as of "a contrite and humble spirit," who are themselves waiting for the salvation of God, which will be wholly of grace. I is they—"the righteous ones"—who confess for themselves and the entire nation that "we are all become as one that is unclean, and all our righteousnesses are as a polluted garment; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away."12

12 Isa_64:6

It is perfectly true, therefore, that Isaiah speaks of the "entire nation as needing enlightening, redeeming, and reconciling to God," and the godly remnant of it, far from being represented in these chapters as rendering satisfaction for others by their sufferings, "appears on the contrary a fainting flock which the Servant of Jehovah is to release, and refresh, and for whose justification He is to suffer and die."13

13 Von Orelli And as Israelis not an innocent sufferer so neither does he suffer voluntarily. “The Jews did not go voluntarily into captivity,” as Hengstenberg well observes, “but were dragged into it by force,” and so all through the centuries they did not voluntarily suffer the many oppressions and wrongs which they had to endure, but were forced to submit to them by the Gentile nations whom God used as His scourge.

Still less can it be asserted that Israel was an unresisting sufferer: “Here is one described,” writes another Hebrew Christian brother, “who bears all sorts of affliction and oppression, without making the slightest resistance, without even opening his mouth to utter reproach—one who has the meekness and gentleness of a lamb, the inoffensiveness of a sheep. Surely this does not apply to the Jews. A very hasty glance at their history is sufficient to convince us of that. As long as ever they had the power, they did resist bitterly and bloodily. We freely acknowledge that their provocations were great. We have no wish to defend the wickedness of Christian nations. We grant that their treatment of the Jews is a blot and a stain. But that is not the question. The question is, Did the Jews bear all the oppression heaped upon them like lambs? Did they suffer evil without resisting it? History answers in the negative. The history of the Jewish captivity for the first seven centuries is a history of a series of insurrections, fierce and violent, against the nations. How desperate was the resistance to the Roman power which brought on the destruction of the temple by Titus! But when that was destroyed, the spirit of resistance still remained. A.D. 115, the Jews of Cyrene rebelled and slew 220,000 Libyans; and it was not until after several bloody battles that they submitted. A.D. 132, Bar Cochba appeared in the character of the Messiah at the head of an army, ready to shake off the Roman yoke. R. Akiba, one of those looked upon by the Rabbis as most righteous, supported his resistance to the Roman authority; a bloody war was the consequence, and it was only by force that this insurrection was put down. A.D. 415, the Jews of Alexandria revolted. A.D. 522, the Jews of Persia revolted under the conduct of R. Mid, or Miz, at their head, and declared war against the King of Persia. A.D. 535, the Jews in Caesarea rebelled. A.D. 602, the Jews at Antioch. A.D. 624, the Jews in Arabia took up arms against Mahomet. A.D. 613. they joined the armies of Chosroes, when he made himself master of Jerusalem, and put thousands to death.”14

14 Doctrine and Interpretation of the Fifty-Third Chapter of Isaiah, by Dr. Alexander M’Caul. And yet in spite of these facts a modern Jewish writer (Dr. A. Kohut, in Discussions on Isaiah 52:13-15, Isaiah 53:1-12) can allow himself to write: “We have suffered much and murmured less; the annals of history teem with the atrocious crimes of cruel Torquemadas, but fail to reproach us with even a breath of remonstrance. . . . We have whispered sweetly of our wrongs, not imprecations of revenge, but hope-fraught hymns of glad release.” But it is a fact, as Dr. Lukyn Williams observes in reply, that “meekness is not, and never has been, a characteristic of Jews, and they have not hesitated to call down the vengeance of God upon their enemies in their private or public devotions. So, for example, in the Service for the Festival of the Dedication: ‘When Thou shalt have prepared a slaughter of the blaspheming foe, I will complete with song and psalm the dedication of Thy altar,’ and, at the end of the same piece, though omitted by Dr. Singer: ‘Lay bare Thy holy arm, and bring the time of Thy salvation near. Take vengeance for the blood of Thy servants from the wicked nation’” (Christian Evidence for Jewish People, by Canon A. Lukyn Williams, vol. i. p. 168).

Neither have the sufferings of the Jewish nation ended in death, as is the lot of the Servant of Jehovah in Isaiah 53:1-12. No; Israel, in spite of all the centuries of persecutions and oppressions, still lives and can say as of yore, “Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth, yet they have not prevailed against me.” “I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of Jehovah.”

I must bring this introductory section to a close, but I may add to all that has been said that it is clear and manifest to all unprejudiced minds that the chapter cannot be applied to a collective body personified, but must refer to an individual person. To quote from another writer, “Not one analogous instance can be quoted in favour of a personification carried on through a whole section, without the slightest intimation that it is not a single individual who is spoke of. In Isa_53:3 the subject is called ■■■ (’ish, ‘a man’); in Isa_53:10 and Isa_53:12 a soul is ascribed to Him; grave and death are used so as to imply a subject in the singular. Scripture never leaves anything to be guessed. If we had an allegory before us, distinct hints as to the interpretation would certainly not be wanting. It is, e.g., quite different in those passages where the prophet designates Israel by the name of the Servant of the Lord. In them, all uncertainty is prevented by the addition of the names of ‘Jacob’ and ‘Israel’;15 and in them, moreover, the prophet uses the plural by the side of the singular to intimate that the Servant of the Lord is an ideal person, a collective.”16 15 Compare Isa_41:8; Isa_44:1-2; Isa_44:21; Isa_45:4; Isa_48:20 16 e.g., Isa_43:10-14; Isa_48:20-21

No, this prophecy speaks of an individual, and there is only one person in the history of the world whom it fits. “Let any one steep his mind in the contents of this chapter,” observes Professor James Orr, “and then read what is said about Jesus in the Gospels, and as he stands under the shadow of the Cross, say if there is not the most perfect correspondence between the two. In Jesus of Nazareth alone in all history, but in Him perfectly, as this prophecy found fulfillment. The meekness, the pathos of undeserved suffering, the atoning function, the final triumph, will suit no other.” That there is a marked resemblance between the picture of the Servant of Jehovah in this chapter and the historic account of Jesus of Nazareth as given in the Gospels is acknowledged by many Jews.

Thus Rabbi Abraham Farissol,17 who himself proceeds to misinterpret the prophecy of Israel, says: “In this chapter there seem to be considerable resemblances and allusions to the work of the Christian Messiah and to the events which are asserted to have happened to him—so that no other prophecy can be found, the gist and subject of which can be so immediately applied to him.” And as a matter of fact this glorious prophecy of the sufferings of the Messiah and the glory which should follow has been used of God more than any Scripture in opening the eyes of Jews to recognize in Jesus Israel’s Redeemer King.18 17 Rabbi Farissol, early in the sixteenth century, author of Iggereth Orechoth Olam; Itinera Mundi.

18 “Blessed, precious chapter, how many of God’s ancient covenant people have been led by thee to the foot of Christ’s cross!—that cross over which was written, ‘Jesus Christ, the King of the Jews!’ And oh! what a glorious commentary shall be given of thee when, in the latter days, repentant and believing Israel, looking unto Him whom they have pierced, shall exclaim, ‘Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted!’”—Adolph Saphir, D.D., The Sinner and the Saviour. Is this, perhaps, the chief reason why this chapter is omitted from the public readings in the Synagogue? We know, of

course, that whereas the whole Torah (the Pentateuch) is read through on the Sabbaths in the course of the year, only selections from the prophets are appointed for the Haphtarahs, but it is none the less remarkable that in these “selections” the portion for one Sabbath should end with Isaiah 52:12, and the one for the following should begin with Isaiah 54:1-17, and that the whole of this sublime section about the suffering Servant, through the knowledge of whom the many are made righteous, is passed over.

It certainly gives ground for the statement that the 53rd of Isaiah is “the bad conscience of the Synagogue,” which it dare not face because it reminds them too much of Him whom the nation, alas! in its blindness still despises and rejects, and considers “smitten of God and afflicted.” But this very feeling and attitude on the part of the Jewish nation is one great proof that Jesus is the Messiah, and that it is to Him that this prophecy refers.

5.06. PART II - The Exposition

PART II The Exposition

“Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.”—Act_8:35

5.07. Chapter 1 - Jehovah's Introduction of His Servant and a Summary of His Redeeming Work

Chapter 1 Jehovah’s Introduction of His Servant and a Summary of His Redeeming Work The Divisions

We will now seek, apart from controversy and criticisms, to look into the heart of this great prophecy, and I will make no further apologies if in the handling of this chapter I do so in the full light which is thrown upon it in the New Testament as well as the Old. The whole prophecy divides itself into three sections. The first section consists of Isa_52:13-15, and may be described as God’s Ecce Homo. In it God introduces His Servant, and seeks to direct the attention of all men to Him. This introductory section is really a summary of the whole prophecy, and contains in brief the whole story of Messiah’s sufferings and the glory which should follow. The second section, consisting of Isa_53:1-9, is primarily the lament and confession of penitent Israel in the future, when the spirit of grace and of supplications shall be poured upon them, and their eyes are opened to behold Him whom they have pierced. The third section, consisting of the last three verses, sets forth the blessed fruit of Messiah’s sufferings, or the glory which should follow. The prophecy really begins and ends with a description of the exaltation and glory of the Righteous Servant, but in between the mountain-tops of glory lies the deep valley of shame and suffering, which “for us men and our salvation” He has to pass.

“Behold My Servant” The prophecy begins with the word ■■■, hinneh (“behold”) This is the little word by which in Scripture God seeks to call the attention of men to matters which are of the utmost importance for them to know. Here it is on His beloved and only-begotten Son in the form of a servant that He would have our eyes fixed.

We may note in passing that several different times is the Messiah introduced in the Old Testament by this word “behold,” and in four different aspects. Here (as in Zec_3:8, which refers back to the passages about the Servant of Jehovah in the second part of Isaiah) it is “Behold My Servant.” In Zec_6:12 we read, “Behold the Man whose name is the Branch”; and in Zec_9:9 of the same prophecy, the announcement to the daughter of Zion is, “Behold, thy King cometh unto thee”; while the proclamation in the sublime prologue to the second half of Isaiah unto the cities of Judah is, “Behold your God”; and that it is of the Epiphany of God in the person of the Messiah that the prophet speaks is evident from the whole context of those chapters. Under these four different aspects also is Messiah spoken of by the name of “Branch”—“the Branch of Jehovah” (Isa_4:2); “the Branch of David” (Jer_23:5-6); “My Servant, the Branch” (Zec_3:8); and “the Man whose name is the ‘Branch’” (Zec_6:12). The Man—the Servant—the Son of David—and the Son of God. And this fourfold portraiture of the Redeemer in the Old Testament corresponds (as I first pointed out in a small work many years ago)1 to the fourfold picture of our Saviour in the New Testament.

1 Rays of Messiah’s Glory: The Branch, or, Four Aspects of Messiah’s Character. The subject is also more fully dealt with in the exposition of the 3rd chapter of Zechariah in The Visions and

Prophecies of Zechariah.

We have four different and independent accounts of the Life of Christ, and so harmonious and similar are the main features and facts about His character and work in all the Four Gospels that no one who has ever read them has had to be told that they all speak of the same blessed Person. Yet each one of the Evangelists was led by the Spirit of God to portray a different aspect of His character.

Over the Gospel of Matthew—which was primarily written for the Jews, and which sets forth Christ as the Redeemer-King of Israel, the Messiah promised to the fathers—the inscription may be written, “Behold thy King.”

Over the Gospel of Mark—a summary more of His deeds than of His words, written, in the first instance, for the practical Roman world of power and action—the words, “Behold My Servant” are, so to say, inscribed, for there it is the Servant aspect of our Saviour that is portrayed before us—“how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power; who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed with the devil; for God was with Him.” In the Gospel of Luke, written primarily for the Greek, who, in the New Testament, stands as the representative of the Gentile world, it is as the Son of Man that He is pictured to us, who, by His human nature, stands related as Kinsman-Redeemer to the whole race, and is therefore able and willing to save men of all nations and kindreds and peoples who turn to God through Him. Over this Gospel the words, “Behold the Man whose name is the Branch,” may be written; while over the Gospel of John, which was designed neither for Jews nor Gentiles, neither for Greek nor Roman, but for the Church—the congregation of the faithful, those whose eyes are opened to behold His glory, “the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth”—“Behold your God” are graven in letters of gold. In our chapter, however, it is as the Servant that He is introduced to us by the Father—as One who is sent to accomplish a work and to fulfill a mission. And it is with special satisfaction and complacency that God speaks of His only-begotten Son in His charter as Servant. “Behold My Servant, ” whom I uphold; Mine elect (“My chosen One”), “in whom My soul delighteth”—one reason being, perhaps, because in this respect this ideal Servant stands out as the great contrast, not only to Israel nationally, who was called to be God’s servant, but proved unfaithful, but to all other men. The curse of man and the cause of his ruin is pride, self-will—the striving to be independent of God, and seeking to strike out a career for himself. By seeking to be free, and thinking that freedom consists in doing, not what he ought, but what he pleases, man landed himself in bondage to sin and Satan. But here is One who says, “Lo, I am come; in the scroll of the book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy Law is within My heart,” and who, when on earth, could say, “I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will but the will of Him that sent Me”; “My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work.”

Insignificant, fallen man ever aims at exalting himself, but here is One who, though in the form of God counted not His equality with God a prize (“to be grasped” at), but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant “and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the Cross.” No wonder, then that the Father points with delight to Him, saying, “Behold My Servant,” and would have our eyes fixed on Him, not only as our Saviour, but as our example, that we might follow in His footsteps. This true Servant of Jehovah, we read, “shall deal prudently.” The verb ■■■■■, his’kil, primarily means “to act wisely,” but since

“wise action as a rule is also effective,” and leads to prosperity, the verb is used also sometimes as a synonym for “prosperously.” It is used in such passages as 1Sa_18:14, “And David was acting wisely in all his ways, and the Lord was with him”; and in David’s charge to Solomon (1Ki_2:3), “And keep the charge of the Lord thy God . . . in order that thou mayest act wisely in all that thou doest.” In Jer_23:5, this verb is used directly of the Messiah, and describes one feature of His blessed rule, “Behold the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper (his’kil, ‘deal wisely’), and shall execute judgment and justice in the land.” Here, in Isa_52:13, it is used to describe the action of the Servant of Jehovah in relation to the great task which is entrusted to Him. “He shall ‘deal wisely’ and accomplish His great work skilfully”—an assurance, as it were, at the very outset, that “the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in His hand.” He shall be exalted and extolled (“lifted up”), and be very high. There is an ancient Rabbinic Midrash on this sentence, which says, “He shall be exalted above Abraham; He shall be lifted up above Moses, and be higher than the ministering angels,” I sometimes think that when the inspired writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews sat down to write that wonderful and comprehensive treatise on the supremacy and greater glory of the Messiah, and took for his keynote the little phrase “better than”2, and proceeded to show how Christ was greater, and higher, and “better” than the angels, than Moses, than Joshua, than Aaron and the whole Aaronic priesthood and ritual, and than all the types and shadows of the Old Covenant, the substance and fulfillment of which are to be found in Him alone—he must have had the thought expressed in this Midrash in his mind.

2 Heb_1:4

Yes, our Lord Jesus is exalted above Abraham, the father of the faithful, who stands at the head of the history of the peculiar people, whose history also prefigures and unfolds the story of Redemption, inasmuch as He is not only Abraham’s Son but Abraham’s Lord, whose day Abraham rejoiced to see “from afar,”3 though whom the great promise that in Abraham’s seed all the families of the earth should be blessed is realized, and in and through whom the history of Abraham and of the nation which sprang from his loins receives its true significance and glory.

3 Joh_8:56 And “He is lifted up above Moses” because He is the Mediator of a better covenant which rests upon better promises, who brings us out of a greater bondage than that of Egypt, and whose “law of the spirit of Life” implanted in our hearts enables us to render that obedience to God which the mere letter of the law graven on tablets of stone could not do. And “He is higher than the angels, for to which of the angels did God say at any time, Sit thou on My right hand till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet?” which is the height of exaltation attained by the Servant of Jehovah as the Son of Man, who through the deepest sufferings enters into glory.4

4 “Rosenmuller observes on verse 13b, ‘There is no need to discuss, or even to inquire, what precise difference there is in the meaning of the separate words’; but this a very superficial remark. If we consider that ■■■, “rum,” signifies not only to be high, but to rise up (Pro_11:11) and become exalted, and also to become manifest as exalted (Psa_21:13), and that ■■■, ni’sa’, according to the immediate and original reflective meaning of the niphal, signifies to raise one’s self, whereas ■■■, gabah, expresses merely the condition, without the subordinate idea of activity, we obtain this chain of thought: he will raise up, he will raise himself still higher, he will stand on high. The three verbs (of which the two perfects are defined by the previous future)

consequently denote the commencement, the continuation, and the result or climax of the exaltation; and Stier is not wrong in recalling to mind the three principal steps of the exaltation in the historical fulfillment, namely, the resurrection, the ascension, and the sitting down at the right hand of God. The addition of the word ■■■, m'od, shows very clearly that ■■■■, v'gabah, is intended to be taken as the final result; the Servant of Jehovah, rising from stage to stage, reaches at last an immeasurable height that towers above everything besides." (Delitzsch) The climax in the height of His exaltation, as set forth by the three verbs in this sentence, is expressed by the word ■■■, m'od, lit. very much, with which the sentence ends. "He shall be exalted and lifted up and be high very much, or exceedingly." Of the glorious fulfillment of it in the person of our Lord Jesus we are told in the New Testament. "Wherefore"—because for our salvation He descended so low, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross—"God also hath highly exalted Him"; yes, "far above all principality and power, and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come."5 5 Eph_1:20-23; Php_2:9-11 But after what may be called this preface of glory, which tells us at the very outset what shall be the end of His path of humiliation, the next verse of this introductory section gives a glimpse of the valley of sorrow and suffering through which the Servant of Jehovah has first to emerge—the valley which is, so to say, lengthened out and extended in the more detailed account of His sufferings in the next section, Isa_52:14-15 are in the Hebrew linked together by the words ■■■■, ka'asher, "like," or, "just as," and ■■, ken, "so." They express, if I may so put it, the balance of proportion, and announce in advance that the effect shall be commensurable with the greatness of the cause. Let me first translate these verses literally.

"Like (or, 'just as') many were astonished at Thee ('so marred,' or 'disfigured,' or 'distorted' was His visage more than that of any man, and His form more than the sons of men)6—so shall He sprinkle many nations," etc.

6 Delitzsch renders, "So disfigured, His appearance was not human and His form not like that of the children of men"; and Von Orelli, "So disfigured was His visage beneath man's, and His form so unlike man's." The sudden transition from the second to the third person is not exceptional, but is found in many other places in the prophetic writings.

It is generally agreed among commentators that the words which I have enclosed in brackets must be regarded as a parenthesis and explain the reason of the astonishment at Him on the part of many. The verb ■■■, shamem, which is rendered "astonished," means to be desolate or waste; to be thrown by anything into a desolate or bereaved condition; to be startled, confused, as it were petrified by paralysing astonishment.7 Even to such an extent will many be astonished at Him because of the greatness of His suffering, which shall cause His blessed countenance and form to be so "marred" that it shall appear, as it were, "disfigurement" itself, without any trace of the grace and beauty which belong to the human face and figure.8 7 See its use in Lev_26:32; Eze_26:16

8 "His appearance and His form were altogether distortion (mishchath, an expression stronger than mashchath, which means distorted—lit. away from men, out beyond men), i.e., a distortion that destroys all likeness to man.

"The Church before the time of Constantine, pictured to itself the Lord, as He walked on earth, as repulsive in His appearance; whereas the Church, after Constantine, pictured Him as having quite an ideal beauty. They were both right: unattractive in appearance, though not deformed, He no

doubt was in the days of His flesh; but He is ideally beautiful in His glorification. The body in which He was born of Mary was no royal form, though faith could see the doxa shining through. It was no royal form, for the suffering of death was the portion of the Lamb of God, even from His mother's womb; but the glorified One is infinitely exalted above all the ideal of art." (Delitzsch) By these strong words and expressions the Spirit of God seeks to give us a glimpse into the depth and intensity of the vicarious sufferings of our Saviour, and of the greatness of the cost of our redemption; and as we contemplate this picture of the Man of Sorrows, with the "face" which for us was "marred" more than that of any man, and with His form bowed and and disfigured more than the sons of men, may our hearts be stirred with shame and sorrow for the sin which was the cause of it all, and with greater love and undying gratitude to Him who bore all this for us! But as His humiliation and sufferings were great, yea, "more than that of any other man," so also shall the blessed fruit and consequences of them be. Isa_52:15 is, so to say, the antithesis to Isa_52:14, and sets forth the state of glory after the suffering. "Like (or 'just as') many were astonished at Thee (because His visage and form were distorted by suffering 'beyond men')—so shall He sprinkle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths at Him" with astonishment and reverence, for that which could not "have been told them" by any man, and which was previously altogether unheard of, shall they now "see" and "understand"; or, in the words of Isa_49:7, which might be described as Isaiah 53:1-12 in miniature, for it summarizes in few words the sufferings of the Messiah and the glory which should follow—"Kings shall see and arise, princes and they shall worship, because of Jehovah that is faithful, the Holy One of Israel who hath chosen Thee"—they shall see that the One whom man humbled God has exalted; that He who was despised of man, and abhorred of the nation, is, after all, He whom the Holy One of Israel hath chosen; that in spite of their vain counsels, and their individual and united efforts, His kingdom progresses, and is destined to triumph—and they shall "arise" from their thrones in token of reverence, and shall signify their submission and allegiance by prostrating themselves before Him in worship; and all this "because of Jehovah that is faithful" to His covenants and promises, "even the Holy One," who will never draw back from His word, and shall, by espousing and vindicating His Servant's cause, make it manifest in the sight of the whole world that He hath chosen Him! In a measure this has already been fulfilled. Because "He hath humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross, therefore also God hath highly exalted Him, and given unto Him the Name which is above every name; that in the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Already before the crucified Nazarene kings must rise from their thrones, and princes fall in the dust, not, indeed, necessarily because their hearts have been subdued by His grace, or their eyes opened to His essential glory as the Son of God, but because they have found out by experience that it is no longer safe to resist His power. But even though the obedience be feigned, and the worship be outward, it is still a testimony to Christ's exaltation, and to the faithfulness of Jehovah, in lifting Him out of the valley of humiliation, and appointing Him His "First-born, higher than the kings of the earth." But we are looking forward to a fuller, more visible, and universal fulfillment, when He who was "despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" shall be the acknowledged King over the whole earth, and when—

"He shall have dominion from sea to sea And from the River unto the ends of the earth.

They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before Him; And His enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents; The kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts:

Yea, all kings shall fall down before Him;

All nations shall serve Him" (Psa_72:8-11) But I must return for a moment to Isa_52:15 concerning which there has been much discussion. Most modern scholars object to the rendering of the word ■■■, yazzeh, by "He shall sprinkle," as is given in the Authorized and Revised Versions of the English Bible, and translate the phrase, "so shall He startle," or "make to tremble," or "cause to leap"—i.e., either for joy or fear—on the ground chiefly that the parallelism between the fourteenth and fifteenth verses [Isa_52:14-15] demands that this phrase should express "a change in those who formerly abhorred the Servant," or, as another prominent Bible scholar puts it, as a parallel to the words, "were astonished at Thee, we have the word yazzeh (which he renders, 'He shall make to tremble')—in other words, the effect which He produces by what He does stands over against the effect produced by what He suffers." But to this it has been replied that the real parallel (or, rather, contrast) to the words, "as many were astonished," in Isa_52:14 are the words, "kings shall shut their mouths" in Isa_52:15, as is shown by the correspondence of the words, "at Thee," and "at Him" in these two sentences. I shall not enter into a minute controversial disquisition on this point, as nothing of a fundamental character really turns on it. The priestly and atoning functions of the Servant of Jehovah stand out prominently enough in the next section of the prophecy. I will only briefly state my own grounds for retaining the rendering "sprinkle," first and chiefly because of the general usage of the Hebrew word. The verb ■■■, nazah, occurs in very many passages in the Old Testament, and the hiphil form of it, ■■■, yazzeh (which is used in Isa_52:15) invariably signifies "to sprinkle."

It is true also, as another writer observes, that it is specially set apart and used for the sprinkling with the blood of atonement and the water of purification.9 9 It is used, for instance, in Lev_4:6; Lev_14:7; Lev_16:14-19; Num_19:19, and in many other places.

Delitzsch, who himself renders the word "He shall make to tremble," writes: "The hiphil hizzah (to sprinkle) generally means to spurt or sprinkle (adspergere), and is applied to the sprinkling of the blood with the finger, more especially upon the capporeth and altar of incense on the Day of Atonement (differing in this respect from zaraq, the swinging of the blood out of the bowl), also to the sprinkling of the water of purification upon a leper with the bunch of hyssop (Lev_14:7), and of the ashes of the red heifer upon those defiled through touching a corpse (Num_19:18); in fact, generally, to sprinkling for the purpose of expiation and sanctification. And Vitringa, Hengstenberg, and others, accordingly follow the Syriac and Vulgate in adopting the rendering adsperget (he will sprinkle).

"They have the usage of the language in their favour; and this explanation also commends itself from a reference to ■■■■ (nagua') in Isa_53:4, and ■■■ (nega') in Isa_53:8 (words which are generally used of leprosy, and on account of which the suffering Messiah is called in b. Sanhedrin 98b by an emblematical name adopted from the old synagogue, "the leper of Rabbi's school"), since it yields the significant antithesis, that He who was Himself regarded as unclean, even as a second Job, would sprinkle and sanctify whole nations, and thus abolish the wall of partition between Israel and the heathen, and gather together into one holy church with Israel those who

had hitherto been pronounced “unclean” (Isa_52:1).”

It is true that nazah (“to sprinkle”) is usually construed with the accusative, in which case the preposition ■■, al “upon,” should follow the verb. But slight deviations and irregularities in the construction of phrases do sometimes occur in the Hebrew Bible; they do not, however, alter the meaning of words, and in this case, though nazah al would mean “sprinkle upon,” yazzeh by itself still means “sprinkle,” or, more properly, “besprinkle.”

Secondly, the only other passage in the second half of Isaiah where another form of this same verb occurs10 is Isa_63:3, and there the word most certainly means “sprinkle.” It is alleged against the rendering of the phrase, “so shall He sprinkle,” that “there would be something very abrupt in the sudden representation of the Servant as priest”; but there is no more abruptness, it seems to me, in the introduction of this idea of priesthood in this passage than in the sudden transition from the exaltation described in Isa_52:13 to the depth of humiliation in Isa_52:14.

10 ■■■ v’yez, which is qal future, 3rd person sing, masc. of the verb ■■■. In this introductory section we have, as stated at the beginning, a brief summary in terse, condensed form, of the whole prophecy, which is fully developed in Isaiah 53:1-12. And to my mind it would seem strange if there were no reference also to the priestly atoning function of the Servant (of which the next section is so full), in this introductory summary.

5.08. Chapter 2 - Israel's Penitential Confession: The History of the Servant of Jehovah ...

Chapter 2 Israel’s Penitential Confession: The History of the Servant of Jehovah Unfolded The second section, into which the whole prophecy divides itself, is, as stated above, primarily the sorrowful lament and confession of repentant Israel in the future. We are transplanted in these verses, by the spirit of prophecy, into that future solemn day of Israel’s history which is described in the last chapters of Zechariah—when the spirit of grace and supplications shall be poured upon them, and their eyes shall be opened to look upon Him whom they have pierced. It is then, in the great mourning and weeping which are there described, that they shall break out with this plaintive hymn, which is musical in its sadness and betrays the agony of a broken heart and contrite spirit.

Let me say, at the beginning of this exposition, that the tenses in these verses are perfects, the future being regarded prophetically as already past. “Who hath believed our report?”—literally, “that which we hear,” namely, the wonderful story about this glorious Servant of Jehovah, who, through His self-humiliation and vicarious suffering even unto death, has accomplished for us so great a salvation, and is now exalted to such height of glory—“and the arm of Jehovah over (or ‘upon’) whom has it been revealed?” The arm of Jehovah is the emblem of divine power. In Isaiah 51:1-23 we have the remnant of Israel appealing to it: “Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of Jehovah, as in the days of old, the generations of ancient times.”1 And in Isaiah 52:1-15 we read: “Jehovah hath made bare His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.”2

1 Isa_51:9

2 Isa_52:10 From the context we see that it is the manifestation of this power of God in and through the Messiah that is here spoken of. “In the Servant of Jehovah who is depicted in this prophecy,” an old writer truly observes, “the redeeming arm of Jehovah manifests itself: so to say, personifies itself. The Messiah Himself is, as it were, the outstretched arm of Jehovah,” and the message (the proclaiming) concerning Him, “the power of God unto salvation to all who believe.” But who hath believed this message? And whose eyes were opened to behold in this despised and humiliated Servant the very embodiment of the power of God and the wisdom of God? The answer implied in the first question is that very few, if any, did believe it; and to the second question, that only such upon whom an operation of divine power has been performed, only those “over” or “upon” whom the arm of Jehovah has been revealed, could believe it—so marvellous, so utterly incredible to mere human thought and imagination is the wonderful story which, in all its saving power and glory, is now made plain to us. Truly, the message, or “report,” of a full and perfect salvation through a suffering Messiah, who through humiliation and death enters into glory, could not have been known or believed, and much less invented, by either Jew or Gentile; but all the more it bears upon it the seal of Divine wisdom and Divine power. “As it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit.”3

3 1Co_2:9-10 (1) The Early Years and Unobtrusive Character of the Servant of Jehovah In the plaintive confession which follows there is incidentally unfolded also the whole earthly life-story of the Servant of Jehovah, beginning with His tender youth, which gradually develops into a manhood of suffering, and ends in a violent and ignominious death.

“For (or ‘And’) He grew up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground.”

“Jehovah’s Servant,” as has been well said by another, “does not burst upon the world all at once in sudden splendour of daring or achievement, dazzling all eyes and captivating all hearts. He conforms to God’s slow, silent law of growth. This law holds in every province of God’s empire. Great lives are built up under this law:—a babe on mother’s lap, opening its fringed eyelids to look forth wonderingly on an unknown world; a child learning to prattle and play; a boy at school; a young man with bloom on his cheek and splendid purpose in his eye; and so onward throughout successive stages. . . . Even so did ‘Jehovah’s Servant’ grow by a natural human growth.”4

4 James Culross The word ■■■■, yoneq, translated “tender plant,” literally means “suckling,” but is used here figuratively (in a horticultural sense) for the tender twig upon a tree or trunk, or stalk.5 Taken in connection with Isa_11:1, we see that it springs up out of the decayed stump of Jesse, “after the proud cedar of the Davidic monarchy had been felled.” But Isa_53:2 presents not only a parallel but also a contrast to Isaiah 11:1-16. There, the figure is that of a strong, vigorous shoot coming out of the root of the decayed house of David; here, it is the frail “tender twig” or sapling, struggling out of the dry ground. Here, men are represented as turning away in disappointment, if not in disgust, from this “root” springing up out of such unpromising surroundings; there, we read in Isa_11:10, “And it shall come to pass in that day, that the root of Jesse, which standeth for an ensign of the peoples, unto Him shall the nations seek, and His resting place shall be glory.”

5 Eze_17:22 The difference is explained by the fact that whereas in Isaiah 53:1-12 it is Messiah’s sufferings and rejection which are depicted, it is especially His millennial glory and reign, the beneficent effects of which extend even to the animal creation, which are described in Isaiah 11:1-16.

But, to return for a moment to a more minute examination of the second verse. We have here incidentally a prophetic description of our Lord Jesus during the early years of His life, concerning which there is so little recorded in the Gospel narrative. According to the manifest suggestion of the passage, “He grew up in obscurity and lowliness. Not as a prince royal, on whom the hopes and eyes of a nation are fixed, and all whose movements are chronicled in Court Gazette or Circular. Here is one living a lowly life in lowly environments. . . . Men expected ‘a plant of renown,’ fairer and statelier than all the trees in the garden of God, with boughs lifted cedar-like in majesty; instead, there is a suckling, a sprout from the root of a tree that had been cut down, with nothing fair or magnificent about it. It owes nothing to the soil in which it grows. The ground is dry, an arid waste without moisture; the plant is a tender one; and in the unpropitious soil whence no sweet juices can be drawn it grows up stunted, dwarfed, unattractive.” The expression “out of dry ground” (which, as Delitzsch correctly observes, belongs to both figures, namely “tender twig,” or “suckling,” and “root”) is intended to depict “the miserable character of the external circumstances in the midst of which the birth and growth of the Servant would take place.” The “dry ground” describes the then-existing state of the enslaved and degraded nation; i.e., “He was subject to all the conditions inseparable from a nation that had been given up to the power of the world, and

was in utter ignorance; in a word, the dry ground is the corrupt character of the age."6

6 Delitzsch And yet, in spite of all the obscure and adverse circumstances of His earthly environment, "He grew up before Him" that is Jehovah—"increasing in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and men," with the eye of His heavenly Father ever complacently resting upon Him. In rendering the last part of Isa_53:2, most modern commentators depart from the accents of the Massoretic text, and translate, "He had no form and comeliness that we should look on Him, and no beauty that we should desire Him" but the English Authorized and Revised Versions properly adhere to the punctuation of the Hebrew text, and render, "He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him there is no beauty that we should desire Him."

There was nothing in His appearance or surroundings that the carnal or worldly minded could be attracted by; everything was so different from what they had pictured or anticipated.

It is not inconsistent with the language of the text to suppose that "there may have been in His aspect, power, grace, majesty, blended with sorrow and meekness. The heart of the thing is, that men did not see the beauty that was there; He did not answer to their ideal; He wanted the qualities which they admired; His greatness was not shaped to their thoughts. Having misread the prophecies, having imagined another Deliverer than God had promised, being blind to the heavenly, while their souls lay open to the carnal and earthly, they found nothing worth gazing upon in Jehovah's Servant when He came. They would have welcomed a plumed and mail-clad warrior, riding forth to battle against the oppressor, would have shouted before him, 'Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and with thy majesty!' They have no admiration and no welcome for One who comes, meek and lowly, to make His soul an offering for sin, and to be God's salvation to the end of the earth. It was not sin that troubled them: how should a Saviour from sin delight them? What was there in a Bringer-in of righteousness to inspire such hearts?"7

7 Culross (2) The Despised and Rejected of Men The penitential confession proceeds in Isa_53:3 to set forth the positive aversion and hostility which the nation in its former ignorance manifested towards Jehovah's righteous Servant. "He was despised and rejected (or 'forsaken') of men." The first description of Him in this line—■■■■, nibhzeh, "despised"—takes our thoughts back once more to what has already been said of Jehovah's Servant in Isa_49:7, "Thus saith Jehovah, the Redeemer of Israel, and His Holy One, to Him whom man despiseth, to Him whom the nation abhorreth."8

8 Or "despised of soul," as the words in Isa_49:7 may best be rendered, describing the depth of contempt, as from the very soul of man, which He shall encounter.

If, instead of prophecy uttered centuries before His advent, it were history written subsequent to the events, no more terse or graphic description could be given of the attitude and feeling of the Jewish nation in relation to Jesus of Nazareth: "despised and rejected of men"—"whom man despiseth and the nation abhorreth." No person in the history of the Jews has provoked such deep-seated abhorrence as He who came only to bless them, and who even on the cross prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." When on earth, at the end of His three-and-a-half years of blessed ministry among them, they finally rejected Him. Their hatred was intense and mysterious. "Away with this man; release unto us Barabbas. . . . Crucify Him, crucify

Him!" was their cry. And all through the centuries no name has provoked such intense abhorrence among the Jews as the name of Jesus.

I have known personally most amiable, and as men, lovable characters among the Jews; but immediately [when] the name "Jesus" was mentioned, a change came over their countenances, and they would fall into a passion of anger. In the course of my missionary experiences these past thirty-five or forty years, how often has it been my lot to witness some of my people almost mad with rage—clenching their fists, gnashing their teeth, and spitting on the ground at the very mention of the Name which to the believer "is as ointment poured forth"! Israel's attitude to our Lord Jesus may be gathered also from their literature. In the filthy legends about Him in the Talmud and more modern productions, the very names by which He is called are blasphemous. The precious name Yeshua ("Jesus" Saviour) has been changed into "Yeshu," made up of initial letters which mean, "Let His name and His memory be blotted out." The Holy One who knew no sin nor was guile found in His mouth, is often styled "the Transgressor"; and another term frequently in the mouth of the Jews is "Talui" ("the hanged one"), which is equivalent to "the accursed one." There are also other hateful designations, such as "Ben Stada," or "Ben Pandera," which imply blasphemies not only against Him, but against her who is "blessed among women." And Israel's blind hatred to the Messiah does not stop short at His person, or His virgin mother, but extends to His words and works, and particularly to those of their nation who are ready to take upon them His reproach and to follow Him. Thus His works are still ascribed to witchcraft and Beelzebub; His gospel (the Evangelium) is called 'Aven or 'Avon-gillajon, the "sinful" or "mischievous writing"; while Rabbinic hatred to His followers (especially from among the Jews) was not satisfied with classing them as "apostates" and "worse than heathen," but rose to the height of instituting a daily public prayer in the most solemn part of their liturgy, that "the Nazarenes" may, together with all apostates, "be suddenly destroyed," without hope, and be "blotted out of the book of life!" This may be painful reading to some Christians, and the Lord knows it is far from my thoughts to write anything which might tend to foster unchristian prejudice against my people, but it is necessary to show how literally the prophetic forecast has been verified, and how deep-seated and mysterious Jewish hatred has been to Him who, according to His human nature, is flesh of their flesh, and bone of their bone, and in whom is bound up all their hope and salvation.

Let it be remembered also that Jewish hatred to Christ and His followers, at any rate in more modern times, is partly to be traced to the sufferings which they have endured at the hands of so-called Christians, and also that it is not our Lord Jesus as we know Him, that Israel in ignorance thus blasphemes, but the caricature of Him as presented to them by apostate persecuting Christendom in the dark ages and since. Often the only way left to the Jews to avenge their terrible sufferings and massacres was to write blasphemously of Him in whose name they were ignorantly perpetrated.

Neither is it to be forgotten that if Christ has been, and alas! to a large extent still is, "abhorred of the nation," there has always been a remnant in the nation to whom He has been "the fairest of ten thousand and altogether lovely," and who, for the love of Him, counted not even their lives dear unto them. It was a man of Israel and a Pharisee who wrote: "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ, yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellencey of knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count

them but dung that I might win Christ." And when the "blindness in part," which has befallen Israel shall be removed, and their eyes are open to behold the true glory of Him whom they have pierced, then the whole nation shall show an example of love and zeal for their Messiah, such as have not been known in the world. The phrase ■■■■■ ■■■, chadal 'ishim, "rejected (or 'forsaken') of men" has been variously rendered. To quote only two or three examples, Hengstenberg translates the clause, "the most unworthy among men"; Moses Margoliouth, "the meanest of men"; and Von Orelli, "shunned of men." But it seems to me that Franz Delitzsch has caught the true force of the Hebrew idiom. "The predicate chadal 'ishim" (rendered in the Authorized Version "rejected of men"), he says, "is misunderstood by nearly all the commentators, inasmuch as they take 'ishim, the word for 'men,' as synonymous with bane ha'adam (children of men), whereas it is rather used in the sense of bane 'ishim (men of high rank, lords) as distinguished from bane ha'adam (ordinary men, or common people). Hence Cocceius explains it thus: 'wanting in men,' i.e., having no respectable men with Him to support Him with their authority. In Hebrew ■■■, chadal, has not only the transitive meaning to 'discontinue' or 'leave off' a thing, but the intransitive to 'cease,' or 'be in want,' so that chadal 'ishim may mean one in want of men of rank, i.e., finding no sympathy from such men. The chief men of His nation who towered above the multitude, the great men of this world, withdrew their hands from Him: He had none of the men of any distinction at His side." And this, alas! is still the case. The great, mighty, and noble in the world, the "men of high degree" (with few exceptions, for which God be praised), still ignore and despise Him, and use their power and influence to hinder rather than to advance His cause and kingdom. It was a reproach brought against Christianity by Celsus and other early pagan writers, that it was the religion of slaves, and Jewish Rabbis still taunt believers from among their nation that it is to the poor that the gospel is preached, and that those who have been drawn to Christ belong for the most part to "the common people." "Have any of the rulers believed on Him, or of the Pharisees?"9 And not only was He "despised and forsaken," especially by the men of high rank, the leaders of the nation, but He was 'ish-makh'obhoth vidhua' choli—"a man of sorrows" (or, "a man of pains," the Hebrew idiom denoting "sorrow of heart in all its forms"), a man whose chief distinction was that "His life was one of constant, painful endurance"—and "acquainted" (or, "well acquainted") with grief (or, "sickness"), the meaning of which, as Delitzsch explains, is not that He had by nature a sickly body, falling from one disease into another (as some would explain), but that "the wrath instigated by sin, and the zeal of self-sacrifice,10 burnt like the fire of a fever in His soul and body." The point emphasised is that sorrow and grief were the very characteristics of the Servant of Jehovah, "the tokens we know Him by." "We have all seen grief and sorrow in our time," writes one; "no one can live long without doing so, God knows; but it is not one sorrow, or two, that makes one 'a man of sorrows,' nor one meeting, or two, with grief that makes him the acqaintance of it.

9 Joh_7:47-48

10 Psa_69:9

"How the Servant endured, with what fortitude and patience, with what faith in God and acquiescence in His will, is not here brought into view, but simply the fact that sorrows came thick and heavy upon Him, like wind-driven rain beating on an unsheltered head, and that grief was present with Him as His close companion through life." And the chief causes of His sorrows and grief were not personal ills, or physical pain, though these were great enough. It was heart sorrow

and grief of soul. “A noble nature, repelled in all its efforts to bless, is pained unspeakably more by that repulse than by the crowding in of merely personal ills, or by all the slings and arrows of adversity: and His sorrow came, thus, because His brethren rejected the help He brought, repelled the Helper, and abode in their lost state.” The last two sentences in Isa_53:3 form, so to say, a climax in the sorrow and humiliation which the righteous Servant of Jehovah had to endure. The words kh’master panim mimmennu (rendered in the Authorized Version, “we hid as it were our faces from Him”) have been variously rendered. The marginal reading in the A.V. and R.V. is, “He hid as it were His face from us,” which is the translation adopted by Hengstenberg, who sees in it an allusion to the law in relation to the leper, who, according to Lev_13:45, had to cover his face, and cry “Unclean, unclean”; also by Margoliouth, who translates, “as one who would hide his face from us,” by not revealing to us His true character and glory. But it is now pretty generally agreed among scholars that the word master is a verbal noun, and that the true translation is that given in the text of the English version, namely, “As one from whom men hide their face”11 “i.e., like one whose repulsive face it is impossible to endure, so that men turn away their face or cover it with their dress” (Delitzsch); or, as another expresses it: “Instead of meeting Him with a joyful gleam in their eyes responding to His grace and help, men turned away from Him—as one looks the other way to avoid the eye of a person whom he dislikes, or as one shrinks from an object of loathing” (Culross).

11 A suggestive and possible rendering of the sentence also is: “There was, as it were, a hiding of God’s face from Him.”

Lastly, all the predicates of shame and sorrow are summed up in the word with which also this third verse began, ■■■■, nibhzeh, “He was despised”—to which, however, is added a negative preposition which the Hebrew idiom requires to mark the depth of the contempt in which He was held—“and we esteemed Him not.” Instead of counting Him dear and worthy, we formed a very low estimate of Him, or rather we did not estimate Him at all, or, as Luther forcibly expresses it: “we estimated Him as nothing.”

This, dear Christian reader, will be Israel’s brokenhearted confession on the day when the Spirit of grace and supplication is poured upon them, and their eyes are opened at last to the fearful error which they committed as a nation in the rejection of their Messiah. But, as we read these sad and solemn words, “He was despised, and we esteemed Him not,” may we not pause for a moment to ask ourselves if this is not true also in professing Christendom to-day?

“How often,” writes another Hebrew Christian brother, “do we meet Christians expatiating on the atrocious wickedness of the Jews in crucifying the Lord of Glory; implying, in fact, that if He had appeared amongst them, He would have met with a more favourable reception. There was a horrid custom once in the Christian Church, which rendered the Jews especial objects of hatred and insult during Lent, and more particularly during the ceremonies of Easter week. The Bishop used to mount the pulpit of the Cathedral, and address the people to the following effect: ‘You have among you, my brethren, the descendants of the impious wretches who crucified the Lord Jesus Christ, whose Passion we are soon to commemorate. Shew yourselves animated with the spirit of your ancestors; arm yourselves with stones, assail the Jews with them, and thus, as far as in you lies, revenge the sufferings of that Saviour who redeemed you with His own blood.’ Alas! this custom still prevails in some countries. You may be sure, however, that if Christ humbled Himself

once more, and appeared visibly amongst us, He would be treated in the same way as He was by the Jews; yea, ‘crucified afresh, and put to an open shame.’ He would again have to listen to the dogmas of insolent reasoning; He would once more be disgusted with the fiend-like sneers of reprobate men, and the polished cavils of fashionable contempt.”12 12 Moses Margoliouth And what about ourselves, who by the grace of God do believe on Him? Do we estimate our Lord Jesus at His true worth? Is He indeed to us the chiefest of ten thousand and altogether lovely? Are we prepared for His dear sake to forsake all and to follow Him outside the camp, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt?

(3) The Vicarious Character of His Sufferings The veil lifted from their eyes, Israel sees the true cause of Messiah’s sufferings, and, “bearing witness against himself, laments his former blindness to the mediatorial vicarious character of the sufferings both of soul and body that were endured by Him” (Delitzsch). Oh, it was for us—they now say—that He endured all the shame and agony. To translate Isa_53:4 literally: “Verily they were our griefs (or ‘sicknesses’) which He bore, and our sorrows (or ‘pains’) with which He burdened Himself, but we regarded Him as one stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.” No plainer or stronger words could be used to express the thought of vicarious suffering than those employed in the original of this verse. The verb ■■■, nasa’, “to bear,” is continually used in Leviticus of the expiation effected by the appointed sacrifices, as, for instance, Lev_16:22, “The goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a solitary land.” “When construed with the accusative of the sin,” as Delitzsch properly explains, “■■■, ‘nasa’, signifies to take the debt of sin upon one’s self, and carry it as one’s own, i.e., to look at it and feel it as one’s own (e.g., Lev_5:1; Lev_5:17), or more frequently to bear the punishment occasioned by sin, i.e., to make expiation for it (Lev_20:19-20; Lev_24:15), and in any case in which the person bearing it is not himself the guilty person, to bear sin in a mediatorial capacity for the purpose of making expiation for it (Lev_10:17). . . . it is evident that both of the verbs used in this verse, ‘He hath borne,’ and ‘He carried,’ are to be understood in the sense of an expiatory bearing, and not merely of taking away, as has been recently maintained in opposition to the satisfactio vicaria, as we may see clearly enough from Eze_4:4-8, where sa’th ’avon (‘bearing iniquity’) is represented by the prophet in a symbolical action. But in the case before us, where it is not the sins, but ‘our diseases’ and ‘our pains’ that are the object, this mediatorial sense remains essentially the same. The meaning is not merely that the Servant of God entered into the fellowship of our sufferings, but that He took upon Himself the sufferings which we had to bear, and deserved to bear, and therefore not only took them away (as Mat_8:17 might make it appear), but bore them in His own person, that He might deliver us from them. But when one person takes upon himself suffering which another would have had to bear, and therefore not only endures it with him, but in his stead, this is called substitution or representation—an idea which, however unintelligible to the understanding, belongs to the actual substance of the common consciousness of man, and the realities of the divine government of the world as brought within the range of our experience, and one which has continued even down to the present time to have much greater vigour in the Jewish nation, where it has found it true expression in sacrifice and the kindred institutions, than in any other, at least so far as its nationality has not been entirely annulled.” As I have already explained, in the more literal translations of the text in Isa_53:3-4, the words rendered in the English versions, “our griefs” and “our sorrows,” mean also “our sicknesses” (or “diseases”) and “our pains,” and it is in this sense that the Evangelist Matthew quotes this passage from Isaiah 53:1-12. After recording some of His precious works of healing—how He cast out the spirits with His word, and healed all that were

sick, he adds: “that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying, ‘Himself took our infirmities and bare our diseases.’” The question has been raised how Christ’s miraculous works of healing can be a fulfillment of this Scripture which sets forth Messiah’s vicarious sufferings for sinners, and in what sense did He Himself “take our infirmities and bear our sicknesses”? The answer is that these cures were in fact and in strictness a fulfillment of this Scripture because wrought in His character as Saviour. As one has said: “Christ was sent for the general purpose of removing by the sacrifice of Himself the evil which sin had brought into the world. And this work He commenced when He cured bodily diseases, for these diseases were the consequences of punishment of sin. And more—they were types of another disease, of the moral and spiritual effects of man’s fall, which the prophecy has principally in view, as is evident from the words which follow.”13 13 William DeBurgh, D.D., The Messianic Prophecies of Isaiah To put it still more simply, the mission of the Messiah was to accomplish a full redemption for His people, and this He did not only by taking upon Himself our sins, but our “infirmities” and “diseases,” which are the direct consequences of sin, though not always of the sin of the individual. The blessed results of His redeeming work to us therefore are not only pardon and regeneration, but the ultimate redemption of body as well as of spirit in resurrection life. The miracles of healing not only served to certify Him as the Redeemer, and as “signs” of the spiritual healing which He came to bring, but were, so to say, pledges also of the ultimate full deliverance of the redeemed, not only from sin but from every evil consequence of it in body as well as in soul. Hence our full salvation includes not only the perfecting of our spirits, but the “fashioning anew of the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of His glory.” The self-accusing confession of their former blindness as to the true cause of Messiah’s sufferings is continued in the second half of the verse. It was for us that He bore all this; it was our crushing burden that He took upon Himself, they say, “but we regarded Him as stricken (or ‘plagued’), smitten of God, and afflicted.”

Every one of the three expressions, ■■■■, nagua’, “one stricken, i.e., afflicted with a hateful, shocking disease”—hence used particularly of “the plague” of leprosy (of which ■■■ is, so to say, the nomen proprium), and ■■■■■ ■■■, mukkeh ’Elohim, “one smitten of God” (“one who has been defeated in conflict with God his Lord”),14 and ■■■■, m’unneh, “one bowed down by suffering,” is intended to describe one suffering terrible punishment for sin.

14 Delitzsch The error confessed, as Hengstenberg well observes, is not in their having considered the sufferings which the Servant of Jehovah endured, as a punishment of sin, but in having considered them as the punishment for the sins which He Himself had committed. This, alas! is what spiritually blinded Israel has thought for all these centuries, and what most of the Jews still do think. Thus our Lord Jesus, the only sinless man who trod this earth, is called the Poshe—the transgressor—who, according to such illustrious exponents of the spirit of Rabbinic Judaism as Moses Maimonides,15 well deserved the violent death which He suffered; while in the Talmud Jesus of Nazareth is placed in Hell alongside of Titus and Balaam, and as undergoing not only the severest but the most degrading form of punishment.16

15 See especially the “Iggereth Teman,” the letter addressed by Maimonides to the Jewish communities in Yemen, written in Arabic in 1172, and translated into Hebrew in 1216 by Samuel Ibn Taban, now printed from a MS. in possession of the late Dr. Jellinek, Vienna, 1873.

16 Gittin, 566. The passage in the original, with translation and comment, will be found in Jesus Christ in the Talmud, etc. by Professor Gustave Dalman and Heinrich Laible.

We can well imagine, therefore, the deep contrition and heartbrokenness of repentant Israel when their eyes are at last opened by the Spirit of God to the true character of this holy Sufferer, and when they perceive that it was for them and in their stead that He endured it all. “In that day” of weeping and mourning over Him whom they have pierced, we can hear, as it were, the sob which will accompany their confession: How base was our ingratitude! How intense was our ignorance! How thick our darkness! How profound our blasphemy against that Holy One, who in His love and compassion condescended to bear our griefs and to be laden with our sorrows! “Yet we regarded Him as plagued, smitten of God, and afflicted.

“But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.” The ■■■■, v’hu’ (“and He”), as contrasted with ■■■■■■, v’anachnu (“and we”) in Isa_53:3-4, continue to set forth the true cause of Messiah’s sufferings in contrast to our former false judgment with regard to Him. “We” in our former blindness and ignorance regarded Him as plagued and smitten of God for His own sin and guilt, while “He”—which is the emphatic word in Isa_53:5—this Holy One, whose true glory as our Redeemer we now behold, endured all in our stead, paying with His own life for the “transgressions” and “iniquities” which we are committed. And how great were His sufferings, both in life and in death! He was wounded, literally, “He was pierced through” (as the verb ■■■, chalal, primarily means)—or, “wounded to death,” as Von Orelli, and others, render it—an expression which reminds us of Zec_12:10, “They shall look upon Me whom they have pierced” though the verb for piercing used there is not exactly the same as here. And “He was bruised,” literally “crushed” (m’dhukka’), by the heavy burden of our sin which He took upon Himself, weighted by the wrath of God. And it was all—to repeat once again—for our iniquities and “for our transgressions.” What else, we ask again, can these words mean than that He suffered vicariously? Not merely with, but for others? By no exegesis is it possible to escape this conclusion. And there is nothing in the conclusion that need surprise us.

“It is in keeping with what we know otherwise. You would not abolish vicariousness by getting it eliminated from the Bible. No one can be unfamiliar with instances of one taking upon himself the penalty of another’s recklessness or folly, even within the range of what we call ‘natural law.’ A child, for instance, playing in a room beside his mother, moves a bar which he has been forbidden to touch, and overturns a vessel of scalding water. The mother sees the danger to her child, and in an instant throws herself between him and the deadly peril, voluntarily taking upon herself her child’s penalty, and saving his life at the cost of cruel suffering for herself. Cases less or more resembling this are not uncommon within the range of ordinary observation.

“To leave out vicarious suffering were to erase the brightest pages from the story of the past,—of all golden deeds,—of men who have died for their country,—of martyrs who have gone to stake or scaffold for the truth’s sake, and helped to pay the purchase-price of our religious light and freedom; and would leave history but a poor record of ignoble selfishness or mean ambition, a record unutterably sad, little better than the record of a herd of wolves or a Newgate Calendar. Seldom, indeed, has there been love absolutely pure from the taint of selfish feeling; and yet it has been strong enough to take upon itself much suffering in the stead of others; and has taught us at

least to acknowledge that it is a sweeter thing to do good than to enjoy selfish ease and pleasure, a nobler thing to suffer for others than to win the world's renown.

"Among the Jews, the idea of vicarious suffering was for from strange; their sacrificial system distinctly expressed it. Sin (said the sacrificial system) is an offence unspeakably odious to God, which He cannot look upon, but must punish. Death is the due punishment of sin. But God has no pleasure in the sinner's death. He is full of mercy, and has Himself opened up a channel, through sacrifice, whereby sin may be expiated, and pardon granted in righteousness. The sacrifices under the law had no intrinsic efficacy to put away sin; but only symbolized substitution—the substitution of Jehovah's righteous Servant in place of the guilty. Men may indeed exclaim against the propriety of one suffering for others, and may insist that every man be wounded for his own transgressions and bruised for his own iniquities. But there is no moral reason, so far as I can see, to forbid love from voluntarily stepping in and suffering for others, to save them from badness and misery. Now in this prophecy, here is One suffering for sins which He never committed—enduring what others deserved—standing in the transgressor's place, as if Himself the transgressor.

"Within the human bosom, the world over, are self-accusings and poignant regrets because of ill that has been done, and dread of what may be, when God shall reckon with us. The case may not be clear to the man himself; but the sense of guilt is there, ineradicable;—it is done; I did it; I cannot undo it; no tears or repentings can change the fact; and I dread the future, for I hear a Voice which proclaims with mysterious, awful sovereign authority, 'Woe unto the wicked; it shall be ill with him.' And so the conscience of the sinner is in a condition of pain, varying from mere uneasiness to darkest and intensest remorse.

"A fire smoulders within that may blaze up any hour into fierce misery. Under such conditions, there can be no true peace with God, no true love to Him, no true joy in Him, no true walking before Him; but revolt and aversion whenever His will thwarts and crosses ours.

"Oh, if only that guilty past were blotted out and made as if it had never been! Oh, if only I could go forward into that unknown future a pardoned man! But the question of blotting out that guilty past is not so simple as at first it seems.

"The forgiveness of sins is a question of righteousness as truly as of mercy. If God cannot forgive in righteousness, then He cannot forgive at all. If He were to forgive simply because He is compassionate, or because (being sovereign) He so wills it, or out of mere good nature, He would remove the very ground on which my conscience plants itself in all its moral operations. It behooves that the glory of His character and the rectitude of His government should suffer no eclipse, but, on the contrary, be demonstrated. But now light is thrown on the case—though still deep mystery remains—when it is said, 'The chastisement of our peace was upon Him.' Through His suffering for others, they obtain 'peace,' in the sense of reconcilement to God."17

17 Culross The phrase musar sh'lomenu—the "chastisement (or punishment) of our peace"—denotes "the chastisement which leads to our peace," or, as more fully expressed by Von Orelli, "The punishment of our well-being—i.e., by the bearing of which, on His part, our peace of well-being is secured—was upon Him," i.e., He bore the burden of it in our stead. The same thought is differently expressed in the last supplementary cause in this verse: "By His stripes" (ubhachabhuratho, literally His wounds) "we were healed (or, healing was brought to us)."18

Peace and healing—two most blessed results which accrue to us from the vicarious suffering and atoning death of our Saviour. Peace with God because of His justifying grace on the ground of what Messiah bore and did for us; and peace in our own conscience, which can never be at peace until sin is expiated—and "healing." This, I believe, goes beyond justification, and hints at the regeneration, sanctifying grace in the souls of the justified, for the work of our Saviour not only procures pardon and reconciliation with God, but is the ground also of the work of the Holy Spirit, who accomplishes within us His mission of renewal and sanctification, so that, delivered from spiritual disease and moral blemish, we may become conformed to His own image.

18 ■■■■■, chabhurah, denoting a tumour raised by scourging. Margoliouth translates the clause, "By reason of His contusions we were healed." In Isa_1:6 chabhurah is rendered "bruises" in the English Version. It may well lead our thoughts to the cruel scourging endured by our Saviour on our behalf.

(4) The Moral Necessity of Messiah's Sufferings

Isa_53:6, as is well observed by Dr. J. A. Alexander, describes the occasion, or rather the necessity, of the sufferings of the Servant of Jehovah, which are spoken of in the verses which precede: "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way, and Jehovah hath laid (literally, 'caused to meet') upon Him the iniquity of us all." It is because men are wholly estranged from God, and an atonement was required for their reconciliation, that Messiah suffered and died. "As the sea furnishes a thousand illustrations of life or truth to the 'inhabiters of the isles,' so the shepherd and the flock to the Hebrew prophets and psalmists. The picture is that of the scattered flock, all wandering from the pasture and the protection and care of the shepherd. It is not, as in the parable, the wandering of one sheep out of a hundred, ninety-and-nine being left, but the scattering of the whole flock. Under this figure is represented our iniquity, the word implying both the sinful act and its guilt. Sleep are not to blame for wandering; they know no better; but in men, with reason, conscience, and heavenly light, wandering means sin."19

19 Culross

Thus, to repeat, "we all" without any exception, are involved in this sin and guilt and consequent misery of having strayed from the Great Shepherd, who is Himself also the fountain of life and all blessedness. But while "the sinful alienation is universal, the modes of its manifestation are as various as men and their tendencies." "We have turned every one,"20 or, more literally, each (one) man, "to his own way," which is the very opposite of the way of God. "We have turned," so that we are not only involved in the sin of the mass, but stand also under a load of personal and individual guilt which we have incurred. But let us not forget that it is primarily still the penitential confession of the remnant of Israel, and the special applicability of the figure employed in this verse to the nation, which, because they have wandered away from God, have for many centuries been a scattered flock, and as sheep having no shepherd.

20 "The second clause is understood by Augustine as denoting selfishness, and a defect of public spirit, or benevolence; and this interpretation is admitted by Hengstenberg as correct 'if taken in a deeper sense,' viz. that union among men can only spring from their common union with God. But this idea, however just it may be in itself, is wholly out of place in a comparison with scattered sheep, whose running off in different directions does not spring from selfishness, but from

confusion, ignorance, and incapacity to choose the right path. A much better exposition of the figure, though still too limited, is that of Theodoret, who understands it to denote the vast variety of false religions, as exemplified by the different idols worshiped in Egypt, Phoenicia, Scythia, and Greece, alike in nothing but the common error of departure from the true God." (J. A. Alexander)

"And one taking a view of the state of the Jewish nation, both spiritual and temporal, since they rejected their Messiah," writes a Hebrew Christian brother, "cannot fail to be struck with the graphic description in this concise inspired sentence. 'We have each one of us turned to his own way.' We have all gone in the path which we chose. There was no union in the service of God; no common bond to unite us; we have not entered into the thoughts of God, nor endeavoured to follow His ways, but we went on the broad way of our own. We were like sheep which are scattered; which have no shepherd, which wander where they please, with no one to collect, defend, or guide them. One would wander in one direction, and another in another; and of course solitary and unprotected, they would be exposed to the more danger. Such has been the state of the Jewish nature since they have rejected the Lord of Glory; they have been sifted among all nations like as corn is sifted, and everywhere they turn to their own way; they have neither king, nor prince, nor sacrifice, nor Ephod."

Disunion among themselves as well as corporate wandering from God has marked their history in dispersion. But to return to the more immediate context: while ours was the sin and guilt, Jehovah, in infinite grace and mercy, "laid (or more literally, caused to meet, or caused to alight21) upon Him the iniquity of us all."

21 ■■■■■, hiph'gia', from ■■■, paga', signifies to cause anything to strike, or fall upon a person. The rendering in the English Version ("laid upon Him") is objectionable only because it is too weak and suggests the idea of mild and inoffensive gesture, whereas that conveyed by the Hebrew word is necessarily a violent one, namely, that of "causing to strike, or fall" (Alexander). The verb is used in such a passage as 2Sa_1:15, "Go near and fall upon him; and he smote him that he died." "In other passages our iniquity is spoken of as resting on the Holy One, and He bearing it. Here it is spoken of as coming upon Him like a destroying foe and overwhelming Him with the wrath that is brought with it." (B. W. Newton)

■■■, 'avon ("iniquity"), is used to denote not only the transgression itself, but also the guilt incurred thereby, and the punishment to which it gives rise. The last word, kullanu, translated "of us all," is the very same also with which this verse began, rendered "all we." It is repeated to give emphasis that it is the sin of "all we," primarily of all redeemed Israel, but inclusively also of all the redeemed from among all the nations, yea, of every individual sinner, who in repentance and faith turned to God, for as "all we" are included in the sin and guilt, so also are we all included in the provision of God's redeeming grace. And it is Jehovah Himself who caused "all this great multitude of sins, and mass of guilt, and 'weight of punishment',22 to light upon Him." The previous verses have shown man's guilty hand in the case, now we must mark Jehovah's action. He it was who placed this awful burden on His shoulders. This was at once His deepest humiliation and His most glorious distinction.23 "There is a striking antithesis in this verse," writes one. "In ourselves we are scattered"—"astray"—"each one turned to his own way"; in Christ Jesus we are collected together. By nature we wander and are driven headlong towards destruction; in Christ we find the way by which we are led to the gate of life. Yes, Jehovah hath caused to meet in Him the iniquity of us all.

He was the object on which all the rays collected on the focal point, fell. These fiery rays which would have fallen on all mankind diverged from divine justice to the east, west, north, and south, were deflected from them and converged in Him. So the Lord caused to meet in Him the punishment due to the iniquity of all. How wonderful are God's judgments!24

22 Delitzsch

23 Culross

24 Margoliouth (5) The Voluntary Character of His Sufferings But while men, in their ignorance of His true character, "and with wicked hands," heaped humiliations and sufferings upon Him, and Jehovah Himself "laid upon Him the iniquity of us all," the righteous Servant of Jehovah endured all the shame and sorrow voluntarily. This is set forth in the next three verses, which describe the manner of Messiah's vicarious life and death and burial.

There has been much discussion over the first part of Isa_53:7, and quite a number of different renderings have been suggested by the commentators. The Authorized Version reads:

"He was oppressed, and He was afflicted; and He opened not His mouth" which the Revised Version has altered to, "He was oppressed, yet when He was afflicted He opened not His mouth."

Delitzsch translates, "He was ill-treated, whilst He bowed Himself," i.e., "suffered voluntarily"; and Von Orelli, "He was used violently, though He humbled Himself." To these I may add the rendering given by Bishop Lowth, which is the same as already suggested by Cyril (among ancient writers) and by De Dieu, Tremellius, and others, namely: "It was exacted, and He was made answerable, and He opened not His mouth." This last rendering comes, according to my judgment, nearer to the true sense of the original, but while ■■■, niggas (rendered in the English versions, "He was oppressed") does indeed mean to exact, and may here be used in the impersonal sense, the rendering of the second verb (■■■■, na'aneh) by "He was made answerable" is not in accord with its usage in the original, for the word nowhere else conveys the notion of legal responsibility. Margoliouth, on the ground was ■■■, niggas, is sometimes applied to the rigorous exaction of debts, paraphrases the first part of the verse thus:

"He was rigorously demanded to pay the debt, and He submitted Himself, and did not open His mouth." That the Messiah in His love and compassion for man became our surety and took upon Himself our great moral debt, paying the ransom with His own life, is a truth set forth in the whole of this great prophecy, even if it be not fully expressed in this particular sentence. What this passage does emphasize is that He "bowed Himself" under this heavy burden, which He took upon our account voluntarily. "He was oppressed," "He was used violently," "He was treated tyrannically" (which is yet another suggested meaning of the word niggas), and He—which is the emphatic word in the verse—"He Himself" it was who "bowed," or "humbled," or "submitted" Himself, and opened not His mouth. The voluntary endurance is in the second half of the verse set forth in a simile: "As a sheep that is led to the slaughter" and "As a lamb before its shearers is dumb, and opened not His mouth."

"The object of the whole passage is to mark the meek and quiet subjection of our Redeemer in His prolonged suffering. He was the subject of cruel and unjust oppression, yet His persecutors were not crushed. God allowed them to pursue their course and to accumulate sorrows on the head of

the Holy One; and He patiently and meekly bowed His head to the infliction, and opened not His mouth."25 "When we suffer," writes one, "how hard we find it to be still! The flames of resentment—how they leap up in our bosom, and flush our cheek with angry red! What impatience there often is, what murmuring, what outcry, what publishing of our sorrow! Of if there is silence, it is at times akin to stoicism, the proud determination not to let men see how we feel. But the spirit of the Servant is loftier and grander unutterably. In sublime and magnanimous silence He endures to the uttermost, sustained by His mighty purpose and by the conviction, Jehovah wills it. I see the temper of His mind in this silence; I see His strength; I see His rest in God; and I look down into the unfathomed mystery of Love. He came to do what only Love was equal to—that is abundantly clear—and He shrank from no suffering; raised not His arm, opened not His mouth, in His own defense, wearied not, fainted not, but was dumb with silence."26

25 B. W. Newton

26 Culross But we may, I believe, go a step further. In this wonderful patience and silence of the Servant—which in the history of fulfillment was exhibited in the silence of our Lord Jesus before the Jewish Sanhedrin and before the Roman Procurator, Pontius Pilate—we see not only His lamb-like meekness and "His love for man, which made Him content to suffer for our redemption," but His acquiescence if the justice of God in the punishment of sin, the whole burden of which He bore. To the Christian this verse is specially precious because of the prominence given to it in the New Testament. Not only was it "from this Scripture" that the evangelist Philip "preached Jesus" unto the Ethiopian eunuch; and not only does the Apostle Peter use it was the basis of his exhortation to believers to be patient in suffering and to follow the example of Him, "who when He was reviled, reviled not again, and when He suffered He threatened not, but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously"; but, as Delitzsch truly observes, "All the references in the New Testament to the Lamb of God (with which the corresponding allusions to the Passover are interwoven) spring from this passage in the book of Isaiah."

(6) The Unjust Trial and Violent Death of the Servant of Jehovah

We now come to perhaps the most difficult verse in this great prophecy, the main purport of which is to describe the closing portion of the life of the Servant of Jehovah and the manner of death that He should die.

"No three words in the Hebrew Bible (with the exception perhaps of the four words which follow) have been more variously rendered," says Dr. Henderson, than those which constitute the first sentence in this eighth verse. [Isa_53:8] It would not be to much profit were we to enter into examination of the many translations and paraphrases of these three words in ancient and modern versions and commentaries. The Authorized Version reads, "He was taken from prison and from judgment" and the Revised Version, "By oppression and judgment was He taken away." A suggestive reading, first given by Dr. Henderson, and adopted by Margoliouth, is: "Without restraint and without a sentence He was taken away" which of course fits in with the fulfillment of the prophecy in our Lord Jesus, who exercised no manner of restraint over His persecutors, and was given over to a cruel death in violation of every principle of justice, and without a proper trial or sentence. But this, though a possible and suggestive rendering, does somewhat strain the meaning of the words from their general usage. On the whole, I prefer the reading given by Delitzsch, Von Orelli, and others: "He was taken away from prison and from judgment" which is

almost, though not quite, the same as that in the Authorized Version. The principal emphasis (in the sentence) is not laid upon the fact that He was taken away from suffering, but that it was out of the midst of suffering that He was carried off. The idea that is most prominent in the word ■■■, luqqach (“taken away”), is that of being snatched or hurried away.27 The word ■■■, ‘otser (rendered “prison”), primarily means a violent constraint. “Here, as in Psa_107:39, it signifies a persecuting treatment which restrains by outward force, such as that of prison or bonds. . . . The word mishpat (‘judgment’) refers to the judicial proceedings, in which He was put upon His trial, accused and convicted as worthy of death—in other words, to His unjust judgment . . . Hostile oppression and judicial persecution were the circumstances out of which He was carried away by death.”28 27 See, e.g., Isa_52:5; Eze_33:4

28 Delitzsch The second sentence in this verse, consisting of the four words ■■■■■ ■■ ■■■■■■■■, V’eth-doro mi y’socheach, has also been very variously rendered and interpreted by translators and commentators. The Authorized Version reads: “And who shall declare His generation?” The Revised Version connects the sentence with the words that follow, and translates: “And as for His generation, who among them considereth that He was cut off from the land of the living for the transgression of My people?” etc., which is practically the same as that given by Delitzsch and others. Von Orelli translates: “And among His contemporaries who was concerned.” Of other suggested renderings I may mention the following:—

(1) “As to His generation, who shall set it forth?” i.e., in all the guilt of their iniquity.

(2) “Who shall declare His life?” i.e., the mystery of His Being.

(3) “Who can declare the number of His generation?”—i.e., of those inspired by His spirit or filled with His life.29 Luther, Calvin, and Vitringa understand the cause to mean, “Who can declare the length of His life hereafter?”; Kimchi, like Hengstenberg, explains it to mean, “Who can declare His posterity?” Yet another rendering based on the fact that ■■■ (dor) sometimes stands for “habitation,” or “dwelling,” is that given by Hoffmann and Margoliouth, namely, “As for His dwelling, who cares for it?” (or who can speak of it?)30

29 Hengstenberg

30 See Isa_38:12, R.V. The new American Jewish translation of the Bible renders: “And with His generation who did reason?” This great variety of opinions by Bible scholars, both ancient and modern, Jewish and Christian, will give the reader an idea of the difficulty of coming to a positive conclusion as to the actual meaning of this clause, and how unbecoming it would be to speak with anything like dogmatism. Yet I may venture to suggest an explanation which seems to me the most probable. In the Hebrew Bible ■■■ (dor rendered “generation”) signifies “an age,” or “the men living in a particular age”; or, in an ethical sense “the entire body of those who are connected together by similarity of disposition,” or likeness of moral character. The Pol‘el verb ■■■■■, y’socheach (rendered in A.V. “declare,” and in R.V. “considereth”), signifies, “a thoughtful consideration,” “meditation,”31 but it means also “to speak,” “to complain,” “to lament,” and is used in at least one or two places to describe an exercise very much akin to prayer. As, for instance, Psa_55:17, “Evening, morning, and at noonday will I pray, and cry aloud: and He shall hear my voice.” The words “will I pray” (the R.V. has, “will I complain”) are a translation of this same verb.32 I would therefore translate “As for His generation—who (among them) poureth out a complaint?”

(i.e., at His treatment); or, “who among them uttereth a prayer?” (i.e., on His behalf). In either case there may be, as suggested already by Bishop Lowth, a prophetic allusion to the custom which prevailed among the Jews in the case of trials for life to call upon all who had anything to say in favour of the accused, to come and “declare it,” or “plead” on his behalf.

31 e.g. Psa_143:5, “I remember the days of old, I meditate (■■■■, ’socheach) on all Thy doings.”

32 As a noun it is found also in the inscription of Psalms 102:1-28—a prayer of the afflicted when he is overwhelmed and poureth out his complaint (■■■■, sicho) before Jehovah. The following striking passage from the Talmud (Sanhedrin fol. 43) may be cited by way of illustration. “There is a tradition: On the eve of the Sabbath and the Passover they hung Jesus. And the herald went forth before him for forty days crying, ‘Jesus goeth to be executed, because he has practiced sorcery and seduced Israel and estranged them from God. Let any one who can bring forward any justifying plea for him come and give information concerning it’; but no justifying plea was found for him, and so he was hung on the eve of the Sabbath and the Passover. Ulla said, ‘But doest thou think that he belongs to those for whom a justifying plea is to be sought? He was very seducer, and the All-merciful has said, Thou shalt not spare him, nor conceal him.’ But the case of Jesus stood differently because he stood near to the Kingdom”: or as others translate, “for his place was near those in power.” That this legend about Jesus has for its basis a well-known custom in the procedure of the Sanhedrin in trials for life, there is, I think, no doubt;33 for the principle by which they were supposed to be regulated was that “they sat to justify, and not to condemn; to save life, and not to destroy.” That this humane custom of calling upon those who knew anything in favour of the accused to come and declare it, was not observed in the case of Jesus of Nazareth, and that the proceedings at this hasty, mock trial before the Sanhedrin were in flagrant contradiction with the regulations which were supposed to govern their procedure, are facts of history, but there is this much truth in this Talmudic passage, that none dared to appear in His favour; and that in the great crisis when the Christ of God stood on His trial before the corrupt hostile Jewish hierarchy and the representatives of the then great Gentile world power, no one come forward with a justifying plea “on His behalf” for fear of the Jews. Yea, at that solemn moment, when the sword awoke to smite the Shepherd, the sheep were all scattered; and even His own disciples, who later on when convinced of His resurrection became as bod as lions, and willingly laid down their lives for Him, became demoralized with fear and forsook Him and fled.

33 Lowth thinks that our Lord referred to this custom in His words to the high priest in Joh_18:20-21, “I spoke openly to the world. . . . Why askest thou Me? ask them that have heard Me,” etc. And in a sense our Lord Jesus is still on His trial. Are we, His professed disciples, ready now to take our stand as His witnesses in the face of a hostile Jewish and Gentile world, and make our “justifying plea” on His behalf not only in word but by showing forth the power of His gospel over our own hearts and lives? But this has been somewhat of a digression. The next clause in this verse proclaims clearly the fact of His death, and the manner of it. “For He was cut off out of the land of the living.” It is by wicked and violent hands that this righteous Servant of Jehovah dies—“cut off” as it were, in the midst of His days. And then, finally, in repudiation once again of their previous false notion that it was for His own sin that He was “stricken and smitten of God” (Isa_53:4), the vicarious atoning character of His sufferings and death is yet again emphasized: “For the transgression of My people the stroke fell upon Him.”

Ewald, one of the chief fathers of the German rationalistic school of interpreters, who assigns a different (and earlier) authorship for Isaiah 53:1-12 than the rest of the writings of the Great Unknown,34 with which according to him, it has somehow become incorporated adduces the “frequent repetition of expressions and ideas which occur nowhere else” in the second part of Isaiah, as a ground of his theory; but these “frequent repetition,” as Dr. Alexander observes, so far from being rhetorical defects, or indications of another author, are used with an obvious design, namely, that of making it impossible for any ingenuity or learning to eliminate the doctrine of vicarious atonement from this passage by presenting it so often, and in forms so varied and yet still the same, that he who succeeds in expelling it from one place is compelled to meet it in another, Thus in this verse, which fills up the last particulars of the humiliation and sufferings of the Messiah even unto death, it is once again repeated that it was “for the transgression of My people” that the stroke fell upon Him.

34 The name with which the critics have christened their “second Isaiah.” As already pointed out in the introductory part, the term ■■■, ‘Ammi (“My people”), can only apply to Israel, and is one of the many internal marks which make it impossible to interpret the prophecy of the Jews as a nation, for the servant suffers and dies for the people, and therefore cannot be confounded with the people. Yes, the Good Shepherd laid down His life in the first instance for “My people”—the people which in a special sense He calls “His own,” and that is the chief ground of our hope and confidence for Israel as a nation, but, blessed be God! He died, not for the nation only, but that “He might also gather into one the children of God that were scattered abroad” (Joh_11:51-52); and since Christ came, in whom this prophecy received its minute fulfillment, millions from among all the Gentile nations, “who in time past were no people,” are now the people of God.35

35 No little controversy has centred round the last line of this verse. It is contended by Jewish controversialists that ■■■, lamo (the last word in the verse which I have rendered “upon Him”), has the plural suffix and ought to be translated “upon them,” and this is adduced by some in proof that it is a collective subject that the prophet speaks of in this chapter, namely, Israel But first Kimchi, who originated this argument, himself denied it. In his commentary he says: “I should like to ask the Nazarenes who explain the Parashah of Jesus, how the prophet could have said ‘to them’ (■■■) when he ought to have said ‘to him’ (■■), for ■■■ (lamo) is plural, being equivalent to ■■■ (la-hem).” But in his grammar he says: “■■ (mo) occurs as the affix of the 3rd person singular, as in Job_20:23; Job_22:2.” And again, “■■ (mo) is used both of many and of one.” There are also other instances in the Hebrew Bible besides these two passages in Job quoted by Kimchi where the poetic plural suffix ■■■ is used for the singular. We find it even in this second part of Isa_44:15—“he maketh it a graven image, and falleth down thereto” (■■■). But even if it be admitted that lamo is here a plural, there would be no ground for the assertion that the subject is a collective one. The translation would then be: “For He was cut off from the land of the living. For the transgression of My people—the stroke or punishment that should have fallen on them.” This is admitted in the New American Jewish translation of the Bible, which renders: “For the transgression of My people, to whom the stroke was due.”

(7) God’s Special Interposition in the Burial of His Servant The prophetic story of the Servant of Jehovah unfolded in this penitential confession moves on. From His life of vicarious suffering and atoning death we come to His burial.

“And they made (or ‘appointed’36) His grave with the wicked, And with a rich man in His death, Because He hath done no violence, Neither was deceit in His mouth.”

36 ■■■■, vayyitten (rendered in Authorized Version “He gave”), is, as generally admitted, used here, as in many other places in the Hebrew Bible, impersonally, as in the German, es gibt.

“The predictions concerning Christ in this chapter,” writes Moses Margoliouth, “are so numerous and so minute that they could not possibly have been dictated by any but by Him to whom all things are naked and open, and who worketh all things according to the counsel of His own will. The most insignificant circumstances connected with our Lord’s death are set forth with as nuch accuracy as those which are most important. If we reflect but for a moment on the peculiar circumstances which attended our Saviour’s last hours, we shall see reason to exclaim with Moses, ‘The secret things belong unto the Lord our God’; or with Paul, ‘O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!’ What could be more unlikely than that the Messiah should be crucified when crucifixion was not a Jewish but a Roman punishment? And yet David (in Psalms 22:1-31) predicted that such would be the case centuries before Rome was founded. Again, the fulfillment of David’s prediction was brought about by the Jews themselves contrary to their own law and tradition. The law expressly forbade to choose a heathen for their king, for the following are the words of Moses, whose disciples they averred they were: ‘Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee whom the Lord thy God shall choose; and from among thy brethren shalt thou set a king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother.’37

37 Deu_17:14-15 Their Rabbinic law pronounced the most severe anathema against any one who should deliver a Jew to a heathen magistrate. But in this case—that the word of God may come to pass—they regard neither their law nor their tradition, but deliver Jesus to the judgment of the Roman Procurator and call upon him to pronounce sentence. And when Pilate, half in remonstrance and half in mockery, said: “Shall I crucify your King?” they replied, “We have no king but Caesar.”

After the remarkable fulfillment of an extraordinary prophecy when Jesus was really put to death according to the Roman law, and was crucified between two malefactors, what more likely than that He should be treated as they were? But no: for when Pilate, yielding once more to the clamour of the Jews that the death of the victims should be hastened so that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath—“The soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other that were crucified with Him; but when they came to Jesus and saw that He was dead already, they broke not His legs. Howbeit one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and straightway there came out blood and water . . . These things came to pass that the scriptures might be fulfilled, a bone of Him shall not be broken—and again another scripture, They shall look upon Him whom they have pierced.” Again, “what more insignificant than that the soldiers should part His garments and cast lots for His vesture! Yet that too, with a great number of other incidents equally minute, was circumstantially predicted.”38 And so also was it with His burial.

38 Margoliouth. I have taken the liberty to abbreviate and slightly recast his remarks. The Jewish leaders, not content with the humiliations and sufferings they heaped upon Him; not appeased even by the cruel and shameful death to which at their will He was given over, followed Him with hatred even to the grave. “They appointed His grave with the wicked.”

“In all countries, I suppose, it has been the rule that persons put to death as criminals have had ignominious sepulture,” writes one. “Even after death shame has followed them, though after ages have ofttimes reversed the award and built monuments to them.” But this was especially the case among the Jews. This was the law of the time, as stated by Josephus.39 “He that blasphemeth God let him be stoned, and let him hang upon a tree all that day, and let him be buried in an ignominious and obscure manner.” Now, it was a blasphemer that they condemned Him in their ignorance and blindness, and what more likely than that as He died with criminals He should also be buried with them? But—“with a rich man (He was) in His death.”40 39 Antiquities, 4.8.6.

40 The word for death is in the plural, and some have argued that it should be rendered, “in His deaths,” and have adduced it as yet another proof that the subject of the prophecy is a collective one. But there is no basis for this assertion, for first, if a plurality of persons were intended, it is the plural suffix which would be required, and this is here expressed by the singular. “There is no ground,” as Pusey correctly observes, “to lay any emphasis on the plural in ■■■■, mothay ‘death,’ than ■■■■, chayyim ‘life’ (in the preceding verse), which is also in the plural—the singular for ‘life’ not being used in Hebrew. Many nouns in Hebrew are used in the plural where we Westerns could hardly account for it. The plural is used of a condition as a period of life, or a condition of body. There is then no reason why ■■■■, ‘deaths,’ if there is any stress on the plural, should not mean ‘the state of death,’ as ■■■■, chayyim (the plural for ‘life,’ the state of life).” In Eze_28:10 “deaths” is certainly used “for the death of one.” Delitzsch says the plural is used of a violent death, the very pain of which makes it like dying again and again.

Modern scholars have sought to explain the word ■■■■, ‘ashir, as being a synonymous parallel to ■■■■■, r’sha’im (“wicked”), in the previous clause. This explanation is, as far as I can trace it, first mentioned by Rabbi Sh’lomoh ben Melekh of Fez in his Mikhlol Yophi (about 1500 A.D.), where he says, “’Ashir (rich) is considered by Rabbi Yonah to be equivalent to rasha, ‘wicked’”; but he himself adds that “it is not allowable to abandon the usual signification ‘rich’ merely on account of the parallel clause.” This explanation, which Franz Delitzsch properly says, is “untenable,” has unfortunately been adopted by Luther, Calvin, and Gesenius, who regard the word “rich” here as suggesting the necessary idea of “one who sets his heart upon his wealth, or puts his trust in it,” or makes an unlawful use of it. But this is so arbitrary that some of the later writers abandon the Hebrew usage altogether, and profess to derive the sense “wicked” from an Arabic root. But this, as Dr. Alexander truly says, “is doubly untenable; first, because the Hebrew usage cannot be put aside for an Arabic analogy without extreme necessity, which does not here exist; and secondly, because the best authorities (as Delitzsch also shows) find no such meaning in the particular Arabic word itself.”41

41 Ewald, Hoffmann, Bottcher, etc., have tried their hands at altering the original word so as to produce a synonymous parallelism to “wicked,” but this is a violent method of handling the sacred text, especially when there is absolutely no necessity for it.

It may seem surprising that this forced imposition of a new and foreign meaning on a word so familiar should be thus insisted on. “Luther and Calvin, no doubt, simply followed the rabbinical tradition; but the latter writers have a deeper motive for pursuing a course which, in other circumstances, they would boldly charge upon the Reformer’s ignorance of Hebrew. That motive is the wish to do away with the remarkable coincidence between the circumstances of our Saviour’s

burial and the language of this verse, as it has been commonly understood since Capellus." (Alexander) And this "remarkable coincidence" is truly wonderful, for, in the words of Delitzsch, "if we reflect that the Jewish rulers would have given to Jesus the same dishonourable burial as to the two thieves, but that the Roman authorities handed over the body to Joseph the Arimathean, a 'rich man' (Mat_27:57), who placed it in the sepulchre in his own garden, we see an agreement at once between the gospel history and the prophetic words, which could only be the work of the God of both the prophecy and its fulfillment, inasmuch as no suspicion could possibly arise of there having been any human design of bringing the former into conformity with the latter." And the reason assigned for this honourable burial, which was so different from what had been planned, or "appointed" for Him by His enemies, is that—"He hath done no violence, neither was deceit found in His mouth"—which is yet another reiteration of the absolute innocence of His outward actions and of the inward purity and gentleness of His character. It was vicarious sufferings that He endured; it was a death of atonement for others that He died; but immediately those sufferings were ended and that death accomplished, His humiliation was ended, and no further indignity to His blessed person could be permitted. And so, already, in His burial, He was "separated from sinners," and was laid in the tomb of the "rich man of Arimathea, wherein never man before was laid."42

42 Luk_23:53

5.09. Chapter 3 - The Resurrection and Future Glory of the Servant of Jehovah

Chapter 3 The Resurrection and Future Glory of the Servant of Jehovah With Isaiah 53:10 begins the account of the Messiah's exaltation and glory. But first it is once more reiterated and emphasized that they were not mere chance experiences which the Servant of Jehovah passed through. Nor was it merely that wicked men were allowed to work out the evil of their hearts in the sufferings and humiliations which they were permitted to heap upon Him, and thus make manifest by their treatment of "the Holy One" their enmity towards God.

No: "the supreme causa efficiens" as Delitzsch expresses it, was God, "who made the sin of men subservient to His pleasure, His will, and predetermined counsel."

"Yet it pleased Jehovah to bruise (■■■■, dakk'o, literally 'to crush') Him; He hath put Him to grief."1

1 ■■■■, he'cheli, as is generally admitted by scholars, is the hiphil of ■■■, chalah. Both the verbs "to bruise," or "crush," and "to put to grief," or "afflict with sickness," go back to Isa_53:4-5 : "He hath borne our griefs (or, 'sicknesses'), and "He was bruised (or, 'crushed'), for our iniquities." This is the confession of the penitents whose eyes are now opened to see the true meaning of it all. He who "had done no violence nor was deceit found in His mouth," "whose actions were invariably prompted by pure love, and whose speech consisted of unclouded sincerity and truth," was yet "crushed" and put to grief by Jehovah. "Here is not only the mystery of suffering innocence; but of innocence suffering at the hands of righteousness and perfect love." Yes, mystery of mysteries; and apart from the explanation He Himself gives of it, it is the most inexplicable thing in God's moral government. But it is fully explained, not only in all that preceded in this chapter, but by the great purpose of redemption formed by the triune God before the world was founded, and which is progressively unfolded in the pages of the Old and New Testaments. In this light of God's own revelation the sufferings of the Messiah in which the good pleasure of God's will was accomplished, become a mystery of light in which there is no darkness at all. We see that this pleasure of Jehovah in the sufferings of the Righteous One, to use the words of another, "does not proceed from caprice, but that He acted righteously as well as sovereignly in what He did.

"Not only did the Lord bruise Him, but it was the 'good pleasure of His will' to do so. He who has no pleasure in the death of the wicked was pleased to put His righteous Servant to grief—not, of course, because the death-agony was a pleasure to look upon, but as means to the fulfillment of a great purpose.

"Even a noble-minded man finds pleasure in contemplating heroic and self-sacrificing love in others, to accomplish glorious ends. We look back, for example, on our martyrs, who suffered cruel death for the Gospel's sake; we forget the physical torture they endured; or rather it ceases to be a horror in our eyes, and becomes a glory; we read of their sufferings with uplifted and joyful hearts, thanking God who gave such grace to men. And even so, we cannot help thinking, the

Lord, whose pity is like unto a father's pity, had pleasure in the self-sacrifice of His Servant; yea, had pleasure in the very appointment which issued in the self-sacrifice. And if we add to this—as exhibited in what follows—the results which the sufferings achieved, in their nature, blissfulness, magnitude, and perpetuity, we shall understand how it comes to be said, 'Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him: He did put Him to grief.'"2

2 Culross

These blessed results the spirit of prophecy in the mouth of the penitent confessors now proceeds to enumerate, after emphasizing yet again that they are all conditioned on His sufferings and death.

"If (or 'when'), His soul shall make an offering for sin." The word ■■■■, tasim ("shall make"), is either second person masculine, in which case the rendering would be as in the Authorized and Revised Versions, "When Thou (i.e., God) shalt make His soul an offering for sin," or third person feminine, "When His soul shall make an offering," which is the rendering accepted in the margin and by most modern scholars. The latter translation is preferable, as Jehovah is nowhere else addressed in this chapter. In either case the Servant of Jehovah gives His life as an offering for the sin of others and takes on Himself the penalty which their guilt had incurred. "Language could not more simply and unequivocally declare the significance of His death." The word rendered "offering for sin" ■■■, 'asham, really means "trespass," but just as the word ■■■■, chattath, which is used for "sin offering," "denotes first the sin, then the punishment of the sin, and the expiation of the sin, and hence the sacrifice which cancels the sin; so 'asham signifies first the guilt or debt, then the compensation of penance, and hence the sacrifice which discharges the debt or guilt and sets the man free" There was much in common between the trespass offering and the "sin offering." Both are called kodesh kodashim, "most holy",3 and as regards the manner in which the sacrifice was to be slain, and as to which portions were to be burnt on the altar, and what parts assigned to the priests, there was "one law for them both."4 3 Lev_6:17; Lev_14:13

4 Lev_7:7

Yet there were differences between the chattath ("sin offering") and the 'asham ("trespass offering"), and in their moral and typical significance each one of the sacrifices set forth a distinctive aspect of the great work of atonement which was to be accomplished by the Messiah5 and the blessed results accruing therefrom to sinful men. On the whole, it is correct to say with Dr. Culross, that while the sin offering looked to the sinful state of the offerer, the trespass offering was appointed to meet actual transgressions, the fruit of the sinful state. The sin offering set forth propitiation, the trespass offering set forth satisfaction. It was brought by the transgressor "to make amends for the harm that he hath done." "It symbolized rights violated and compensation rendered, debt contracted and satisfaction made." But whether it be a sin offering or a trespass offering it had to be slain, and its blood shed before it could become a sacrifice.

5 "Every species of sacrifice had its own primary idea. The fundamental idea of the 'olah ("burnt offering") was oblatio, or the offering of worship; that of the sh'lamim ("peace offering") conciliatio, or the knitting of fellowship; that of the minchah ("meat offering") donatio, or sanctifying consecration; that of the chattath ("sin offering") expiatio, or atonement; that of the 'asham ("trespass offering") mulcta (satisfactio), or a compensatory payment. The self-sacrifice of the

Servant of Jehovah may be presented under all these points of view. It is the complete antitype, the truth, the object, and the end of all the sacrifices." (Franz Delitzsch)

I. The first of the blessed results of Messiah's vicarious sufferings and atoning death which are enumerated in Isa_53:10 is expressed in the two Hebrew words, ■■■ ■■■■, yir'eh zera', "He shall see His (or more literally 'a') seed (or 'posterity')." Jewish controversialists, supported by some Gentile rationalistic writers, have based a quibble on this clause. Taking zera', "seed," in its literal sense as denoting natural offspring, they have argued that this prophecy cannot apply to Jesus of Nazareth, who had no natural progeny, overlooking the fact that this "seed" (like the other fruits of His atoning Passion set forth in the last three verses of this prophecy) [Isaiah 53:10-12] follows His death, on which it is conditioned, and therefore cannot be taken in a literal sense.6 No; the Messiah's "seed," of which the spirit of prophecy speaks here, is the glorious spiritual progeny which He has begotten with "the travail of His soul," and the new family which He came to found, and which sprang, so to say, at His resurrection out of His empty tomb, is the new "seed of Israel," or the Household of Faith. This spiritual "seed"—the "bringing of many sons unto glory"7—was the chief joy which was set before Him, for the sake of which He endured the cross, despising the shame. Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth along; but if it die, it beareth much fruit; and the Church of Christ, consisting of the multitude of the redeemed out of all nations, Jew and Gentile—which was born when He died, and which looks back to Him as the source of its life and the origin of its being—is the continuous living witness to this truth.

6 ■■■, zera', is again and again used in the Hebrew Scriptures in a figurative sense of spiritual seed. It is used also in this sense of spiritual "seed," or disciples, in post-Biblical Rabbinical writings.

7 Heb_2:10 The parallel scripture to Isaiah 53:1-12 is Psalms 22:1-31. There also the sufferings of the Messiah are minutely foretold in advance as well as the glory which should follow. And among the blessed results which are there set forth as following from His death is, "A seed (zera') shall serve Him";8 which shows that it is not a literal but a spiritual seed, namely, His disciples, or followers, who also "serve" Him.

8 Psa_22:30

II. "He shall prolong His days." How wonderful, how seemingly paradoxical! He "pours out His soul unto death," as a trespass offering; He is "cut off from the land of the living"; is dead and buried, and yet he shall live and have continuance of days!

How is it possible? The answer to this question is that the Messiah was not only to die for our sins but must rise again from the dead "according to the Scriptures." And in light of the glorious fulfillment all these seeming paradoxes in the Old Testament in reference to the person and mission of the Messiah are cleared up. Our Lord Jesus, who was delivered up for our offences, was raised again for our justification, and ascended into heaven, where He now sitteth at the right hand of God, whence His word of encouragement and assurance comes to His disciples; "Fear not, I am the First and the Last, and the Living One; and I became dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of death and of Hades."9

9 Rev_1:17-18 This prediction that Messiah shall "prolong His days" after having died is in accord also with what we read in other Scriptures, as for instance Psa_16:10, "Thou wilt not leave my soul

in (or ‘to’) Sheol neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption”; and Psa_21:4, “He asked life for Thee, Thou gavest it Him, even length of days for ever and ever.” which Jonathan in his Targum, and Kimchi in his Commentary, themselves explain that the expression ’orekh yamim, “length of days” refers to “the life of the world to come,” and so in fact it must be, since it is for ever and ever.

III. “And the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in His hand” i.e., God’s will shall be fully accomplished by Him: the mission on which He is sent He shall triumphantly carry through. But if we want to know more particularly what this “pleasure of Jehovah” is, which is thus to be brought to prosperous issue “in His hand,” we find the answer in the commission entrusted to the perfect Servant of Jehovah as set forth in his second part of Isaiah. Let me quote only two or three passages from preceding chapters.

“Behold My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen, in whom My soul delighteth: I have put My Spirit upon Him, He shall bring forth judgment (or ‘justice’) to the nations. . . . I Jehovah have called Thee in righteousness, and will hold Thy right hand, and will keep Thee and give Thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.” “And now, saith Jehovah that formed Me from the womb to be His Servant, to bring Jacob again to Him, and that Israel be gathered unto Him: . . . yea, He saith, It is too light a thing that Thou shouldest be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give Thee for a light to the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be My salvation unto the end of the earth.”10 10 Isa_42:1-7; Isa_49:5-6 This then, in brief, is the pleasure of Jehovah which shall prosper in His hand, or be brought to a triumphant accomplishment through His mediation, namely, the regathering of Israel, the bringing back of Jacob, not only to his land but into new covenant relationship with God, of which He Himself will be the bond; the illumination of the Gentile world with the light of the knowledge of the true and living God; the establishing of judgment and justice in the earth; the deliverance of men from spiritual blindness and the bondage of sin, and the bringing near of God’s salvation to all men throughout the whole world, even “unto the end of the earth.” And to this we must add words from the New Testament which open up yet more illimitable vistas of this “good pleasure” of Jehovah which is to be realized in and through the mediation of the Messiah. “For it was the good pleasure of the Father,” writes the Apostle Paul, “that in Him should all the fullness dwell; and through Him to reconcile all things unto Himself, having made peace through the blood of the cross . . . whether things upon the earth or things in heaven.” And again, “Making known unto us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Him unto a dispensation of the fullness of times, to sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens, and the things upon the earth . . . according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His will.”11 “Glorious consummation of redemption,” exclaims one, “which is also the manifestation in its fullness of the Divine Love!”

11 Col_1:19-20; Eph_1:9-11

5.10. Chapter 4 - Jehovah's Final Word Concerning His Servant--The glorious Award for His...

Chapter 4 Jehovah’s Final Word Concerning His Servant—The Glorious Award for His Sufferings In the last two verses “the prophecy leaves the standpoint of Israel’s retrospective acknowledgment of the long-rejected Servant of Jehovah, and becomes once more the prophetic organ of God Himself, who acknowledges the Servant as His own.”1 In this climax God puts, so to say, His own seal to the penitent confession of repentant Israel, and sets forth once again the glorious results of the vicarious sufferings and atoning death of His righteous Servant.

1 Delitzsch

“He shall see of the travail of His soul” (or, more literally, ‘because,’ or, ‘in consequence of the “toil,” or, “labour” of His soul’), He shall see and be satisfied.” This “travail of soul” includes, as has been well observed, “all the toil, suffering, and sorrow through which He came, and has been outlined, if not unfolded, in the previous part of the prophecy. It culminated when He was cut off out of the land of the living, and His soul was made an offering for sin, accomplishing what the Levitical sacrifices only symbolized. No accumulation of mere bodily sufferings could satisfy these expressions. The ‘travail’ is that of the soul; it has its seat within, and is such as might find voice in those words reported from Gethsemane, ‘My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death,’ or in those other words reported from the cross, ‘My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?’ It is what the Greek litany calls ‘unknown agonies.’”2

2 Culross But what is it that He shall see, i.e., look upon with delight, and be abundantly satisfied?3 For answer we have, I believe, to go back to the verse which immediately precedes as well as to what follows.

3 The verb ■■■■, yisba‘, from ■■■, sabha‘, means not only to be contented, but to be filled, or abundantly supplied. It stands for the fullest realization of expectation, or gratification of any particular desire.

Abarbanel, followed by some Christian commentators, paraphrases, “He shall see, i.e., His seed; He shall be satisfied, i.e., with length of days.” That is true, but it goes beyond and includes the full and final accomplishment of all “the pleasure of Jehovah.” In part this is already being realized. He who for us men and our salvation endured agony and shame, and poured out His soul unto death, is now seated at the right hand of God, being endowed as the Son of Man with “length of days for ever and ever,” and everywhere He beholds with joy “a seed that serveth Him.”

Then, apart also from the multitude which no man can number, who have been redeemed by His precious blood and who out of love for Him have sought to do the will of His Father in heaven, the indirect influences of His gospel in almost all parts of the earth have been great and wonderful. But this is not all for which Christ suffered and died. This is not all the “pleasure of Jehovah,” which He came to accomplish. It is only when Redemption is fully completed that “He shall see” a glorious

completed church “without spot or wrinkle”; a restored and converted Israel which shall bear upon itself the inscription “Holiness unto Jehovah,” and be “the priests of Jehovah” and the willing “ministers” of God in diffusing the blessings of their Messiah’s gospel among all nations; a world which shall be “filled with the knowledge of God as the waters cover the sea”; and a new heaven and a new earth wherein shall dwell righteousness for evermore. Yes, He shall see all this as the outcome of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied.

One of the most blessed results of the “travail of his soul,” and that which at the same time forms no little part of the “satisfaction” for all the sufferings which He endured, is the prerogative with which He is endowed of removing guilt and imparting righteousness to those who, through faith in Him, seek communion with God.

“By His knowledge shall My righteous Servant justify many” or, to give a more literal rendering of the words in the order in which they stand in the Hebrew, “By His knowledge shall make righteous (or, ‘bring righteousness’) the Righteous One (‘My Servant’) many.”

It cannot be positively stated whether ■■■■■, bedha‘to (“by His knowledge”), is to be understood in a subjective sense of the Servant of Jehovah, i.e., “according to His knowledge,” or objectively, “by the knowledge of Him.” Grammatically it might be rendered either way, but it is correct to say with Delitzsch (who himself favours the subjective view) that nearly all the commentators who understand by the Servant of Jehovah the divine Redeemer, give preference to the latter of the two explanations, namely, by the knowledge of Him on the part of others. And this, it seems to me, is the more satisfactory view. The kind of “knowledge” expressed in the word is not only that which has reference to understanding with the mind, but a practical, experimental knowledge4—a spiritual heart acquaintance with Him, a personal appropriation by a living faith of His redeeming work for sinners—such a “knowledge,” for instance, as is implied in the words of Christ, “This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou didst send,” or, in the prayer of the Apostle, “That I might know Him and the power of His resurrection.”

4 ■■■, dha‘ath, stands in the Bible for experimental knowledge. The construction of the phrase ■■■■ ■■■■, Tsaddiq ’abhdi, is unusual, and is intended to emphasize the unique character of the Servant of Jehovah and to explain in part how it is that He is the bringer of righteousness to others.

“It is in the Hebrew language as a rule, that the adjective should be placed after the substantive to which it belongs. But in the passage before us that rule is transgressed. ‘Righteous’ is not placed after ‘Servant,’ but stands before it, and that without the article. The omission of the article before words which are, nevertheless, definite, indicates both in Hebrew and Greek that the person or thing denoted is to be regarded as standing in a sphere of its own—singular, isolated, or pre-eminent. So it is here. We must translate ‘One that is righteous,’ or ‘the Righteous One.’ The omission of the article indicates that the person thus spoken of held in earth a position of righteousness that was singular and isolated, and that there was none like it. the peculiar position of the word ‘righteous’ preceding, and not following its substantive, is intended to give especial prominence to the thought it expresses. Our minds are intended to rest on the righteousness of the Righteous One as the procuring cause of the blessing spoken of in this verse. In virtue of having been the Righteous One, He becomes the causer, or bringer of righteousness to His believing people.

“Yet whilst prominence is thus given to the great fact of His righteousness, it is important also to observe that the words ‘My Servant’ are added. . . .

“It is not in virtue of that essential righteousness that pertains to Him as God—one with the Father and the Holy Ghost—that He brings to us righteousness. The righteousness by which we are constituted righteous is a service, an obedience which He became man in order to render, and which He commenced and finished in the earth. It commenced when He said, ‘Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God.’ It terminated when He had become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, and said, ‘It is finished.’ It is true, indeed, that unless He had been one to whom righteousness essentially belonged, He could not have wrought out the righteousness which He did work out as the Servant. The service of that Servant had in it a superhuman excellency, for that Servant was Immanuel—God manifest in the flesh.”5

5 B. W. Newton The word ■■■■■, yatsdiq, followed as it is by the preposition ■, le, ought, as I have already suggested, to be rendered “shall cause,” or, “bring righteousness.” The ■■■■, rabbim (“many”), to whom He thus brings righteousness, or constitutes righteous, is the mass of mankind, or all—not only in Israel, but amongst the nations also—who shall respond to His call, and by a living faith enter into an acquaintance with Him. It is probable that this passage was in the mind of our Saviour when, on the night of His betrayal, He took the cup and said to His disciples, “This is my blood of the New Covenant which is poured out for many” (το περι πολλων),6 and it is almost certain that it was in the mind of the Apostle Paul when writing Rom_5:12-21, which is an inspired unfolding and application of the same doctrine of substitution which is set forth in this great Old Testament prophecy. After writing of the consequence of Adam’s transgression to the whole of mankind, he says: “But not as the trespass, so also is the free gift. For if by the trespass of the one the many be dead, much more did the grace of God, and the gift by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abound unto many, . . . For as through the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One shall the many (οι τολλοι), be made righteous.” To repeat, it is the righteousness of faith which is the consequence of justification on the ground of the atoning work of the Messiah which is set forth in this passage, yet those are not altogether wrong who maintain that it includes also that “righteousness of life which springs by an inward necessity out of those sanctifying powers that are bound up with the atoning work which we have made our own.”7 For though this is not the ground of our acceptance before God, it is yet important to remember that the doctrine of justification does not stand alone in the Bible, and that God does not constitute any one righteous to whom He does not also impart the power to be righteous. We are justified that we may also be sanctified and glorified, and the outward seal of the true followers of Christ is that they “depart from iniquity” and “walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” But to return to our immediate context. “Because our righteousness has its roots in the forgiveness of sins as an absolutely unmerited gift of grace without works, the prophecy returns once more from the justifying work on the Servant of Jehovah to His sin-expunging work as the basis of all righteousness.”

6 Mat_26:28

7 Delitzsch

“And their iniquities He shall bear.” The introduction of the pronoun, as Dr. Alexander observes, makes a virtual antithesis suggesting the idea of exchange or mutual substitution. They shall

receive His righteousness, and He shall bear the heavy burden8 of their iniquities. “From this doctrine the heart that is self-righteous, hard, and proud may turn scornfully away—as Naaman did when told to dip seven times in Jordan; but to the man who knows himself to be a ruined and helpless sinner, and who has been made to sigh for reconcilement and peace with God, the news of grace to the ill-deserving manifested in righteousness will be welcome beyond all thought, and mighty to produce newness of life.”9

8 The thought expressed in ■■■■, yisbol—“shall bear”—is that of pressure as of a heavy burden. It is the future of the same verb as is rendered “carried” in Isa_53:4.

9 Culross

Before we pass on to the last verse let me quote also a note by Delitzsch on this last clause: “This yisbol (He shall bear),” he says, “which stands along with future verbs, and being also future itself, refers to something to be done by the Servant of Jehovah after the completion of the work to which He is called in this life, and denotes the continued operation of His ‘bearing,’ or ‘carrying’ (Isa_53:4) through His own active mediation, His continued lading of our trespasses upon Himself is merely the constant pressure and presentation of His atonement which has been offered once for all. The dead yet living One, because of His one self-sacrifice, is an eternal Priest, who now lives to distribute the blessings that He has acquitted.” The last verse takes us back, as it were, to the very beginning of this prophecy (Isa_52:13-15), and sets forth again the personal exaltation of the One who has been despised and rejected of men, and the victor’s prize, which He shall receive on His triumphant emergence from the conflict with the powers of darkness.

“Therefore will I divide (or ‘allot’) to Him a portion among (or ‘in’) the many (or ‘great’), and with the strong shall He divide the spoil.”10 The award is bestowed upon Him by Jehovah’s own hand—“I will divide Him a portion”—and the prize is glorious beyond conception, for the rabbim, “many,” who form His portion include not only “His own” nation, whom He saves and blesses, and who shall yet render Him such loyal devotion and service as the world has not known, but extends beyond the bounds of Israel to the Gentile nations.

10 The Septuagint and Vulgate, followed by the Fathers and many modern commentators, rendered ■■■■■ (bharabbim), among the many, and ■■■■■■■■■ (’eth-atsumim), with the strong, as accusatives, and explain “the great” and “the strong” as constituting the spoil given to the Servant of Jehovah. But the more natural construction of the words is that given in the English versions. ■ (be) occurs nowhere else as a connective of this verb with its object, and the particle ■■ (’eth) must mean with, as it is indeed rendered in this same verse, where it occurs again, as well as in the ninth verse.

“What is meant by His having His portion among the rabbim (the ‘many,’ or ‘great’)” observes Delitzsch, “is clearly seen from such passages as Isa_52:15 and Isa_49:7, according to which the great ones of the earth will be brought to do homage to Him, or, at all events, to submit to Him.” But this is only a mere outline. For the full extent of His “portion” as the Son of David and Son of Man, who, in order to carry out the pleasure of Jehovah in the redemption of the world, took upon Himself the form of a servant, we have to go to a Scripture like the 2nd Psalm: “Ask of Me, and I will give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession”; or Psalms 72:1-20 :

“He shall have dominion also from sea to sea. And from the River unto the ends of the earth.

They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before Him; And His enemies shall lick the dust.

Yea, all kings shall fall down before Him:

All nations shall serve Him.” But while His portion is “divided” or allotted to Him of God, He Himself “divides spoil” “with” or “among” the strong. These ■■■■■■ (atsumim, “strong” or “mighty ones”) are those who flock to His banner and go forth with Him to the conflict against the powers of darkness. They are those of whom we read in Psalms 110:3. “Thy people offer themselves willingly (or ‘are all willingness,’ or ‘thorough devotion’) in the day of Thy power.” They are those whom the beloved John beheld in vision as “the armies of heaven,” following in His train as He rides forth in glorious majesty, conquering and to conquer, “riding upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and pure.”11

11 Rev_19:14 With these He condescends to share His triumph and to divide the spoil taken from the enemy by making them partners with Himself in His kingdom and glory, even as they were sharers in His sufferings. And truly He and no one else is worthy to be thus exalted, and deserves the glorious award which God bestows upon Him. This is emphasized in the recapitulation of His peerless merit in the last words of this wonderful prophecy.

“Because He poured out His soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. And He (Himself) bore the sin of many. And He made intercession for the transgressors.” The phrase ■■■ ■■■, tachath ’asher, expresses more distinctly than the English rendering “because” the idea of compensation or reward. It has been translated by some “instead of,” or “in return for that, i.e., the glorious portion or allotment which is divided to Him by the Father is ‘in return’ for the great Redemption which He was accomplished with His own life’s blood. the word ■■■■, he‘erah (rendered ‘poured out’), means ‘to strip,’ ‘lay bare,’ ‘empty,’ or to ‘pour clean out,’ even to the very last remnant.”12 And it was “His soul,” which stands here for His life-blood, which He thus completely emptied out “unto death.”

12 Delitzsch And although all this was in accord with the pre-determinate counsel of God, He did it voluntarily, for this also is implied in the original verb, which accords again with His own word, which has already been quoted: “Therefore doth My Ford love Me, because I lay down My life. . . . No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down Myself,” And not only did He thus voluntarily pour out His soul unto death as an atonement for sinners, but “He was numbered” (or, as Delitzsch, Hengstenberg, and others more properly translate the reflexive verb ■■■■, nimnah, ‘He suffered Himself, i.e., voluntarily, to be numbered, or ‘reckoned’) with transgressors,” ■■■■■, posh‘im—that is, not only ordinary sinners, such as all men are, but criminals—open transgressors of the laws of God and of man, with whom to be associated would be a great humiliation for ordinary men, and how much more to the “Holy One.” To the believer it is precious and interesting to remember that this clause formed one of the direct quotations from this chapter made by our Lord Jesus Himself just before His betrayal and crucifixion. “This which is written,” He said, “must be fulfilled in Me, And He was reckoned among transgressors.”13 It was, indeed, as another writer observes, “one of those remarkable coincidences which were brought about by Providence between the prophecies and the circumstances of our Saviour’s passion”14 that the Christ should have been crucified between “two thieves” (or, more literally, “robbers”), but this one striking

incident did not exhaust the scope of the prophetic word.

13 Luk_22:37 14 J. A. Alexander

He suffered Himself also to be reckoned with transgressors “in the judgment of His countrymen, and in the unjust judgment (or, ‘sentence’) by which He was delivered up to death as a wicked apostate and transgressor of the law.”15 “And He”—the pronoun is emphatic—“He Himself bare the sin of many”—blessed words which are again and again joyously echoed in the New Testament, as, for instance, in 1Pe_2:24, “Who His own self bare” (or, “carried up”) “our sins in His own body upon the tree, that we, having died unto sin, might live unto righteousness”; and Heb_9:26-28, where there is also an underlying allusion to the great Old Testament prophecy: “But now once at the end of the ages hath He been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And inasmuch as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after death the judgment; so Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for Him unto salvation.”

15 Delitzsch

Yes, He Himself, the Holy One, who knew no sin, bare our sin right “up to the tree,” and “was made sin for us,” enduring the penalty due to it on our behalf, that we might for ever be freed from the accursed load and “become the righteousness of God in Him.” The whole prophetic picture of the sufferings of the Messiah and of the glory that should follow closes with a brief but pregnant reference to His priestly function:

“And He made (or ‘maketh’) intercession for the transgressors.” The verb ■■■■■, yaphgia‘ (“made intercession”), is an instance of the imperfect or indefinite future, and expresses a work begun, but not yet ended. Its most striking fulfillment, as Delitzsch observes, was the prayer of the crucified Saviour, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” But this work of intercession which He began on the cross he still continues at the right hand of God, where He is now seated, a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel and the forgiveness of sins. Wherefore also He is able to save to the uttermost (or “completely,” “all along”) them that draw near unto God through Him, “seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.” Hence also the triumphant challenge of the Apostle, “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is He that condemneth? It is Christ Jesus that died, yea, rather that was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.” But remember, dear Christian reader, that He who is now our Advocate (or blessed Paraclete) with the Father, by whose unceasing priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary our life of fellowship with God is maintained, bears also “His own” nation Israel on His heart. It was for them primarily that He prayed on the cross. And now at God’s right hand He still pleads for them, “For Zion’s sake will I not hold My peace” He says, “and for Jerusalem’s sake will I not rest, until her righteousness go forth as brightness and her salvation as a lamp that burneth”—because it is not till then that the glory of Jehovah shall fill this earth as the waters cover the sea, and our Lord Jesus Christ shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. Will you not for love of Him share in this ministry of intercession for the people which, in spite of all their sins and apostasies, are still beloved for the fathers’ sakes, and whose receiving again into God’s favour will be as life from the dead to the whole world?

“I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem; they shall never hold their peace day nor night. Ye that are Jehovah’s remembrancers, take ye no rest, and give Him no rest till He establish and till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.”

5.11. APPENDIX

APPENDIX The Suffering Messiah of the Synagogue1

1 After the MS. of “An Exposition of Isaiah 53” was already completed I asked my friend and follow-worker in the Hebrew Christian Testimony to Israel, Mr. J. I. Landsman, to copy for me a few of the most striking passages from the Talmud and Midrashim which speak of a suffering Messiah, thinking it might interest Christian readers if they were added as an appendix.

Mr. Landsman has kindly done more than I asked, for some of the passages are, as well be observed, already either quoted or alluded to in the first part of this book.

I think it well, however, to give the whole of his collection here, as these extracts (most of which he has translated from the original sources) represent in orderly form the different sections of Rabbinic literature, and follow in chronological sequence. THE TARGUM The oldest testimony we possess that Isaiah 53:1-12 was by the Synagogue applied to the Messiah is found in the Targum on the Prophets ascribed to Jonathan ben Uzziel (first century, A.D.). Although the Targum in the form we now possess it has been edited in Babylonia in the fourth century A.D., yet there is no doubt that the material it contains is derived from sources more ancient, and that as a whole it is of Palestinian origin. The paraphrase—for it is not a literal translation—of the chapter begins with the words:

“Behold my servant, the Messiah, shall prosper; He shall be high, and increase, and be exceedingly strong.” This is almost a literal translation. But in what follows the Targum, though ascribing to the Messiah a central place in Israel’s redemption, contrives by a method singularly strange to us to make Israel the real sufferer, naturally at the hands of the Gentiles, but for her own sins, the modern Jewish idea of Israel suffering for the sins of the nations being entirely foreign to the Targum. In this way the Targum succeeds in purging the Messiah from any taint of personal suffering and humiliation. Isa_53:3-4 are therefore thus paraphrased:

3. “Then He will become despised (i.e., by the nations). and will cut off the glory of all the kingdoms; they (Israel) will be prostrate and mourning, like a man of pains and like one destined to sickness; and as though the presence of the Shekhinah had been withdrawn from us, they will be despised, and esteemed not.

4. “Then for our sins He will pray, and our iniquities will for His sake be forgiven, although we were accounted stricken, smitten from before the Lord, and afflicted.” The Targum pictures the Messiah as a man of an imposing, holy and awe-inspiring appearance (Isa_53:2). He makes intercession for the sins of His people, and they are forgiven for His sake (Isa_53:4, Isa_53:6, Isa_53:11-12). His prayers are answered, and before opening His mouth He is accepted (Isa_53:7). He is a great teacher. By His wisdom He holds the guilty free from guilt, makes the rebellious subject to the Law (Isa_53:11-12); by His instruction peace increases upon His people, and on account of its devotion to His words it obtains forgiveness of sin (Isa_53:5). From subjection to the nations, from chastisement and punishment, He delivers the souls of His people (Isa_53:8, Isa_53:11), builds

the Holy Place (Isa_53:5), and wondrous things are done to Isaiah in His days (Isa_53:8). He overthrows the kingdoms of the nations (Isa_53:3), scatters many peoples (Isa_52:15), the mighty of the peoples He delivers like sheep to the slaughter (Isa_53:7), causes the dominion of the Gentiles to pass away from the land of Israel, and transfers on them the sins Israel had committed (Isa_53:8), Israel looking on the punishment of those that hated her, and is satisfied with the spoils of their kings (Isa_53:11). But the Messiah is also judge of His own people He delivers the wicked to Gehenna, and those who are rich in possessions into the death of utter destruction (Isa_53:11). But the Messiah is also judge of His own people. He delivers the wicked to Gehenna, and those who are rich in possessions into the death of utter destruction (Isa_53:9). With the advent of the Messiah a glorious time dawns for Israel. The purified remnant looks on the kingdom of the Messiah, their sons and daughters multiply, they prolong their days, and those who perform the Law of the Lord prosper in His good pleasure (Isa_53:10). The righteous grow up before Him like blooming shoots, and like a tree which sends forth its roots to streams of water they increase—a holy generation in the land that was in need of Him (Isa_53:2).

Thus the Targum succeeded in reading into this chapter the whole Jewish Messianic hope, in which there was no place for a suffering Messiah. the words, “because He delivered up His soul to death,” in Isa_53:12, do not mean that the Messiah actually died, but rather, that He for the sake of His people, like Moses of old, was ready to give His life. But the Targum, in spite of the high esteem in which it was held, found no imitators. Its method was too drastic, and the violence done to the sacred text too apparent to be imitated. We find, therefore, in early Rabbinic literature not a few passages which speak of a suffering Messiah; but they all belong to the time after the Mishna was edited, i.e., after 200 A.D. THE TALMUD 1. The Name of the Messiah In the Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 98b, we read: “The Messiah—what is His name? . . . The Rabbis say, The leprous one of the house of Rabbi is His name, as it is said, ’Surely He hath borne our griefs . . . yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.’” The name, “The leprous one of the house of Rabbi,” is very obscure. Dr. Pusey2 has called attention to the better reading of this passage found in the Pugio Fidei by Raymundus Martini, where it reads: “The Rabbis say, The leprous one is His name; those of the house of Rabbi say, The sick one is His name,” etc. In Isa_53:4 the word “stricken” [nagua’] is taken by the Rabbis as meaning stricken with leprosy, hence they give the name, “The leprous one.” The house of Rabbi (i.e., R. Jehuda the saint, the editor of the Mishna) based their name, “The sick one,” on the words “our griefs,” lit. our diseases, having in mind their teacher, R. Jehuda, who had voluntarily taken upon himself bodily sufferings for thirteen years for the sake of the whole people, for during this period no pregnant women died, nor did any miscarriage take place.3

2 cf. The 53rd chapter Isaiah, according to the Jewish interpreters, vol. ii. Translations, p. 34. The Jewish scholar, A. Epstein, in his M’kadmonioth Ha-yehudim, p. 109, defends Martini’s reading.

3 cf. Jer. Talmud, Kil’ayim 32b and Kethuboth 35a.

2. B. Sanhedr. 93b: “It is written (in Isa_11:3), And His delight (haricho) shall be in the fear of the Lord. R. Alexandri said, This indicates that He (God) will load Him (i.e., the Messiah) with commandments and sufferings as with millstones (rechayim).” It is not said here for what purpose the many sufferings will be laid on the Messiah, but the idea of a suffering Messiah is here expressed, although it has no connection with the Scripture quoted.

3, B. Sanhedr. 98a. Here we read: “R. Joshua, the son of Levi (third century A.D.), met Elijah standing at the door of the cave of R. Simeon ben Yochai. . . . He said to him: When shall the Messiah come? He answered: Go and ask Him personally.—And where does He abide?—At the gate of Rome.—And what is His sign?—He abides among the poor who are stricken by disease. And all unbind, and bind up again, the wounds at the same time, but He undoes (viz. the bandage) and rebinds each separately, saying: Perhaps I am wanted, and I would not be detained. He went to meet Him and said: Peace be to Thee, my Master and my Teacher. He replied to him: Peace be to thee, son of Levi. He said to Him: When wilt Thou come, my Lord? To-day, He replied. Then he returned to Elijah, who said unto him: What has He said unto thee? He said to me: Son of Levi, peace be unto thee. Elijah said unto him: He has assured thee and thy father of the world to come. He said unto him: But He has deceived me in that He said: I come to-day, and He has not come. Elijah answered him: It was so He meant—‘To-day, if you will hear My voice.’” To understand this legend one must remember that, according to the Rabbis, Messiah was born on the very day Jerusalem was destroyed, and is now living in obscurity. According to this passage His place is at the gate of Rome where He, though suffering, is waiting every moment to be called to deliver His people. THE MIDRASHIM

4. In Ruth Rabba 5, 6 (on chap 2:14) we read: “‘Come hither’—this refers to the King Messiah. ‘Come hither,’ draw near to the kingdom; ‘and eat of the bread,’ that is, the bread of the kingdom; ‘and dip thy morsel in the vinegar,’ this refers to the sufferings, as it is said, ‘But He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities.’”

5. Midrash Tehillim on Psalms 2:1-12, and Midrash Samuel chapter 19 (with the readings of the Yalkut, ii. 620): “R. Huna in the name of R. Acha says: The sufferings are divided into three parts: one for David and the fathers, one for our own generation, and one for the King Messiah, and this is what is written, ‘He was wounded for our transgressions,’ etc. And when the hour comes, says the Holy One—blessed be He!—to them: I must create Him a new creation, as even it is said, ‘This day have I begotten thee.’ This is the hour when He is made a new creation.”—So many and great are Messiah’s sufferings and afflictions that God must create for Him a new body. It is not said in what way, perhaps by raising Him from the dead. Psa_2:7 is here used almost in the same way as it is used by the Apostle Paul in Act_13:33.

6. Pesiktha Rabbathi, chapters 33-38.4 Nowhere in Rabbinic literature are the sufferings of the Messiah so graphically described and so expressly stated that He is suffering of the sins of His people as in this Midrash. Apart from this, we have here a vague conception of the pre-existence of the Messiah, for the transaction between God and Messiah takes place at the beginning of creation, when man was not yet created.

4 Friedmann’s edition, Vienna, 1880.

Chapter 36 is based on Isa_60:1-2. Psa_36:9 is quoted, and the question is asked, “What mean the words, In thy light we see light?”

“Which light is the congregation of Israel looking for? This is the light of Messiah, as it is written: And God saw the light, that it was good. This is intended to teach us, that the Holy One—blessed be He!—foresaw the Messiah and His works before the world was yet created, and He hid the light for the Messiah and His generation under His throne of glory. Said Satan before the Holy

One—blessed be He!—Lord of the world, the light hidden under Thy throne of glory—for whom is it prepared? And He said to him: For Him who in the future will conquer thee, and cover thy face with same. Same he: Lord of the world, show Him to me. Come and see, was the Divine answer; and when he saw Him, he began to tremble, and fell on his face, saying: Surely, this is Messiah, who in the future shall cast me and the (angelic) princes of the nations of the world into Gehenna, according to Isa_25:8 . . . ”

Messiah’s Willingness to Suffer for His People

“And the Holy One began to make an agreement with Him, saying, Those who are hidden with Thee—their sins will cause Thee to be put under an iron yoke, and they will make Thee like this calf whose eyes are dim, and they will choke Thy spirit under the yoke, and on account of their sins Thy tongue shall cleave to Thy mouth. Art Thou willing to do this? Said Messiah before the Holy One: Perhaps this anguish will last many years? And the Holy One said to Him: By Thy life, and by the life of My head, one week only have I decreed for Thee; but if Thy soul is grieved I shall destroy them even now. But He said to Him: Lord of all the worlds, with the gladness of My soul and the joy of My heart I take it upon Me, on condition that not one of Israel shall perish, and not only those alone should be saved who are in My days, but also those who are hid in the dust; and not only should the dead be saved who are in My days, but also those who have died from the days of the first Adam till now; and not only those, but also those who have been prematurely born. And not only those, but also those whom Thou hast intended to create, but who have not yet been created. Thus I agree, and thus I take all upon Me. In that hour the Holy One—blessed be He!—orders for Him four creatures to carry the throne of glory of the Messiah.” The Sufferings of the Messiah

“In the week when the Son of David comes, they bring beams of iron and put them (like a yoke) on His neck, until His stature is bent down. But He cries and weeps, and His voice ascends on high, and He says before Him: Lord of the world, what is My strength, the strength of My spirit, of My soul and of My members? Am I not flesh and blood? In view of that hour David wept, saying: ‘My strength is dried up like a potsherd.’5 In that hour the Holy One—blessed be He!—says to Him: Ephraim,6 My righteous Messiah, Thou hast already taken this upon Thee from the six days of creation, now Thy anguish shall be like My anguish, for from the time that Nebuchadnezzar, the wicked one, has come and destroyed My House, and burned My Sanctuary, and sent My children into exile among the nations of the world, by Thy life and the life of My head, I have not sat down upon My throne. And if Thou wilt not believe Me, see the dew which is on My head, as it is said: ‘My head is filled with dew’7. In that hour the Messiah answers Him: Lord of the world, now I am quieted, for it is enough for the servant that He is as His Master.”8

5 Psa_22:15. Here the Editor has a note in which he calls attention to the fact that this psalm deals with the exile of the congregation of Israel, the sufferings of the Messiah and the future redemption, and that only on account of “the seditious talk of the heretics” (i.e., the Christians) the Rabbis explained it as referring to Esther.

6 The Messiah is in these chapters called Ephraim, but not the Messiah, the son of Joseph, is here meant, as Dr. Edersheim thinks, but the Son of David, as can be seen from the words with which the passage begins (viz., “In the week when the Son of David comes”). I believe that they called the Messiah Ephraim on account of Jer_31:20, which passage they applied to the Messiah.

7 Son_5:2

8 pp. 161, 162

Chapter 37 describes Messiah's triumph and the glory which He receives as a due reward for His humiliation and sufferings on behalf of Israel. It is based on Isa_61:10.

"The fathers of the world (the patriarchs) will rise again in the month of Nisan and will say to Him: Ephraim, our righteous Messiah, though we are Thy fathers, yet Thou art greater than we, because Thou hast borne the sins of our sons, and hard and evil measure has passed upon Thee, such as has not been passed either upon those before or upon those after. And Thou hast been for laughter and derision to the nations for the sake of Israel, and Thou hast dwelt in darkness and in gloominess, and Thine eyes have not seen light, and Thy skin was cleaving to Thy bones, and Thy body was as dry as wood, and Thine eyes were darkened through fasting, and Thy strength was dried up like a potsherd. And all this on account of the sins of our children. Is it Thy pleasure that our sons should enjoy the good things which the Holy One—blessed by He!—has poured out so abundantly upon Israel? Or, perhaps, on account of the anguish which Thou has suffered so much for them, and because they have chained Thee in the prison-house,9 perhaps Thou are not pleased with them?

9 This would indicate that He also suffered at the hand of His own people.

"Says He to them: Fathers of the world, whatever I have done I have only done for your sakes, and for the sake of your children, for the sake of your honour and that of your children, that they may enjoy the goodness which the Holy One—blessed be He!—has poured out over Israel. Then say to Him, the fathers of the world: Ephraim, our righteous Messiah, let Thy mind be at rest, as Thou hast put the mind of Thy Maker at rest and also our mind."

Messiah's Glory

"R. Simeon, the son of Pasi, said: In that hour the Holy One—blessed be He!—exalts the Messiah to the heaven of heavens, and spreads over Him the splendour of His glory. . . . And at once He makes for the Messiah seven canopies of precious stones and pearls. And from each canopy issue four streams of wine, honey, milk, and pure balsam. And the Holy One—blessed be He!—embraces Him in the presence of all the righteous ones and conducts Him into the Sanctuary,10 and all the righteous ones see Him. And the Holy One says unto them: Ye righteous ones of the world, Ephraim, the Messiah of My righteousness, has not yet received even the half for all He had suffered. But I have still one reward with Me which I will give unto Him, which no eye hath ever seen. In that hour the Holy One commands the North wind and the South wind, saying unto them: 'Come ye, and do honour and lie down before Ephraim, My righteous Messiah, fully loaded with all the perfumes from the Garden of Eden,' as it is said: 'Awake, O North wind; and come, thou South: blow upon My garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let My Beloved come into His garden, and eat His precious fruits.'"11

10 The word "chuppa," canopy, means here the "seat of the Divine Majesty, Sanctuary." See Jastrow, Talmudical Dictionary, i. 437.

11 Son_4:16, pp. 162b, 163a A Messianic Hymn "As a bridegroom decketh himself with a garland."12

12 Isaiah 61:10

“This teaches us that the Holy One shall clothe Ephraim, our righteous Messiah, with a garment, the splendour of which will be seen from one end of the world to the other end. And Israel shall walk in His light and say:

“Blessed is the hour when the Messiah was created!

Blessed the womb out of which He has come!

Blessed the generation whose eyes behold Him!

Blessed the eye that was waiting for Him! For the opening of His lips is blessing and peace; His whisper—a spiritual delight. The thoughts of His heart are confidence and cheerfulness; The speech of His tongue is pardon and forgiveness unto Israel. His prayer is the sweet incense of offerings; His petitions are purity and holiness:

Blessed are His fathers who obtained the eternal good hidden for ever!”13

13 See also Pesiktha d’rab Cahana, ed. Buber, p. 149, where the same hymn is quoted. There, however, the last line reads: “Blessed is Israel, for whom such as been prepared.” THE LITURGY The following remarkable hymn, by the famous hymn-writer, Eleazar ben Qualir, who, according to the Jewish historian, Zunz, lived in the ninth century A.D., is taken from the Service for the Day of Atonement.14 In it are gathered up the teachings of the Synagogue about a suffering Messiah.

14 cf. The Festival Prayers, with David Levi’s English translation, vol. iii. p. 33. The translation has been revised by me.

“Before the world was yet created, His dwelling-place and Yinnon15 God prepared. The Mount of His house, lofty from the beginning, He established, ere people and language existed.

It was His pleasure that there His Shekhinah should dwell, To guide those gone astray into the path of rectitude.

Though their sins were red like scarlet, They were preceded by ’Wash you, make you clean.’

If His anger was kindled against His people, Yet the Holy One poured not out all His wrath.

We are ever threatened by destruction because of our evil deeds, And God does not draw nigh us—He, our only refuge. Our righteous Messiah has departed from us, We are horror-stricken, and have none to justify us. Our iniquities and the yoke of our transgressions He carries who is wounded because of our transgressions.

He bears on His shoulder the burden of our sins, To find pardon for all our iniquities. By His stripes we shall be healed—

O Eternal One, it is time that thou shouldst create Him anew!

O bring Him up from the terrestrial sphere, Raise Him up from the land of Seir,16 To announce salvation to us from Mount Lebanon,17 Once again through the hand of Yinnon.”

15 “Yinnon” is, according to Babylonian Sanhedrin 98b, one of Messiah’s names according to Psa_72:17, which the Talmud renders, “Before the Sun, Yinnon (Heb., ‘shall flourish’) was His name,” the name indicating the pre-existence of the Messiah.

16 Seir stands here for Edom, and by Edom the Talmud means Rome, where, as we have seen above, the Messiah already lives in deep humiliation and suffering.

17 Lebanon stands here for the Mount of the Temple, from which Messiah is to proclaim to Israel that the time of salvation has come. THE ZOHAR (vol., II. 212a)

“The souls, which are in the garden of Eden below go to and fro every noon and Sabbath, in order to ascend to the place that is called the Walls of Jerusalem. . . . After that they journey on and contemplate all those that are possessed of pains and sicknesses and those that are martyrs for the unity of their Lord, and then return and announce it to the Messiah. And as they tell Him of the misery of Israel in their captivity, and of those wicked ones among them who are not attentive to know their Lord, He lifts up His voice and weeps for their wickedness: and so it is written, ‘He was wounded for our transgressions,’ etc. Then those souls return and abide in their own place.

“There is in the garden of Eden a palace called the palace of the sons of sickness: this palace the Messiah then enters, and summons every sickness, every pain, and every chastisement of Israel; they all come and rest upon Him. And were it not that He had thus lightened them off Israel and taken them upon Himself, there had been no man able to bear Israel’s chastisements for transgression of the law: and this is that which is written, ‘Surely our sicknesses He hath carried.’”18

18 The Zohar, the Bible of the Mystics, contains another tradition about the concealed existence of the Messiah preceding His Advent. He lives in Paradise, in a place called The Bird’s Nest (Kan Tsippor), from whence He will appear to save Israel. cf. Zohar, II, 7b.

Chapter 89

6.00. ISRAEL’S INALIENABLE POSSESSIONS

ISRAEL’S INALIENABLE POSSESSIONS The Gifts and the Calling of God Which are Without Repentance BY

DAVID BARON Editor of The Scattered Nation Author of “The Visions & Prophecies of Zechariah, The Prophet of Hope and Glory,” etc.

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6.000. Contents

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6.01. Romans 9:1-5

“I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.” Rom_9:1-5

6.02. Preface

PREFACE The substance of this booklet is an address, afterwards written out in amplified form for The Scattered Nation, whence, by request, it is now reprinted. May the Great Shepherd of Israel bless this weak and inadequate effort to quicken interest in the hearts of Christians for the people still “beloved for the fathers’ sakes,” to whom He has never forgotten to be gracious even in the darkest hours of their long night of sorrow.

DAVID BARON

6.03. The Apostle's Yearning Love For Israel

THE APOSTLE'S YEARNING LOVE FOR ISRAEL

"For I could wish that I myself were anathema from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh" FROM the height of blessedness to which the Apostle gradually leads us in the first, or doctrinal section of the Epistle, culminating as it does in the triumphant "No condemnation" and "No separation" to "them that are in Christ Jesus," we are here at the commencement of the dispensational, or prophetic section of the Epistle, almost abruptly brought down into a vale of sorrow, and we hear the Apostle speak of "great heaviness and uninterrupted sorrow in his heart." And if the question be asked, Why this sudden descent from the mountain-top of blessedness? Could not the Apostle have spared us the knowledge and the sorrow of this dispensational section of the Epistle, and have taken up the thread of his argument with the practical section which begins with Romans 12:1-21? The answer is No! For their own good the Apostle could not leave Gentile believers in ignorance of the mystery of God with Israel. God's dealings with Israel, God's purposes in Israel, are subjects with regard to which Christians, for their own good, cannot afford to be ignorant. The teaching imparted in this section of the Epistle which was written for the express purpose of instructing Gentile believers about Israel is not only salutary but absolutely needful, and though in the course of our study of these chapters, if our hearts be filled with the compassion of Christ, we too shall be filled with sorrow in contemplating Israel's present condition, yet we too are sure in the end to emerge with the Apostle with the triumphant adoring exclamation, "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" And our gain in the process will consist of enlarged views of God's character and a better understanding of God's ways and, my dear friends, to the Christian there is no greater gain.

Rom_9:1-5 form the introduction to this section of the Epistle, which consists of Romans 9:1-33, Romans 10:1-21, and Romans 11:1-36, and in these verses the Apostle Paul, before proceeding to vindicate the ways of God in His governmental dealings with Israel and the nations, stops to express his own sorrow and deep sympathy for that nation, which, though in the purpose of God exalted so high, is at present, through unbelief, fallen so low.

"I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost." By this solemn asseveration the Apostle wants, not only to impress us with the sincerity and truthfulness of his sorrow and sympathy for Israel, but to teach us that the feelings to which he gives utterance are no mere natural sentiments, such as a Jew might be supposed to have for his nation. He speaks as a man "in Christ," that is, as a man whose conscience, whose whole being, has been renewed and illumined, and who, at the very time of writing, is conscious of being under the direct operation of God's Spirit. It is not as a natural man, but as a spiritual man; it is not as a Jew, but as an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile it is as an inspired Apostle that he speaks, and he may therefore well serve as our pattern.

He says, “I have great heaviness (or “I have great grief”) and uninterrupted pain in my heart.” The Apostle, my dear friends, had indeed drunk deeply of the Spirit of his Divine Master, our Lord Jesus, Who for our sakes became a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief, Who was ever moved to compassion when He beheld the multitude of Israel, and Who wept over Jerusalem.

We may pause for a moment at this second verse [Rom_9:2], and ask ourselves, “How did this Divine sympathy, this Spirit-inspired grief, operate in his heart? What did it impel him to?” It impelled him first of all to earnest prayer and intercession on Israel’s behalf. “Brethren,” he exclaims, at the beginning of Romans 10:1-21, “my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved”; or, more literally, “The good pleasure of my heart and supplication to God on behalf of Israel is for their salvation.” “The good pleasure of my heart” The Apostle found delight in prayer for Israel. I wonder of how many it is true now that they pray for Israel at all. And among those who are watchmen on the walls of Zion, and who do pray for Israel’s salvation, I wonder of how many it can be said that it is done in “the good pleasure of their hearts,” and not rather as a duty at the best. The Apostle found delight in his supplication for Israel, because it brought him so near to the heart of God, who has never ceased to yearn for His wandering people, and because his prayers sprang from sympathy with, and a deep understanding of, the purposes of God, not only to bless, but to make Israel yet the centre and channel of blessing for the whole earth. But he not only prayed for them his divinely given sympathy for Israel impelled him also continually to labor for them. Paul was specially commissioned of God to preach the glad tidings of salvation through the crucified, risen Messiah to the Gentiles. Yet, if we follow his missionary career, we find that wherever he went he always sought out the Jews first, and preached to them in their synagogues. “It was necessary that the Word of God should first be spoken to you,” he says in one place, and when the Jews in that city shut their ears and blasphemed, and he had to turn to the Gentiles, we read that in the very next place which he visited, Iconium, he and Barnabas went again together into the synagogue, “and so spake that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed.” And this we find to be the case to the end of his career. And he not only preached the Gospel to them, but he cared for the temporal necessities of the believing Israelites; and when a famine broke out in Judea he was the first to raise his voice among the Gentile Churches which he had founded, calling upon them to help these believing Jews, and reminding them that “if the Gentiles had been made partakers in their spiritual things, it was their duty also to minister to them in carnal things.” But even all his labors and all his prayers did not fully express his yearning love and desire for Israel. He went much further. This is brought out in the 3rd verse [Rom_9:3]. What a wonderful verse this is! “For I could wish that I myself were anathema from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:” Shrink as we may, my dear friends, from the full meaning of these fervent words of the Apostle, sure it is that no other meaning will sufficiently satisfy the plain sense of the words, than that the Apostle actually went the length of wishing, if it had been possible, and if Christ had permitted it, to be himself cut off from Christ in the place of his people. “The wish,” says Dean Alford, “is evidently not to be pressed as entailing on the Apostle the charge of inconsistency in loving his nation more than his Saviour. It is the expression of an affectionate and self-denying heart, willing to surrender all things, even, if it might be, eternal life itself, if thereby he could obtain for his beloved people these blessings of the Gospel which he now enjoyed, but from which they were excluded. . . . Others express their love by professing themselves ready to give their life for their friends; he declares the intensity of his affection by reckoning even his spiritual life not too great a price if it might purchase their

salvation." In this respect there are two men in the history of Israel who stand nearest to Christ for their willingness to sacrifice themselves for their people. One was Moses, who, after the apostasy of Israel in the matter of the golden calf, prayed to God, "Yet now if Thou wilt forgive their sin; and if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of the book which Thou hast written." And the other was this Apostle, who said, "I could wish that I myself were anathema from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." And remember, my dear friends, that the man who gives us this glimpse into the intensity of his heart's love and yearning for Israel is the one who perhaps, next to our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, has suffered most at the hands of his people. Again and again, as he was proclaiming to them the fulfillment of the promises made to the fathers in God's gift of His only begotten Son, they cried: "Away with such a fellow from the earth, for it is not fit that he should live!" Five different times did they lay many stripes upon him in their synagogues; they hunted him from place to place; wherever they could, they stirred up tumults against him; they beat him, they stoned him, they heaped all sorts of reproaches and blasphemies upon him; and what pained him perhaps most of all was that they tried by all the means in their power to frustrate his Apostolic commission, "forbidding him to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles that they might be saved." And yet, all through, and to the end, not only had he no inclination or desire to "accuse his nation" before the Gentiles (Acts 28:19), but he never ceased to love them and to yearn for them. Truly such love sprang from no mere natural or human source, but was part of that wonderful, everlasting, unchangeable love of Jehovah toward the children of Israel, which even all their many sins and apostasies could never quench, and was drawn by the Apostle from the great heart of his Divine Master, who wept over Jerusalem, and who, even on the cross, prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And it is only in this same spirit of a love which never faileth, and of Christ-like compassion, that we too shall be able to persevere in our prayers and in our efforts for the salvation of gainsaying, disobedient Israel, else we shall soon turn away from them discouraged if not embittered, as has been the case, alas! with some who began well, but whose knowledge of this peculiar people has been shallow, and whose interest did not rest on the deep-enough basis of an intelligent understanding of God's will and purposes, and was not impelled by the all-constraining love of Christ, which alone can prevail.

"A parallel case," as Dr. Adolph Saphir observed in one of his last addresses on this subject, "is this: Jesus asks Peter, 'Lovest thou Me?' then He says, 'Feed My sheep.' It is not love to the sheep that will sustain Peter in feeding them. It is the fact that they are Christ's sheep. It is not because the sheep are lovable that his interest in them will continue. It is because Christ is lovable. Likewise, unless you believe that Israel is God's nation, and your interest is based on the Word of God, your efforts to evangelize among Israel will soon languish, and your patience will be exhausted." To return to the Apostle's willingness to sacrifice himself for his nation, I would remind you that neither a Paul nor a Moses, nor even an archangel, could suffice for the redemption of the people, or of even one soul in Israel. One there is Whose death alone is a sufficient ransom, and He not only "wished," but was actually made a curse for us, that we might be freed from the curse of sin and the law.

Yes, it was necessary, not on the ground of human "expediency," as Israel's apostate high priest expressed it; but because of a Divine necessity, springing from the eternal principles of God's moral government of the world, that the Christ Himself "should die for the people, that the whole nation perish not" (John 11:49-52) And Jesus did die for that nation, and in that great and

wonderful fact rests the certainty of Israel's future salvation. But blessed be His Name, He died, not for that nation only, but that also He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad, which ensures also the eternal salvation of every one of His people individually, of whatever nation, who have been brought to faith and reliance on Him.

6.04. The Significance of the Name Israel

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NAME ISRAEL “Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel” THE chief reasons of the Apostle’s interest in and love for Israel are given to us in Rom_9:4-5. These two verses practically summarize “the gifts and the calling of God” of which he speaks in Rom_11:29, and which are “without repentance,” that is, without a change of mind on God’s part the gifts or privileges and the high calling, namely, which God irrevocably bestowed on the chosen people, and which are Israel’s inalienable possessions. And these reasons, my dear friends, still remain, and they are the permanent grounds why we now should be interested in and love Israel. As we examine Israel’s divinely bestowed gifts and calling, as summarized in these verses, I beg you to note that we have here a gradation in these privileges, culminating in the last, which is the highest and greatest. The first is expressed in the words, “who are Israelites” This is the name of honor given by God to Jacob. It is, I may say, the ideal and prophetic name of Israel in the future, into the full meaning of which they will only enter after they shall have passed through the same experience which Jacob had made on that night when his name was changed from Jacob to Israel.

Let me remind you of that mysterious transaction recorded in Genesis 32:22-32. In “that night,” in anticipation of his meeting with his brother Esau, when his heart was full of anxiety and fear, Jacob, after taking his family and all he had over the brook Jabbok, “was left alone, and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And when He (this mysterious man) saw that He prevailed not against him, He touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob’s thigh was out of joint as He wrestled with him. And He said, let Me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me. And He said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. And He said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel; for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed. And Jacob asked and said, Tell me, I pray Thee, Thy name. And He said, wherefore dost thou ask after My name? And He blessed him there. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel; for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved. And as he passed over Peniel the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh.” This historical incident forms at the same time one of the most beautiful parables of God’s present and future dealings with Israel; and Jacob may, in this mysterious and wonderful transaction, be very well regarded as the type of his whole posterity. This, my dear friends, is the “night” period of Israel’s history; and a long, dark, and dreary night it has proved full of sorrow and of weeping, which will not cease till joy is ushered in, in that looked-for morning, by the sudden rising upon them of the Sun of Righteousness. And it is still the “Jacob” period of Israel’s history. Not yet are they as a nation “Israelites”—princes having power with God and with men, and prevailing. There have indeed always been individuals among them to whom the Lord Himself could bear witness and say: “Behold an Israelite indeed in whom there is no guile”; but as a nation it is the “Jacob” name which still applies to them. And there is a man wrestling with them—unknown, His Name not yet revealed to them it is “the Man Christ Jesus”; it is the Messiah, the Angel of the Covenant.

What are all God's dealings with them as a people? What are these chastisements the various strokes which they receive in this their night of sorrow? Are they not all God's wrestling with them, with a view to bringing this national Jacob to an end of himself. But we read that Jacob withstood, even as the nation withstands now, until, finally, before the breaking of the morning in the last dark hour of the dark night of which we read in the prophetic Scriptures in that final sorrow and "great tribulation" which is to come upon them, Jacob's thigh shall finally be out of joint; and then all that they shall be able to do will be to cleave to Him, the Mighty One, and say, "We cannot we will not let Thee go, except Thou bless us." And then, having been overcome, they shall be overcomers. In Hosea 12:3-4, we have light thrown on this mysterious transaction. There we read that Jacob "by his strength had power with God; yea, he had power over the angel and prevailed; he wept and made supplication unto Him. He found Him in Bethel, and there He spake with us;" from which we see, not only the true character of the mysterious "Man" who wrestled with him that night, that He was none other than the Divine Angel of the Covenant, in and through whom all the theophanies of the Old Testament took place the Eternal Son of God, Who in the fullness of time became flesh and dwelt among us, that men may behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; but we are also let into the secret as to how Jacob, after he was first of all prevailed over, had power with God and over the Angel, "and prevailed." "He wept and made supplication unto Him." He wept over his past over the corruption of his nature and the crookedness of his life, which he confessed when he said, "My name is Jacob"; and he "made supplication" for pardon and grace and for the power of a new life when he clung to the Angel, saying, "I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me." This is how Jacob became "Israel" a prince having power with God; this is how he "prevailed"—in the same way as the helpless little child prevails over the strong father whom he has offended or grieved; not by resisting him, or making excuses for his sin, but by throwing himself into his father's arms in penitent sorrow and love. This is how we, too, may become spiritual Israelites. My friends, have we all passed through such an experience? Have we confessed and wept over our past, and by faith laid hold on God's strength and made supplication unto Him, saying, "I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me"? Then we know what conversion means; then only do we know the meaning of that word, "for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed." And that is how the whole Jewish people shall at last enter into the meaning of the name "Israel," which was divinely bestowed on them. Oh, what a day that will be when "the spirit of grace and of supplications" is poured upon Israel, and when the whole nation confesses and weeps over its past. What are many of the psalms and prophecies? What is that wonderful 53rd chapter of Isaiah but inspired future penitential confessions of repentant Israel? Yes; "in that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, . . . and the land shall mourn, ... all the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart." And this sorrow and weeping will be accompanied by supplications and by a clinging in faith to the promises of God—"But now, O Lord, Thou art our Father: we are the clay and Thou our Potter; and we all are the work of Thy hand. Be not wroth very sore, O Lord, neither remember iniquity for ever; behold, see, we beseech Thee, we are all Thy people." "Turn us again, O Jehovah, God of Hosts, cause Thy face to shine, and we shall be saved" (Isa_64:8-9; Psa_80:19).

Then it is that "worm Jacob" shall become "Israel," strong in the Lord and in the power of His might, having power with God and with men, and prevailing. Then also will Israel see "Peniel" again—which means the "Face of God," which now is hid from them in consequence of their sins, but which they shall yet behold in greater glory and favor than before, when the Sun of

Righteousness shall rise upon them in the glorious appearing of their Messiah-King.

It is interesting to observe that the Apostle himself was proud of the name “Israel”—“Are they Israelites?” he says, “so am I” – “for I also am an Israelite of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin”: and truly he knew from experience the full significance of the name, for, after the persecuting Saul, who had so long resisted Christ, had been conquered and turned into Paul, he became a true prince among men, having in a measure, even unsurpassed by prophets and apostles, “power with God and with men, and prevailing.”

6.05. Israel's Adoption

ISRAEL'S ADOPTION "Israel is My son, My firstborn" THE second of the irrevocable gifts or privileges included in Israel's high calling of God, as enumerated by the Apostle in this scripture, is expressed in the words, "To whom pertaineth the adoption," or more literally, "the sonship." At the very beginning of their national history, when God sent Moses to bring them out of Egypt, His word to Pharaoh was, "Israel is My son, My firstborn, and I say unto thee, let My son go, that he may serve Me." Thus Jehovah avouched them in a special sense as His peculiar people—His firstborn from among the nations; and all His subsequent self-revelations to them, and all His dealings with them, were designed to teach them what is implied in this blessed relationship; what it means in the spirit and in truth to pronounce the word "Abba." Hitherto, though Israel has had this most precious Name of God much on their lips, they have not as a nation entered experimentally into its meaning, nor have they as yet corresponded to the character of "children of the living God." There, has, indeed always been the little remnant according to the election of grace, who worshipped God in the spirit and in truth, and who by the spirit of adoption which was in them cried, "Doubtless Thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not; Thou, O Jehovah, art our Father, our Redeemer; Thy Name is from everlasting" (Isa_63:16); but to the people as a whole the words uttered by Malachi to the priests may well be applied: "A son honors his father, and a servant his master; if then I be a father, where is mine honor? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith Jehovah of Hosts."

One of the most pathetic complaints of God against Israel in this connection is to be found in Jeremiah 3:4. In the first verses of that chapter He reminds them of their many grievous sins and apostasies from Him—of their spiritual adultery, which, if He dealt with them according to law, would be sufficient to separate them from Him for ever; but being full of compassion, He is willing to forgive all the past, and cries, "Yet return again to Me, saith Jehovah."

Then follow those wonderful words which give us a glimpse into the yearning and love of His heart for His people, and show us His longing that they should at last understand and enter experimentally into the relations in which He stood to them according to His covenants and promises: "Wilt thou not from this time (Wilt thou not now at last) cry unto Me, Abi ('my Father')—Thou art the Guide of my youth?" The word, ■■■■■■■■, "alluph," translated here "guide," is the same as in Pro_2:17, where it is used of the "strange" adulterous woman who forsaketh "the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God" a truer rendering, however, of which would be: "Who forsaketh the gentle mate, or friend (or husband), of her youth"; and so, by this act forgetteth or breaketh, the covenant of her God.

Now these were the two great and blessed relationships into which God had entered with His people—that of a father to his son, and that of a husband to his wife. In both of these Israel has thus far proved unfaithful. As a Father, God has to complain of His disobedient and gainsaying people, that they are "children who have corrupted themselves" and become corrupters (Isa_1:4): and as a Husband He has to pour out His heart's grief and pain ever so many times at Israel's

spiritual adulteries, because she “had played the harlot with many lovers.” But, blessed be His holy Name, our God abides faithful and true, though men always prove liars, “He will ever be mindful of His covenant” (Psa_111:5); and in spite of all our disobedience and apostasy He has never ceased to be “a Father to Israel,” or to call Ephraim His “firstborn” (Jer_31:9, Jer_31:20). And in the end Israel will at last enter experimentally into the blessedness of both these relationships.

It is beautiful to note in that same third chapter of Jeremiah, where, ‘in the second part, a glimpse is given us of the future—when Jerusalem shall be called the throne of Jehovah—we read, “But I (Jehovah) said, How shall I put thee among the children and give thee a goodly heritage of the hosts of the nations? and I said, Ye shall call Me, Abi (‘my Father’), and shall not turn away from following Me” (Jer_3:17-19). “Wilt thou not from this time cry unto Me, Abi?” Not yet has Israel as a nation apprehended that for which they were apprehended of God; not yet has the people as a whole responded to their high calling and looked up to the God of heaven and earth, crying, “My Father.” But to them pertaineth the [υ■οθεσ■α], huiothesia—the sonship, and in the end Jehovah has pledged Himself to bring them, actually and experimentally, into this blessed relationship.

“And I said”—it is His irrevocable purpose “ye shall call Me, Abi”—for He who has called them to be “His son, His firstborn,” will pour the spirit of adoption—the spirit of filial fear and of love into their hearts, so that they shall be obedient children and shall “no more turn away from following after Him.” So also that other near and precious relationship of the Bride to the Bridegroom, or of the Wife to the Husband, to which Israel was called, shall yet become an actual experimental reality in their experience; for after Israel repents of her past unfaithfulness and returns to her “first (or lawful) husband” (Hosea 2:1-23), we read: “Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken, neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate; but thou shalt be called ‘My Delight is in her,’ and thy land ‘Married’; for Jehovah delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married. For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy Builder1 marry thee; and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee” (Isa_62:4-5).

1 An ancient alternative reading for “thy son.” The word for “son” and “builder” [■■■■■■■■■■, b■n´■yik] is the same in Hebrew.

Meanwhile, during this period of Israel’s unfaithfulness and disobedience, there is a remnant according to the election of grace from that nation, and a people taken out for His Name from among the Gentiles, who enter into the enjoyment of those very “gifts,” or high privileges, to which Israel was called. To us, too, if we be Christ’s, belongeth the [υ■οθεσ■α], huiothesia—the sonship—“for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of sonship, whereby we cry Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God” (Rom_8:14-16).

I was recently asked by a friend, a Scotch evangelist, as to the meaning of the repetition of the word “Father” in this passage, and also in Galatians 4:6. There is meaning and beauty in it. “Abba” is, of course, the Hebrew for “Father”; and Ho Pater, which immediately follows, is the Greek for the same word: and the repetition in the two languages [■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■, αββα ■ πατ■ρ] is in keeping with the character of the Church in this dispensation, in which there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek, who, through Christ, have access together by One Spirit unto the Father; for the same Holy Spirit which creates in the believing Israelite the spirit of sonship and

teaches him to cry in his language, “Abba,” fulfils the same blessed mission in the heart of the Greek believer—the Greek standing in the New Testament as the representative of the Gentiles—and teaches him to cry in his language, [■ πατ■ρ] Ho Pater.

6.06. The Shekinah Glory and the Covenants

THE SHEKINAH GLORY AND THE COVENANTS “The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night departed not from before the people”

“Nevertheless, I will remember My covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant” THE third of the “gifts” enumerated in our Scripture as constituting part of Israel’s high calling of God, is expressed in the words, “and the glory.” This, of course, refers to the glory of the personal Presence of Jehovah in their midst, which distinguished and separated Israel from all other peoples (Exo_33:16) that wonderful Shekinah, the visible symbol of which was the cloud of glory and pillar of fire, which went before them in all their wilderness experiences, and which never utterly left them, in spite of all their frowardness and sins; the glory which in the Tabernacle and in the first Temple dwelt between the cherubim, as the visible demonstration of His covenant relations with that people.

Well may their great lawgiver exclaim, in view of this special relationship of Jehovah to His people, “Happy” (or, “oh, how happy,” or “blessed”) “art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by Jehovah, the Shield of thy help, and who is the Sword of thy excellence”—“for ask now of the days that are past which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and ask from the one side of heaven unto the other where hath been any such thing as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it? Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire as thou hast heard, and live? or hath God assayed to go and take Him a nation by temptations, by signs and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm, and by great terrors, according to all that Jehovah your God did for you ?” (Deu_33:29; Deu_4:32-34). At present, and ever since the commencement of “the Times of the Gentiles” with the Babylonish captivity, the glory has departed from Israel, and since then the word “Ichabod” is written over their whole history. “Where is the glory?” their land is laid waste, their Temple destroyed, themselves scattered and tossed about among the nations. But this “Ichabod” period will not last forever. The same prophet, Ezekiel, who in the earlier chapters of his prophecy describes the slow, reluctant departure of the glory of Jehovah from the midst of His people, sees also its return from the same direction from which he saw it depart a vision, this, of the appearing of the glory of the great God and our Savior, Jesus Christ, when His blessed “feet” shall “in that day” stand again “upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east.” But when the glory of the personal Presence of Jehovah—Jesus shall thus be revealed so that all flesh may see it together, even as the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken—Israel and Jerusalem will again be the centre of it, and the word will yet go forth: “Cry out and shout, thou inhabitress of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee” (Isa_12:6). Not till then, not till “out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God doth shine,” will the ancient promise be fulfilled, that the glory of Jehovah shall cover this earth even as the waters cover the sea: “For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the peoples, but Jehovah shall rise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee, and (then) nations shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising” (Isa_60:1-3). Truly great and wonderful is the “gift,“ or privilege, expressed in the words,

”theirs is the glory.“

”And the Covenants”—This is the fourth item in the summary of the “gifts and calling” which God irrevocably bestowed upon the chosen nation; and at the remembrance of it the Psalmist may well sing:

“Glory ye in His Holy Name;

Let the heart of them rejoice that seek Jehovah, . . .

He remembers His covenant forever, The word which He commanded to a thousand generations— Which (covenant) He made with Abraham. And His oath unto Isaac; And confirmed the same unto Israel for an everlasting covenant;

Saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, The lot of your inheritance.” (Psa_105:3-11)

Yes, this covenant with Abraham still stands, and will “to a thousand generations,” for it was absolute and unconditional, and was renewed again and again to Isaac and to Jacob, and confirmed by oath by the God who cannot lie, and who pledged His own existence for its certain fulfillment. And one chief item guaranteed in this covenant is Israel’s ultimate permanent possession of “the land of Canaan as the lot of their inheritance,” so that we may confidently look forward to the certain fulfillment of it, in spite of those who, in opposition to God’s promise and oath, boldly deny that the Jews ever will be restored, or that there is a national future for Israel at all. But it is not only that one unconditional everlasting covenant which He made with Abraham, and which He renewed to Isaac and Jacob, that the Apostle has in his mind. “Theirs are the covenants,” he says—for all the covenants which God, in His great condescension, made with man since Abraham, were made with them, and primarily belong to them.

Christians sometimes speak of the Jews as the “people of the Old Covenant,” in contradistinction to themselves as the people of “the New Covenant”; but we have only to turn up the original records of the new covenant to see that, nationally, God did not make this covenant with the English, or French, or Germans, or Russians; but “the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will make a new covenant with the House of Israel and with the House of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which My covenant they brake, though I was an husband unto them, saith Jehovah. But this is the covenant that I will make with the House of Israel. After those days, saith Jehovah, I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know Jehovah: for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith Jehovah; for I will forgive their iniquity, and will remember their sin no more” (Jer_31:31-34).

It is true that, as individuals, men of all nations are, through their union with our Lord Jesus Christ, grafted on to the olive tree of Israel’s covenanted mercies, and, together with the remnant of the nation, even now partake of the root and fatness of the Jewish olive tree thus anticipating the time when “all Israel shall be saved” (Hebrews 8:8-10). But this inclusion of Gentile believers who were formerly “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise,” in no wise affects the purpose of God in relation to Israel nationally. Theirs are “the covenants”;

and as long as there is a God of truth, every item and promise in those covenants, from the highest and greatest contained in the words—“I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more; I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; I will be their God, and they shall be My people; they shall all know Me from the least of them unto the greatest of them”—down to the minutest promise in reference to the possession of their land, and their future national prosperity in it, shall all be fulfilled in His own good time.

6.07. The Law-giving and the Service of God

THE LAW-GIVING AND THE SERVICE OF GOD

“Thou earnest down also upon Mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgements and true laws, good statutes and commandments” THE next step in the gradation of the great “gifts” which God bestowed upon Israel is expressed in the words, “and the giving of the Law” or “the Law-giving.” I fear Christians, generally, would not count this among the gifts or privileges of Israel; but such a derogatory estimate of the Law shows a shallow view also of the Gospel. The New Testament never speaks disparagingly of the law. On the contrary, it tells us that the law is “good,” and “holy,” and “spiritual”; only that in the unregenerated man it becomes weak and ineffectual by reason of the weakness and carnality of the flesh.

“The Law-giving” oh, what a wonderful event that was in the history of the world and of Israel, when Jehovah came forth from Sinai and burst forth (as the rising sun) from Seir unto them, when He shined forth from Mount Paran, and came with myriads of His holy ones, bringing in His right hand a fiery law unto them (Deu_33:2).

What a light that was which then, for the first time, shone upon the moral darkness of this earth! True, it was not, nor was it meant to be, “the Light of Life.” Much more did it become by reason of sin, and our innate corruption which it reveals—a consuming fire and the minister of death. Yet it was “glorious” (2Co_3:7), for it was a revelation of God’s holiness and a perfect transcript of His holy will. It was also a necessary precursor of the Light of Life, and was meant to be our school-master unto Christ; that is, teach us our need of a Savior, and to set us longing for the redemption to be accomplished by Him.

I am often grieved at the ignorant use and popular perversion of a beautiful scripture. I refer to the Apostle’s saying, “For the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life” (2Co_3:6), which is often quoted by some as an excuse for a disregard of the literal sense, or even for a destructive handling of the letter of Scripture. But the Apostle plainly uses the term “letter” for the law—the letter “written and graven in stones”; and, my dear friends, this “letter”—this wonderful revelation of God’s absolute holiness and of the requirements of His holy government is meant to kill us, and must kill us, before the Spirit can come and give us life. “The Lord killeth and maketh alive; He bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up. The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich. He bringeth low, and lifteth up.” That is ever His process, and there is no other way; and if, by the revelation of His holiness and your own inability and innate corruption, you have not, like Paul, been brought to an end of yourself, and to cry, “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” If the Law of God has not, like a two-edged sword, pierced and broken your heart, you do not know the full sweetness and preciousness, and the life-giving power of the Gospel.

“And the Giving of the Law”—and the greatness and beauty of this wonderful “gift,” which constitutes part of Israel’s high calling, will not be fully manifest till, in the millennial period, the Law is put in their inward parts, and written on their hearts when the final end, which God had in the

“Law-giving”—namely, that His people may be holy, because He is holy—shall be accomplished, and the earth shall see, for the first time in its history, a whole nation upon whose life, and conduct, and possessions, shall be written, “Holiness to Jehovah.”

Together with “the Giving of the Law,” the Apostle names “the Service of God” as the next step in the gradation of Israel’s special privileges. This refers to the Divine institutions of their Tabernacle and Temple; the Divinely appointed ritual of which I cannot describe here, but which so beautifully and in such a variety of ways sets forth the blessed Person and redeeming work of our Lord Jesus Christ. This richly symbolical and beautiful “Service of God” may be said to constitute “the Gospel in the Law,” for it already pointed the way how a man who stood condemned and separated from God by the moral law, could yet draw near to Him—namely, on the ground of shed blood, and by the ministry and intercessions of the high priest; and in reference to the future it is probable that, by the temporary restoration of a modified form of this Divinely appointed “Service of God,” which is forecast in the prophetic Scriptures, Israel shall yet teach the spared of the nations the deep significance of their ancient types, and open to them the fullness and manifoldness of the atoning work of their Messiah.

“The Service of God”: I would only add that it is not recorded in the Mosaic writings, and described with such minuteness of detail for our imitation now, as some ignorantly think, who seek to set up an unauthorized human mimicry of Israel’s Divinely appointed ritual in the Tabernacle and Temple, and thereby pervert the simplicity of the Gospel and of Christian worship; but it is recorded for our study, that we may perceive the spiritual significance of these types and shadows, and learn more and more the fullness which dwells in Christ for us

6.08. The Promises

THE PROMISES

“Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers”

“AND the Promises.” This constitutes another of God’s great and irrevocable “gifts” to Israel. Perhaps the great Abrahamic promises with regard to the land and the promised seed, in whom all families of the earth should be blessed, are uppermost in the Apostle’s mind—the promises which are unfolded and amplified in the words of God subsequently spoken to Isaac and to Jacob, and, later, to the whole people, through Moses and the prophets, and which are wonderful and comprehensive in their scope; and are God’s guarantees for the blessing of Israel, and through Israel, for all the nations of the earth.

Now, on this point, especially professing Christendom, and many true Christians even in Protestant countries, have through ignorance been at variance with the Apostle and with the clearly revealed mind of God. The general belief of Christians for many centuries has been that the promises made to Israel have, in consequence of their rejection of Christ, been either annulled or bodily transferred to the Church. This has arisen from the erroneous belief that God hath utterly cast off His people which He hath foreknown, and that there is no more a national future for the Jewish nation.

“The attitude of such Christians in relation to the Jews has been humorously illustrated by that prominent Jewish witness for Christ, the late Joseph Rabinowitch, in the following story: During the last Russo-Turkish war, after a great battle, a certain number of men in a particular regiment were returned in the list as dead, and an officer with a company of soldiers was commissioned to attend to the sad duty of seeing them decently buried.

“While engaged in this task, they came across a poor man who was badly wounded, and left on the field for dead, but who had life enough in him to refuse to be buried. But the amusing part of the business was that the officer in command seemed very much perplexed. He asked the poor man’s name, looked at his list, and then said, ‘Well, I do not know what to do with you; in my list you are put down as dead.’ This, Mr. Rabinowitch said, is the attitude of many Christians in relation to the Jew.

“In their political and religious creeds, the Jews as a nation are put down as dead, and even many true Christians, when reading in the Scriptures the exceeding great and precious promises which God made to Israel, say, ‘Oh yes, Israel that is a nation that once lived, but died some nineteen centuries ago, when they rejected Christ, and now “Israel” means no longer Israel, but the Church which has entered into their inheritance.’ But Israel, though seriously wounded, is not dead, and refuses to be buried; and the remarkable signs of vitality which as a people they are now manifesting are in themselves sufficient to show that they are not merely a nation of the past, but preeminently the nation of the future.”1 1 Quoted from my book, “The Ancient Scriptures and the

Modern Jew." When the Apostle Paul wrote these words, Israel had already rejected Christ, and it was on that account that he pours out the great sorrow and uninterrupted pain of his heart,—yet and this is one great purpose he had in writing these three chapters—he proceeds to show how that, though all men be liars, God abides faithful, and that His gifts and calling of Israel (in spite of all that has happened) are "without repentance" or a change of mind on His part.

Therefore, it is with design that he says, not that they were Israelites, and that to them belonged the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the service of God, and the promises: but who are Israelites, and that theirs still are all these gifts which constitute their high calling, for God hath not cast off the people which He had foreknown; and though the majority of many generations of Israel may exclude themselves through unbelief from the enjoyment of these great privileges, they are reserved in the purpose of God against the time when "all Israel shall be saved," and when, through Christ, they shall experience nationally what we now experience individually, that all the promises of God, "how many soever they be," and whether relating to spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, or to national and "temporal" blessings in earthly places in Canaan "in Him is the yea" of verification, "and through Him also is the Amen" of response and of experience "to the glory of God through us" (2Co_1:20).

Meanwhile, far from the death of our Lord Jesus being the occasion for the canceling or annulling of the promises made to Israel, the Apostle assures us that "Christ was made a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God that He might confirm the promises made unto the fathers" (Rom_15:8); and since they have been ratified with His own precious blood, they have been made doubly sure, and can never fail.

I am speaking to Christians, and do not want to be misunderstood. I believe that there is not a promise in reference to spiritual blessing which the least and weakest believer in Christ may not apply and enjoy as if uttered to himself, and (as I said elsewhere) remember that in all His words and acts to Israel the heart of Israel's God is opened up to you, whoever you may be, who have learned to put your trust under the shadow of His wings. For this God is your God forever and ever—the Father of your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who wants you to learn from His infinite grace and faithfulness to His unworthy Israel that His faithfulness to you, too, can never fail. But what I want you to know is that your inclusion into promises made to Israel in no way alters the meaning and force of the words as primarily uttered to that nation, and that you can be no gainer, but rather much of a loser, by the so-called spiritualizing, or phantomising, method of interpreting Scripture, by which "Zion," "Israel," "Jerusalem," etc., are explained to mean the "Church," or "heaven"—a method which is largely responsible for the fact that the Bible, especially the prophetic Scriptures, has become a sealed book to the majority of professing Christians, who in consequence become an easy prey to every wind of false doctrine, or to the specious rationalism in relation to God's Word which now, alas! permeates the Churches.

"Theirs are the promises," and not one thing that God spake will ever fail—"For thus saith Jehovah, like as I brought all this great evil upon this people [and so literally fulfilling all the threatenings and curses which He had uttered against them], so will I bring upon them all the good that I promised them." "He will turn again, He will have compassion upon us; He will subdue our iniquities, and Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. Thou wilt perform the truth unto Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which Thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of

old.” And then, when Jehovah “hath remembered His mercy and His truth toward the house of Israel, all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of God” (Jer_32:42; Mic_7:19-20; Psa_98:3).

6.09. Whose are the Fathers, and of Whom is Christ

WHOSE ARE THE FATHERS, AND OF WHOM IS CHRIST “As touching the election they are beloved for the fathers’ sakes”

“Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham”

WE are now approaching the climax in the gradation of the great “gifts” and high privileges which are parts of Israel’s calling, The next step is “Whose are the fathers.” Oh, my friends, whenever you want to have your hearts stirred afresh with love and interest for Israel, think of “the fathers.” Think of Abraham, “the friend of God,” who was strong in faith and staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, and so became a pattern of faith and obedience to all the family of God; think of Isaac, who was willing to be put on the altar of burnt-offering, and so became a type of Christ, “the Lamb of God”; think of Jacob, who became “Israel”; of Joseph, the beautiful type of our Lord Jesus in His purity of life and in His sufferings and exaltation; of Moses, the great law-giver, who was willing to sacrifice himself for his nation.

Think of the company of Israel’s prophets and psalmists, whose words you continually use as the expressions of your deepest feelings of penitence, faith, devotion, and praise. Think of those “elders” who, “through faith obtained a good report,” and whose paintings are hung up in God’s picture gallery of his heroes, for the admiration and imitation of all ages, in that wonderful eleventh chapter to the Hebrews. No wonder that we read that they are still beloved of God for their fathers’ sakes (Rom_11:28). Christendom has forgotten the relation between these poor wandering Jews in their midst and their noble fathers who form the true aristocracy of all times.

I am reminded of an amusing incident which happened a few years ago. A clergyman who was much interested in the Jews was spending his summer holiday in a small out-of-the-way place in Schleswig-Holstein. Being anxious to create an interest in God’s people, he gathered a number of the peasants together one day and gave them an address, in the course of which he reminded them of their obligations as Christians to the Jewish people. He spoke of Israel’s past history, and how through them were given to us the oracles of God. Then he proceeded to speak of the “fathers” and the prophets; and finally came to the New Testament, and observed that the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, too, were all Jews. At this point he was interrupted by one of the peasants, who stood up at the end of the room and said, “I beg your pardon, sir, this is a mistake; Jesus Christ had twelve apostles, but only one was a Jew, and that was Judas.” I fear that poor ignorant peasant gave expression to the practical thought of multitudes in Christendom. They remember Judas, and readily associate him with the Jewish people; but they forget that Peter and Andrew, and James and John, and Philip and Bartholomew, and Paul and Nathanael, and all the other apostles were also men of Israel.

Alas! there are still Judases among the Jews as there are among the Gentiles, and they are sometimes to be found even among the professed followers and “apostles” of Christ; but, blessed be God, there are also still those who answer to John—disciples whom Jesus loves, and

Nathanaels to whom He Himself bears witness: “Behold Israelites indeed, in whom there is no guile”; and Pauls and Apollos—men “mighty in the Scriptures,” and faithful ministers of the truth, who have instructed many, not only of their own nation, but among the Gentiles.

We now reach the climax of this wonderful gradation. All the previous steps have linked Israel with everything that is sacred and holy in the history of the world and of humanity; but this last step connects Israel, not with earth only, but with heaven – “And of whom as concerning the flesh is Christ, who is over all God blessed forever.” Oh, my friends, every time you approach the Throne of Grace, every time you seek to draw near to God, remember that the “Man at His right hand”—our one Mediator with God and Advocate with the Father—is, as far as His blessed humanity is concerned, forever linked with that nation; for when, “for us men and our salvation,” the Eternal Word was made flesh, so that He might have a sacrifice to offer “for the life of the world” (John 6:51), He took not upon Him the nature of angels, but He took on Him the seed of Abraham (Hebrews 2:16), and was born of a Jewish virgin named Mary, who was of the family of David, and of the tribe of Judah.

I do not expect love or interest for the Jewish people from those who know not and love not Christ. I am not surprised at the anti-Semitism which is to be found among so-called Christian nations who have become apostate from the truth, and who have turned the grace of God into lasciviousness; but I do wonder that there should be true Christians without any love or sympathy for Israel.

“Of whom, as concerning the flesh, is Christ,” but the Babe which was born in Bethlehem is none other than He “whose goings forth are from of old, even from the days of eternity” (Mic_5:2), and the “Son of Man” and “Son of David” is none other than the eternal Son of God—the Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, the Jehovah-Tsidkenu, who, according to His Divine nature, is “God over all, blessed for ever.” To Him, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be glory everlasting. Amen.

Chapter 100

7.00. THE SHEPHERD OF ISRAEL AND HIS SCATTERED FLOCK

THE SHEPHERD OF ISRAEL AND HIS SCATTERED FLOCK A Solution of the Enigma of Jewish History BY

DAVID BARON Editor of The Scattered Nation Author of “The Ancient Scriptures and the Modern Jew,” etc.

(1910) Morgan and Scott

7.000. Contents

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7.01. Psalm 80

GIVE ear, O Shepherd of Israel, Thou that leadest Joseph like a flock;

Thou that sittest upon the cherubim, shine forth, Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh, stir up thy might, And come to save us.

Turn us again, O God; And cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.

O LORD GOD of hosts, How long wilt thou be angry against the prayer of thy people?

Thou hast fed them with the bread of tears, And given them tears to drink in large measure.

Thou makest us a strife unto our neighbours; And our enemies laugh among themselves.

Turn us again, O God of hosts; And cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.

Thou broughtest a vine out of Egypt:

Thou didst drive out the nations, and plantedst it.

Thou preparedst room before it, And it took deep root, and filled the land. The mountains were covered with the shadow of it, And the boughs thereof were like cedars of God.

She sent out her branches unto the sea, And her shoots unto the River.

Why hast thou broken down her fences, So that all they which pass by the way do pluck her? The boar out of the wood doth ravage it, And the wild beasts of the field feed on it.

Turn again, we beseech thee, O God of hosts;

Look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine, And the stock which thy right hand hath planted, And the branch which thou madest strong for thyself.

It is burned with fire, it is cut down;

They perish at the rebuke of thy countenance.

Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand, Upon the son of man whom thou madest strong for thyself. So shall we not go back from thee.

Quicken thou us, and we will call upon thy name.

Turn us again, O LORD GOD of hosts:

Cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.

(Psalms 80:1-19)

7.02. Preface

Preface THIS book is primarily a continuous exposition of a very important scripture which briefly but very graphically depicts Israel's present state among the nations, and looks on prophetically to God's dealings with them in the future. The summary of Jewish history, which might almost stand by itself, and which some readers may perhaps regard as not the least valuable portion of the work, is included chiefly in order to confirm and elucidate the Scripture, and to show how truly the Word of God has been fulfilled in the history of this unique people. Of the importance of this subject, especially in these days of unsettlement and doubt, I need not here speak. Christians, as stated in the book itself, have reason to be thankful for the confirmation of Scripture, and for the light thrown on its pages by recent historical and monumental discoveries; but, after all, the most eloquent monument to the faithfulness of God and to the everlasting truth of His holy word is the JEW; and there is an inscription more striking and legible than any which can be found written on papyrus or graven on rock—an inscription nearly twenty centuries long, consisting of the history of the Jewish nation since their dispersion, written for the most part in their own blood, and which supplies more light upon, and confirmation of, God's living oracles, than can be obtained from any other source except within the Bible itself. But this is not primarily an apologetic or argumentative book. Much rather have I sought, by God's help, not only to point out the true solution of the enigma of the history of the nation to which I have the honor to belong, and which I love, not less, but more, since by the grace of God I have been led to recognise in Christ Israel's true Shepherd and King; but I have tried also to keep before me the spiritual profit of my readers, whether Jews or Christians.

One or two further explanations are perhaps necessary. The summary of Jewish history among the Christian nations is derived from various standard Jewish and Christian sources, as indicated in the footnotes; but I must specially acknowledge my indebtedness to the recently-published Geschichte des Jüdischen Volkes seit der Zerstörung Jerusalems, by Professor F. Heman, of Basel, the most important and most impartial history of the Jewish people since the destruction of the second Temple which has yet appeared, and which, it is to be hoped, will before long be made accessible to English readers. In reference to this section of the book, some may remark that it presents only the tragic side of the story of this undying race. But though it is true that the life of Israel through the Middle Ages was not quite "an unbroken horror of carnage and rapine," and that "there were spells of respite, some of them fairly long, during which the Jews were permitted to live and grow fat"; these sabbaths of rest, as the same writer truly proceeds to state, "can be likened not inaptly to the periods during which a prudent husbandman suffers his land to lie fallow, in the hope of a richer harvest. They are only intervals between the acts of a tedious and bloody tragedy, and a continent for its stage, and seven centuries for its night." The other elements which go to make up Jewish history since the dispersion—the development of the Rabbinic system and its effects on Jewish character—the social life, and manners and customs of the Jews, of which the synagogue might be said to be the emblem and centre—concerns more inner Judaism; and, though an acquaintance with them is of importance to the student and specialist, they are not of

equal interest to the general reader. It would, moreover, be outside the scope of this modest work to enter into these details. For the same reason I have omitted all reference to that part of the Jewish nation whose lot has been cast among Mohammedan and heathen peoples; not only because they have for many centuries formed a very inconsiderable minority of the Diaspora, as compared with the masses of their brethren in Christendom, but because they have placed no special rôle in the world's history, nor have they in any perceptible degree influenced the destiny of the peoples among whom they lived. If the physical suffering which they endured has been less intense than that to which Israel has been subject in Europe, the scorn and contempt to which they were with few exceptions exposed, from races much inferior to themselves, has been if anything greater, and, intellectually and morally, they are on a lower grade than their brethren who are scattered in European countries. For the copying and translation of longer and shorter passages from German sources, as well as in sifting the facts in the historic summary generally, I am indebted to the able and diligent pen of my dear wife, who has so truly been a fellow-worker with me for the Kingdom of God these past twenty-seven years.

Finally, I would beg my reader to note, in reference to the Scriptures dealt with, that while the whole psalm which forms the basis of my subject, and which stands at the commencement, has been copied from the Revised Version, in the exposition itself I have not been bound to any translation, but have had the Hebrew text before me.

It is the prayer of my heart that at least in some little way these pages may conduce to the glory of the great Shepherd of Israel and to the blessing of His long-scattered and suffering flock, concerning which He has still wonderful purposes of grace, and thoughts of salvation.

DAVID BARON.

7.03. Introductory

Introductory

Psalms 80:1-19, about the Shepherd of Israel and His erring flock, is one of the most striking and comprehensive scriptures in the Bible; it has reference to the past, present, and yet future dealings of God with the people whom He has chosen for the express purpose that in and through them “His way” might become known on all the earth, and “His saving health” among all nations. As I take up my pen to write out an exposition of it, my heart goes out in prayer that the same Holy Spirit who first inspired the prophetic writer to utter this sacred oracle may also illumine and guide and help His servant in the attempt to unfold it, so that my readers—whether Jews or Christians—may be constrained to give glory to God, and exclaim with Israel’s great law-giver:

“The Rock! His work is perfect; For all His ways are judgment; A God of truth [or faithfulness], and without iniquity, Just and right is He.”

I must touch only very briefly in passing on the question of date and origin; “definiteness” with regard to which (as is generally admitted by almost all commentators) “is unattainable.” Some commentators suppose this psalm to have been originanally a prayer of Judah for their brethren of the Northern Kingdom, after the latter were carried away captive by Shalmaneser into Assyria; because the only tribes mentioned in the invocation are Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin, the greater part of which also joined with those tribes which broke away from the house of David, while part remained with Judah. Probability is supposed to be added to this view by the fact that in the Septuagint the words ■π■ρ το■ ■σσυρ■ου (“concerning the Assyrian”) are added to the inscription which forms the title, and may be taken as an indication that the translators of that version, in the third or early in the second century before Christ, have regarded it as primarily a prayer for those who had been carried away into Assyria. But there is another, and to my mind a truer, explanation why these tribes are specially named.

There are in this psalm touching allusions to Israel’s past history, and particularly to the wonders connected with the Exodus and the journey through the wilderness; when, with the cloud of glory—which subsequently “dwelt between the Cherubim”—and the pillar of fire, He led His people “like a flock,” till the “vine” which He brought “out of Egypt,” was safely planted on the promised holy soil, where it took root and flourished. Now, in that memorable march of God at the head of His people from Egypt to Canaan, the three tribes which walked immediately in rear of the Tabernacle, with which the symbols of Jehovah’s special presence in their midst were connected, were “Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh” (Num_2:17-22); and as this psalm is an inspired prophetic prayer that, in keeping with His theocratic relation to them, God might once again come and take His place at the head of His people, and bring them out of a greater bondage than that of Egypt, and through this greater and more terrible wilderness than that of Sinai, therefore—in keeping with the historic foreground—these three tribes are especially named. But whatever may have been the time and circumstances which occasioned its original composition, whatever the historic foreground to which it had but a very partial reference, there can be no doubt that the Spirit

of God, who inspired its utterance, has preserved for us in the 80th psalm a permanent picture of Israel's woeful condition when banished from God's presence and scattered among the nations; while in the fervent cry for help in the invocation and in the thrice repeated refrain, which contains the real theme and fundamental prayer of this psalm, we have also a prophecy as to how and whence Israel's final deliverance and full salvation will yet come. To repeat, then, this psalm is a prophetic prayer which shall yet ascend from the heart and soul of the godly remnant of Israel on behalf of the whole nation at the time of the end. But till then—until the Spirit of Grace and of Supplication is poured out on Israel, and they learn to pray in the name of Him through whom alone their prayer shall be heard—it is well pleasing to God that Christians, whose privilege it is to be "watchmen on the walls of Zion," should pray for them after the manner, and more especially in the spirit, of this inspired model prayer; and let me assure the reader that in seeking to lift up holy hands of intercession on behalf of this people, who, in spite of all, are still "beloved" of God "for the fathers' sakes," he himself shall be blessed.

7.04. The Division

The Division Psalms 80:1-19 is divided into three unequal parts by the thrice repeated refrain:

Turn us again, O God; And cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved; the first section consisting of the first three verses (Psalms 80:1-3) form the Invocation; in the second (Psa_80:4-7) Israel's present unspeakably sad condition is graphically depicted, and used as the ground for the earnest cry for God's interposition on their behalf; and in the last and longest section (Psa_80:8-19) the appeal to the Covenant God of the fathers is based on the ground of His former mercies to them.

7.05. Chapter 1 - The Invocation

Chapter 1 The Invocation

“O SHEPHERD of Israel, give ear”—this is the order of the words in the original in the first line of our psalm. How beautiful and significant is this name of God! it was first used by Jacob in blessing Ephraim and Manasses in Gen_48:15, “The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God who hath fed me”1 (literally “who hath shepherded me”) “all my life long unto this day, the Angel which hath redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads”; and again in his final blessing of Joseph he exclaims: “Thence is the Shepherd the stone of Israel.” We can imagine how full of meaning that name, as applied to God, must have been in the mouth of the patriarch. He knew what it meant to be a shepherd. For twenty years he had tended Laban’s sheep, enduring all sorts of hardships and privations in his devotion to them. “Thus I was,” he says in his remonstrance with his wily father-in-law, “in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep departed from my eyes” (Gen_31:40). It subsequently became a very favourite name for God; and no wonder, for next to the precious names “father” and “husband,” there is no name which so fully describes what God is to His people and to the soul that trusts in Him. It is, however, only in and through Christ that we can learn to know God in this very blessed relationship. This is clearly set forth in the prophetic scriptures in the Old Testament as well as in the New Testament. The great Old Testament scripture which sets forth the shepherd relation of God to His people is Eze_34:1 &c. There we read how God will “seek” and “deliver” and “heal” and “strengthen” and “feed” and “rest” and “satisfy” His flock; but when we come to the last part of that chapter, He tells us that He would be and shall yet be all this for Israel in and through the Messiah “And I will set up one Shepherd over them,” He says, and “He shall feed them, even My servant David; He shall feed them and be their Shepherd; they shall dwell safely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods.” And so also in Eze_37:24, “And my servant David2 shall be king over them, and they all shall have one Shepherd; they shall also walk in My judgments and observe My statutes and do them.” It is only, therefore, when Israel’s ear is opened to hear the voice of Him who says, “I am the Good Shepherd: the Good Shepherd layeth down His life for the sheep,” that they will be able intelligently and in truth to say, “Jehovah is my Shepherd”; or to cry out, as the prophetic writer by the Spirit of Inspiration does in this psalm, “O Shepherd of Israel.”

1 There is much more in the Hebrew word■ ■■■■■■ than “to feed.” There are implied in it also the ideas of keeping, leading, ruling over, &c.

2 Even the Jews explained the name “David” in these passages as applying to the Messiah—the great Son of David, in whom all the promises to the Davidic house are centred. Thus Kimchi, in his comment on Eze_34:23, says: “My servant David—that is, the Messiah who shall spring from his seed in the time of salvation”; and in Eze_37:24, he observes: “The King Messiah—His name shall be called David because He shall be of the seed of David.” And so practically all the Jewish commentators. The figure of the Shepherd and the flock is continued in the second line:

“Thou that leadest Joseph like a flock”— who in thy capacity as Shepherd of Israel didst tend and guide, and wert all to them that a shepherd is to his flock:

“Thou that dwellest [literally ‘that sittest enthroned’] between the Cherubim”— i.e., who didst manifest Thy special presence in our midst, dwelling in the Tabernacle and in the Temple in that symbolic cloud of the Shekinah glory—

“Shine forth”— let the light of Thy countenance, O thou Sun of Righteousness, break through and dispel the clouds and the darkness by which we are now surrounded. But the word which the psalmist uses really expresses a prayer for the manifest and personal appearing of His glory for the deliverance of His oppressed, suffering people, and to the dismay of their enemies. It is a somewhat parallel cry to that in Isa_64:1-2.

“Oh that Thou wouldst rend the heavens, that Thou wouldst come down, that the mountains might quake at Thy presence . . . to make Thy Name known to Thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at Thy presence.” In the Hebrew Psalter this word [■■■■■, shine forth] is found only three times, and in every case it is used in relation to the future personal, visible appearing and interposition of God on behalf of Israel and Zion. Its first use is in Psa_50:2, “Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined forth”; which is explained by the words which immediately follow:

“Our God cometh, and shall not keep silence.” The second place is in Psa_80:1 and the third in Psa_94:1, “O Jehovah, thou God to whom vengeance belongeth, O God to whom vengeance belongeth, shine forth.” And all these three passages in the Psalms are based on the sublime scripture in Deu_33:2, in the blessing wherewith Moses, the man of God, blessed the children of Israel before he died.

“And he said:

Jehovah came from Sinai, And rose [or “burst forth”—i.e., as the rising sun] from Seir unto them;

He shined forth from Mount Paran, And he came with [or “from”] the myriads of His holy ones: From His right hand went forth a fiery law unto them.” The imagery of this passage is beautiful, the figure being borrowed from the breaking of the dawn, and the progressive splendour of the sun-rising. Oh, what a wonderful event in the history of the world and of Israel was the revelation of the glory of Jehovah on Sinai! What a bursting forth of light on the moral darkness of this earth! But, alas! by reason of the weakness of the flesh it was not the light of life, but rather of death; for it revealed to man his sin and utter helplessness, and the perfect holiness of the God who is “a consuming fire.” But the law contained not only the promise, but was in itself also a preparing for the Gospel; and, therefore, in the fulness of time, though not attended by outward splendour as on Sinai, another Epiphany (2Ti_1:10) of God our Saviour took place, bringing not “a fiery law,” but the Gospel of His grace, which abolished death and brought life and immortality to light. The acceptable year of the Lord ushered in by that Epiphany is rapidly running to its close; and although for nigh nineteen centuries favour has been preached to the wicked, yet he has not leaned righteousness. Men are beginning to ask if the faith founded by the Son of God has not already proved a failure; and scoffers boldly say: “Where is the promise of His coming, and what sign is there of any change or interruption of the present state of things?” Even the professing Church, lost for the most part in worldliness and error, seeks to strike its roots in the earth, crying

peace and progress, and acting as if all things will for ever continue as they are.1

1 See the chapter, “The Silence of God—how it shall be Broken,” in the author’s work, The Ancient Scriptures and the Modern Jew. But this earth shall yet again see the glory of the personal presence of the Lord, and the answer to the prophetic prayer, “Shine forth,” will be the “appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ”—“at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven, with the angels of His power, in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Tit_2:13; 2Th_1:7-8)—when in a special manner He will show Himself to be the “Shepherd of Israel” and their Deliverer. The prayer is continued in the same strain in the second verse:

“Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh,”

—even as Thou didst in our fathers’ times when Thou didst march at the head of the tribes, in the Pillar of Cloud and Pillar of Fire, scattering Thine enemies before Thee1—

“Stir up Thy might,” which now seems to be slumbering; and which reminds us of Isa_51:9, “Awake, awake, put on strength, O Arm of Jehovah; awake as in the days of old, the generations of ancient times. Art Thou not it [that great power] that cut Rahab [i.e., Egypt] in pieces, that pierced the dragon [of the Nile—i.e., Pharaoh]? Art Thou not it which dried up the sea, the waters of the great deep; that made the depths of the sea a way for the redeemed to pass over?” Oh that Thou wouldst again “stir up Thy might and come to save us!” or, as the last line of the second verse of our psalm reads more literally, “And go forth for salvation to us,” which prayer for God’s Yeshuah (“salvation”) will only be fulfilled in the going or coming forth of Him whose Hebrew name is ■■■■■■■■ Jeshua—i.e., “Saviour,” and who shall yet “save His people from their sins” (Mat_1:21), and “out of all their troubles” (Psa_25:22).

1 See remarks on the reason of the special mention of these tribes in the Introduction.

7.06. Chapter 2 - Israel's Woes Depicted

Chapter 2 Israel’s Woes Depicted

WE come now to the consideration of the second section, in which, as already stated, Israel’s present very woeful condition is depicted and used as the plea for God’s interposition and deliverance:

“O Jehovah God of Tzebaoth, How long wilt thou be angry [lit. ‘wilt thou smoke’] against the prayer of thy people?

Thou has fed them with the bread of tears, And given them tears to drink in large measure,”

Thou makest us a strife [or ‘a subject of contention’] unto our neighbours: And our enemies laugh among themselves.1

1 The word ■■■■■■■■■, shalish, means literally “the third part” (of some large measure). It is found elsewhere only in Isa_40:12, where it is rendered in the Authorized and Revised Versions simply “a measure.” The “measure” is probably the Ephah, the third part of which, as Delitzsch observes, though puny for the dust of the earth, is “a large measure for tears.”

Now, in reading these lines, which so truly and graphically summarise the experience of the Jewish people for so many centuries, we are first of all reminded of the fact that the Great Shepherd of Israel had purposed and provided something very different for His flock. Oh, there are green pastures prepared “upon the mountains of Israel” (Eze_34:14); there are “the waters of quietness” (Psa_23:2) flowing from “wells of salvation,” from which they might drink and be satisfied. How is it, then, that Israel has now to eat the bread of tears, and have tears in great measure for his drink? For an answer to this important question we need go no farther than Psalms 81:1-16. It is not without design that Psalms 81:1-16 immediately follows Psalms 80:1-19; for it supplies the explanation and answer to the “How long?” (Psa_80:4) and the “Why” (Psa_80:12) contained in it. The reason of Israel’s special sorrows is found in his peculiar relationship to Jehovah. The God of heaven condescended to enter into a special national covenant with this people when he brought them out of the land of bondage. Great and wonderful blessings were promised to them if they were “good and obedient” (Isa_1:19). This is how God solemnly charged and warned them:

“Hear, O My people, and I will testify unto thee;

O Israel, if you would but hearken unto Me!

There shall no strange god be in thee;

Neither shall thou worship any strange god.

I am Jehovah thy God, Who brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it."

What He was ready to feed and satisfy them with He tells us in the last verse of that psalm:

"He should have fed them also with the fat of the wheat, With honey out of the rock, should I satisfy thee."

"Oh that My people would hearken unto Me,"

He exclaims in yearning desire over them—

"That Israel would walk in my ways!"

"but"—He sorrowfully laments in the eleventh verse—

"My people hearkened not to My voice, And Israel would none of Me."

Oh, how much there is included in Psalms 81:11 : "My people hearkened not: Israel would none of Me!"—it summaries Israel's many transgressions, their stubborn unbelief and innumerable provocations of the Most High. Shall I stop to trace the beginning, progress, and climax of Israel's disobedient and progressive apostasy? The first stage downwards was the disregard of the most solemn charge: "There shall no strange god be in thee; neither shalt thou worship any strange god"—which contains the keyote of the revelation given from Sinai, and the fundamental command of the decalogue.

I do not wish to dwell much on this point here, having already elsewhere1 pointed out the very humbling object-lesson which Jewish history presents in this respect to all the rest of mankind, and how it contradicts all the rest of mankind, and how it contradicts and the boasted assertions of human progress and development in relation to things spiritual and eternal.

1 See A Divine Forecast of Jewish History.

Modern so-called "progressive" Rabbis—confirmed and supported by many "modern" Christian theologians, who also no longer believe in a Divine revelation—speak boastfully as if the Jews had discovered or evolved the belief in One God. "This," says one of the greatest of modern Jewish lights (viz., that the Jewish people "created Monotheism out of itself"), "is Israel's imperishable merit."1 But the very opposite is the truth. Not only did Israel not create the belief in one true and living God "out of itself," but history testifies to the fact that Israel was naturally as prone to idolatry as any of the other Semitic peoples to whom they are related; and when left to themselves they could not even retain the knowledge of the living God after it had been divinely communicated to them. And if the light of the knowledge of God was maintained in their midst, the fact is to be ascribed, not to the "monotheistic genius" of the Jewish people, but to Divine acts and interpositions, in judgments and in mercy, of Israel's God. Instead of claiming "imperishable merit," as is done by modern Rabbis, Israel's true prophets and psalmists confess with broken hearts that "to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers" (Dan_9:8); for though the God of Glory revealed Himself in our midst, and dealt with us as with no other nation, "though He commanded the clouds from above and opened the doors of heaven and rained down manna upon them to eat," and showed them many other great and wonderful signs, "their hearts were not right with Him," and they continuously "turned back and dealt unfaithfully like their fathers;

they were turned aside like a deceitful bow. For they provoked Him to anger with their high places, and moved Him to jealousy with their graven images" (Psa_78:23-24, Psa_78:57-58).

1 "Es hat den Monotheismus in gewaltigem 'Ringen mit Gott und Menschen', wie die Bibel sagt, aus sich geschaffen. Das ist Israel's unvergängliches Verdienst"—Das Judenthum, by Dr. M. Güdemann, Chief Rabbi of Vienna (p. 17); the edition from which I am translating was published in Vienna by R. Löwit in 1902. This was the beginning and the first stage in Israel's national apostasy—the turning from God to idols. The climax was reached when, after a long-continued process of disobedience and self-hardening, and because their hearts were already alienated from God, Israel turned their backs upon Him who is "the brightness of God's glory and the express image of His person." The Scribes and Pharisees in Christ's time, and the majority of the Jews of the present day, would have us believe that they rejected Jesus of Nazareth because He wanted to mislead and turn them away from God and His holy law. Many of them in their ignorance sincerely believed and still believe this to be the case. But alas! this very ignorance is part of the awful consequences of Israel's prior alienation from their heavenly Father, and from the true spirit of Moses and the prophets. No: Israel rejected Christ, not because He went counter to, or sought in any way to lead them astray from God, or because His teaching was contradictory to the Law and to the testimony which was already in their hands; but because, on the contrary, He sought to bring them back to God, and was Himself the very image of God, who as the only true Israelite, not only bore witness to the law and the prophets, but Himself magnified the Law, and fulfilled and exemplified it in His own life. How pathetic is the Gospel narrative in this respect! The self-deceived leaders of the people sought to justify their hostility to Jesus and their rejection of His claim on the ground of their zeal for God. "We have one Father, even God," they said. But Jesus said unto them, "If God were your Father, ye would love Me; for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but He sent Me" (Joh_8:41-42). Again, they put it on the ground of their zeal for the Law; but His answer was, These very Scriptures which ye search, and for which ye profess such zeal, are "they which testify of Me." "Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me, for he wrote of Me; it is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man, therefore, that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto Me" (Joh_5:39-47; Joh_6:45).1 1 See Appendix 1—"Were the Jews Justified in Rejecting Jesus of Nazareth?" In the light of the gospel narrative and the history of Israel's dealings with, and their attitude to, their Messiah, how solemn and full of significance is God's complaint:

"But My people hearken not to My voice; And Israel would none of Me!" for in the rejection of Christ and in their resistance of the Spirit, Israel reached the climax of their progressive apostasy from their God. The sad and terrible consequence of it all is tersely set forth in Psalms 81:12 :

"So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust, And they walked in their own counsels." So the Authorised Version reads: but the words in the original are much more forcible and striking, literally:

"So [or then] I sent them forth [or 'cast them out'] in the stubbornness of their heart:

Let them walk [or 'they shall walk'] in their own counsels." This is the most terrible thing which an befall any man or nation—when God says, "Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone" (Hos_4:17), or in the words of personified Wisdom:

“They would none of my counsel;

They despised all my reroof;

Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, And be filled with their own devices” (Pro_1:30-31).

“So He sent them forth” It reminds us of the very solemn words of Hos_9:17, “My God will cast them away, because they did not hearken unto Him; and they will be wanderers among the nations.” And with this banishment from God’s presence, and their dispersion among the nations, began Israel’s night of weeping. What a long and dark night it has been to them! How terribly real and true have the words proved to be:

“Thou hast fed them with the bread of tears, And given them tears to drink in large measure”!

What other people under heaven have suffered and wept so much as the Jews? At the inauguration of Israel’s great and many national tribulations—at the very commencement of the prophetic period called “the times of the Gentiles”—Jeremiah, who was an eye-witness of the calamities which fell on his people at the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the first Temple by the Chaldeans, which marked the close of the first stage of Israel’s apostasy and punishment, exclaims: “Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow which is done unto me; wherewith Jehovah hath afflicted me in the day of His fierce anger.” And some five and a half centuries later, after the second stage of Israel’s national sin culminated in the rejection of Christ, which brought about the breaking-up of their national polity, and inaugurated the longer and more terrible captivity than the seventy years’ exile in Babylon, the historian Josephus, in commencing to write the history of The Jewish Wars, and particularly the final desperately heroic, but futile, death struggle with the great Roman world-power, says in his Preface: “Accordingly it appears to me that the misfortunes of all men from the beginning of the world, if they be compared with those of the Jews, are not so considerable as they were . . . this makes it impossible for me to contain my lamentation.” This was at the very beginning of our “Christian Era.” What would that historian have said if he could have foreseen the untold woes and miseries which have been heaped upon this people in the nineteen centuries which have intervened? As I write, there lies before me a rare book, written in the middle of the sixteenth century by the Jewish Rabbi and physician, Joseph ha-Kohen, who was born in Avignon in 1496, but was driven by persecution to Italy, where he died in 1575. It is a history of his people from the destruction of the second Temple down to his time. And what do you think is the title of the book? “Emek ha-Baca—‘the Valley of Tears.’ ” And the name, as he truly observes in his Preface, accurately describes its contents. “For everyone,” he says, “who will read it must do it with astonishment” (and as a Christian I must add also with shame and indignation) “in his heart, and as the tears stream down from his eyes he will be constrained to exclaim, ‘How long, O Lord; how long!’ ” It is one long martyrology, the record of a almost unbroken chain of unparalleled sufferings—a chronicle of massacres, oppressions, banishments, fiendish tortures, spoliations and degradations, which have been inflicted upon the Jews for the most part by so-called Christian nations. No wonder that another Jewish historian in Italy (Samuel Usque), who wrote a work in Portguese also early in the sixteenth century1 depicting the universal misery of his people, exclaims in his Introduction: “To which part of the world shall I turn to find healing for my wound, forgetfulness for my pain, and comfort for my heavy, unbearable sufferings? Among the riches and

enjoyments of happy Asia I find myself a heavy-laden pilgrim. In sun-burnt Africa, rich with gold, I am a wretched, starving exile. And thou, Europe, my hell upon earth! What shall I say about thee? How shall I praise thee, vicious, warring Italy? Like a hungry lion hast thou fed on the torn flesh of my lambs! Ye corrupted French meadows, poisoned grass did my lambs eat on you! Proud, barbaric, mountainous Germany, thou hast thrown down and broken to pieces my young men from the top of thine Alps! Ye sweet and fresh waters of England, bitter and salt draughts did my flock drink of you! Hypocritical, cruel, and blood-thirsty Spain, ravenous hungry wolves have devoured and are still devouring my flock in thy midst. . . . It is the lot of every creature to experience change; but with Israel it is not so: his misfortune never changes, his sorrows never end." "All peoples of the earth," laments yet another Jewish author, Joseph Ibn Verga, in the middle of the sixteenth century, "are as one in their hatred against the Jews; all creatures in heaven and on earth are united in sworn hostility to them. Before the Jewish child can lisp, it is already followed or surrounded by hatred and scorn. We are despised as the lowest worms."

1 The title of the work is Consolaçao as Tribulaçoens de Israel. I am translating the abstract from Professor Heman's new and important work Die Geschichte des Jüdischen Volkes, pp. 303, 304. To show that this is no mere hyperbole nor rhetoric, but literally true, I beg the reader to follow me in a summary of Jewish history among the so-called Christian nations, which—though it may form a long break in the continuous exposition of the scripture which we are considering—I feel myself constrained to include, because of the general lack of knowledge of the history of the scattered people since the destruction of the second Temple, and also because of the absence of any really satisfactory work in the English language on this most important subject.

Chapter 108

7.07. Chapter 3 - A Summary of Jewish History Since the Destruction of the Second Temle

Chapter 3 A Summary of Jewish History Since the Destruction of the Second Temple A. The National Catastrophe B. The Final Struggle with Imperial Rome C. Degradation and Sufferings Heaped upon the Jews by the Papal Church D. Jewish Sufferings in the Middle Ages E. The Jews in France F. The Jews in England G. The Fiery Furnace in Germany H. The Jewish Tragedy in Spain and Portugal I. The Jews in Poland J. The Reformation and Since

7.08. A. The National Catastrophe

Chapter 3 A Summary of Jewish History A. The National Catastrophe NOT one stone remained upon another; the Temple and city lay in smoking ruins. The foundations of the Temple terraces alone withstood destruction, and of the great and glorious city Titus left standing only the three strong towers which bore the names of Hyppicus, Mariamne, and Phasael; all beside were ashes and heaps of ruins. During the course of the long siege more than a million of people had perished in the city; thousands had fallen in battles in the country. Those who fell into the hands of the Romans and were not slain were sold into slavery, the fate of all prisoners in the olden time. Many thousands went forth to the mines and quarries of Egypt; other thousands were bought by the slave dealers at absurd prices; all the markets were glutted with Jewish slaves. Thousands more were shared as spoil by the conquerors and sent as presents to their friends; the finest and most powerful of the men and youths were selected for conflicts with wild beasts, for gladiatorial games, and to grace the triumphal train of the Emperor and Cæsar; 900,000 of the sons and daughters of Zion thus witnessed in all the world to the destruction of the Jewish kingdom and nation.

“In every city through which Titus passed on his return to Rome splendid entertainments in honour of his victory were celebrated, at which hundreds of Jewish youths were compelled to fight with one another, and with wild beasts, till death. His triumphal car to Rome was drawn by seven hundred beautiful youths in chains, among whom were the two last bravest party leaders, John of Gischala and Simon bar-Giora, who had fallen alive into the hands of the Romans; after these were borne the most precious of the spoils from the Temple—vessels and treasure, the great golden candlesticks, the golden table, and the precious sacred Roll of the Law.

“Coins were struck memorialising the fall of Judah, and the splendid triumphal arch of Titus still shows the captive Jews in chains, and the sacred vessels of their sanctuary. While almost all other memorials of Rome’s victories have long since fallen into ruin, this monument of Jewish misery, like the Jewish people itself, remains today a wonderful coincidence in the history of the world! And which will endure the longest—the misery of the Jewish captivity or its memorial”1 1 Heman, Geschichte des Jüdischen Volkes.

7.09. B. The Final Struggle with Imperial Rome

Chapter 3 A Summary of Jewish History B. The Final Struggle with Imperial Rome THIS overthrow of the Jewish nation seemed irreparable and final; but some sixty years later the bitter struggle with the power of Rome commenced anew, and the desperate courage of the Jews and their overwhelming numbers protracted the contest three and a half years. The Emperor Hadrian had revived a law by which the practice of circumcision was punished by death; he also proposed to build a city, over the ruins of Jerusalem, to be named Ælia Capitolina, and to erect on the platform foundation of the destroyed Temple of Jehovah a temple for the worship of Jupiter. This maddened the Jews, threatening as it did to destroy both their separate national existence and their national hopes—ever expectant of the coming of Messiah and of future glory in their land. The appearance of a man at this time, who claimed to be the promised Messiah, and whom the great Rabbi Akiba hailed as such by the name of Bar Cochba ("Son of a Star"),1 in allusion to the prophecy of Balaam, inflamed their zeal to white heat. The Rabbis and students of the Law ardently encouraged the revolt. The numbers who rallied to Bar Cochba are reported by Dio Cassius as 580,000, including some hired soldiery. For some two years their fierce valour caused Tinius Rufus, the Roman Governor, to retreat before them; the additional help in troops sent from Rome was insufficient to cope with the Jewish forces, madly confident of success, until Julius Severus, the most capable of all Roman generals of the time, was recalled from Britain. The task of subduing the Jews was no light one even for him; it was a prolonged guerilla warfare, the foes not to be met in open conflict, but having to be sought out in their places of concealment, incurring terrible suffering and waste of life to both armies.

1 After the bitter disappointment of their hopes the survivors changed the name to Bar Coziba ("Son of a Lie"). The last stand was made at Bithar, which held out two years, till the people were reduced to starvation; it is probable also that treachery aided the Romans in the end. All the men were put to the sword, and the women and children reserved for slavery.

Five hundred and eighty thousand Jews are said to have perished in battle, beside those who perished by famine and sickness. "Judea was almost wholly a wilderness"; 50 castles and 285 villages were entirely destroyed. At the yearly market, by Abraham's Oak at Hebron, Jewish slaves were sold at a nominal price; a Jew was worth no more than a horse. A Temple to Jupiter rose on Mount Moriah, and Jerusalem received the name of Ælia Capitolina; Jews being forbidden on pain of death to come within sight of the city.

7.10. C. Degradation and Sufferings Heaped Upon the Jews by the Papal Church

Chapter 3 A Summary of Jewish History C. Degradation and Sufferings Heaped upon the Jews by the Papal Church

IT would be a weary task to give even a brief summary of the precarious conditions of Jewish life under the pagan Roman emperors. We pass over nearly two hundred years in silence, and take up the tread of their history at a date when Christianity had become the State religion of the Roman Empire. For a brief three years the Emperor Constantine was tolerant of all religions, and the Jews enjoyed the same rights as other subjects, and their Rabbis the privileges granted to the leaders of the Christians and to heathen priests. In the year 315, however, a new decree was issued, declaring the Jews to be “an injurious, impious sect,” which must be proscribed and repressed. The first Christian Council of which history takes cognisance, the Council of Nicæa, resolved to break those ties of relationship, the result of their common origin, which until now had existed to some extent between the Synagogue and the Church. Among other things, Easter was henceforth to be observed universally on a fixed date, independent of the Jewish calendar. Eusebius relates that the Emperor addressed the assembled bishops: “It seems unworthy of us to celebrate this holy festival after the custom of the Jews. We desire to have nothing in common with this so hated people, for the Redeemer has marked out another path for us. To this we will keep, and be free from disgraceful association with this people.”

Thus did the first Christian Council wholly forget the love of Christ, and breathe out only hatred and enmity against the unhappy people of the Jews. And these first “Christian” edicts were the precursors of many passed by subsequent Councils, the one aim of which was to degrade and humble them, and to represent them in the eyes of the world as the offscouring and pariahs of mankind. The natural consequences soon followed. Marriages between Jews and Christians were made punishable by death; Jews were excluded from all public offices. Sometimes, indeed, the expensive duties of magistracy were laid upon them, while its exemptions and privileges were denied them. The evidence of Jews against Christians was declared inadmissible; for the Israelite was, in the eyes of the Christian of that period, worse than an infidel, and was designated in the official language of the Church perfidus—i.e., a man to whom no faith or credit could be given; “Oremus et pro perfides Judœis” are the words of the Liturgy of Good Friday, and all the divines and canonists of the period used the expression.1 1 Von Döllinger No Christian was to let or sell his house to a Jew. In one of the earliest Councils it was decreed that no Christian might eat with a Jew; and Chrysostom improved upon this ordinance by protesting that Christians ought not to hold any intercourse with Jews, “whose souls are the habitations of demons and whose synagogues are their playground.” A Jew might not sit in the presence of a priest; in a quarrel, if a Jew should strike a priest, death by fire, with the confiscation of his goods, was the penalty.

They were excluded from all schools, both higher and lower. On Christian festivals Jews were not to be seen in the streets; so it was enacted in the Third and Fourth Councils of Orleans, “since

their appearance would be a species of offence to Christianity." At the Council of Vienna it was decreed that "no Jew should be admitted in a public bathing establishment, an inn, or a house of call for journeymen"—in short, the Jew was to be shunned "like one plague-stricken, whose very breath is infectious, like a dangerous seducer whose speech harbours the poison of scepticism and unbelief."1 1 Von Döllinger

Jews might not traffic nor practice any profession or handicraft: nor could they engage in agriculture, since the holding of land was forbidden them everywhere. They were shut up to money-lending and usury, which became an additional cause of their moral and physical ruin, since they were used only too often as a sponge in the hands of rulers, which could be wrung out when full, and then given over to the fury of the people. The climax of Jewish hatred on the part of the Papal Church found expression in the Lateran Council of 1215. At this Council the whole of Western Christianity might be said to have been represented, for there were present at it: 71 archbishops, 412 bishops, 800 abbots, and a host of other Church dignitaries and priests. Its decrees were embodied in seventy canons, four of which deal with the Jews, and the one which has proved of the most terrible consequence to the scattered people in Europe for a number of centuries was that which practically put upon them the badge of outlawry. Henceforth the Jews "in all Christendom and in all times" "were ordained to wear a distinctive dress or badge." This humiliating mark was soon placed upon the scattered people everywhere. In some lands it was a badge in shape of a wheel, red, yellow, or parti-coloured, fixed upon the breast; in others it was a square patch placed upon the shoulder, or hat. At Avignon the sign was a pointed yellow cap; at Prague a sleeve of the same colour; in Italy and Germany a horn-shaped head-dress, red or green, and so on.

"Thus," says Professor Heman, "were the Jews [by this badge of degradation] given over by the Church and the representatives of the Christian religion to shame and reproach for half a millennium." And the worst consequences of this degrading position in which they were placed were that the Jews lost all self-respect and sense of their own dignity; they became outwardly obsequious in manner, and everywhere cringed in abject humility and slavishness of spirit; but at heart they became ever more and more embittered against Christians, and more intense in their hostility to Christianity. Utterly helpless in themselves, they were condemned by the leaders of Christianity to be the pariahs of mankind, and were compelled to endure contempt and hatred, plundering and banishment, blows and murder, from all the world. From this time especially the Jewish people became the martyr nation of the earth, and of mankind; and its tormentors were the Christians, who behaved infinitely worse to them than the Mohammedans and heathen.

"The material loss which the Christians are supposed to have suffered in the course of centuries from the usury of the Jews, into which they were forced against their will, has been far outweighed by the loss of property, blood, and life, which the Jews have suffered since they were subjected to wear the yellow badge. But quite impossible to estimate is the injury to character suffered by the Jews as a result of this abominable outrage. The abject, slavish spirit, malicious craftiness, artful cunning, painful timidity, and all other faults of character which till lately have been made a reproach against them—these are all chargeable to the humiliating and scandalous treatment which they have received from Christians since the Lateran Council."1 1 Heman, Geschichte des Jüdischen Volkes.

Men wise before their age, and even those noted for Christian sanctity within the Papal Church, found no place in their hearts for compassion for this afflicted people. “It is true that here and there in the Dark Ages there was an occasional gleam of pity, or even of justice. It is to the lasting honour of Bernard of Clairvaux that during the whirling excitement of the Second Crusade he urged the soldiers of the Cross not to slaughter the people ‘who were scattered among all nations as living memorials of Christ’s passion.’ And the illustrious Raymond Lull, who in the opening years of the fourteenth century died on the African coast in the name and service of our blessed Redeemer, kneeling on the sand while the stones crashed around him, and crying with his last shaking breath, ‘None but Christ! None but Christ!’ was the pioneer of Jewish missions.” But Peter of Clugny, who was a contemporary of Bernard of Clairvaux, sought to incite Louis VII. of France to plunder the Jews, saying that the blaspheming Jews were worse than the Saracens; and Thomas Aquinas advised Alice of Burgundy that the Jews were by their own guilt under sentence of perpetual slavery, and that the lords of the land had therefore the right to treat Jewish property as their own. The gentle Ambrose already in the fourth century designated burning synagogues in Rome by the mob “a work well pleasing to God,” while a century later the pugilistic Christian bishop and father, Cyril of Alexandria, himself led a “Christian” mob against the Jewish quarter of that imperial city; demolished their synagogues, pillaged their dwellings, and hounded the inmates out of the city in which they had lived and prospered for seven centuries. “Forty thousand of them, the most industrious and thrifty part of the population, were driven forth to join their brethren in exile,” As to the Popes, there are a few notable exceptions of some who shielded the Jews in their own States, chiefly, it must be confessed, because of their commercial enterprise and wealth, which were such important factors in mediæval Europe; but most of the papal pontiffs, who were regarded not only as the heads of Christendom, but as the very “Vicars of Christ” on earth, were their relentless persecutors, and promulgated edicts which breathe fire and sword against the Jews. “Whenever in mediæval times a pope was consecrated the Hebrew congregation were among the attendants, standing with slavish gestures, full of fear or timid hope, while the Chief Rabbi at their head carried on his shoulders the mysterious veiled Roll of the Holy Law. they were accustomed to read their fate in the gloomy or genial countenance of the new pope. Was it to be toleration or oppression? While the Rabbi handed the Vicar of Christ the scroll for confirmation, their eyes scanned keenly the face that turned towards him. As the scroll was handed back, this was the formula which the Pope was accustomed to utter: “We recognise the Law, but we condemn the view of Judaism; for the Law is fulfilled through Christ, whom the blind people of Judah still expect as the Messiah.”1 “A deadly fright had overcome him,” writes Pope Stephen VI. (885—91) to the Archbishop of Narbonne, “on hearing that the Jews there, those enemies of God, by royal grant, possessed allodial property, and that Christians dwelled together with these dogs, and even rendered them services, while by way of punishment for the death of Christ all grants and promises sworn by God Himself had been taken away”; while the declaration of Innocent III. that the whole nation was, for its guilt’s sake, doomed by God to perpetual slavery, became the Magna Charta always appealed to by all who thirsted for the possessions of the Jews and their gains.

1 Hosmer, The Jews, in “The Story of the Nations” series.

7.11. D. Jewish Sufferings in the Middle Ages

Chapter 3 A Summary of Jewish History D. Jewish Sufferings in the Middle Ages

Turning from the un-Christian attitude of the spiritual guides and leaders of the Christian Church to the experience of the Jewish people at the hands of the princes and peoples of so-called Christian nations, what a terrible picture meets our gaze! “Jews Massacred in France,” “Jews Massacred in Germany,” “Jews Massacred in England,” “Jews Massacred in Germany and France,” “Jews Massacred in Spain,” again and again and again. These headings, not to mention expulsions, oppressions, and spoliations without number, stare us in the face as we turn over the pages of the history of mediæval Europe, and the cold lines assume a terrible significance as we peruse tale after tale of bodily and mental torment, such as no other people have suffered and survived. And as we read on and try to realise the awful scenes, the desolate cry of the sufferers rings in our ears like a long-drawn wail borne across the centuries: “How long, O Lord, how long.”1 1 G. F. Abbott, Israel in Europe. A few facts from their experience in the leading countries of Europe must suffice. By confining the Jewish population in the narrow quarters of a ghetto whose space never widened, though the families within it increased, where they were shut within gates every night, they were kept like a caged beast who can be slaughtered at will; and whenever necessity forced the Jew to go abroad the yellow badge at once marked him as an object for insult and violence. A people held to be so degraded, so accursed, and of a double necessity living their life apart, even while dispersed among the other peoples, regarded with suspicion and continually exposed to violence; without hope of justice, became suspicious, hated and avoided the sight of others, and appeared to justify the evil opinion formed of them. It was easy to make the hated people the scapegoat in all cases of crimes committed, and, in that superstitious and ignorant age, of evils, also which had a natural origin.

“If sickness prevailed, it was because the Jews had poisoned the wells; if a Christian child were lost, it had been crucified at a Jewish ceremony; if a church sacristan was careless, it was the Jews who had stolen the Host from the altar to stab it with knives at the time of the Passover. In many periods, in almost all lands, whoever sinned or suffered, the Jew was accused, and the occasion straightway made use of for attacks in which hundreds or thousands might perish. the wild cry of the rabble, ‘Hep! hep!’—probably derived from the Latin formula, ‘Hierosolyma est perdita’—might break out at any time.”1 1 Hosmer, The Jews.

7.12. E. The Jews in France

Chapter 3 A Summary of Jewish History E. The Jews in France The first monstrous blood accusation was raised against the Jews in France. In Blois (during the eleventh century) a mounted servant professed to have witnessed a Jewish rider throw the dead body of a child into the water. Count Theobald at once imprisoned all the Jews of the city. As the servant was the only witness, his truth was put to the test by his crossing the River Loire in a boat filled with water, and as he did this successfully it was regarded as proof of the guilt of the Jews, who were condemned to death by fire. They were secured in a wooden tower surrounded with fagots; when this was done they were exhorted by a priest to save their lives by submitting to baptism, but in vain. Thirty-four men and seventeen women suffered death by fire, repeating Hebrew prayers.

“From these times there has been handed down a tragic Hebrew lay which affords a glimpse into the souls of those who thus suffered. It describes the immolation upon the funeral pile of a Rabbi and his family—a chant characteristically Jewish, pathetic, tenderly affectionate, but bitterly scornful to the last, and audacious in its imprecations. A few passages from this follow:

“ ‘Israel is in mourning, bewailing its brave martyred saints. Thou, O God, dost behold our flowing tears. Without Thy help we perish!’

“ ‘O Sage, who day and night grew pale over the Torah, for the Torah you have died.’

“ ‘When his noble wife saw the flames burst forth: “My love calls me,” she cried. “As he died, I would die.” His youngest child trembled and wept. “Courage!” said the elder. “In this hour Paradise will open.” And the Rabbi’s daughter, the gentle maid? “Abjure your creed,” they cry “A faithful knight stands here who dies for love of thee.” “Death by fire rather than renounce my God! it is God whom I desire for my spouse.” “Choose,” said the priest, “the cross or the torture.” But the Rabbi said: “Priest, I owe my body to God, who now requires it,” and tranquilly he mounts the pile.

“ ‘Together in the midst of the unchained flames, like cheerful friends at a festival, they raise high and clear the hymn of deliverance, and their feet would move in dances were they not bound in fetters.

“ ‘ “God of vengeance, chastise the impious!”

“ ‘ “Doth Thy wrath sleep?”

“ ‘ “What are the crimes which I am forced to expiate under the torch of these felons?”

“ ‘ “Answer, O Lord, for long have we suffered; answer, for we count the hours!” ’ ”1 1 Reinach, Histoire des Juifs.

Philip IV. bought a Jew for 500 francs from the Count of Chablis, and another Jew with his children from his brother, Charles of Anjou. On the accession of Philip Augustus, terrible times commenced for the Jews. He intended to overthrow the power of the barons and to make the throne supreme, and meant to attain his end by means of Jewish gold. In January, 1180, he caused all the Jews in

his kingdom to be thrown into prison, and only let them free again on the payment of 15,000 marks in silver. The next year he banished all the Jews, confiscating all their landed property to the Crown. Later he favoured their return; but between the nobles and the King they led a miserable life, being sold like chattels with the estates of the nobles on which they live, and were continually exposed to cruelty and robbery.

Philip IV. (1306) commanded all the Jews to leave the kingdom within a month, with loss of all their property and debts due to them, on pain of death. About 100,000 left the land with only the clothes they wore, and means of provision for one day. The King himself appropriated all their gold, money, jewels, and treasure in silver. The synagogue at Orleans was sold for 340 livres; that in Paris he presented to his coachman. Nine years later Louis X. permitted the return of the banished people. In 1320 the shepherd scourge took place, marching with banners flying from town to town, like crusaders, joined as they went by highwaymen and other criminals. They attacked and destroyed the Jews, spoiling their property from the Garonne to Toulouse. five hundred Jews perished in the fortified city of Verdun, and massacres of Jews occurred in the neighbourhood of Gascoigne, Bordeaux, Toulouse, and Albi; 120 Jewish communities were wiped out by them in the South of France. In 1321 a number of ill-used lepers revenged themselves by poisoning springs and rivers, accusing the Jews of having incited them to do it, and of giving them the poison. In consequence, Jews were again imprisoned, tortured, and done to death by fire. In Chinon a great pit was dug, and eight Jews and Jewesses burnt in it. All Jews in France were condemned to pay the sum of £15,000. How the sponge was wrung dry from time to time and why the poor people were permitted to return after spells of banishment it is easy to see.

Two centuries later the Jews were again accused of poisoning the wells and causing the plague, which in reality had travelled Westward from China. Under torture, by order of the Duke of Savoy, two Jews and a Jewess were forced to declare that the charge was true. All the Jews on the shores of the Lake of Geneva were burnt alive. The news was sent to Berne, where the Jews were again tortured and burnt; it passed to Basle, Strasbourg, Freiburg, Cologne, to Zurich, St. Gall, Schaffhausen, and many other cities; Jewish martyr fires lit up Southern France, Switzerland, and Germany. A little later, when the French King John became a prisoner in England, and France, greatly impoverished, was unable to raise a ransom, the Jews saw their opportunity, and proposed to the Dauphin a plan by which the exiled Frenchmen, and Jews also, might settle in France under conditions alike favourable to the State and to themselves. the King agreed to this, and granted great privileges to the Jews, and liberty to settle in the land for twenty years. A year later he made certain modifications in the privilege granted, and eight years later his son, Charles V., issued a decree of banishment, which was but to squeeze the sponge a second time after a lapse of only nine years; for on the payment of 15,000 marks he recalled the edict of banishment. In 1394 hatred of the Jews had grown to such an extent that they were again banished by Charles VI. And four hundred years passed before their return; since which time they have for the most part escaped persecution, though the bitter spirit of animosity still exists, as was apparent not many years ago in the trial and unjust sentence of Captain Alfred Dreyfus, imprisoned in the barren rock prison of the Ile du Diable.

7.13. F. The Jews in England

Chapter 3 A Summary of Jewish History F. The Jews in England

Even in dear old England, where in more recent times a limited number of Jews have found a home and have attained to a position of importance and prosperity, how terrible was their lot in the Dark Ages! When exactly the Jews first found their way to Britain cannot be positively stated. It is certain that they were in these islands before the Norman Conquest; and already in the eighth century we read of repressive laws which were promulgated against them. Hatred of them broke out into a terrible flame at the coronation of Richard Cœur de Lion. “As Richard was returning to his palace from the coronation in the church, there entered onto the state-room, among others who came to do homage to the King, a deputation of the richest and most prominent members of the whole Jewish community of England, to hand in their presents. On their appearance, Baldwin, Archbishop of Canterbury, a fanatical church dignitary, remarked darkly that no presents might be accepted from the Jews; and that they must be dismissed from the palace, as through their religion they had forfeited the privilege to rank among other nations. Richard, who did not think to what evil consequences the expulsion of Jews would give occasion, innocently followed the instruction of the Archbishop. The palace menials, who showed the Jews out of the palace, thought to gain the approval of their masters by abusing them. The gaping crowd like-wise fell to, and pursued the Jewish deputies with blows of the fist, with stones and clubs. Soon there spread about in all parts of London the false report that the King desired to humble and massacre the Jews, and immediately the mob and the crusading rabble trooped together to enrich themselves with the possessions of the Jews. The pillagers made an attack upon the houses in which the Jews had fortified themselves, and set fire to them. Meanwhile night had come, and covered with her shadows the ghastly butchery of the Jews. It was in vain that the newly-crowned King sent one of his courtiers, Randulph de Granville, to make inquiries about the uproar, and put a stop to it. At first he could not make himself heard, and was moreover, assailed with jeers by the raging mob. Thus many Jews perished; others killed themselves rather than submit to baptism. Most of the Jewish houses were burnt, and the synagogues destroyed.”1 1 Graetz, History of the Jews.

Richard did his best to put an end to the excesses committed at the time of his coronation by punishing the ringleaders; but on his leaving England on the Third Crusade (1190) the massacres again began, Stamford, Lincoln, and Norwich being scenes of the worst examples of this mania for blood and plunder. In York the Jews fled for refuge to the Castle, defending themselves for a while under the lead of two brave men, and then by sword and fire took their own lives rather than submit to be baptized. Rich old Joceus, an inhabitant of York, who had suffered severely at the time of the Coronation massacre, was the first to kill his wife, and to fall by the hand of the Rabbi; of a community of nearly 500 not one remained alive.

All Jews, with their property, were owned by the King, who had an exact inventory of the Jews, and their means, taken throughout his kingdom in order to know how much they were worth to him in realisable wealth. A Court of Exchequer of the Jews exercised control over all Jewish matters,

with which in this land the Church had no voice at all; but this was in order that the King himself should have complete cognisance of all their means and the opportunities by which he could express them to his own ends. No Jew could leave the land without permission of the Court of Exchequer of the Jews; incredible sums were reaped by the King's purse for such permission. For the confirmation of a decree of Henry, John Lackland extorted the sum of 4,000 marks; again in 1210 he obtained 60,000 marks. A Jew of Bristol was tortured by the cruel extraction of tooth after tooth, until the miserable man paid down the sum of 10,000 marks in silver. Under the regency of Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury, Jews were compelled to pay tithes to support the Church, and to wear the prescribed badge of shame; they were forbidden to build synagogues, or to protect their property when spoliation was threatened by depositing it in the churches. Henry III. and Edward I. in a period of nine years extorted the sum of 8,400,000 marks (£420,000) from them; Henry III. in person forcing from Aaron of York the sum of four gold marks and 4,000 silver marks. Edward I. forbade the Jews to be usurers; and since this was the only means of livelihood left them, their case was evil indeed, and their Rabbis implored permission for them to quit the land. Blood accusations were trumped up against them, and in Easter week, 1264, some hundreds of Jews were massacred. In 1278 the Jews were accused of falsifying the coins; all the Jews were imprisoned on one day and their houses searched; two hundred and ninety-three Jews were hung on this occasion. Next year a blood accusation occurred in Northampton, and some Jews in London were first hanged and then quartered. And thus the record of oppression and suffering continues till 1290, when Edward I. issued his final Act of banishment against them. On October 9th of that year the remnant of 16,000 Jews left the British shores, where they had lived for many generations, to begin a wandering life in other, not more hospitable, lands; and from that day till the time of Cromwell (about three hundred and seventy years) the English law, and fear, prevented single Jew from landing on these shored.

7.14. G. The Fiery Furnace in Germany

Chapter 3 A Summary of Jewish History G. The Fiery Furnace in Germany When the Jews first settled in Germany is as little known as when they first came to France or England. Their first settlement in this part of Europe was probably Worms. One Jewish legend asserts that the Jews in the Rhine countries had lived there from the time of the Judges; and another legend in proof of the antiquity of the Jewish settlements in Germany avers that they were there already in the time of Ezra, who is alleged to have sent letters to them, admonishing them to come up to Jerusalem for the great feasts, but that they replied that in Worms on the Rhine they had found a new Jerusalem, and desired to know nothing of the old. But these are only legends invented in the Middle Ages in the hope of clearing themselves from the charge of having had any share in the crucifixion of Christ, and of escaping the frightful persecution that so often threatened them, on the charge that their fathers had been the “murderers of God.” It is only in the fourth century after Christ that any evidence exists of Jews dwelling in Cologne. When Charlemagne (797) sent an embassy to Harun al Raschid, the Jew Judah Isaac accompanied as interpreter. After the embassy had perished on the journey, the reply of the Sultan, with his presents, was brought back by Isaac alone. In a solemn audience at Aix-la-Chapelle he gave them over to the Emperor. The martyrology of the Jews in Germany begins with the first Crusade. The first two hordes (for they can scarcely be called armies), led by Peter the Hermit and the monk Gotschalk, left the Jews alone; but behind these followed an immense rabble, made up of different nationalities, some two hundred thousand strong, including a host of bad women and girls, preceded by a goose and a goat. “In this vile horde no pretence was kept up of order or of decency. Sinning freely, it would seem, that grace might abound, they plundered and harried the lands through which they marched; while three thousand horsemen, headed by some counts and gentlemen, were not too dignified to act as their attendants and to share their spoil.”1 1 The Crusades, by Rev. Sir G. W. Cox, Bart., M.A, p. 39.

Words cannot describe the sufferings and agonies inflicted on the Jewish people by this lawless host as it swept across Europe. The course of blood was worst in Germany. A monk inflamed the fury of the rabble by showing them an inscription supposed to be found on the tomb of our Lord, to the effect that it was the duty of the faithful to compel the Jews first to embrace Christianity. Death or baptism! La mort ou le baptême! they cried with the sword held to the breast of their victims. As they approached Trier such terror fell on the Jews that some of them killed their own children; matrons and maidens threw themselves into the Moselle, to perish in its waters, rather than live to meet the fate preparing for them. Mothers took their infants, and, loading themselves with stones, sprang with them from the bridge to certain death. Bishop Egilbert, appealed to by the Jewish community for protection, gave them the same alternative—baptism or death. At Spires the fanatics arrived on the Sabbath Day; they caught ten Jews and dragged them to the church to force them to be baptized, but they resisted, and all fell martyrs. Bishop John received and protected the Jewish community in his palace, for which kindness he is blamed in the Chronicles of Berthold von Constance. At Worms the Bishop sheltered as many families as he was able; the rest made such defence as they could, but were overmastered and slain, women killing

themselves and their children for dread of what would come upon them. Later the Bishop explained himself powerless to protect those who were yet in his palace unless they submitted to baptism. A short space was permitted them to decide. When the doors were at last forced open, a ghastly sight appeared, all the Jews lay dead in their own blood. The mob in revenge sought for any of their victims that might yet be in the city, and put them to cruel deaths. The Jewish community in Worms to this day observes a yearly fast in remembrance of the “saints”—some eight hundred—who perished in this massacre. The history of the same time in Mainz and Cologne, Mörs, and the cities of the Rhine, is a story of blood and horror which passes imagination or description. The despair which seized the Jews was such that in Cologne Samuel ben Jechiel, an aged Jew, took his young son, and after pronouncing a blessing over him, gave him his death blow, the boy acquiescing with his dying breath with an “Amen” to the deed. The old man then handed the knife to another Jew to be slain himself, the bystanders repeating aloud the Jewish confession of faith: “Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one God,” as was their custom in all times of massacre. After so doing they also perished, throwing themselves into the river. In another place the Jews chose five of their number to kill all the rest, and lastly themselves; the last man ended his life by precipitating himself from a high tower. What must not have been the terrors which faced the unhappy people throughout an entire continent at the hands of the Christians of their day, when they took such means to escape their fury!

Similar scenes were enacted in the second crusade, just fifty years later (1146). Pope Eugenius III. issued a Bull proclaiming that all who joined in the Holy War would be released from the interest which they owed to the Jews; while Peter, the Venerable Abbot of Clugny, exerted his influence to inflame Louis VII. of France, and other noble crusaders, against them. But “the appetite for blood among the hordes of the second crusade was whetted by the wolfish howlings of the monk Rudolph”1 who travelled about everywhere preaching with tears in his eyes that all Jews should be slain as “murderers of our dear Lord.” the worst fate again befell the Jews in Germany. “Even the partial protection which the citizens of the Rhineland had afforded the persecuted people in the First Crusade was now withdrawn, and the undisciplined mob gave the reins to the gratification of its religious zeal and of its lust.”2 It was then that Bernard of Clairvaux lifted up his voice on behalf of the Jews in his two famous epistles, one addressed to the Archbishop of Mayence and the other to the clergy and people of France and Bavaria. “The Jews,” he says in the first, “ought not to be persecuted; they ought not to be slain; they ought not to be driven into banishment. consult Holy Scripture. . . . These men are living monuments to remind us of the passion of Christ. For this cause they are dispersed in all countries, that while they suffer the just punishment of their heinous sins, they may be witnesses of our redemption . . . yet in the eveningtide of the world they will be converted, and He will remember them.”3 It was then also that the German Emperor took them under his protection; “but this favour was to cost the recipients dearly. Henceforth the German Jews were regarded as the Emperor’s protégés, which gradually came to mean the Emperor’s serfs. All they possessed, including their families and their own persons, were the Emperor’s chattels, to be bought, sold, or pledged by him at pleasure. They were designated ‘chamber-servants’ (Servi Camerœ, or Kammerknechte); servitude, however, that had the advantage of making it the Emperor’s interest to safeguard them against oppression, and to suffer no one to fleece them but himself.” But even the power of the Emperor could not always shield them. Thus, to single out only a few out of numberless Jewish tragedies; in 1298 some hundred Jewish communities in Germany and Austria were destroyed by an infuriated Christian rabble,

under the leadership of a fanatical noble named Rindfleisch, on the pretext that the Jews had stolen and desecrated the Host. “It had actually been seen that as they were pounding the wafer in a mortar, blood spurted up from it”! Once again we read of many Jewish mothers throwing their children into the flames and then destroying themselves rather than fall into the hands of the demon-possessed mobs.

1 The Crusades, by Rev. Sir G. W. Cox, Bart., M.A., p. 88.

2 Abbot, Israel in Europe.

3 The letters are given in full in Israel and the Gentiles, by Da Costa. In 1336-39, in the reign of the Emperor Louis of Bavaria, a similar scourge fell upon the Jews. A horde of peasants calling themselves “Jew-slayers,” under the leadership of two nobles, swept though Alsace and Rhinelands, plundering and murdering; one of the leaders (Armleder) declaring that he was commissioned by God to avenge “Christ’s blood and wounds” on the Jewish people. But the sufferings of the Jews in Germany, “a chapter ages long,” culminated at the time of the Black Death, 1348-50. “This scourge, which carried off a quarter of the population of Europe, afflicted the Jews but lightly on account of their isolation and their simple and wholesome way of life. This comparative exemption from the pest was enough to make them suspected. ‘The Jews poison the wells and the springs,’ it was said. The Rabbis of Toledo were believed to have formed a plot to destroy all Christendom. The composition of the poison, the colour of the packages in which it was transported, the emissaries who conveyed them, were all declared to have been discovered. Confirmations of these reports, extracted by torture from certain poor creatures, were forthcoming, and the people flew upon the Jews until entire communities were destroyed.

“The ‘Flagellants,’ fanatical sectaries, half naked and scourging themselves, swarmed through Germany preaching extermination to all unbelievers. Basle expelled its Jews, Freiburg burned them, Spires drowned them. The entire community at Strasbourg—two thousand souls—was dragged upon an immense scaffold, which was set on fire. At Worms, Frankfort, and Mainz, the Israelites anticipated their fate, setting their homes on fire and throwing themselves into the flames.”1 1 Hosmer, The Jews.

7.15. H. The Jewish Tragedy in Spain and Portugal

Chapter 3 A Summary of Jewish History H. The Jewish Tragedy in Spain and Portugal

I fear the hearts of my readers are already quite sick with the details of the Jewish tragedy in different lands, as is that of the writer in compiling them. Yet to finish this imperfect summary of Jewish suffering in the Middle Ages I must add a brief outline of their history in one or two other Christian countries. For some centuries the Jews suffered least of all in Spain, where some of them are supposed to have resided before the destruction of the second Temple, and where they took deep root and became very wealthy and powerful. Numbers embraced Christianity, and intermarried so largely with the noble families of the land, that it was said that in Aragon there was only one noble family which was not of partly Jewish extraction. “the Green Book of Aragon,” written by Juan de Andreas, secretary of the Inquisition, in 1507, is a genealogy of baptized Jewish families, and confirms this statement. In the reign of Alfonso XI., 1325—50, their condition was so favourable that they imagined it could no longer be held true that the sceptre had departed from Judah, for the lordship and government of Spain was in their hands.

During the same reign, however, hatred against the Jews had already grown to an alarming extent. In 1348 the Black Death, to which reference has already been made more than once, travelled from far-off China, across Asia and Europe, sweeping about one-third of humanity from off the face of the earth. The Jews of Spain were accused of concocting a diabolical plan to destroy all the Christians in the world by poisoning all springs and wells. The Rabbis of Toledo in particular were named as the fiends who devised this plan of ridding themselves of their Christian oppressors at one stroke. “They had despatched messengers far and wide with boxes containing poison, and with threats of excommunication had instigated all the Jews to aid in carrying out their plans. These directions to the Jews had issued from Toledo, which place was to all appearance the Jewish capital.

“The deluded and infatuated people even went so far as to point out by name the man who had delivered these orders and the poison. It was Jacob Pascate, said they, a man who had come from Toledo, and had settled in Chambery (in Savoy): he it was who had sent out a whole troop of Jewish poisoners into all the different countries and cities. This Jacob, together with a Rabbi Peyret, of Chambery, and a rich Jew, Aboget, were said to have dealt largely in the manufacture and sale of poisons. The poison, which was prepared by the Jewish doctors of the Black Art in Spain, was sometimes reported to be concocted from the skin of a basilisk, or compounded of spiders, frogs, and lizards, or again from the hearts of Christians and the fragments of the Host, beaten into a soft mass. These and similar silly stories, invented by ignorant or perhaps malicious people, and distorted and exaggerated by the heated imagination, were credited not alone by the ignorant mob, but even by men of higher culture.”1 1 Graetz, History of the Jews, vol. iv. p. 109.

Great excesses were committed against the Jews in different cities of the Peninsula, many of them being killed and their property plundered; a wholesale massacre of all the Jews in the kingdom being averted only by a Papal Bull of Clement VI. (one of the very few Popes who lifted up his

voice in defence of the Jews) and by the intervention of the nobility. From this time onward, however, with short respites and brief intervals of prosperity, Israel's night of sorrow in Spain commenced.

One special tragic chapter in the history of the Jews in Spain is that of the Marranos. In 1391, stirred up by the fiery eloquence of the fanatical priest Fernando Martinez, a series of wholesale massacres took place in Castile and Aragon. It commenced in Seville, where of the large and wealthy Jewish community about half were slain, and the other half to save their lives allowed themselves to be baptized. Of their three beautiful synagogues, two were turned into churches. The rising against the Jews spread itself all over Spain. Many thousands were sacrificed to priestly and popular rage, "and the cities of Toledo, Cordova, Catalonia, Barcelona, Valencia, as well as the island of Majorca, were coloured red with Jewish blood." Great numbers, however—according to von Döllinger two hundred thousand—submitted to baptism to save their lives. To these "converts" large numbers more were added by the unenlightened frenzied zeal of the Dominican monk Fray Vincente Ferrer, afterwards canonised by the Romish Church for his great services on her behalf; a real ascetic, burdened by the corruptions of Christendom, and impelled by the belief that the end of the world and the Great Judgment were at hand, he went about preaching repentance in the monkish style, but with fiery zeal, and depicting in the most realistic style the Passion of our Saviour. Weeping and lamentation broke forth among the audience wherever he preached. Encouraged by his success in the churches, he thought himself called to undertake the work of converting the Jews and Saracens; and for this purpose obtained not only a royal mandate to preach in the synagogues, but that the Jews should be forced to attend his sermons. This "sincere but forbidding saint, who called his bigotry religion, and his hatred of heretics love to God," rushed from synagogue to synagogue, the crucifix in one hand, the Torah roll in the other, attended by a crowd of "Flagellants" and a bodyguard of lancers, preaching the Gospel of peace in a voice of thunder. "Impressive processions, and sacred hymns, banners, crucifixes, and assaults on the Jewish quarter" by the Christian mob, had their desired effect, and large numbers of the confused and terrified Jews flocked to the churches to be baptized.

Now, there were some sincere converts to Christ among the Jews in Spain, several of the eminent for their learning and devotion to His cause (as there were, thank God! in all other countries, and at all times—even in the darkest days of the Church's history), who must not be confounded, as Jewish historians maliciously attempt to do, with those who have been driven into the Church by fear, or who have themselves entered it out of indifference, or for worldly advantage. But the methods of the Dominicans and of the Romish Church generally were not only foreign to the spirit of the Gospel, but have resulted in incalculable injury to the cause of Christ; for these are largely responsible for the deep-seated hatred of the Jews to Christianity, and their prejudice against those who attempt to make the Gospel of their Messiah known among them.

These Anusim (forced converts), as the Jews called them, or Marranos ("the Damned") as the Spaniards called them, became eventually a curse to Spain, to their own people as well as to themselves. Many of them felt in their hearts a more intense antipathy to Christianity than when they had been openly opposed to it, but were obliged to live a lie. Outwardly they had to conform to the Church-regulated life of a Spaniard, while in secret they observed the Jewish rites and ceremonies. The new Christians soon began to be suspected by the old; moreover, the spirit of envy and jealousy took possession of multitudes of Spaniards, for these Marranos, by their wealth

and intelligence, pressed themselves into all circles, and monopolised many important positions, not only in the State, but also in the Church. They intermarried with the highest in the land, many an impecunious noble seeking to make good his declining fortune by courting a fair daughter of "converted Israel." But neither ecclesiastical nor civic honours nor social advancement could bring these Marranos to have faith in Christ, or into real sympathy with the Romish Church. Cardinal Mendoza, the Archbishop of Seville, was commanded by the Spanish sovereigns, "as a last resort before proceeding to extremes to set forth the doctrines of the Catholic faith in a short catechism, and to cause his clergy to diffuse the light among the benighted Marranos"; but this also proved of no effect. "Such was the frame of the public mind when short-sighted statecraft, in the person of Ferdinand, King of Aragon, was wedded to narrow piety in that of Isabella, heiress to the crown of Castile. The legitimate offspring of such a union could be no other than persecution. But even if the sovereigns had been enlightened and tolerant, it is doubtful whether they could have stemmed the current.

"In 1473 the mob massacred the Constable of Castile at Jaen, because he attempted to repress its fury; and after Isabella the Catholic's accession to the throne, petitions poured in from all sides, clamouring for the extirpation of the 'Jewish heresy.' The bigots of Seille, headed by the Dominican Prior of the monastery of St. Paul, agitated for the introduction of the Inquisition. Their demand was seconded by the Papal Nuncio";1 but only after seven years (on September 17, 1480) did Ferdinand and Isabella at last yield to the popular clamour.

1 Abbott, Israel in Europe. The Inquisition—the very mention of which sends a shudder through our whole being, and which afterwards directed its devilish machinery against the saints of God who broke away from the superstitions of Rome—was thus established in the first instance to terrify into faithfulness apostate Jews, the sincerity of whose conversion to Christianity was suspected, and in almost all cases with good reason. "Seated in some vast and frowning castle, or in some sunless cavern of the earth, its ministers chosen from the most influential men of the nation, its familiars in every disguise, in every corner of the land, its proceedings utterly secret, its decrees overriding every law, it would be impossible to draw a picture which would exaggerate its accumulated horrors. Men and women disappeared by hundreds, suddenly and completely as a breath annihilates the flame of a lamp, some gone for ever, without a whisper as to their fate; some to reappear in after years, halt through long tortures, pale and insane through frightful incarceration. when, in the cities the frequent processions wound through the streets, with their long files of victims on the way to the place of burning, children, bereaved of father and mother, flocked to see whether among the doomed they might not catch a last look at the face of the long lost parent. The forms that were observed were such a mockery of justice! In the midst of the torture came the cold interrogation of the inquisitor. Fainting with terror and anguish, the sufferer uttered he knew not what, to be written down by waiting clerks and made the basis of procedure. Grace Aquilar, in one of her stories, makes her heroine to disappear through the floor of a chamber of Queen Isabella herself, who had sought to protect her; borne then by secret passages to a vast hall, where a grandee of Spain superintends cruelties of which my words give but an adumbration. She recites the traditions that have come down in Jewish families, and history confirms all that they report. No earthly power could save, no human fancy can paint the scene too dark." The Inquisition had not been in existence three days when six wretched Marranos suffered at the stake; and the Jesuit historian Mariana informs us that the net total of victims for the first

year amounted to 2,000 burnt alive and 17,000 sentenced to loss of property, loss of civil rights, or incarceration. Already in the following year the first auto-da-fé took place; and to give my readers an idea of what this meant, I include a description from a Jewish writer of one celebrated just two hundred years later (1680) in honour of the marriage of Charles II. with Marie Louise, niece of Louis XIV.:

“Upon the great square in Madrid an amphitheatre was reared, with a box for the Royal Family upon one side, opposite to which was a daïs for the grand inquisitor and his train. The Court officials were present in gala uniforms, the trade guilds in their state dresses, the orders of monks, and an immense concourse of the populace. From the church towers pealed the bells, among those sounds were heard the chants of the monks. At eight o’clock entered the procession. Before the grand inquisitor was borne the green cross of the Holy Office, while the bystanders shouted, ‘Long live the Catholic faith!’ first marched a hundred charcoal-burners, dressed in black and armed with spikes. it was their prescriptive right to lead the procession, as having furnished the fuel for the sacrifice. A troop of Dominican monks followed, then a duke of the bluest blood, hereditary standard-bearer of the Holy Office. After friars and nobles, carrying banners and crosses, came thirty-five effigies of life size, with names attached, borne by families of the Inquisition, representing condemned men who had died in prison or escaped. Other Dominicans appeared, a ghastly row, carrying coffins containing the bones of those convicted of heresy after death; then fifty-four penitents, with the dress and badge of victims, bearing lighted tapers. In turn came a company of Jews and Jewesses (in the interval since Ferdinand and Isabella a few wretched Jews had ventured back into Spain), mostly persons of humble rank, in whom the interest of the ceremony chiefly centred; these were to be burned as obstinate in their refusal of the faith. Each wore a cloak of coarse serge, yellow in colour, covered with representations, in crimson, of flames, demons, serpents, and crosses. Upon their heads were high pointed caps, with placards in front bearing the name and offence of the wearer. Haggard they were through long endurance of dungeon damp and darkness, broken and torn from the torture chambers, glad, for the most part, that the end of their weary days had come.

“As the procession moved past the station of the royal personages, a girl of seventeen, whose great beauty had not been destroyed, cried out aloud from among the condemned to the young queen: ‘Noble queen, cannot your royal presence save me from this? I sucked in my religion with my mother’s milk; must I now die for it’ The queen’s eyes filled with tears, and she turned away her face. She was unused to such sights. Even she, probably, could not have interceded without danger to herself. The supplicating girl passed on with her companions to her fate. High Mass having been performed, the preliminaries to the terrible concluding scene are transacted. The sun descends, the Angelus is rung from the belfries, the vespers are changed, the multitude proceeds to the place of suffering. It is a square platform of stone in the outskirts of the city, at whose four corners stand mis-shapen statues of the prophets. Those who repent at the last moment have the privilege of being strangled before burning. The effigies and bones of the dead are first given to the flames. Last perish the living victims, the king himself lighting the fagots; their constancy is so marked that they are believed to be sustained by the devil. Night deepens; the glare of the flames falls upon the cowl of the Capuchin, the cord of the Franciscan—upon corselet and plume—everywhere upon faces fierce with fanaticism. In the background rises the gloomy city—all alight as if with the lurid fire of hell!”

Leaving the Marranos and turning again to the general history of the Jews in Spain, the final and greatest calamity that befell them in that land has yet to be told. On March 31, 1492, the decree was finally signed by Ferdinand and Isabella in the magnificent Alhambra of Granada (about three months after the final overthrow of the Moors and their triumphal entry into that city) that all the Jews of Spain, Sicily, and Sardinia must quit those countries within four months on pain of death; the reason adduced in the edict being that they were the occasion of, and abetted, the relapses into Judaism on the part of the “New Christians,” or Marranos. They might take their property with them, with the exception of gold, silver, coins, or such articles as were forbidden to be exported; but as by far the greater part of their wealth consisted in these very precious metals and money, it practically implied also the confiscation of their property.

It is related that when the decree of expulsion of the Jews was promulgated, Abrabanel, a Jew himself and Lord of the Treasury, with the most eminent Marranos of the Palace, came to the Catholic sovereigns with the offer of a large sum of money to induce them to recall the decree; but that when Torquemada, the Grand Inquisitor, learned this, he hastened to the palace, and holding the crucifix before Ferdinand and Isabella said: “Judas sold Christ for thirty pieces of silver; your majesties are willing to do so for thirty thousand. Here He is; take and sell Him.” This had the desired effect, and the doom of the Jews in Spain was sealed. For the finest palaces and houses the poor exiles obtained a mere song. Why should the Christians buy when they knew that the Jews would have to leave all behind anyhow? A piece of cloth was offered for a vineyard, an ass for a house. The Inquisition even forbade Christians to sell them any food. On August 2, 1492, which happened to fall on the 9th of Ab—the day of such sorrowful associations to the Jewish nation (on which both the first and second Temples were destroyed)—about 400,000 Jews left Spain, that “happy land,” as they once used to call it; the “accursed land,” as it has since been known among them—to go forth they knew not whither. To help them forget their sorrows, the Rabbis caused companies of trumpeters and pipers to head the mournful pilgrim procession. In Segovia the last three nights were spent in weeping and prayer by the graves of their fathers. The tale of their wanderings is most woeful. Misery and dire need, robbery, hunger, and the plague overtook them; many were sold in foreign lands as slaves; many were drowned, many burnt on ships at sea; 12,000 who sought refuge in the neighbouring kingdom of Navarre had the usual conditions proposed to them—exile or baptism. Those who sought safety in Oran and Algiers were prevented landing on account of the plague which had broken out among them; and when later they did land, they were not permitted to enter the towns. A fire broke out among their wooden huts and reduced them all to ashes. In Fez they were nowhere allowed inside the towns, and had to subsist, like the animals, on herbs. Fathers were obliged to sell their children as slaves that they might not die of hunger; mothers killed themselves and their children; sailors tempted children to the ships by offer of food in order to sell them as slaves. the Genoese seamen were worst of all in their treatment of the fugitives. They threw many into the sea, and it is related that, actuated by greed, they cut many of their victims open in search of jewels and coins which they may have swallowed in order to retain them. Those who were landed were permitted to remain in Genoa three days only, unless they would submit to baptism. The children were so hungry that they crept into the town and the churches, consenting to be baptized for a bit of bread. In Corfu and Candia they were sold into slavery, and were bought by Persians, who hoped to extract large sums from the Persian Jews for their release. The Jews in Portugal The history of the Jews in Portugal is, to a large extent, linked with and very similar to that of their brethren in Spain. Here, too, they could

look back to a golden age of prosperity, and there were times when the destiny of the kingdom might almost be said to have been in Jewish hands. But soon Israel's night of weeping commenced here too. Already, early in the fourteenth century, we read of anti-Jewish decrees and the imposition of the badge of shame. From time to time excesses were also committed against them by mobs urged on thereto by the preaching of the monks. Their sorrows in this kingdom, however, culminated shortly subsequent to the Spanish catastrophe in 1492. when the decree for their expulsion from the Peninsula was signed, many Spanish Jews desired to settle in Portugal; but with the exception of a limited number of artisans, armourers, and other workers in metal, permission was refused; the rest were only permitted on payment of twenty marks in gold each to remain eight months, after which the King promised to provide ships and a cheap passage to any land in which they might choose to settle. One hundred and twenty thousand came to Portugal on these conditions, in the hope, most probably, that the time limit would be lengthened or removed. Popular feeling, however, was against them; and as the plague made its appearance in Portugal soon after, the unfortunate Jews were accused of having brought it to the country, and the populace clamoured for their departure.

Ships were provided at the end of eight months to take them whither they would or could go; but the sailors extorted from them all that they had, refused them food except at exorbitant prices, committed outrages on the women and girls, and finally landed the wretched people in desert parts on the African coast, where they were left to perish of hunger or to be carried as slaves by the Moors. Those who were in the country after the eight months, were declared by King Joao to be his slaves, whom he proceeded to present to the different grandees of his kingdom. To add to their anguish their children were torn from them and shipped to the island of St. Thomas, there to be forcibly baptized and brought up as Christians. So much for these poor Spanish exiles; there still remained in the kingdom the native Portuguese Jews, who had been in the country for centuries. In 1495 King Manoel came to the throne. This prince was at first favourably inclined to his Jewish subjects; but, unfortunately for Portugal as well as for the Jews, he entered into negotiations for a marriage with the Infanta Isabella, a daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, who had already been married to the Infanta of Portugal, but soon after became a widow; the Spanish Court would listen would listen to the proposal only on two conditions—firstly, that he should break off friendly relations with the Court of France, and, secondly, that he should banish all the Jews out of his kingdom. Both proposals were repugnant to Manoel; but after a time of hesitation, being deeply enamoured with the Infanta, he weakly yielded. This Isabella herself seemed to excel her own mother in bigotry. When King Manoel was at last expecting his bride to cross the borders of his country, he received a letter from her, saying that she would never set foot in Portugal until the land had been cleansed from the "curse-laden Jews." The marriage contract had therefore to be sealed in the misery of the Jewish people. The King promulgated an edict that all the Jews of his kingdom must either be baptized or leave the country after a few months' respite on pain of death. Only a few, however, chose the alternative of baptism, which aggravated the King, who wanted very much to retain the Jews in his country. A decree was issued that all Jewish children under fourteen years must be baptized before or on Easter Sunday, 1497. The agony which this occasioned to the Jewish parents cannot be described. Some killed their own children, some threw them into the rivers and wells to prevent what they feared for them even more than death. Many parents and children were torn from one another by the whip and scourge, and then dragged by the hair to the baptismal font, the poor children being afterwards distributed among Christians

to be brought up as such.

Some of the Jews now asked for baptism merely in order to retain their children, but only afterwards, as suspected Marranos, to be followed by fire and sword by the Inquisition. At last Manoel appointed the single harbour of Lisbon as the place of departure for the remaining Jews of Portugal. Some twenty thousand of the wretched people assembled; but so many difficulties were put in their way that a large number were unable to leave by the appointed time, whereupon the King declared them to be his slaves. Later, again, he promised them honour and privileges if they would submit to baptism; and when this did not succeed, he kept them three days without bread and water. Again abominable scenes occurred, and aged men were dragged by their beards, or hair, or by ropes, to the churches, to be forcibly baptized; from which they saved themselves only by suicide, either without or within the churches. In the year 1500 two thousand “new Christians,” or Jewish Marranos, were massacred in Lisbon within three days.

7.16. I. The Jews in Poland

Chapter 3 A Summary of Jewish History I. The Jews in Poland

It would be a weary task to trace the story of the scattered people in fuller detail, or to follow their wanderings in lands not included in the above summary; but it is a striking fact that there is no country in which Jews are found in any appreciable numbers where their history—however bright and promising it may have been for a time—does not end in tragedy. A striking illustration of this is presented by the history of the Jews in Poland. Here, too, as in Spain and Portugal, they could look back to a golden age lasting several centuries, when, as the only middle class between the luxurious, easy-going magnates and the serfs, they were indispensable in the land, and became all-powerful. In the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries, when such terrible calamities fell on their brethren in the more “advanced” southern countries of Europe, the Jews in Poland dwelt in peace and prosperity. In the reign of Casimir the Great (1333—70), who seemed to have been much in the power of a Jewish favourite named Esther, who knew how to exercise her influence over the King for the advantage of her people, the Jews seemed to enjoy greater privileges in the land than the Christians. No wonder that it became a land of refuge for many thousands of the persecuted race from all other countries, and that the Jews of Poland and Lithuania became known throughout Europe not only for their worldly prosperity, but also for their Talmudic learning and cabalistic casuistry. But here, too, the Jews could not escape the common fate of the Jewish people since the destruction of Jerusalem. “When the bow of Jewish prosperity was overstrained it snapped in two.”1 The occasion was as follows: The Cossacks, a people half-savage, composed of escaped Russian convicts, peasants, and adventurers, were permitted to settle on the frontier districts between Poland, Tartary, and Turkey in order that they might be a protection to Poland from attacks by Tartars and Turks. The government of the Cossack colonies, the courts of justice, taxes, the trade in spirit, and other products of the soil—in fact, everything that related to their settlements—was in the hands of Jewish agents, employed by the nobles who owned the land. Not even a baptism or wedding could take place without the Greek Pope obtaining the key of the church from a Jewish custodian. As the Jesuits grew in power in Poland they tried to force the Roman Catholic faith on the Cossacks, and in this they were abetted by the Jews, who hoped to further their own interests with the Polish King by this means. They procured instead only the intensified hatred of the Cossacks, which soon burst forth in a flame of terrible vengeance.

1 Heman, Geschichte des Jüdischen Volkes. In the first Cossack rising of 1638, which was quickly suppressed, two hundred Jews perished. Confident that their Messiah would appear in the year 1648, and that all power would then be theirs, the Jews continued to abuse the power they possessed. Instead of the vain hope of the advent of the Messiah being realized, 1648 proved to be the commencement of terrible disasters to the Jews. All the Ukraine flamed into war. The Cossacks, under the leadership of the terrible Chmielnicki, joining with the Tartars, beat the Polish army, leading eight thousand Poles, with their prince, captives to Tartary. Then ensued a terrible time, the Cossack companies devastating the whole land as far as Kiev, murdering and spoiling all Jews. The perfidious Poles, not unfrequently, under promise of being spared themselves, gave up

the Jews who had taken refuge in their strongholds to the power of their cruel foe; six thousand Jews perished in this way in Nemirow. The Rabbi was spared only till he was made to disclose the hiding-place of the Jews' treasure, then he, too, fell a victim. At Tulczin fifteen hundred Jews were done to death who would not receive baptism; ten Rabbis were spared for the sake of the ransom which might be wrung from their communities. The Cossacks penetrated into Little Russia, annihilating all Jews. In Homel the Jews were driven naked into the fields, surrounded by the Cossacks, and fifteen hundred men, women, and children, who would not be baptized, were put to barbarous deaths. Thousands fled to Polonnoie, where they were treacherously given over to their foes. Hundreds and thousands of Jews perished in numerous other towns. Hunger and the plague made frightful ravages among the destitute Jewish fugitives. Throughout Podolia, Volhynia, and West Russia the Jews, the nobles, and the clergy shared the same terrible fate. On one occasion a hundred Jewish children were killed and thrown to the dogs. The Cossack leader extorted from the Jesuit prelate-king of Poland, as terms of peace, that Jews should be excluded from living, owing land, or farming, throughout the Ukraine, West Russia, Kiev, and a part of Podolia. In 1651 the war was renewed, and the advantage appeared to be with the Poles. The King now dictated a treaty of peace, with conditions, permitting the Jews their old rights of settlement in the Ukraine; but this did not help them, and only led to fresh disaster. The Cossacks appealed for help to Russia, and now the unhappy Jews of Lithuania and West Poland, hitherto unmolested, had to endure unspeakable sufferings and almost wholesale slaughter. Among other places a terrible massacre took place in Wilna, the capital of Lithuania, and the large Jewish community there was almost annihilated. Then came the invasion of Poland by Charles X. of Sweden, which again brought terrible sufferings to the Jews. Poles, Russians, Cossacks, Swedes, Prussians, and Transylvanians ravaged the land, and the Jews always were especially the victims of their worst ferocity.

Thus the might and prosperity of the Jews in Poland came to an almost sudden and tragic end. Thousands wandered forth into other lands, and those that remained sunk into ever lower depths of poverty and wretchedness.

7.17. J. The Reformation and Since

Chapter 3 A Summary of Jewish History J. The Reformation and Since With the Reformation there commenced a new period of the world's history, and the principles which were then promulgated could not but eventually affect the Jews also among those peoples by whom they were adopted. Yet it cannot be said that for a considerable period subsequent to that great movement their condition was very materially altered or their sufferings much lessened. Indeed, it is humiliating to find that some of the reformers, men of God though they were, had not more place in their hearts for compassion for this long oppressed people than their papal antagonists. Luther himself is a notable illustration of this. He began well. In his exposition of Psalms 22:1-31, he blames the cruelty of the nations toward the Jews, and describes the enormities which have been committed against them as "worse than beastly."1 In 1523 he published a remarkable book with the startling title Das Jesus ein Geborene Jude Gewesen (That Jesus was born a Jew), in which he says, among other things: "Those fools the papists, bishops, sophists, monks, have formerly so dealt with the Jews, that every good Christian would rather have been a Jew. And if I had been a Jew, and seen such stupidity and such blockheads reign in the Christian Church, I would rather be a pig than a Christian. They have treated the Jews as if they were dogs, not men, and as if they were fit for nothing but to be reviled. They are blood relations of our Lord; therefore if we respect flesh and blood, the Jews belong to Christ more than we. I beg, therefore, my dear Papists, if you become tired of abusing me as a heretic, that you begin to revile me as a Jew. Therefore it is my advice that we should treat them kindly; but now we drive them by force, treating them deceitfully or ignominiously, saying they must have Christian blood to wash away the Jewish stain, and I know not what nonsense. Also we prohibit them from working amongst us, from living and having social intercourse with us, forcing them, if they would remain with us, to be usurers."

1 Geschichte des Jüdischen Volkes, p. 420. But Luther, who in some respects reminds one of the Apostle Paul, lacked not only the patience and Christlike spirit of the great Apostle, but the prophetic light and insight into God's plan and purpose with this unique people which would have enabled him to persevere in his love for them in spite of all their opposition and hardness of heart. Because they were not converted in masses, and stirred by their continued opposition to the Gospel and the sins of some individual Jews, he turned against them in great bitterness; so much so that it seems scarcely credible that it could have been the same Luther, who in 1523 wrote Das Jesus ein Geborene Jude Gewesen, that twenty-one years later (in 1544) wrote Von den Juden und Ihren Lügen (About the Jews and their Lies), which breathes fire and sword against them, and in which he seeks to stir up the same spirit of hatred against them among the Protestant peoples and princes which he had previously denounced among the Catholics. "If the denunciations of Israel by the early Fathers of the Church had continued to dictate Christian intolerance through the ages, and their authority was quoted in support of the persecutions and massacres which sullied mediæval Europe, Luther's utterances exercised a similar influence over the Protestant world both in his own and after times down to the present day. Protestant Germany took up the tale of persecution in the sixteenth century where Catholic Germany had left off in the fifteenth. The Jews

were given the alternative of baptism and banishment in Berlin, were expelled from Bavaria in 1553, from Brandenburg in 1573, and the tragedy of oppression was carried on through the ensuing centuries."1 1 Abbott, Israel in Europe, p. 227. Nor has Israel ceased to weep since their so-called "emancipation" ushered in late in the eighteenth century, when, chiefly through the influence of the French Revolution, civil and political rights have been granted to them in most of the countries in Europe, but not in those lands where the great bulk of the scattered people is to be found.

Indeed, the sorrows of Israel within these past ten years in the great Northern Empire of Russia (where more than half of the whole Jewish nation lives in a condition of more or less chronic wretchedness) and in Roumania, etc., have been such as to move even hard-hearted worldly men with compassion for them. "The picture," says Max Nordau in a masterly and comprehensive Survey of the General Condition of the Jews at the Close of the Nineteenth Century presented by him at the first Zionist Congress, "might almost be tinted as a monochrome, for wherever Jews are dwelling in any number among the nations there Jewish misery prevails. this misery is not that of mere common poverty, which, according to the unchanging lot of earth, is ever our unfailing companion. It is a peculiar misery which befalls the Jews, not as men, but as Jews, and from which they would not suffer were they not Jews. Jewish distress is of two kinds, physical and moral.

"In Eastern Europe, in North Africa, in Western Asia, exactly in those lands where the overwhelming majority of Jews, probably nine-tenths of them, dwell, Jewish misery is to be understood literally. It is a daily physical oppression, a terror of the day to follow, a tortuous struggle to support a bare existence. In Western Europe the battle of life is of late somewhat easier, although indications are not lacking to show that even here it may become more severe. But still, for the time being the question of food and shelter, of safety of body and life, is less anxious. Here the misery is of a moral description, and consists in daily mortification of self-respect and sense of honour, in the rough suppression of their effort to attain complete mental rest and satisfaction which none who is not a Jew need deny himself." No wonder that in a very eloquent address on the same subject two years later he pathetically exclaimed: "We are living like Troglodytes, in perpetual darkness. To us the sun of justice is not shining. We are living like the creatures in the depths of the ocean. Upon us press the weight of a thousand atmospheres of mistrust and disdain. We have lived for centuries in a glacial period, surrounded by the bitter cold of malice and hatred. These are the permanent powers which have permanently influenced us, without noise, without incident to give rise to sensational reports, yet under which we have retrograded steadily, gradually, and unmistakably." And not only are the great majority of the Jewish people full of sorrow and wretchedness from within, but they have been for many centuries, and still continue to be, a butt and a derision from without.

"Thou makest us a strife unto our neighbours, And our enemies laugh unto themselves."

One need only be reminded of the ever present "Jewish Question" in all the lands of their dispersion, or have even a very slight acquaintance with the references to the Jews in the literature of the Middle Ages; one need only note the coarse jests and unjustifiable gibes, the shameful caricatures of the Jews to be found in the trashy anti-Semitic effusions of the "most civilised" nations of Europe at the present day; one need only be reminded of the fact that the

honourable name of “Jew” has become a proverb and a byword among all the nations of the earth—to see how truly these words of the Psalmist have been and are still being fulfilled.

“What strikes one as very remarkable” observed von Döllinger, the President of the Academy of Sciences in Munich, in an address on “The Jews in Europe,” delivered before that learned body in 1881, “is that in the ‘Christian’ chronicles and histories of the Middle Ages no sign of compassion, not a word of indignation, is to be met with in their reports of the outrages committed against the Jews. Many of the clerical chroniclers even manifest their pleasure in them. Thus, for instance, the monk of Waverly relates in a triumphant tone the slaughter in London at the coronation of Richard I., which had taken place without any cause being given for it by the Jews, and concludes by exclaiming: “Blessed be the Lord who hath delivered up the wicked.”1 Truly Israel has had, and still has, much cause for weeping!

1 Annals Monast., p. 246. And it is a pathetic and sorrowful sight to see Israel weep. “Go to Jerusalem,” wrote the late Franz Delitzsch in an early number of his Saat auf Hoffnung, “and there you can see it. On the south-western side of the Temple hill, where the tremendous ruins of the area of Solomon’s Temple stand, is ‘the Wailing Place of the Jews.’ As their fathers of yore by the waters of Babylon, so the elders of the daughter of Zion mourn here every Friday, laying their hoary heads low in the dust by the crumbling Temple wall, and their tears fall in torrents on the open page of the Book of Lamentations, which they hold with their trembling hands. Youths, lying on their faces, moisten the penitential Psalms of David with their tears. Maidens, with dishevelled hair, bow their heads to the ground, kissing the ancient stones, and weeping for the misery of their people.”

“Mournfully the Precentor begins the chant of lamentation:

“ ‘ Because of the palace that lies desolate.’

“ And the people respond:

“ ‘ We sit solitary and weep.’

“The Precentor the continues his plaint:

“ ‘ Because of the temple that is destroyed,’

“ ‘ Because of the walls that are laid low,’

“ ‘ Because of our glory, that is departed from us,’

“ ‘ Because of the great men that are no more among us.’

“And again the people answer:

“ ‘ We sit solitary and weep.’

“Once more the Precentor continues:

“ ‘ Because of the precious stones that are burnt,’

“ ‘ Because of our priests that have stumbled,’

“ ‘ Because of our kings that have despised Him.’

“And ever more plaintive comes the response of the people:

“ ‘ We sit solitary and weep.’ ”

7.18. Chapter 4 - The Primary Cause of Jewish Sufferings; Israel a Prophet of Judgment

Chapter 4 The Primary Cause of Jewish Sufferings; Israel a Prophet of Judgment

EVEN more sad and pathetic than actually to see Israel weep at the “Wailing Place,” and in their synagogues on the 9th of Ab, and on other solemn occasions, is the thought that to this day they neither know nor acknowledge the real and underlying cause of all their sorrows and their sufferings. This indeed constitutes the saddest symptom of Israel’s present spiritual blindness. They have a zeal for their God, but not according to knowledge; they feel the Lord’s hand heavy upon them, but they know not wherefore; they are smitten and even delude themselves into the belief that “they as a nation are the promised Messiah who are to atone for the sins of the world by unspeakable suffering.” Their leaders and teachers blame the cruelty and inhumanity of the Gentile nations, and verily the nations of Christendom in particular have a terrible account yet to settle with God for their attitude and dealings with the Jewish people;1 but but behind these, for the most part apostate and corrupt nations who were used as God’s scourge, there is the anger of God.

“O Jehovah, God of Hosts, How long wilt Thou be angry [lit. “smoke”] against the prayer of Thy people?” (Psalms 80:4)

1 We are sometimes asked, “But have not the sufferings of Israel all been minutely foretold by Moses and the prophets in advance?” Yes, certainly they have all been foretold; but have not the sufferings of Christ been even more minutely foretold and described also? And yet we read that it was “with wicked hands” that they took and crucified Him, and Israel was held responsible for their conduct and dealing in relation to Him. Prophecy, my dear reader, is given to us, not that it may be fulfilled, but because the omniscient God, who sees the end from the beginning, knows that it shall be fulfilled, and man is left a free and responsible agent; and the nations who know not that the great God is overruling all things, even their wicked actions, to the fulfilment of His predetermined counsel, are held accountable for their deeds. And that the “jealousy” and hot displease of Jehovah against the nations because of their attitude to Israel are to be dreaded, history also testifies. Where are the great nations of antiquity who have lifted up their hands against the Jewish people? And in modern times the ancient word which He spoke to Abraham is still verifying itself in the experience of nations as of individuals: “I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse.” (From the Author’s Notes on Zechariah.) The expression is a very striking one. Other scriptures speak of God’s anger as “smoking,” but here the figure is applied to Him—“How long wilt Thou smoke?” Yes, alas! the Light of Israel, He who should have been their “Sun and Shield” has been a smoking furnace, and a consuming fire to His own people; or in the words of the national song which God commanded Moses to write and to put into their mouth (Deu_32:14-23) that in case of their apostasy from Him it may be an everlasting witness against them:

“Because he forsook God which made, And lightly esteemed the God of his salvation, * * * * * Jehovah saw it, and abhorred them, Because of the provocation of his sons and his daughters. And He said, I will hide My face from them, I will see what their end shall be: For they are a very froward generation, Children in whom is no faith.

They have moved Me to jealousy with that which is not God;

They have provoked Me to anger with their vanities: And I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people;

I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation. For a fire is kindled in mine anger, And burneth until the lowest pit, And devoureth the earth with her increase, And setteth on fire the foundations of the mountains.

I will heap mischiefs upon them;

I will spend Mine arrows upon them:

They shall be wasted with hunger, and devoured with burning heat, And bitter destruction; And the teeth of beasts will I send upon them, With the poison of crawling things of the dust.

Without shall the sword bereave, And in the chambers terror;

It shall destroy both young man and virgin, The suckling with the man of grey hairs.”

(Deu_32:18-25)

It is also a remarkable fact of history that the suffering of the Jewish people since the destruction of the second Temple, which inaugurated the second stage of their dispersion among the nations, have been much terrible than those which followed the destruction of the first Temple. Now we know the special great national sin of Israel which brought about the overthrow of the Northern Kingdom and the seventy years’ captivity in Babylon; but what can be the outstanding great and awful sin of the Jewish nation which has been visited by God with a punishment so unique and unparalleled, and with a bondage lasting already early two thousand years? To this question neither the synagogue nor the Rabbis have any answer. Idolatry has been detested by the Jews ever since the captivity in Babylon. It is a matter of fact also that they have, as a people, outwardly at any rate, been more obedient to the letter of the Law—more “religious” and zealous for God at the time and since the appearing of Christ, than their fathers were before them. Not content merely with the Law, they have elaborated the Talmud, and have added innumerable precepts and commandments which have made Rabbinic Judaism a burden heavy indeed to be borne. To their superior morality and certain outstanding national virtues even their enemies have had to bear witness; for “in the vast mass of exhortatory sermons, accusations, and hostile declamations against the Jews, which in the endless representation of stereotyped phrases, pervades the ecclesiastical literature of the Middle Ages, their moral life, as far as regards family, chastity, temperance, faith in the performance of agreement, is never impeached.”1 Indeed, it is their tenacious adherence to their religion, and their zeal for their Law, which was one chief caused of the accusations and persecutions which have been heaped upon them. What, then, I repeat, can be the great sin which has caused God to hide His face from His chosen people for so long, and which has occasioned Israel’s weary wanderings as a fugitive among the nations for so many

centuries?

1 Von Döllinger.

Alas! “Israel doth not know, My people doth not consider,” nor will they acknowledge it as a nation until the spirit of grace and supplication shall be poured upon them, and they “look upon Him whom they have pierced.” Then with broken hearts they shall confess, like Joseph’s brethren of old: “We are verily guilty concerning our brother” (Jesus, of whom Joseph is such a beautiful type)—“in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us” (Gen_42:21). Then Israel’s greatest but final mourning will take place—a weeping, not on account of their sufferings, but their great nation sin. “They shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and they shall be in bitterness for Him as one that is in bitterness for his first-born. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem . . . and the whole land shall mourn, every family apart, and their wives apart” (Zec_12:10-14). then, and only then, also shall Israel be finally comforted: then the “oil of joy shall be given to them for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.” “And the ransomed of Jehovah shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads, they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.” (Isa_35:10, Isa_61:3). But till then, in the words of one of Israel’s noblest and most gifted sons,1 Israel has been, and must remain “a prophet of judgment.”

1 The late Prof. Paulus Casssel, of Berlin. His erudition, versatility, and genuine disinterested love for his nation have been acknowledged by the Jews themselves.

“ ‘The Lord is righteous’ is Israel’s cry in Lam_1:18, ‘for I have rebelled against His commandment.’ ‘Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods,’ says Jethro ‘for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly He was above them’ (Exo_18:11).

“Israel is a prophet of judgment. When he had taken prisoner the heathen king Adoni-bezek whose custom had been to mutilate his prisoners, Israel treated him as he had treated others, and so was it with Israel himself. Ahab and Jezebel, who slew the prophets, perished ignominiously, and their blood was licked by dogs. Before Christ’s coming, and afterwards, Israel experienced what he did to others.

“Israel destroyed the temple of the body of their best and greatest Friend, an awful miracle which sin wrought, and their temple of stone and gold was rased to the ground. On the hill of Golgotha they shed blood, and the Mount Moriah, which their fathers’ holy footsteps had trodden, became a desolation. As they had shed blood, so were they for centuries slain like sheep of the slaughter, both in the East and in the West, both by Christians and Mohammedans. The prophecy of Moses in Deu_28:66 was fulfilled in a hundred places: ‘Thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life.’ A Jewish author in Spain makes a Christian servant say that he had been told by his masters that since Jews had put the Saviour to death it was no crime to murder a Jew.

“They struck the Innocent One, and fearfully has the rod of retribution been laid on their own backs. A Jewish poet of the Middle Ages mourns:

“ ‘ We are beaten with rods, The wounds bleed. ’

Even Queen Christina of Sweden allowed her attendants wantonly to beat her Jewish physician as if he were a fox. In Frankfort in the eighteenth century Spencer strongly reprobated from the pulpit the system of beating and mocking Jews, so that they could not pass through the streets without insult. Fools full of iniquity had struck the Lord in the face, and how has this been visited upon them! In the Middle Ages it was customary at Toulouse to give a Jew a violent blow on the face in the name of the community, so much so that death often ensued; and this was specially done at the seasons of Christmas, Good Friday, and the Feast of Assumption.

“They demanded the liberation of Barabbas, and they, who in their paschal hymns so beautifully styled themselves the sons of freedom, became the general slaves of the empire. They made Christ bear His cross on His weary way, and, for a long, long time, whilst longing and waiting from morning to evening, and from evening till morning, have they borne the ignominious cross as a mark on their hats and on their garments.

“In the Middle Ages they were forced in some countries to have the letter T on their clothes to distinguish them. It served as a memorial to represent the truncated cross, and had reference to the words of the prophet Ezekiel: ‘Go ye through the streets of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon their foreheads.’ It is asserted that in the East they have been branded in the face and neck like horses, which however, has been also done to Christians by Moslem princes. Hokem Biamsilla compelled them to wear the image of the golden calf on their breast.

“It was the most degrading punishment when Israel elevated Christ on the cross—the most exalted of their high priests; and from that moment how degraded has Israel been, for he degraded himself when he defiled his Priest and Prophet! Jews in the Middle Ages were considered unworthy of being hanged on the same gallows with Christians. In Wiesthümer they were raked with vile women and hangmen. In a Bavarian tax register of 1458 they are classified under ‘things for sale’ between trout and veal! Were not they the people who murmured against Jesus because He ate with publicans and sinners? and for 1,500 years they had to pay a poll tax, and form an important article in the revenue of the State.

“This tax was only removed in 1813 in Saxony, and originated in the principle of the Swabian law that the Emperor, like every sovereign prince before him, was the successor of the Emperor Titus, and consequently the master of their life and death, and this claim they could only redeem by paying every third penny they had. In a proclamation of Albrecht Achelles of Brandenburg, it is said these words occur: ‘Be it known throughout the Empire in the event of a king of the Romans being chosen—that he may either burn all the Jews according to ancient custom, or show them mercy in allowing them to purchase their lives by paying the one-third of all they possess.’

“They stoned Stephen and Paul, and in the course of time every one of these stoes finds its way back upon their own heads.

“In Beziers on Psalm Sunday, the custom was for Christians to have a stone-throwing at the Jews. The bishop gave his blessing to the people in these words: ‘Throw stones and manfully revenge Christ’s shame’; and with the blessing of their spiritual pastor, and the permission of their prince, we can imagine it would not be done by halves.

“The many complaints that when Christians were persecuted it was not for things they had done, but for the name they bore, and that the occasional misdeeds of a few were visited upon all, over

which the Fathers (Justin, Tertullian, &c.) mourn so much, are constantly recurring facts in the history off the Jews. ‘One Israelite is surety for another’ has become a proverb. The community suffers for the crime of an individual.

“Dickens, in one of his tales, makes a pious Jew speak thus: ‘In Christian countries Jews are not treated like other people, for they say, “This is a bad Greek, but there are good Greeks. such a one is a bad Turk, but good ones can be found.” When they talk of Jews it is not so. they find out the bad amongst us easily enough—in every nation is it not easy to discover the bad?—but people take the worst amongst us as specimens of the best, and accept the vilest among us to represent the noblest, and say Jews are all alike.’

“Tertullian and Origen defended the early Christians from another reproach—that of being deficient in patriotism, and not to be depended upon as citizens. This accusation has been engraved on the hearts of Jews by all parties, with sword and with pen. When the Arabs took possession of Spain, the blame was laid on them. Yet they were even killed because they did not surrender the Spanish fortress after the flight of the Goths. In the year 1849, many of the inhabitants of Komorn were slain in the Hungarian revolution because one Jew, whose sympathies were Austrian, supported the besiegers, whilst at the same time every Jewish community was taxed by Prince Windishgrätz, where a single Jew was found who sympathised with Kossuth.

“The accusation brought against the Christians by the heathen and Jews, of drinking blood at their meetings, was a horrible misrepresentation of the Lord’s Supper. Justin Martyr appealed to the Jew Trypho to bear witness that it was not true; and how has this accusation recoiled upon the Jews, of whom thousands have lost their lives in consequence of their being supposed to drink blood, though there has never been a shadow of foundation for it.

“The Jews vilified Christ and His disciples, and gave them names of reproach; and their own honourable name of ‘Jew,’ which had won such glory in the heroic time of the Maccabees, the possession of which was the Apostle’s boast, and which is borne by the Lion of Judah, has become a term of opprobrium. They who bear it are sometimes themselves ashamed of it, as of a word of reproach. A French writer, wishing to describe with moral bitterness the extent to which corruption, love of money, and dishonesty prevailed in the time of Louis Philippe, entitled his book Jews, the Kings of the Time.

Rothschild has been called king of the Jews, and also the Jew of the kings;1 but the crown of thorns which has encircled this name throughout history, with burning shame and reproach for young and old, in the schools and in life, in books and newspapers, has not lost its power to pierce.

1 It may not be out of place here to mention the German saying referred to in the text—“The Jews used to have one king; now the kings have one Jew.”

“An idea prevalent in former times has latterly been revived—that Judas, who betrayed his Master, was a type of the Jewish people in their history; but this is utterly erroneous, for Judas only typifies the treachery of those who, professing to be disciples, betray their Master, from fear of man or self-made wisdom.

“The Jewish priests and elders who gave money to set aside the Saviour who came to them, gave money to lose love, offered money to betray the True One, have imprinted the judgment that befell them on the history of the nation. Israel had soon nothing to trust in but money. Money became his breastplate, his sword, his refuge. It saved the people from death, but did not ennoble their life. For money Israel sold Him who brought the noblest freedom, and by money he purchased a tolerated servitude. Money was his protection and his bitterest enemy. He was trodden under foot if he had it not, envied and hated if possessed of it. Henry III. of England pulled out the teeth of Jews in York till they gave up all their wealth, and his successors banished them from the kingdom. They were drained of all they had, and then punished for having nothing. Usury was their exclusive privilege, ad they were made to suffer for exacting it. Money is their power and their enemy.

“Such it has been, and such it is at the present time.”

People have not failed to draw the conclusion that the legendary wandering Jew is a type of his nation; but the one-sidedness of this view is apparent. Israel is no aged wanderer in the world’s history, but an ever youthful prophet of the judgment and the grace of God who appeared in his midst—like the legendary handkerchief on which remained the impress of our Lord’s features; but this handkerchief was a banner of glory and holiness. Israel’s history is the impression of the scars of judgment—a history so far of the cross, but through the Christ, who has never ceased to yearn over them, and on whose cross was inscribed Jesus Nazarenus Rex Judœorum—a relationship which He has never renounced, and which is indissoluble—it shall yet become one of victory and of glory.

Chapter 120

7.19. Chapter 5 - Israel's Sufferings in Fulfillment of Divine Forecasts and an Object-Lesson...

Chapter 5 Israel’s Sufferings in Fulfilment of Divine Forecasts and an Object-Lesson to Christendom

THERE are yet two points in connection with Israel’s night of weeping which I must emphasise at the risk of repetition before proceeding to the second section of our psalm.

1. Israel’s sorrows and sufferings are not only due in the first instance to God’s righteous and retributive anger against His people; but are in fulfilment of prophetic forecasts, predictions and warnings, some of which were uttered at the very beginning of their national history.

If it be true indeed, as their own prophets and historians pathetically complain, “that under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem” (Dan_9:12); and that “the misfortunes of all men from the beginning of the world, if they be compared with those of the Jews, are not so considerable ad they were,” what is this but a fulfilment of the solemn and awful words of God through Moses: “If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are within this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful Name, Jehovah, thy God, then Jehovah will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, even great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sicknesses and of long continuance.” And again in the same prophecy: “Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, by reason of the abundance of all things: therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things: and He shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until He have destroyed thee” (Deu_28:47-48, Deu_28:58-59).

2. The history and experience of Israel in dispersion is intended of God to be an object-lesson and warning to Christendom. This is one reason why the Shepherd of Israel—who has had His eye on his erring flock even during the period of their banishment from His presence—has so ordered their wanderings that the great bulk of the Jewish nation has for so many centuries been found in countries in which, nominally at least, the Name of Christ has been professed.

We are thankful for the confirmation of Scripture and for the light thrown on the Word of God by recent historical and monumental discoveries; but the most eloquent monument to the faithfulness of God and to the everlasting truth of His holy Word is the Jew: and there is an inscription more striking and legible than many which can be found written on papyrus or graven on rock—an inscription two millennia long, consisting of the history of the Jewish nation since their dispersion, written for the most part in their own blood. And how does the inscription read? Or in other words, what is the testimony which Israel in dispersion, and during his night of weeping, bears to the Christian nations? Some of Israel’s modern leaders and teachers would have us believe that the dispersion, instead of being an act of God’s judgment upon the nation on account of their sin, and an expression of His displeasure, was intended to be, and had indeed proved, a means of blessing

to the world, because the nations have in this manner learned to know the One true and living God. Thus even in the prayer-book of the Jewish “Reform” community in Berlin we find this remarkable passage: “Exalted high was the Light of Thy knowledge (O God) in Jerusalem, and in the midst of Israel; but a dark and all-pervading night rested beyond his boundaries, and no ray of Thy light reached the peoples round about. But behold! the mighty and exalted Temple building falls—the pillars which bare its domes brake in pieces—Thine hand, O God, has broken it into fragments. Lamenting, the sons of Israel go forth into the distant land; by the waters of Babylon they sat and wept, but when they returned to the place of Thy Temple in order to build it up anew, then Thy right hand laid hold of them again, and scattered them on the face of the whole globe—even as far as the sun sends forth his rays. And behold, love sprang up where hatred was sown, and light where night had rested; the Sun of righteousness rises over the earth.”1 And so, in a prayer for the Sabbath Day we read: “Thou hast called us as priests of Thy law, O Father of Mankind! . . . . that we might bear witness in our endeavours and strivings.”

1 Gebetbuch der Jüdischen Reformgemeinde zu Berlin, pp. 38-39. the edition from which I am translating is the Neue Ausgabe, Berlin, 1885, Selbstverlag der Jüdischen Reformgemeinde. In the same spirit many, especially of the “Reformed” Rabbis, and Jewish writers, speak boastfull of Israel’s “mission” among the nations, and of the time when through them the Messianic era (for these Jews have given up the hope of a personal Messiah) shall be ushered in on the earth. But this is mere delusion; for, as I have said elsewhere, “Neither from the ‘Orthodox’ Talmudic Jews, who may be regarded as the successors of the Pharisees, nor yet from the progressive or ‘Reform’ Rabbis, who are no improvement on the Sadducees of the time of our Lord, did the Gentiles learn to know of the true and living God, but from the Jewish apostles of Jesus Christ, the true Light of the World, whose glory these Rabbis have done their utmost to hide and misrepresent before their people, and from such Jews whose names the nation cast out as evil, and who had to take upon them the same reproach of their Messiah, and follow Him ‘outside the camp.’ ” It is a notorious fact also that these Rabbis and Jewish leaders who boast in having a “mission” to the nations are doing absolutely nothing to bring the knowledge of God, or to spread abroad their law, among the Gentiles; and that since the rejection of Christ and the destruction of Jerusalem, while the Gospel of Christ has continued its triumphal march among the nations, the synagogue has been struck with impotence and unbelieving Israel with barrenness. The day is assuredly coming when the people whose calling it is to be “a kingdom of priests and an holy nation” (Exo_19:6) shall show forth God’s praise, and be the instrument in His hand to spread abroad the knowledge of God among all nations; but the law to which they will then “bear witness” (to use the language of the Reformed Prayer-Book quoted above) will be the new law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus, and the spirit in which all Israel will then go forth among the nations will be the spirit of the Apostle Paul, who said: “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world.”

Till then, as already shown, Israel is a witness chiefly to God’s righteous judgment, and the solemn inscription which is written over the history of the Jewish people since their dispersion for the instruction and the warning of Christendom is this: Jehovah is a righteous and faithful God—faithful in carrying out His threatenings as in fulfilling His promises; it is an awful thing to fall into the hands of the living God when once these hands are stretched out in judgment—whether it be against a nation or an individual. “Behold, therefore, the goodness and the severity of God; on

them which fell severity; but toward thee goodness, if thou continue in His goodness; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." Would to God Christendom had read this inscription and had laid to heart this warning! Then it would not have developed into what it is; then it would not have fallen into the very sins and errors—in an even more intensified form—which brought about the banishment and long-continued sorrows which came upon Israel.

"Nor let the Church Christian"—says Bishop Horne, speaking of the desolation of the vineyard, (Psa_80:13)—"imagine that these things relate only to her elder sister. Greater mercies and more excellent gifts should excite in her greater thankfulness, and call forth more excellent virtues; otherwise they will serve only to enhance her account and multiply her sorrows. If she sin and fall after the same example of unbelief, she must not think to be distinguished in her punishment, unless by the severity of it. She may expect to see the favour of Heaven withdrawn, and the secular arm, instead of supporting, employed to crush her; her discipline may be annihilated, her unity broken, her doctrines perverted, her worship deformed, her practice corrupted, her possessions alienated, and her revenues seized, till at length the word be given from above, and some Antichristian power be unchained to execute upon her the full vengeance due to her sins." But not only to God's righteous judgment does Israel in dispersion bear witness. How thankful, for instance, even true Christians should be that in these days of increasing unbelief in the supernatural, when attempts are being made even within the professing Christian Church itself to reduce all the early records of biblical history into myths and legends, that we have still a whole nation in our midst who embody all their past history in their present, and who, by their very existence and solemn rites and observances, bear witness in a thousand ways to the historic truth of those early Scriptures which, in the providence of God, they have preserved for us.1 And in these days also, when even theological professors coolly assert that it is doubtful whether Abraham was an actual personality, and when a canon of the Church of Egland can coolly assert that to him the actual existence of personality of Moses is "unproved ad improbable," and when others who condescend to admit the existence of Moses as an historical personality confidently declare that he had very little or nothing to do with the giving of the Law—how thankful, I say, we should be that to this day there is a whole people scattered throughout the earth who whenever they name Abraham always add Abinu—"Abraham, our father"; and whenever they speak of Moses say, Moshe-Rabenu—"Moses, our teacher, or Law-giver," as if in solemn protest against those extreme, unreasonable, and unjustifiable theories which are now being palmed off in the name of criticism!

1 This section to the end of this chapter is transferred here from the author's small book A Divine Forecast of Jewish History. And in this materialistic age, when men are denying God, not only as Redeemer but as the Creator, it is something to have a nation who throughout their history have kept the seventh day as a reminder and testimony that in six days the Lord created the heavens and the earth, but rested on the seventh day.

How significant also are the various festivals which Israel continues to observe! For instance, there is the Passover, which celebrates the great historical event of the Exodus and the wonders which God wrought for them in bringing them out of Egypt; there are the Feasts of Weeks and of Tabernacles, which commemorate the experiences in the wilderness, and their entrance into the promised land; and the many other rites and observances which could only have originated in actual facts of history, of which they are momentos.

“And as they observe the festivals so they observe the law of Moses; and it is owing to that law of Moses that they are still in existence, for Israel is not like any of the other nations. Other nations, when they have reached, as it were, their highest point, and when they have been living in great civilisation and luxury, become effete, on account of their immorality and on account of their wickedness; but Israel has never become effete.

“The sanctities of family life endure in Israel up to this day, owing to the law of Moses, owing to the ten commandments, owing to the ordinances which God gave to His people, and to God Himself watching over them. They are physically, as they ever were, distinguished by their longevity, distinguished by their tenacity and vigour of purpose, distinguished by their mental freshness so that they are able to enter into any branch of study or into any occupation of life.”1 1 Adolph Saphir.

“God’s judgment of Israel,” says another Hebrew Christian brother, “is the most terrible thing in history—yet they have been preserved to this very day through the power of that very God who punished them so terribly. Here they are, a monument of the truth of God’s Word—a monument also of God’s faithfulness. None of the persecutions which they have endured have availed to destroy them, neither have they broke their energy, nor subdued their indomitable will, nor crushed their power of mind; and no sooner was the great pressure which the nations—so called Christian nations—put upon them removed than we see them prosper in every country, and take leading positions in every sphere of life—in commerce and politics as well as in literature and art, showing that the Lord God has made them to be a peculiar people, a nation to be perpetuated and that it was He who gave them nerve to endure, in order that in the future, when His grace shall melt their hearts, they may be a mighty instrument to show forth His praise. There is still visible among scattered Israel something of blessing and influence, the effect of God’s training through so many centuries. Their history since the rejection of Christ is unspeakably sad; yet we cannot help noticing that in the midst of Christless Israel some traces of the grandeur and beauty of their fathers’ house still linger.

“Behold their zeal for God, their zeal for the Scriptures, their zeal for the Sabbath Day; behold the sacrifices which they make in order to carry out the injunctions of the Law! Yes, there are many features in the Jewish character which we cannot explain in any other way than this—that there is still a blessing resting on them; that the voice of God which was heard upon Sinai has still its echo in their hearts and consciences; and that the prayers which have been offered up on their behalf, by patriarchs, kings, prophets, and saints, are still held in the remembrance before the throne of God.”1 1 From an address by C. A. Schönberger.

7.20. Chapter 6 - The Parable of the Vine: The Contrast Between the Past and the Present

Chapter 6 The Parable of the Vine: The Contrast Between the Past and the Present

I COME now to the third and longest section of this comprehensive psalm, in which, as stated in the Introduction, the plea for God's interposition on Israel's behalf is based on the ground of His former mercies to them.

First, we have a striking picture of the time when, under the fostering care and protection of Jehovah, Israel spread themselves abroad and flourished:

"Thou broughtest a vine out of Egypt;

Thou didst drive out the nations, and plantedst it.

Thou preparedst room [or "didst clear room," or "the ground"] before it. And it took deep root, and filled the land. The mountains were covered with the shadow of it, And by its boughs the cedars of God.

She sent out her branches unto the sea, And her shoots unto the river." The Vine (or Vineyard) as an emblem of Israel is frequently found in the Old Testament, and is adopted also by our Lord in His parables in the New Testament. To the inspired writer of this psalm it has very probably been suggested by Isaiah's prophetic song on the same theme (Isa_5:1-7), to which there are manifest allusions in this psalm, and perhaps also by Jacob's blessing on Joseph, who is described as "a fruitful bough by a fountain, whose branches run over the wall" (Gen_49:22).

Looking closely into this parable, we find in these eight graphic lines a summary of God's mighty acts of power and grace, and also of judgment, which He displayed in bringing Israel out of Egypt and in planting them in the land of promise.

It is in many points a parallel scripture to Psalms 44:1-26, where the psalmist also seeks to encourage himself and the people in their present distress and suffering by a rehearsal of God's wonderful deeds for them in the past:

"O God, we have heard with our ears [I am translating literally] our fathers have told us, What work [or "how wonderfully"] Thou didst in their days, in the days of old.

It was Thou—with thine own hand, Who didst drive out the nations and plantedst them [i.e., Israel];

Thou didst afflict the peoples and didst spread them [i.e. Israel] abroad." In both psalms all the glory of Israel's deliverance from Egypt and of the original conquest of Palestine is ascribed to Jehovah.

1. Found in the uncongenial soil of Egypt, where they had been held, so to say, rooted for centuries, God brought them out; the particular verb which the sacred singer employs being used

both of horticulture (Job_19:10) and, like the word “planted” in the next line, of “breaking up and removing a nomadic encampment—the pulling out the tent pins and driving them in.”

It was He Himself “with His own hand” and stretched out arm who did it! for the more we learn of the might of Egypt at the time of the Exodus, and how contrary to all human probabilities it was that Israel could ever have escaped from under the hand of the mighty Pharaohs, the more we understand how it is that in the Old Testament the Exodus, and the wonders which accompanied it, are continually referred to as the most manifest proof of the almighty power of God in exercise on behalf of His people. And it was a display, not only of His power, but of His grace, for all that the sacred historians and prophets tell us of Israel’s moral and spiritual condition in Egypt, and at the time of their deliverance, testifies to the fact that they did not in themselves deserve such a Divine interposition on their behalf. But in the words of another psalm:

“He remembered His holy word [of promise] And Abraham His servant; So he brought out His people with joy, And His chosen ones with singing.” (Psa_105:42-43)

2. And it was He also who did “drive out the nations” in order “to clear the ground” and make room for this vine, which His own right hand was now bringing in to plant. “By their own sword” they never could have conquered Palestine. All the historical and monumental discoveries go to show that the region was at that time inhabited by different nations, some of them very warlike, greater and mightier than they, whom they ever could have dislodged in their own strength. What the human probabilities were in reference to Israel’s gaining possession of the land were stated by the spies in their report: “The people that dwell in the land are strong, and the cities are fenced in and very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there”—in short—“We be not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we” (Num_13:28-31). This was all true; their sin and guilt lay only in the fact that they left God and His promises out of account. Caleb and Joshua put the matter in its true light; they did not under-estimate the difficulties; they also saw the great and fenced cities, and the giants, but they said: “If Jehovah delight in us, then He will bring us into the land, and give it unto us.” And that the faith and confidence in God of these two were justified, is attested by history and commemorated in these two psalms and other scriptures:

“They got not the land in possession by their sword, Neither did their own arm save them: But Thy right hand and Thine arm and the light of Thy countenance.

Because Thou hadst a favour unto them.” (Psa_44:3)

3. But in the words “Thou didst drive out the nations” and “afflict the peoples,” we are reminded not only of God’s acts of power and of grace toward Israel, but of His severity and righteous judgment toward the seven nations of Canaan.

Unbelievers sometimes cavil at Scripture because of the record it contains of the destruction of these peoples, and profess themselves even unable to believe in a God who could sanction or permit such things; while modern Christian apologetes think themselves under the necessity to compromise the character and inspiration of the sacred writers by assuring us that God never did command Israel to uproot and destroy those nations. The simple believer, on the other hand, remembering the marvellous longsuffering which God exercised toward these Canaanites, and how for many centuries He had been waiting ad restraining His anger because “the iniquity of the Amorite” was not yet quite full (Gen_15:16), cannot only exclaim:

“Great ad marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, thou King of Nations. Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy Name, for Thou only art holy”— but, without holding God responsible for any single deed or particular action on the part of Israel or their leaders and judges in their relation to these doomed nations, can even see His love and concern for humanity as a whole in His acts of judgment on these corrupt peoples.

We do not regard the skilful surgeon (to use a very imperfect illustration) as a cruel man, but rather as a benefactor, when to save the man he has to cut deep and sharp in order to remove a diseased or decaying physical member; so either is God unjust or unkind when nations or individuals who have become wholly and hopelessly, both morally and physically corrupt, are given over by Him to utter destruction in order to prevent the festering mass from becoming a source of moral contagion and death all around.

“Behold, therefore,” my reader, in these lines of the psalm, “the goodness and the severity of God”1; toward these nations whom He “drove out” and “afflicted” severity, but toward Israel goodness, so long as Israel continued in His goodness; but when Israel in their turn began to manifest signs of moral and spiritual corruption, He spared not even His own chosen people—“the dearly beloved of His soul”—but gave over generations of them to judgment, and the whole nation to long-continued suffering, though His purpose in reference to their future still abides.

4. But to return more directly to our psalm, which goes on to dilate on the wonderful way in which this slip of a “vine,” which the great Husbandman transplanted from Egypt, grew and flourished upon His fostering care:

“It took deep root and filled the land, The mountains were covered with the shadow of it, And by its boughs the cedars of God.1 She sent out her branches unto the sea, And her shoots unto the river.”

1 I prefer this rendering to that given in the Authorized and Revised Versions, and it brings out the parallelism more clearly. In these lines we have a poetic or allegorical reference to the boundaries of the promised land and particularly to the limits of its possession reached in the glorious days of the Solomonic empire (1Ki_4:24). For the “mountains” refer to the hill country of Judea in the South, “particularly the southernmost part of the same, which at the commencement of Israel’s country met the traveller like a wall”1 and the “cedars” unto which the boughs of the vine reached out stand for Lebanon in the North—the expression “of God” (translated in the Authorised Version “goodly”), used also in Psa_36:6 of the mountains of Palestine, being intended to impress us with their loftiness and majesty, and perhaps also with the fact of God’s delight in them as an outstanding feature of Immanuel’s land, and as showing forth the glory of the Creator. The (Mediterranean) “sea” always stands for the western boundary of Palestine, and the “river,” which is the Euphrates, for the eastern boundary. thus, in measure at any rate, especially during Solomon’s reign, and as a foreshadowing of the time when restored and converted Israel shall enter into the full possession of the whole promised land, has God’s promise to them through Moses been fulfilled: “Every place whereon the sole of your foot shall tread shall be yours, from the wilderness, and Lebanon, for the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the hinder [or western] sea shall be your border” (Deu_11:24).

1 Hengstenberg

5. Compared with the beautiful past, when Israel dwelt under the protection ad favour of God, the preset appears all the more gloomy. “Why,” the psalmist mournfully proceeds—

“Why hast Thou broken down her fenced, So that all they which pass by the way do pluck her? The boar out of the wood doth ravage it, And the wild beast of the field doth devour it.”

Here again the sacred writer attributes Israel’s misfortunes as being due in the first instance to the withdrawal of God from their midst. So long as He was among them, “the Almighty was their defence,” and His salvation was much more to them than “walls and bulwarks” (Isa_26:1). Not all the nations combined, nor all the forces of the universe, could prevail against them as long as Jehovah Himself was the Captain of their salvation, and strove with them that strove against them. But when He hid His face and withdrew from them, then their “defences were broken down,” and all that passes by began to “pluck” at them. The “boar” and the “wild beast,” which latter word is found in the original elsewhere only in Psa_50:11, are emblematic of Gentile world-power1—of those nations namely who in turn tread down Jerusalem and oppress Israel—the last named, which is formed from a verb which means to “move to and fro” in restless activity, pointing probably to the last of the four “great beasts” in Daniel’s vision, whose united course make up “the time of the Gentiles”—the one “diverse from all the beasts which went before it”—the great Roman power, which is still dragging on, and is yet to be manifested in its final development under Antichrist, and which in a special manner has “devoured and brake in pieces and stamped the residue with his feet.”2

1 There are many other scriptures where Gentile powers are symbolised by wild beasts and birds of prey. Cf. Psalms 68:30; Ezekiel 29:3; Ezekiel 17:1-24; Daniel 7:1-28, &c.

2 So the Talmud understood it. And that which the psalmist here describes as actually taking place is exactly what the great Husbandman threatened to do in the pathetic and beautiful song about the vineyard uttered by Isaiah, where we also find the answer to the question expressed in the “why” in the twelfth verse. It was because after having done all that He possibly could for this vineyard He found that it brought forth only wild grapes, that He finally says: “Go to, I will tell you what I will do to My vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up, and I will break down the fence thereof, and it shall not be pruned or hoed, but there shall come up briars and thorns; I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. For the vineyard of Jehovah of Hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah His pleasant plant; and He looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry” (Isa_5:1-7).

7.21. Chapter 7 - "Turn Again, We Beseech Thee": Israel's Hope for the Future

Chapter 7 “Turn Again, We Beseech Thee”: Israel’s Hope for the Future

MOVED by the picture of Israel’s present oppressed and desolate condition, the psalmist breaks forth into earnest, importunate prayer for God’s interposition and deliverance:

“God of Tzebaoth, turn again, we beseech Thee, Look down from heaven and behold, and visit this vine”; as much as to say “Only turn Thyself” to look, and thou wilt surely be moved with compassion and wilt visit with Thy mercy and deliverance once again this Vine. But we may regard this prayer also in a more literal and personal sense, during Israel’s long night of weeping God is represented as having withdrawn Himself. “I will go,” He says, to quote another prophetic scripture, “and return to My place till they acknowledge their offence and seek My face”; but “He will turn again, He will have compassion on us; He will subdue our iniquities; and Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.” And “His going forth is sure as the morning; and He shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter rain that watereth the earth” (Hos_5:15; Hos_6:3; Mic_7:19). In the first line of the fifteenth verse the Authorised Version has “and the Vineyard,” and the Revised Version the “Stock”; but almost all modern scholars are agreed in regarding the Hebrew word ■■■■■■, kannah, not as a substantive, but as the imperative of the verb ■■■■■ kanan, meaning to cover or to protect, in which sense it was understood also by the translators of the Septuagint and Vulgate versions. It certainly preserves the parallelism best:

“Look down from heaven, behold and visit this Vine, And protect [or “maintain”] what Thy right hand hath planted. And the son [not branch, as in A.V., or more lit. “upon” or “over the son”; i.e., “let Thy protection be over him”] whom Thou madest strong for Thyself.”

Once again the present wretchedness of Israel forces itself on the psalmist’s mind, and he would use it also once more as a plea with God for His interposition on their behalf:

“It [i.e. the vine which Thou hast brought out of Egypt; the vineyard which Thine own right hand hath planted] is burned with fire, it is cut down, At the rebuke of Thy countenance they perish.

Oh, let Thy hand be upon [or “over”] the man of Thy right hand, Upon the son of man whom Thou madest strong for Thyself.”

“The Son,” “the Man of Thy right hand,” “the Son of Man”—primarily all these names apply to and are used of Israel. (a) “Israel is My son, My firstborn,” was God’s word to Pharaoh (Exo_4:22), and in Hos_11:1 we read, “When Israel was a child I loved him, and called My son out of Egypt.” (b) And Israel was called to occupy the position of honour and power as the “man of God’s right hand”—the true Benjamin, to which name there is a manifest allusion, and of whom it is said:

“The beloved of Jehovah shall dwell in safety by Him; And [Jehovah] shall cover him all the day long, And he shall dwell between His shoulders.” (Deu_33:12)

(c) And he also is the Ben-Adam—"the Son of Man" who, though "belonging to a humanity that is feeble in itself, and thoroughly conditional and dependent,"1 is by God's power made strong for and by Himself.

1 Delitzsch. But though Israel was called to be all that, they have never yet responded to their high calling; and actually, and in their truest and deepest sense, these titles belong to the antitypical Israel—to Him who is the crown and glory of Israel, and through whom alone Israel will at last enter into the condition and experience of sonship. He is "the Son"—the only begotten of the Father, and the true and anti-typical Benjamin. Once He was the ■■■■■■■■■■■■, Ben-oni, "the Son of My Sorrow," "a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," but now is ■■■■■■■■■■, Ben-jamin, the Man of God's right hand," exalted there in power to be a "Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel and the forgiveness of sins." And He is also "the Son of Man," which as applied to Him has a sense and significance quite its own—the Man par excellence, the ideal and representative of the race.

Hence the Jewish Targum is quite right when it paraphrases the second line of the seventeenth verse in the words:

"And upon King Messiah, whom Thou hast established for Thyself." The blessed effects of God's interposition and of Israel's final outward and inward deliverance is expressed in the eighteenth verse:

"So shall we not go back from Thee:

Quicken Thou us, and we will call upon Thy Name." A nation so purified in the fires of God's judgments, and which shall have passed through such a repentance and contrition of soul as are described, a nation which has tasted so deeply of the bitterness of sin, and the sweetness of the infinite love of God, which is stronger than death, as converted Israel shall have done—will take good heed never to depart from God any more, but shall continue to "follow on to know the Lord." And this vow of future fidelity on Israel's part is confirmed by God's own sure word of promise, which says:

"They shall be My people, and I will be their God; and I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me for ever for the good of them and of their children after them; and I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them to do them good; and I will put My fear in their hearts that they shall not depart from Me. Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with My whole heart and with My whole soul." (Jer_32:41)

Then also—when the spirit of grace and of supplication is poured upon them—shall not only be "quickened" and "live before Him" again as a nation (Hos_6:2), but they shall "call upon His Name," or, more literally, "then will we call with Thy Name"—i.e., "make it the medium and matter of solemn proclamation," as Delitzsch properly explains—the idiom being exactly the same as used of Abraham, who, wherever he went, built an altar and "called upon" (or "proclaimed aloud") the Name of Jehovah.

Yes, in that day they shall say:

“Give thanks unto Jehovah; call upon [or “proclaim”] His Name, declare His doings among the peoples, make mention that His Name is exalted.

“Oh, praise Jehovah, all ye nations;

Laud Him, all ye peoples. For His grace [or lovingkindness] has prevailed over us; And the truth [or faithfulness] of Jehovah endureth for ever.” (Isa_12:4; Psa_117:1-2) And the nations who hear them will respond:

“Hallelujah: from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, Jehovah’s Name is to be praised.”

7.22. Chapter 8 - The Refrain

Chapter 8 The Refrain

I NOW come to the refrain, which gathers up in itself the whole theme, and contains the fundamental prayer of the psalm.

It is thrice repeated, with significant variations, which mark not only the increasing intensity and fervour in the petition, but the growing faith and rising hope in the God who has promised the very things for which the psalmist here prays.

It is for that reason that many of the inspired prayers in the Psalms must also be regarded as prophecies; for they are the echo of the very words of God, and of what He actually promised that He would do.

It is because Jehovah hath revealed His purpose and “promised this goodness” unto His servants (2Sa_7:27-29) that Israel’s prophets and psalmists, in their intercessions for the people, “find it in their hearts to pray” such prayers unto Him.

Note the variations:

“Elohim, turn us again [or “restore us”], And cause Thy face to shine, and we shall be saved” (Psa_80:3).

“Elohim Tzebaoth [God of Hosts], turn us again, And cause Thy face to shine, and we shall be saved” (Psa_80:7).

“Jehovah, Elohim Tzebaoth, turn us again, And cause Thy face to shine, and we shall be saved” (Psa_80:19).

Some of our hypercritical friends have somewhat stumbled at this “accumulation” and “heaping up” of the Divine names in this psalm, ad are quite sure that the “addition” or “expansion” of the name Jehovah in this “Elohistic” psalm, is the touch, not of the original writer, but of a “redactor,” and is proof positive that this scripture belongs to a later date. One cannot but marvel sometimes at the skill and ingenuity of some of these friends in turning order into confusion and light into darkness. Oh, there is design and fulness of meaning and beauty in this “heaping up” of God’s names; for it is in these very names that the sacred writers find the basis and encouragement for all their hopes and expectations in reference to Israel’s present and future: and the name of “Jehovah” in particular is their strong tower, “into which they run” and take refuge in all times of doubt and perplexity.

Now note the significance of the gradation:

1. “Elohim”—Thou fearful almighty God, Creator and Upholder of all things—“turn us again, cause Thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.”

2. “Elohim Tzebaoth”—Thou might God of Hosts, whose chariots are “twenty thousand,” even myriads of angels; who hast all the hosts of heaven, and all the forces of nature at Thy command, ready to carry out Thy behests—“turn us again, cause Thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.”

3. “Jehovah Elohim Tzebaoth”—Thou everlasting, self-existing, unchangeable God, who hast revealed Thyself, not only in Thy might, but in Thy grace in the history of redemption; who hast entered into covenants, and given us promises to which Thou wilt ever abide faithful, though we be unfaithful and unworthy—“turn us again, cause Thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.” The prayer itself contains a twofold petition. The first is expressed in the word ■■■■■■■■■■■, hashibenu, rendered in the Authorised and Revised Versions “turn us again”; but this verb in the Hiphil conjugation is most generally used of a bringing back from captivity. The prayer, therefore, which is expressed in this word is “Oh, restore us again—bring us back from our long exile and captivity—renew our days as of old, when we dwelt in safety and prosperity under Thy shepherd care.” And the answer to this fervent petition is to be found in many precious and direct promises of God, which abound in the prophetic Scriptures, and which are, so to say, echoed in this very petition. Thus, for instance, we read in Jer_16:14-15—

“Therefore, behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that it shall no more be said, As Jehovah liveth that brought the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt: but, As Jehovah liveth that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the countries whither He had driven them; and I will bring them again into their land that I gave to their fathers.”

And, again, in Jer_30:3 (to turn to no other prophetic book) God says to the prophet:

“Write thee all the words that I have spoken unto thee in a book. For lo, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will turn again the captivity of My people Israel and Judah, saith Jehovah; and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it.”

—in both of which scriptures the expressions, “I will bring them again” and “I will cause them to return” are the translations of the same verb (though in another tense) as is used in the petition thrice repeated in our psalm.

We, therefore, who believe in God’s Word have the sure and certain hope that the promise will be fulfilled and the prophetic prayer answered. And in this respect, as in so many others, we are different from those who make no account of God, and even from Christians who pay no heed to the sure word of prophecy. In the elaborate work on the Jews to which I have referred more than once in these pages,1 the writer, in summing up the present position and future prospects of the Jews among the nations, says, on the very last page:

1 Israel in Europe, by G. F. Abbott.

“It would be idle to deny that, viewed as a whole, the Jewish question at the present moment stands pretty much where it has been at any time during the last eighteen years. . . . If the past and the present are any guides regarding the future, it is safe to predict that for many centuries to come the world will continue to witness the unique and mournful spectacle of a great people roaming to and fro on the highways of the earth in search of a home.” And the same spirit of pessimism in relation to their future is expressed by many Jewish writers and poets themselves. But there is no need for Israel to “roam about to and fro on the highways of the earth in search of a

home.” There is a home waiting for them; but before they can return to it under the blessing of God, and enjoy rest and peace after their long wanderings, the national prodigal must first be reconciled to his heavenly Father, and confess the great sin which has been the cause of all his sorrows and sufferings. But this brings me to the second petition in the fundamental prayer of the psalmist. The restoration of Israel to their own land, after the many centuries of dispersion and wanderings, will be a great mercy, and a wonderful event in the world’s history; but a still greater mercy and a still more wonderful thing will be their restoration to the favour of God: and this is expressed in the prayer, “Cause Thy face to shine,” which is an echo and inspired reminder to God of the benediction which He Himself put into the mouth of the priests wherewith they should “bless the children of Israel,” viz.:

“Jehovah bless thee and keep thee:

Jehovah make His face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee;

Jehovah lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace; which prayer and prophecy will in the fullest and literal sense be also fulfilled in the appearing of Him who in the Old Testament is called the ■■■■■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■, Mal’ak Panav—the “Angel of His Face” because it is the only face of God which man has ever see, or can behold; and who, in the New Testament is revealed as the very image of the invisible God—“the effulgence of His glory, and the express image of His substance.”

“Cause Thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.”

“In the light of the King’s countenance is life, and His favour is as a cloud of the latter rain.” (Pro_16:15) At the rising of the Sun of Righteousness all clouds and darkness must vanish. All the evils which have befallen Israel during their night of weeping have been consequent, as we have seen on the hiding of God’s face from them. “In overflowing wrath,” He says, “I hid My face from thee for a moment”—one of God’s moments measured by the line of eternity; but that glorious face shall yet again be turned upon them: “With everlasting kindness will I have mercy upon thee, saith Jehovah, thy Redeemer.” Then we “shall be saved.” Oh, yes, to behold that countenance, once marred for us more than that of any man, to walk in its light, to gaze upon it until we are transformed into the same image—that is full and perfect salvation. It is our blessed privilege now to gaze upon it by faith: “Whom having not seen we love; on whom though now we see Him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory; receiving [already by anticipation] the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls” (1Pe_1:8-9). But this period of invisibility and of silence will not last for ever. The day of unveiling and of manifestation is drawing nigh, when His blessed “feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east”; when Israel shall behold Him with their eyes, and pointing to Him, as it were, with their hands, shall say:

“Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is Jehovah; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.” (Isa_25:9) And we too, my dear reader, shall see with our own eyes “the King in His beauty,” and experience the very fulness and completeness of His “salvation,” which shall include also the redemption of our bodies. Already we are the sons of God, but it is not made manifest what we shall be. We know, however, that “when He shall be made manifest, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” And “every one that hat this

hope set on Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure.”

7.23. Appendix 1 - Were the Jews Justified in Rejecting Jesus of Nazareth?

Appendix 1 Were the Jews Justified in Rejecting Jesus of Nazareth? IN the elaborate work of over 500 pages (“Israel in Europe,” by G. F. Abbott) to which I have made several references in this book and which at the time of its publication (1907) attracted a good deal of attention, the writer, a professing Christian, says (p. 43):—

“The Founder of Christianity, Himself a Jew, had appeared to His own people as the Messiah whom they eagerly expected, and with all the Divine prophecies concerning whose advent they were thoroughly familiar. They investigated His credentials, and, as a nation, they were not satisfied that He was what his followers claimed Him to be. Instead of remembering that His Jewish fellow-countrymen were, after all, the most competent to form a judgment of their new Teacher, as they had done in the case of other inspired Rabbis and prophets, the Christians proceeded to insult and outrage them for having come to the conclusion that He failed to fulfil the conditions required by their Scriptures.”

I am far from condoning the insults and outrages which have been heaped upon the Jews by professing Christians, and more especially when it was done in the name of Christianity; on the contrary, I am ashamed of them and abhor them from the depths of my soul. Yet I cannot but protest against such shallow and misleading statements as the above, which only show how unfit those are to write on Jewish history who are not acquainted with the sad and tragic religious development of this peculiar people.

1. Alas! owing to Israel’s previous alienation from God and the spirit of the prophets, as I have shown above, and the long-continued process of self-hardening through which they had passed before His advent, the majority of the nation were far from being competent to for a right judgment of their new Teacher.

2. This is shown by their very attitude and dealings with the “other inspired Rabbis and prophets.” If the writer had only studied Jewish history a little deeper, he would have found that it has always been the misfortune of the Jewish nation, not only to follow false prophets, ad “Rabbis” who were far from being “inspired” by the Spirit of God, but to reject and to persecute even unto death God’s true prophets and messengers. On the very last page of the Jewish Scriptures (2 Chronicles being the last book of the Hebrew Bible) the sacred historian in summing up the chief causes of the calamities which ended in the destruction of the first Temple, says:

“Moreover all the chiefs of the priests, and the people, trespassed very greatly after all the abominations of the heathen; and they polluted the house of the Lord which He had allowed in Jerusalem. And the Lord, the God of their fathers, sent to them by His messengers, rising up early and sending; because He had compassion on His people, and on His dwelling-place: but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, till there was no remedy.” Did they not say of

Jeremiah, “This man is worthy to die,” and actually seek again and again to compass his destruction because, as they said, “this man seeketh not the welfare of this people but the hurt”? (Jer_26:11; Jer_38:4) Did they not say to Isaiah, “See not; prophesy not. . . . get thee out of the way; turn aside out of the path; cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us”? (Isa_30:8-11) Is it any wonder therefore that they should have treated the greatest and the holiest of all the prophets in the same way? Of course, the Jews afterwards changed their minds and repented of their attitude to the true prophets, and so also will they yet most assuredly do of their attitude and conduct in relation to Christ.

3. It was not because Christ “failed to fulfil the conditions required by their Scriptures” that the majority of the Jewish nation, led by their blind leaders, rejected Christ; but because of their perversion of an alienation from the spirit of this scripture (as is borne witness to by the whole Talmudic system to which He went counter) and because He failed to correspond with their own invented carnal and fantastic ideas about the Messianic kingdom which have no real basis in the Hebrew Scriptures. If they had but “searched the Scriptures” as Christ wanted them to do (Joh_5:39, Joh_5:46-47) with a view honestly to “investigate His credentials” in their light, they would most certainly have come to the conclusion that “they testify of Him.”

4. The rejection of Christ by the majority of the Jewish nation—the sad and terrible consequence of centuries of progress in apostasy and self-hardening, for which they alone were responsible—was foreknown of God, and clearly and even minutely foretold in the Hebrew Scriptures centuries before His advent. Moreover it was the occasion of the fulfilment of the purpose of God in providing a perfect atonement, not only for Israel, but for men of all nations. The fact, therefore, of Israel’s rejection of Jesus of Nazareth, instead of being an argument against His Messiahship, must, under the peculiar circumstances, be regarded as an additional proof that he is indeed the one of whom “Moses in the law and the prophets did write.”

5. Lastly, let it be remembered that not all Israel rejected Christ. It is, alas! true that when “He came to His own”—where He had every right to expect a welcome—“they that were His received Him not”; but the “as many as received Him,” to whom He gave the right and power to “become sons of God” (Joh_1:12), were also in the first instance men of Israel; and it was through Jewish evangelists and disciples who had all sorts of “insults and outrages heaped upon them” by the majority of their people, and most of whom had to seal their testimony with their blood, that the faith of Christ became known among the Gentiles. Now, considering that hitherto throughout the past of their history the majority of the nation has always been in a condition of apostasy from God, and that it was only through a small remnant of Israel that the purposes of God in and through that people were carried on: we have every right to regard the minority, who did receive and follow Christ—the little “remnant according to the election of grace” as the apostle Paul calls them—as the true Israel, the link between the faithful in Israel in the past and the “all Israel” which after the great national repentance and conversion, when they shall look upon Him whom they have pierced and mourn, “shall be saved.”

7.24. Appendix 2 - Hebrew Christian Testimony to Israel

Appendix 2 Hebrew Christian Testimony to Israel Under the Direction of David Baron and C. A. Schönberger

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Rev. James Elder Cumming, D.D. (St. Andrew's); Captain W. H. Dawson (Tunbridge Wells); Prebendary H. E. Fox, M.A. (C.M.S.); General Halliday (Blackheath); Rev. D. M. McIntyre (Glasgow); W. M. Oatts, Esq. (Glasgow); Hind Smith, Esq.; G. F. Trench, Esq., B.A. (Ardfert). This Mission to Israel, which was founded in 1893, is under the direction of David Baron and C. A. Schönberger (brother-in-law to the late Dr. Adolph Saphir), both of whom have been engaged for many years in the work of preaching the Gospel, in different parts of the world, to the people still "beloved for the fathers' sake." They are assisted by a small band of able and experienced Hebrew Christian brethren, who give proof that they are called of God to this peculiar work. Its Aim and Objects are as the Lord shall enable, and supply the means, to bear witness for Christ to the Jewish people in all the lands of their dispersion, in order, by the preaching of the Gospel, to call out the "remnant according to the election of grace," and to prepare the nation for the time when "the Redeemer shall come out of Zion," and "all Israel shall be saved." To quote from an article by

Mr. Schönberger: “Our mission was not intended to gain adherents to this or that particular Church, but to witness to Jews and Gentiles that Christ is still to be Israel’s King, and Israel is still to be Christ’s ‘own.’ We believe it, feel it, and are certain of it, and we say that the Jewish people must be evangelised by men who are in harmony with the teaching of Christ and His apostles regarding Israel, and who personally recognise that Christ, in virtue of His human descent, is the crown and glory of His people Israel.” Not that there is a different Gospel for the Jews, or any other way of salvation than by repentance, grace, and faith, but that the Jewish nationality cannot be effaced, and that the Jews coming to Christ do not become ‘proselytes,’ but re-enter their own spiritual inheritance. The Mother-Church of all the Churches was the truly Apostolic Hebrew-Christian Church of Jerusalem, and when Israel as a nation shall see Him whom they have pierced, there shall be not only a renewal, but a consummation of the work once begun in the midst of this nation, and at Jerusalem.

What we continually press upon the Jews is that we believe in Christ, the Son of Man and Son of God, not in spite of, but because we are Jews, that Jesus is the divine King of our people, the sum and substance of our Scriptures, the fulfiller of our law and our prophets, the embodiment of all the promises of our covenant-God. Jesus-Jehovah, Jehovah-Jesus, Jehovah-Tzidkenu, is the continual burden of our message to Israel.

“Our ‘Testimony’ is that of Jews to Jews.

“Having before our mind their singular prejudices, their peculiar ignorance regarding the Gospel of Christ, and knowing so well their traditional offence at the Cross, we try to follow the Apostle Paul, who became a Jew to the Jews in order to win them for Christ.” Its Headquarters are in London. Here in our large Mission Home (189, Whitechapel Road), situated in a most prominent position on what might be called the East End promenade, a variety of efforts for Jewish men, women, and children are carried on day by day.

We may particularly mention our Bible Class, which has been carried on from seven to eight every evening for the past sixteen years (with the exception of Saturdays and Sundays, when the meetings are of a somewhat different character), and at which regular and continuous teaching in the Word of God is given. At this class, at which in the autumn and winter months as many as fifty and more Jews may be seen gathered around the Scriptures every evening, whole books of the Bible, both Old and New Testament, have been systematically gone through. Many families are also visited in their homes, and hundreds are spoken with in the streets. At intervals we visit other towns in the United Kingdom where Jews are to be found, but our hearts are chiefly set on the masses of “the Scattered Nation” in Central and Eastern Europe, and other countries, and missionary journeys are continually being made abroad. Mr. Baron, whose journals appear in The Scattered Nation, has himself made twenty tours in many parts of the world, always accompanied by one or two earnest, experienced Hebrew Christian brethren. In the course of these journeys many thousands of Jews had the Gospel of their Messiah preached to them, and many thousands of New Testaments and suitable tracts ad pamphlets such as the writings of Rabbi Lichtenstein, which are published by this Mission, circulated amongst them. In order to supply a suitable Hebrew Christian literature for Jews we have ourselves printed and published about thirty-five very valuable books, pamphlets, and tracts in Hebrew, Yiddish, German, Hungarian, English, and French—mostly written by our own missionary brethren, and circulated very extensively in all parts

of the world. By means of our Postal Mission many thousands of the “better class” Jews in this country and in almost all other lands of the dispersion—who might never meet a missionary—have had the claims of Christ brought before them through the printed page. The two other centres where missionaries are permanently stationed are Berlin and Budapest. Its Character is thoroughly unsectarian; and although we have our own views as to the necessary qualifications and proper methods for the Jewish Mission, we wish Godspeed to all who in sincerity and truth seek to make Christ known to the Scattered People. All who are loyal to the Bible as the Word of God; all who, in these days of failure and declension, cling to the grand old Protestant evangelical doctrines; all who out of a pure heart and in sincerity call Jesus Lord, and seek to do the will of our Father in heaven, are our brothers and sisters. We know of only one Church—“the general assembly of the first-born ones enrolled in the heavens”; and in the great work of evangelising Israel in these “latter days” we wish to co-operate with all who abide by the foundation truths of our most holy faith. A Testimony to God’s Faithfulness The needs of the Mission are met entirely by the spontaneous and freewill offerings of the Lord’s people. All worldly means for raising funds are avoided as being unworthy of the cause of our great Master, Jesus Christ.

Since the foundation of the Hebrew Christian Testimony to Israel, not a penny has been spent in advertising for funds; we send about no deputations; we have no “Auxiliaries,” “District Associations,” or “Collectors” (though we do not mention these as judging or condemning others, who in their own way may also be doing the work of Christ); we have never yet appealed to anyone personally for money, and yet from year to year, as the work has grown and its needs have increased, the Lord has been mindful of His own work and His servants engaged in it, and has moved the hearts of His children in all parts of the world spontaneously to send their freewill offerings, in may cases accompanying their gifts with words of cheer, which have been more precious than silver and gold, because they speak of continual prayer and intercession going up for us, and the work, to the throne of God. The way the large needs of this Mission have hitherto been met has been a continual testimony to all concerned that we have still to do with the same living, prayer-hearing God of Israel who gave His people manna in the wilderness, and water out of the rock. An outstanding proof of this we had also in connection with the building of our new Mission House. It cost £9,000, and there has never been a penny debt upon it. for that, too, no appeals were made and the only place where any statement of the need appeared was our own quarterly, the Scattered Nation.

About £300 are needed every month for the current expenses of the work at home and abroad, and although we have no visible resources whatever to rely upon, we are confident that the Lord will still be mindful of us, and out of His own fulness, supply our very need.

All the money contributed is spent in the actual and direct needs of the Mission, the support of the workers, and the relief of the poor. For the sake of Jewish friends especially, into whose hand this book may fall, Mr. Baron feels it right to add that he has not from the beginning of the “Hebrew Christian Testimony to Israel” taken a penny from the Mission for his own use. Nor does he receive a salary from any Mission or Society whatsoever.

Contributions will be gratefully received by the Hon. Treasurer, A. Boake, Esq., Highstanding, Loughton, Essex; by C. A. Schönberger, 90 Mount View Road, Stroud Green, N.; or by David Baron, “Northfield,” Chorley Wood, Herts.

They may also be sent to the Publishers of The Christian 12, Paternoster Buildings, E.C., or to the Bankers: Parr’s Bank, Limited, 77 Lombard Street, E.C., with instructions that they be put to the account of “Hebrew Christian Testimony to Israel.”

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