

Now we proceed to look this apparent contradiction fairly in the face. And the very first thing that strikes us is, that while the inspired writers teach the doctrine of the divine omnipresence and with the utmost distinctness and fulness, they constantly speak of God as coming down to interfere with the affairs of the children of men. In illustration of this observation, we need only refer to the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt (Ex. iii. 7, 8); the giving of the law upon Mount Sinai (Ex. xix. 11); the special manifestation of the divine presence and communication of the divine Spirit to the elders of Israel (Num. ii. 16, 17). In all these instances He is represented as coming down. David, speaking of the Messiah—the Jehovah of the Old Testament and the Christ of the New—says He shall come down like rain—healing, refreshing, invigorating—Ps. lxxii. 6. The author of Psalm cxliv. prays that He may come down to deliver His Church out of the hands of her enemies, and Isaiah repeats substantially the same prayer in chap. lxiv. 1.

Now let us look at some of those instances in which He is said to have come down. In Exodus xix. 20, we are told that “the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai;” and when we turn back to the preceding verses, we learn that what is meant by this was, that he manifested himself to the Israelites in thunder and lightning, in fire and smoke, and the sound of a trumpet exceeding loud. David says (2nd Sam. xxii. 10) of the Lord, “He bowed the heavens and came down;” but when we read the whole of the sublime passage of which these words form a part, we learn that what is meant is, that in answer to prayer God was pleased to manifest Himself in a signal manner in the deliverance of His servant and the discomfiture of his enemies. “In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried to my God; and He did hear my voice out of His temple, and my cry did enter into His ears. Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations of heaven moved and shook, because He was wroth. There went up a smoke out of His nostrils, and fire out of His mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it. He bowed the heavens also and came down; and darkness was under His feet. And He rode upon a cherub and did fly; and He was seen upon the wings of the wind. And He made darkness pavilions round about Him, dark waters, and thick clouds of the skies. Through the brightness before Him were coals of fire kindled. The Lord thundered from heaven and the Most High uttered His voice. And He