

distance of time; and, confident of this, they looked by faith through the vista of death and the grave, to its fulfilment: and confessed themselves to be only strangers and pilgrims upon the earth.

3. What sustained the Israelites in the cruel oppression to which they were subjected in the land of Egypt, but the sure word of prophecy? It was this that encouraged the parents of Moses to hide their child, whom the bloody tyrant had condemned to death. "And they were not afraid of the king's commandment."—*Heb. xi. 23.* And when Moses was grown up he proved himself ready to avenge the wrongs of his suffering brethren, by slaying one of the tyrants that injured them. The reason given for this act is, "he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God would deliver them by his hand." He acted from faith in prophecy; and though he miscalculated the time, and anticipated the fulfilment of the prophecy, yet his mistake gives evidence of a spirit waiting upon God, and taking heed to His Word.—Nor was it without its reward; he had the approbation of God, who protected him in exile, and in due time fulfilled His word by His servant's hands. And those of his people, who believed the word of prophecy as he did, would share, with him, its consoling influence.

4. What was it that sustained the mourning captives in Judea, during their long captivity, but the prophecy that they should be delivered at the expiration of seventy years? We have proof of this in the case of Daniel; chap. ix. 2; "In the first year of Darius, I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of God came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolation of Jerusalem." Here was the study of prophecy, and what was the use of it? "And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications." The consequence was, that an angel was sent to him to assure him of the Divine approval, and to communicate further information to his mind, upon the most important subjects: reaching us, that to him who improves the light already given, more shall be added.

5. What is it that sustains the minds of the followers of Christ, during the absence of their Lord from the earth? Is it the assurance that the truth should so prevail, by the preaching of the gospel, that the world shall be converted, during this period, and persecution, as a matter of course, cease? No, it is not. No such thing is found in the New Testament; and to the Old Testament prophets, the present dispensation was unknown. Christ taught His disciples, that while the bridegroom was absent, the children would fast and mourn, that in the world they should have tribulation, be put out of the synagogue, and be put to death. This state of things was not confined to the apostolic age; it is extended down to the time, when the saints shall take the kingdom. Until then, the tares grow with the wheat, and a converted world is out of the question. What then is the source of the comfort of those who are taught of God? It is this: "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." "And, behold I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his work shall be." "Surely I come quickly." Gracious words; the coming of the Lord is the hope, the blessed hope of his faithful people; for then, and only then, the suffering of the Bride of the Lamb will termi-

nate, in glorious union with her Lord. May we be looking, always looking, for this blessed hope.

III. The study of prophecy is necessary to give us right views of the Dispensations of Divine Wisdom. Acts xv. 13-17. The Return, or second coming of the Lord, is here placed between the completing of the Fleet church, of the present dispensation, and the full establishment, and conversion of the Jewish nation. Israel must be restored, and converted, for God hath spoke the word: but this predicted event is subsequent to the Lord's coming, and not before it. Before the spirit of grace and of supplications is poured upon the house of David, the Lord will destroy all the nations that encamp against Jerusalem; and when he does this, his feet shall stand upon the mount of Olives; yes, and then his saints, his present church, will be present with Him. For at that time the Lord my God shall come, and the saints with thee. This brings the coming of the Lord to His waiting people near, much nearer than we have supposed; for His coming to them to receive them to Himself, and His coming with them in glory, to deliver Israel, convert Israel and then to establish His kingdom in the earth, are two different events, and the former must precede the latter; but how long we cannot with certainty tell. But it is during the interim between these two events, that the visit of the wrath of God will be poured out upon a guilty world; and all those fiery judgments executed, of which we read, Isaiah xix. xiv. xxiv. Jer. xxv. 15-33, Dan. xii. Matt. xxiv. 21. Nahum i. Zeph. i. ii. iii. and in many other places.

But though all this is a matter of more than supposition to the mind of the writer, yet with Burch, he will suppose a case. "Suppose then that while the majority of the Christian church are, as has long been the case, indulging in the lively anticipations of triumph and of a victory almost undisputed, a steady onward march of Truth to subject the world unto Christ—suppose the reality of the prospect to be, that an hour of darkness is approaching—yea, of horrible gloom and thick darkness—when truth shall all but leave the earth, and the faithful shall be diminished from among the children of men—when the striving against sin will be resistance unto blood, and every believer will be a martyr! Far be such a thing from us," methinks I hear it said, "this shall not happen to us—where is the proof? My friend, I did but suppose a case: the proof is for another time; but suppose it, and what I ask, would be the effect on minds like ours, trained to the anticipation, not of suffering but of victory; well versed in triumph, but unskilled in battle, taught to sing the Lord's song, but unprepared to encounter the great fight of affliction, through which the Lord himself was led to triumph—to drink the cup he drank of, to be baptized with the baptism he was baptized with! Alas! it grieves one to think what will be the result when the children to their fathers, and the people to their teachers, will say, 'you prophesied to us falsehoods—yourselves deceived, you have deceived us. The boast of the infidel it is, not yours, that is realized;—the whole is a deception. Yet what else can be expected when terror and dismay shall be added to disappointment, and when all that the mind has clung to is taken from it, without any substitute. O blessed in that hour he who taught in 'the sure word of prophecy,' and habituated to heed it, finds it a light shining in a dark place, till the

day dawn and the day star arise in his heart; who has read the hand-writing against the adversary and its interpretation, and knows that his days are numbered! Behold, 'in his patience he will possess his soul; no terror shall affright—no troubles dismay—no signs nor wonders deceive him; his heart is established, and will not shrink until he see his desire upon his enemies.'

"But why not then, even in that latest hour, correct the error; why not then, turn to the warning and the promise? No; then it will be too late: too late, I repeat it, to trim the lamp when the midnight cry is already made, 'Behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye forth to meet him.' Too late to harness the armour—point the spear—whet the sword—order the buckler, and anoint the shield, when the battle is even now begun. Remember Jerusalem: remember to whom it was said, 'O that thou hadst known, even thou in this thy day—But now they are hid from thine eyes;' mark, 'Now—in this thy day—HID!' Awful, but gracious and salutary warning! When shall we be instructed—when shall we learn wisdom?"

But not only is the slumbering church in danger of being taken by surprise, through neglecting the sure word of prophecy, but the state of a sinful world requires warning. We are expressly informed that "as it was in the days of Noah, and in the days of Lot, so shall it also be in the day when the Son of man is revealed"—"revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." Men will be saying "Peace and safety, when sudden destruction cometh upon them, and they shall not escape." For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell upon the face of the whole earth." Then let sinners be afraid, and turn to a despised Saviour while mercy is offered; and let professing Christians hear Him who says, "Watch ye, therefore, and pray always that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." Luke, xxii. 35, 36.

[FOR THE CHRISTIAN OBSERVER.]

#### WERE THE EARLY PRESBYTERIANS MILLENNARIANS?

In the Elements of Prophetic Interpretation, by the Rev. W. J. Brooks, M.A., on page 92, we find the following passage, which will give a fair answer to this question; at least it shows that many of the most pious and learned among them, held the views which are usually considered to be Millenarian.

"Considerable light has recently been thrown upon the sentiments, in this matter, of the majority of the famous Assembly of Divines, held at Westminster in the year 1643, by the publication, in Scotland, of the Journal and Letters, written at that time, by Principal Baillie, himself a determined Anti-Millenarian; and, therefore, not likely to be disposed to exaggerate the number or respectability of the parties who maintained it. In his letter, No. 117, he says, 'Send me the rest of Forbes: I like the book very well, and the man much better for the book's sake. I marvel I can find nothing in it against the Millenarians. I cannot think the author a Millenary. I cannot dream why he