

of their prosperity; of the reign of their Messiah; and of the manifestations of the Divine presence. The weeping captives complain of being cut off from all hope of sharing this happiness; and God comforts them with the assurance, that he will bring them to share it, and raise them out of their graves for that purpose. This resurrection, will be followed by a settlement in their own land, and shall be such a demonstration of the truth and faithfulness of God, as shall make them know the Lord. If one part of these predictions is to be understood spiritually, the other part must be understood in the same manner; but we cannot spiritualize some of these predictions, witness Chapters xxxviii, xxxix; therefore we have no business to spiritualize the others. A premillennial resurrection is here clearly taught.

(1) See Horsey and Cuninghame.

(2) Lowth's Version. (3) Is not this another proof of the premillennial advent of Christ?

[FOR THE CHRISTIAN OBSERVER.]

As the December No. of the *Observer*, seems to close the series of articles on "Unfulfilled Prophecy," I would, with due deference to the writer, point out objections to his method of interpreting prophecy, and millennial theory.

In No. I. (June No. of the *Observer*), he urges the importance and value of the prophetic writings; at the same time states that they "are sadly neglected." As to the former, the pious can have but one opinion; and as to the latter, there is no doubt, room for confession. So far we agree. But as the writer proceeds, we differ. Among other reasons, he does not admit that there is much, if any difficulty, in the interpretation of prophecy. "This difficulty," he remarks, "exists rather in the minds of those who are unwilling to receive what God teaches, than in the prophecies themselves." Pious persons, we trust, cannot be extensively charged with unwillingness to receive what God teaches; nor indeed can any be justly condemned, because they may be unwilling to receive what a certain theory teaches.

He has discovered, that "the only rule necessary to the understanding of the difficulties is to distinguish between the figure or symbol, and the literal fact which they are intended to teach." This rule may be of use in some cases, but it will fail in others.

It is true, as he observes, that "the candlesticks in the book of Revelation are symbols," and also, that "the churches signified thereby, are literal churches;" but it is also true, that a symbol does not necessarily determine the exact character of the literal fact—that it must be one thing rather than another. A horn is a common symbol in scripture; still it is far from being the invariable emblem of the same "literal

fact" or object. It is sometimes the symbol of strength; at other times, that of honour: in instances, it is the emblem of a king; in others that of a kingdom. Zechariah saw in a vision (chap. iv.), "a candlestick all of gold;" but the literal fact it represented was not a church. Here then, "the only rule," this writer considers "necessary," fails. It cannot determine why the candlesticks of Zechariah should symbolize the building, or rather completion of the second temple; and those of John, "literal churches."

But is it sufficiently established that a figure or symbol always represents a "literal fact? I cannot admit it. In Zechariah it is predicted that "the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof towards the east," what literal fact can correspond to this? But as some may not possibly admit this language to be figurative, I will select other passages occurring in the same prophetic writings. "Ten men shall take hold, out of all languages of the nations, of the skirts of him that is a Jew," &c. The conversion of the Jews, and their religious influence in the world, when that important event shall transpire, may be the import of this prediction; but these would not be corresponding literal facts. Why "ten," more than twenty? Again, "a bastard shall dwell in Ashdod." Here is a prediction in figurative language. What is the literal fact?

But to return—Daniel saw four beasts in one of his visions; but how could he ascertain that a beast was the symbol of an empire? But though he could, and ever did distinguish correctly between the symbol and the literal fact, how could he determine which empire each respectively represented? Might not the second represent the Grecian, instead of the Macedonian? Might not the fourth symbolize the Ottoman, or any other empire, instead of the Roman? Might not the "rough he-goat," which he saw in another vision, represent Rome, or any western dynasty, as well as Greece; and the "notable horn between his eyes," Julius Cæsar, instead of Alexander the Great? Be this as it may, the whole had to be explained to him. We may then conclude, either that Daniel did not know "the only rule necessary;" or that he found it useless.

In the same article the writer urges the "necessity of seeking to understand the literal sense of the whole Word of God." If he uses the term *literal*, in the usual sense of writers, as opposed to *figurative*, many portions of the Divine Word are not designed to be so understood at all. Take two or three instances: "He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver." "The wicked shall be ashes under the soles of your feet." "There shall be a bridle in the jaws of the people." Ye shall conceive chaff." "My sword shall be bathed in heaven." In

these passages, and the like, a *literal* sense is out of the question.

But if he uses it as opposed to what is called "spiritualizing," a few explanations are necessary. Some spiritualize passages which were never intended to be so understood. For example, the parable of "the good Samaritan." Thus the man who fell among thieves, is made to intend the sinner; the thieves, the Devil; the Samaritan, Christ; the wounds, depravity; the wine and oil, the Divine Spirit and grace; the beast, the means; the inn, the church, &c. I need not say that this treatment of scripture is equally erroneous and repulsive.

The parable is intended to bring out an answer to the question, "who is my neighbour?" To the inimitable illustration of the principle taught in the parable, and the question founded upon it, "Which, now, of the three, thinkest thou, was neighbour to him who fell among the thieves?" the correct reply was obvious and irresistible, "He that shewed mercy on him." The spiritualizing method subverts the whole design of this beautiful parable. Take another instance: "And he must needs go through Samaria;" that is, says the spiritualizer, for the sake of the woman who came to the well. But it is obviously stated by the Evangelist, on account of its geographical locality, lying between Galilee and Judea. Luke (chap. xvii. 2), states "that he went through the midst of Samaria and Galilee." The difference here is, that he was travelling the opposite direction. Still there is the same warrant to spiritualize the passage. Neither admits of it.

But whilst this habit is to be avoided, and even detested, no one can doubt that many passages must be spiritualized, otherwise they will impart no instruction, nor will they escape the charge of absurdity. The following may be mentioned: "If thy right eye offend thee pluck it out;"—"Put on the whole armour of God;"—"Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it."

Instead then, of urging upon his readers the necessity of seeking to understand the "literal sense of the whole Word of God," it would be more safe for the writer to have urged them to endeavour to understand the sense intended by the inspired pen.

So much for the present. P. M.

EPITAPH ON A SLEEPER IN THE HOUSE OF GOD.

Here lies a man who every Sabbath day,
In public worship slept his time away.
He might have heard of heav'nly rest, but chose
In his pew rather to indulge repose.

The scene is alter'd now—in vain he tries,
In easy slumbers, once to close his eyes;
For God insulted, doth in anger swear,
He who despised my rest, shall never enter there.