

The illustration is taken from Isaiah vi., p. 38, in Canon Cheyne's first volume (edition 1880). In verse 6 he reads, "There flew unto me one of the seraphim, with a *stone* in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar." What the *stone* may be, one is so curious to know that one immediately consults the note. It reads thus: "One of the seraphs brings a stone from the never-extinguished fire of the altar of incense." Why "the altar of incense?" one asks. Why "never-extinguished?" Where are we? In "the palace," by verse 1, not "the temple;" and a note informs us that it is "Jehovah's heavenly palace." To find an altar in heaven the learned writer is obliged to cite Rev. viii. 3, ix. 13. Surely Isaiah wrote before St. John! Overlooking the fact that it is there described as "the *golden altar*" (like the "altar of incense." to which he himself has referred,—see Exodus xxx. 1-3, which speaks of *shittim-wood* overlaid with *pure gold*), he writes thus: "*A stone*, for the heavenly altar is formed on the model of the earthly one. [Moses puts it in the opposite way,—Exod. xxvii. 8.] Ewald rightly sees an allusion to the law in the 'Book of the Covenant,' that altars should be constructed of earth, or of unhewn stones (Exodus xx. 25),—a law which evidently arose in the nomadic period *before tools were common*."

So runs the note. The way in which mistakes are piled on one another is positively bewildering. To begin with the last. *Tools are expressly mentioned and forbidden* in the law referred to: "If thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it." So far as this text proves anything, "evidently" tools were just as common as altars then. Next, "the heavenly altar," *golden* by the testimony of the only places where we hear of it, is built on the model of the earthly one; that is to say, the golden altar of incense is formed on the model of an altar of unhewn stones. And "a stone" is brought from it to the prophet's lips. Why? Because, our note informs us, "Fire is the sacramental sign of moral purification" (Matt. iii. 12, Comp. Num. xxxi. 23). This is excellent doctrine. And if the seraph had brought a coal, "a live coal," as we have been accustomed to read, the exposi-