

This hurt the feelings and wounded the pride of the great Christian, who was himself a philosopher; and not being able to see how these promises of scripture could be *literally* fulfilled gave them all a spiritual or allegorical interpretation. The spiritualizing method of interpretation introduced by him has influenced Christian thought more or less ever since.

Q. Would you say that it is wrong to spiritualize at all?

A. Most assuredly I would not. How could I, when every one knows that the Apostles frequently did it. All I insist upon is that those promises and prophecies which plainly require a literal fulfilment should not be spiritualized away because we may not be able to see just how God can fulfil them. Would it not be far more honoring to faith to patiently await God's time than to say in the face of plain promises, "This is not to be literally understood." Is this not equal to saying, "God made these promises but He has not kept them, therefore we must save the reputation of our God by giving His promises a mystical interpretation." In my opinion it would be far better to admit that we do not know how God can keep these promises than to resort to such methods of interpretation. The evils of spiritualizing are shown by Dr. Howlett in his book *Anglo-Israel*, Part 5, chap. 1.

"This spiritualizing of predictions totally ignores *localities*, and when this is done the language of the prophets cannot be apprehended. They speak continually of places *Samaria, Jerusalem, Mt. Zion, The Land, The Great Sea, The Isles of the West, The North Country, The Mountains of Bashan, 'Carmel,' 'Olives*, on whose sides vines shall be planted as in days of old."

By spiritualizing these expressions the Bible has suffered at the hands of its friends more than by the attacks of its enemies. Dr. Howlett goes on to say:

"This system has prevailed ever since the fourth century. It teaches that the prophecies relating to the Hebrews, the historic people of God, are not to be understood in a literal sense, as signifying blessings to them, but in a mystical and figurative sense, as signifying spiritual blessings to the Gentile church. The effect has been to blot from the creed of Christendom the 'hope of Israel,' and to make the writings of the prophets a book with seven seals. . . . Such is the fruit of this theory of interpretation. It makes the clearest and most beautiful predictions of the prophets a 'rock of torture' to the expositors. Is the Bible written in language ambiguous, so that like heathen oracles it may be understood in two or more senses entirely antagonistic? Not at all. 'The Bible is truth and sunlight.' This spiritualizing interpretation is falsehood and fog. . . . The expression 'Spiritual Israel,' a child of this spiritualizing theory of interpretation, is misleading. It is not found in the Bible. There is no 'spiritual Israel,' except as the true and literal Israel becomes spiritual. Not once in Scripture is the word 'Israel' used as synonymous with the christian church. The word is employed only to denote the lineal seed of Jacob."

How plain and beautiful such passages as may be found in Isa. 35 and 55 become when the historic people of God are