

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE CONVERSION OF THE JEWS.

LETTER XXV.

SUBJECT IN DISCUSSION: The GENERAL SCOPE and BEARING, on the Question, of the Epistle to the Romans.—No. 13.—Analysis. Chap. xi. 25, "Until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CHRISTIAN MIRROR.

SIR,—Hitherto the Church of Christ has chiefly consisted of those "who from among the Gentiles have turned to God." And though her past history presents some very cheering eras of honoured standing, yet it must be confessed she has never yet appeared with that aspect of complete purity, unity, universality, and commanding influence among the nations, which might reasonably be expected to characterize "the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth;" and with which the language of divine prophecy has instructed us to expect. She shall yet be adorned and beautified.

When, as a nation, the Jews refused to make a fair and devout experiment of "the Gospel of Christ," it was divinely transferred to "the Gentiles;" among whom it has almost exclusively continued ever since. And well and abundantly has this second "house of Obad-Edom" been blessed and recompensed for cherishing "the ark of the whole earth." Among them it has been the instrumental cause of the innumerable advantages, national and individual, which distinguish the Christian from the pagan world; and among them, in all ages and nations, multitudes of triumphant witnesses have been raised up, in proof that the Gospel "is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth."

The multitudinous evidence thus presented, before the opening eyes of the world, has, in many happy cases, and by the grace of God, triumphantly vanquished the individual unbelief of both Jew and Gentile. But the Jews, as a nation, have among them an inveteracy of unbelief, which the hitherto imperfect christianisation of Gentile nations has been inadequate to remedy. The glowing descriptions of Messiah's reign, which their prophets have given, have not yet been fully realized in the evangelical administration of Christ upon earth. To them, therefore, the Gospel is a moral problem which requires a greater "fulness" of solution and demonstration, to propitiate their interest and to secure their acceptance.

And to the Church of Christ on earth, there is still reserved, and is rapidly approaching, a promised era of more glorious triumph and ascendancy "among the Gentiles," than the world has ever yet beheld. That age will be distinguished by a "fulness" both of Gentile salvation and Jewish conversion. The moral miracles of that long-desired day, will become the honoured means of finally subjugating "all Israel" to the righteous sceptre of "THE TRUE MESSIAH!"

It is thus we understand the above-quoted words of St. Paul: "Blindness in part hath happened unto Israel, UNTIL the FULNESS of the Gentiles BE COME IN!"

It has been considered that the period here designated, will by no means be either of sudden occurrence or of brief continuance. Nor will its beneficial tendencies, as it regards the conversion of the Jewish nation, (it is thought,) be reserved to the completion of that period. As soon as that happy era shall commence, its happy influence in the promotion of the conversion of Israel shall also begin to be apparent, and this shall be one of "the signs of the times." The two events most signally co-working together, to the acceleration of each other's maturity and full completion.

This felicitous period, as we learn from the holy Scriptures, will be distinguished by a four-fold PLENITUDE, or "fulness of the Gentiles," A plenitude of divine knowledge—of accession of converts to Christ—of the experience of sanctifying grace—and of the exercise of universal kindness and good will.

1. A FULNESS, in the tide of DIVINE KNOWLEDGE which shall then flow among all the pagan nations of the world. In that respect, even in this advanced day, "darkness" indeed covereth "the earth, and gross darkness the people." And

"how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard." But in the happier day, of which we now speak, there will be doubtless a very extensive circulation of the Holy Scriptures, in all lands, and a considerably increased number of faithful ministers making known "among the Gentiles, the unsearchable riches of Christ." In the largest sense shall then the desire of the apostle be accomplished, "that the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear." 2 Tim. iv. 17. The things of God will then become matter of universal interest, and examination, and understanding. Then will there be a full and complete development and opening out, to the eyes of "all the world," of the divine character and government, and of the gospel designs of God respecting mankind. Eph. iii. 1-11. The influences of the Holy Ghost will be more plentifully poured out on the children of men and "THE EARTH shall be FULL of the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." Isa. xi. 9. Heb. ii. 9.

2. A "FULNESS," in the accession of "CONVERTS," from among the Gentile nations to the faith of Christ. The inspired writers of the Old Testament speak of the multitude of pagan converts to the truth and grace of the gospel under the forcible and magnificent metaphor of the tendency of the waters to the ocean. Isa. ii. and Micah iv. "And people," and "all nations, shall flow unto" the "exalted" house of our redeeming Lord. Isa. lx. 5. "THE ABUNDANCE OF THE SEA shall be converted unto thee; the FORCES OF THE GENTILES shall come unto thee." Mal. i. ii. "From the rising of the sun, even to the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and, IN EVERY PLACE, INCENSE shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering." It will be admitted that these words cannot be grammatically understood, but as signifying an extensive and prevailing turning to God, from among the Gentiles—SUCH AS THE WORLD HAS NEVER YET BEHOLD—such as shall be infallibly seen, because divinely foretold—and such as may indeed well receive the appellation of "the fulness of the Gentiles."

3. A "fulness" of sanctifying grace shall then distinguish the Gentile church of Christ. The grace of God is the only efficient cause of human salvation. It is thereby believing penitents are freely justified through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. By the further exercise of his grace, "the very God of peace sanctifies wholly, those who through grace have believed." Not only are their habits reformed, but their hearts are renewed. Not only are they regenerated and sanctified in part, but also cleansed and sanctified wholly, when they "follow on to know the Lord." Then even the thoughts of their hearts are cleansed by the inspiration of his Holy Spirit, so that they perfectly love God and worthily magnify his holy name.

It is to be regretted, that some who would be offended were their piety to be called in question, decry and ridicule this SANCTIFYING GRACE. Nevertheless, it is a blessed truth of the Word of God, that "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." Individual instances of this maturer and more elevated Christian experience, have often been raised up in the church "to the praise and glory of God."—But the period is hastening on, when this happy and most desirable moral state shall characterize the whole "church militant here on earth." Speaking of that era, the prophet Isaiah says, "My people shall be ALL RIGHTEOUS." chap. lx. 21.

Then shall all the followers of Christ evince their actual enjoyment of "entire sanctification," or "perfect love," both by a child-like simplicity of verbal profession, and by the undeniable demonstration of unequivocal practice. For this St. Paul prayed in behalf of the Gentile church, in his own day: "that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the length, and breadth and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye might be FILLED with all THE FULNESS of God!" Eph. iii. 17-19.

4. A "fulness" of universal kindness and good will, will also be most evidently displayed by the converted "Gentiles" of that generation. The natural state of pagan nations is as completely the reverse of this as can be imagined, and ever has been; and the christianity of too many even now, among ourselves, so far as these qualities of

character are concerned, is, alas, but too much tinged with the selfishness and malignity of the heathen. But when "the Spirit" shall be fully "poured out from on high," then "the wilderness shall become a fruitful field." The lovely spirit of the God of love shall be exhibited by all the converted Gentiles. Then, in the expressive metaphor-phrases of the evangelical prophet, "the wolf shall dwell with the lamb—the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp—and they shall not HURT nor DESTROY in all my holy mountain." chap. xi.

This promised state of things is yet, in the expressive language of the 25th verse, to COME IN. Certainly it has NOT YET "come in." It has not YET gladdened any age since it was foretold, nor could it have been reasonably expected, until some of its more immediate harbingers had made their appearance. There is another animating instance of prophecy extending beyond "43!" The national "blindness" of the Jews will continue, "UNTIL the fulness of the Gentiles BE COME IN!"

Such a change in the moral condition of the Gentile world, will be gradual in its production. Yet every preceding period will find the Gentile church in the most evident, delightful, and increasing degrees of advance towards this evangelical paradise, Her "path shall shine more and more unto the perfect day!"

As the happy period shall come on, the Jewish people will have become more and more corrected by the providential discipline through which God hath appointed them to pass. They will thus, by grace divine, be the better prepared to view, and with immense moral advantage to themselves, the coming of this long-promised "fulness of the Gentiles." And this cannot but prove a mighty source of aid to the "heart" of the Jew when turning "to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away."

These two great divisions of the human family will thus be brought to exercise over each other, and to a degree previously unknown, a most marvellous influence for good. Thus will "the Deliverer turn away ungodliness from Jacob;" "AND SO ALL ISRAEL SHALL BE SAVED."

As we have humbly suggested, this will, in a great measure, be the blessed result of "the fulness of the Gentiles," even when that happy era shall dawn, and before the entire world will have been converted to God. In the concluding labours of the world's moral harvest home, the converted Jews will render the most invaluable services. Yes, "what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead!"

I remain, dear Sir, yours,  
AN HUMBLE BELIEVER IN A MILLENNIUM YET TO BE PRODUCED BY THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST.  
Near Lake Champlain, July 13, 1844.

FRIENDLY HINTS.

To love God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself, are Divine commands, which Ministers and people of all creeds are bound to obey, being the sum of the Divine law.

To obey these commands would not interfere with religion or politics; it requires no sacrifice of time or money, and the result would be most excellent, in every family, city and nation.

Another requirement of great importance is found in the Bible; "To be temperate in all things," not indulging too freely, but using the blessings which God affords without abusing them. Lest any should think strong drink is one of God's blessings, and may be used as such, I would say with Sir Ashley Cooper, and many others, that *Ardent Spirits are evil Spirits.* And Paul saith "touch not, taste not, handle not."

Should all yield obedience to the above requirements, wars, and crimes, with most of the evils and sufferings in our world would cease, millions of lives, and many hundreds of millions of pounds would be saved for the relief of the poor, and for the promotion of useful knowledge.

Those who may be disposed to meet at the Bethel on Sundays at 9 o'clock, A. M., and 4 o'clock, P. M., also on Tuesday and Friday evening, at half-past 7 o'clock, will hear more on the above subjects.

That many may attend, especially seamen, is the prayer of

T. OSGOOD.  
Montreal, July 10, 1844.