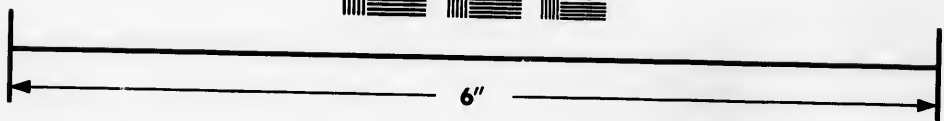
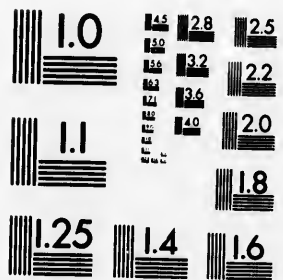


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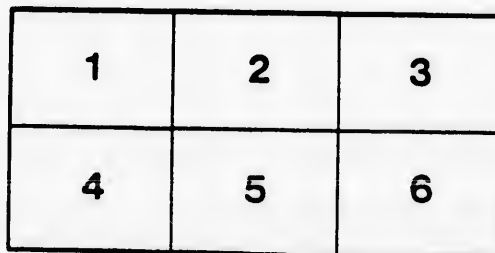
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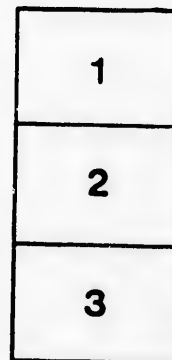
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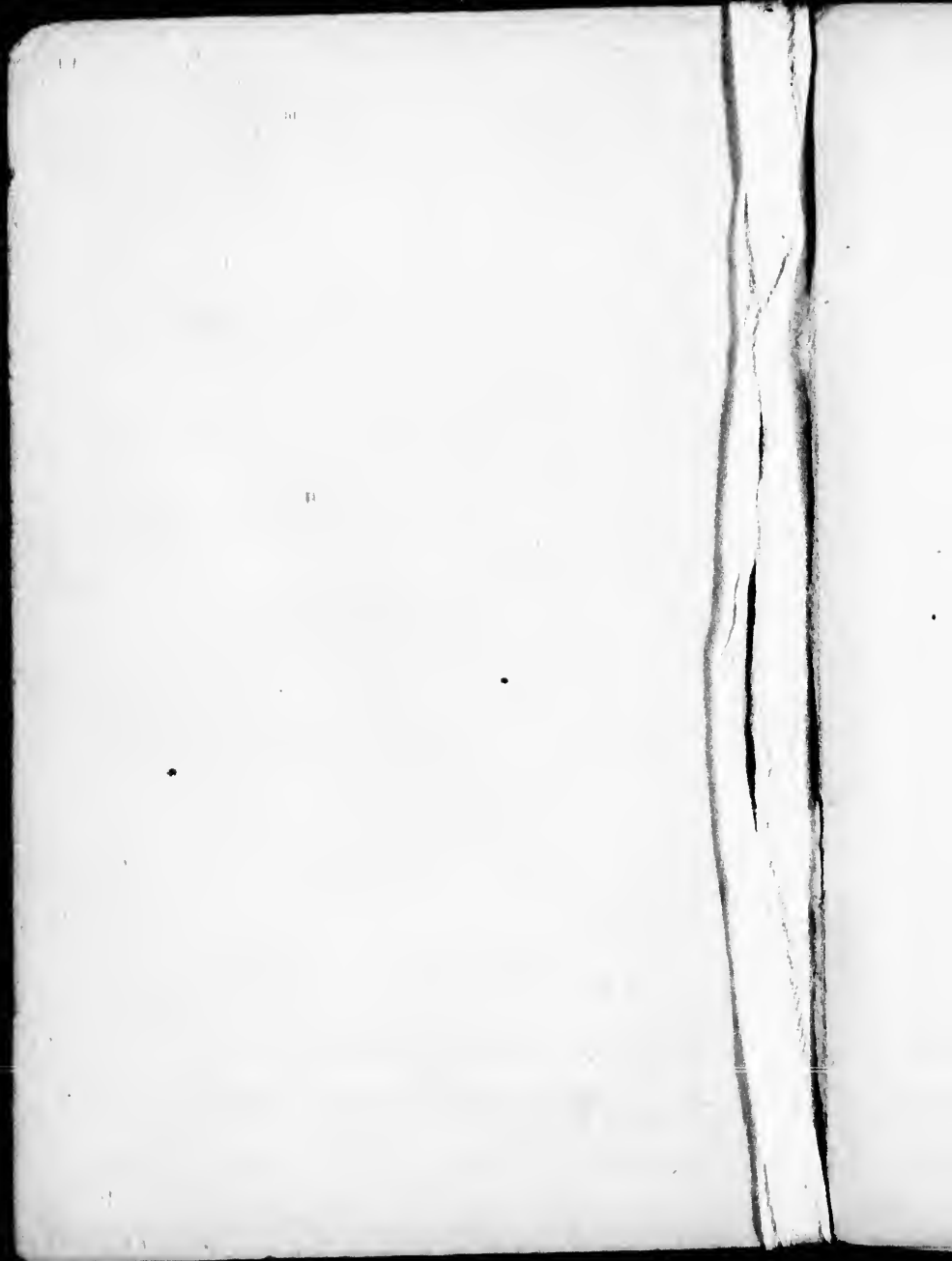
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A TRACT FOR THE TIMES,

OR

SIX VISIBLE SIGNS

OF

The Approach of the Son of God,

BEING THE

SUBJECT OF THREE DISCOURSES DELIVERED IN
ST. JAMES' CHURCH, PERTH,

DURING THE ADVENT SUNDAYS, 1853.

BY THE REV. A. PYNE, A. B.,

RECTOR OF PERTH.

"Ye can discern the face of the Sky, but can ye not discern *the Signs of
the Times.*"—Matthew xvi. 3.

Montreal:

PRINTED BY JOHN LOVELL, ST. NICHOLAS STREET.

1854.

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PREFACE.

THE Author having delivered the following discourses in his Mission Church, and judging from enquiries made respecting them, that they might be read with interest, if not profit, by the members of his other Congregations throughout his Mission, sends them to the press for more general circulation, not without the hope, also, that other sections of the Country may feel interested in their perusal, as the subjects discussed are not of a local nature, but such as appertain to our Church in general, as well as to the hopes and expectations of all Christians. If this little Tract should awaken enquiry in the minds of any so as to create a desire to INVESTIGATE Truth, then the utmost that the Author has in view will be fully attained.

PERTH, 1853—Christmas Eve.



SERMON I,

CONTAINS, FIRST--THE NATURE OF THE SECOND ADVENT.—
TWO SIGNS OF ITS APPROACH, FROM DANIEL, 12 CHAP. 4TH VERSE.

“In every place, incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering.” Malachi, i. 11.

At the present season, my Brethren! the Church reminds us of the first Advent of the Son of God; all those prophecies which declare it, are made to pass in review before us, and then, the fulfilment of each is described in the Gospel appointed for the day. There are, however, some passages introduced into the services during the Advent Sundays which allude to the second coming of Christ—such as the Gospel for the second, and the Collect for the third Sundays. Lest, (I suppose,) our minds should receive any undue bias from considering all the humiliation of the first Advent, our Church has wisely interspersed her services with some sentences to remind us of the Majesty and Glory of Him, who for our sakes “made himself of no reputation.” Let us, therefore, devote a few Sundays to the consideration of that glorious Advent, now so largely occupying the attention of the Church of God, but more especially, let us consider some of those *signs of its approach* which prophecy describes, and which may now be seen among the nations. If we rise from the investigation with minds more deeply impressed with its importance,

or with desires more quickened for spiritual things, then, the labour of the preacher will be amply repaid.

For some time, the opinion was very generally entertained, that a spiritual millenium should precede the second Advent. It was supposed that through the preaching of the Gospel among the nations, mankind would eventually be so re-claimed, that sin would cease, and "righteousness cover the earth, as waters cover the sea;" hence, all those passages of Scripture which speak of Christ's reigning with his saints on earth, or in "the new Jerusalem," were interpreted as declarative of his spiritual reign in the hearts of his children. I am aware that this view of the subject is still entertained by some, but the few who retain it, are beset with so many difficulties, that they look upon prophecy as a dark letter, and feel desirous to avoid its investigation. But the signs of the times are now ripening, instead of "righteousness increasing," we find on the contrary, "iniquity abounds," insomuch that our Lord's question seems fulfilled, "when the Son of Man cometh; will he find faith on earth?" The second Advent of Christ, therefore, is to be preceded by infidelity and wickedness instead of righteousness. Scoffers are to be abroad asking in derision "where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were."

Now, although the prophets clearly foretold the first Advent of Christ, still they frequently describe a state of things not to be expected in this dispensation—they speak of Messial's dominion extending from shore to shore; they tell us of righteousness covering the earth

as waters cover the sea;" they assure us, that "nations shall learn war no more, and that the wolf and lamb shall feed together, and the lion eat straw like the bullock, and they announce an "ever present helper." "Before they call, I will answer, and while they are yet speaking, I will hear," and the universal purity of the worshippers is thus described in the text: "In *every* place, incense shall be offered unto my name and a *pure* offering." But instead of this description holding good, what do we see? Look at the slow progress which Christianity has made, it has perished in many places where it once flourished, and till very lately, it was prohibited from the most populous parts of the world, and moreover, where it is *professedly* received, to a great extent the pure faith of the Gospel is deformed with gross errors, and superstitious inventions; when, therefore, we consider these things, we feel convinced, that the instrumentality and agencies now at work, never can accomplish that glorious scene described in the text, when "in *every* place, incense shall be offered, and a *pure* offering." With these preliminary remarks let us now consider first, the *universality* of the offering *in every place*; secondly, the perfection of the offering; and thirdly, "the signs of its approach—first, the universality of the offering, "in *every* place, incense shall be offered."

At the period in which the prophet delivers this sentence, the Jews had profaned the temple and rendered their incense unavailing in consequence of transgression, they had no love to God, or his service, but merely to the emoluments of their office, hence their full rejection

as a nation is announced, and the adoption of the Gentiles in their place. "I have no pleasure in you, neither will I accept an offering at your hand, for from the rising of the sun, even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among Gentiles," and "incense shall be offered in every place." The incense under the law cannot be what the prophet alludes to here, that was a perfume made by instructions from God himself, and required the golden altar of the temple to offer it on. The officiating priest having taken this perfume, kindled it at the never ceasing fire which came down from Heaven, he then put it in a censer, and laid it on the altar, and while its perfumes were being wafted into the holiest of holies, the High Priest took the censer, carried it inside the veil, and thus rendered his intercession valuable for the sins of the people. But that dispensation has passed. Its altar no longer exhibits the fire from Heaven. The censer no longer contains the incense, and no authorized hands, according to Aaron's succession, can offer. What *then*, becomes of the prophet's declaration, that "*incense shall be offered in every place.*" We see then, that the incense under the law, cannot be what the prophet alludes to in the text, and especially, as in Jerusalem's temple alone was that incense offered, but this, in *every place*; and, although under the Gospel dispensation, "the lifting up of the hands without wrath and doubting" be the incense which is acceptable to Heaven, yet, this even will not answer the prophet's description, as it never has been so offered "in every place." It is, therefore, the universality of the offering,

that proves to us, the prophet had in view that glorious period, when "righteousness shall cover the earth, as waters cover the sea;" when they shall no more say, "know the Lord, for all shall know him from the least to the greatest." Now, in order to see this more clearly, we shall consider, secondly, the purity of the offering.

When we consider the state of Christianity amongst us Gentiles, how many belong to the visible fold, who in reality have neither part or lot in the matter, how many are called members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of Heaven," who have no real claim to such an invaluable heritage; then we shall see that "the offering is still so defiled with sin, so stained with imperfection, that the prophecy in the text has not yet received its completion. The Church of God has yet to be perfectly holy, "without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing," before its offering becomes pure in the sense alluded to by the prophet,—“the wheat and the tares” are now growing together, and both are to remain so, till the end, till Christ, the great head of the Church himself shall come, and cast the tares into everlasting burnings, but gather the wheat into God’s kingdom, then shall be the cleansing of his Church; then the Canaanite, the unconverted no longer shall defile the Church’s Communion; then, throughout the wide spread earth universal Hosannas unstained with sin shall arise; congregations in *every place* shall be perfectly holy, harmless and undefiled. A mysterious ministration shall be amongst them, for “they shall teach no more, every man his neighbour and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord, for all shall

know me, from "the least of them even to the greatest," (Jer. xxxi. 34,) and they shall hear a word behind them saying, "this is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand or to the left." (Is. xxx. 21.)

Now, the Jewish Church never has seen this period; the Church amongst us Gentiles consists of congregations of fallible men, ministered unto "by men of like passions" with themselves; both priest and people may now make the most grievous departures from "the right hand and to the left," and no warning voice is heard save that of conscience, and in many cases even that ceases to remonstrate. But these ministrations are to be superseded; a perfect and an ever watchful ministration is yet to be set up among the nations, a ministration invested with all the powers of omniscience, which will throw around each worshipper an angelic guardianship, and which will whisper to him *timely* admonition, when inclined to err, "this is the way, walk you in it." The benefits of such an extraordinary oversight will be, that universal conversion will take place, righteousness will cover the earth as waters cover the sea," and the prophecy of Joel will receive a more universal fulfilment than at the day of Pentecost.

"I will pour out my spirit upon ALL FLESH, and your sons, and your daughters shall prophecy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams, and on my servants, and on my handmaidens, I will pour out in those days, of my spirit, and they shall prophecy."

There are many, I am aware, who take a different view from this, many who suppose that *human* ministrations

will accomplish those glorious scenes, yet to be realised by the Church of God, many who think that the Church, through the *present* ministrations will be able to render a "pure offering," and thus, eventually fulfil the description of the prophets. But, I would ask such for one moment to pause, before they settle down in such a belief as this. Let them examine what it is, that now hinders the purity of the Church's offering, and they will not be so sanguine as to suppose that human agencies will ever bring about the happy consummation.— One great essential in the purity of the offering is, *the unity* of the worshippers. Is there, I would ask, the slightest ground for supposing that the present ministrations will forget their differences, and thus promote that unity and concord, so indispensable before the Church of God can in *every* place offer a pure offering? Are there not various schisms and dissensions now promoted and cherished with far greater resentment than heretofore? What probability is there that Rome will adopt Protestantism, or that Protestants will merge their minor differences? None. The trial has been a long one—1800 years. Unity, so essential in the purity of the Church's offering, is farther from us than ever.— The "Paul,"—the "Apollos."—and "the Cephas" ministry, will continue to mar the unity of the Church, till the Great Shepherd comes, and *then*, but *not till then*, there will be the one fold, *under* one Shepherd.

Another great essential in the purity of the offering is, that there should be no false professor, no hypocritical pretender. Look at the present state of nominal Christianity, and it will be found "iniquity abounds, and

the love of many waxes cold." We may proclaim with all the faithfulness and zeal of an apostle, the love of God to man; we may reprove, rebuke, and exhort, and still we shall have to witness sins of omission and commission in the professed worshippers of God; still some Achan defiles the sanctuary, some profane Esau sells his birthright, some Judas will be found even at the table of the Lord; thus, the purity of the offering is marred in *every* place, and human ministrations seem inadequate to bring about the happy consummation mentioned in the text, and because they are inadequate, the Heavenly bridegroom shall alone accomplish the task; He shall "make his people willing in the day of his power." He shall make them all of one mind, one heart, one soul—and they shall encourage each other. "Come let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach of his ways, and we will walk in his paths, for out of him shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." (Is. ii. 3.)

Before, however, this glorious period arrives, there are certain signs to precede it, to which we shall do well to take heed, as "to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in our hearts." It is, I believe, acknowledged by all who diligently read the word of God, and compare its prophecies with the present state of the world, that the coming of Christ is nigh, even at the doors." God has in mercy to those who shall be alive, when that coming draws nigh, revealed certain signs, and foretold certain events, which, if we examine, we shall certainly conclude, that we now

have arrived at that period mentioned in the parable, when the midnight cry was made, "behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him."

The first evidence of the coming of Christ, and one which it requires no spiritual perception to observe, is the rapid strides of intellect, and science. Were the generation that has just passed to arise from the grave and to witness the improvement in every branch of science, to see the wonders of steam, the mechanical powers brought into operation in order that man might speed on his enterprises, to see the inanimate wire receive an intelligence almost equal to omniscience, and to find new plans and schemes proposed, which in a few years will cast in the shade, what we now wonder at—were, (I say,) one of the past generation, who has been in the grave only thirty years, to rise up suddenly, and view these things, he would think himself in a different planet, he would stand amazed at the sight of the steam horse, and whilst it speeds on its way, with its hundreds behind and sends its premonitory whistle throughout the echoing woods, he would doubtless think that a new animal had been discovered, and pressed into the service of man, or should he as he rose from the grave, find himself far from the place of his nativity, and the home of his fathers, and should he feel desirous to enquire after his friends and relations, he need only stand at some station of our telegraph and ask such questions as he needs. A few moments and an answer is returned; quick as thought, and full of intelligence, the wire trembles with its mandate, brings back the message, and, irrespective of the feelings of the questioner, faith-

fully unfolds its tidings, be it for life or death. What, I would ask, might be the feelings of this resurrection man? even though he may have been dead but a few years? I feel certain, he would be inclined to express his astonishment, in words very similar to the heathen admirers of the Apostles: "the gods have come down to us in the likeness of men."

But were you likewise prepared to understand the increase of knowledge in *every* branch of science, you would then see that man's powers and capabilities have well nigh arrived to that perfection which the Creator intends.

The Geologist has fully matured his science, and by his investigations has discovered wonders before unknown, but not content with his success, and panting after further information, he has dared to impugn Revelation; and thus, his knowledge and wisdom, (seeking to be wise without God,) have proved his ruin.

The Astronomer too, has revealed to us the wonders of the visible Heavens with extraordinary accuracy, and in consequence of his unparalleled success in the construction of his telescope, he has brought the heavenly bodies so near to our vision, that the moon reveals a landscape similar to the earth,—one more slight improvement remains, and then the mystery of the moon is solved.

We are surprised also at the progressive improvement in all mechanical operations. Here especially, the ingenuity of man is wonderful, so that it is now a proverb, "what next?"—Manufacture exhibits new laws,—even the sluggish earth receives new vigour, and

is soon to be turned up without the labour of man!—the mere rustie too, can procure a knowledge of these things, and the labours of the press spread that knowledge far and wide. Thus, human research manifests a perfection, as if it had reached its legitimate bounds, as if there were no other “worlds to conquer.”

Now, my brethren! remember, this sudden progress in science and knowledge, is a sign of the coming of the Son of Man; the world may rejoice at these improvements, merely because it assists it in enterprise and speculation, but the man of God rejoices, because it reminds him of the coming of his Lord.

When the prophet Daniel was sealing up his vision of prophecy, and when he had given a full description of kingdoms and events till the end of time, it was revealed to him, that the world should thus progress, that speed should be an object in the latter day, and that knowledge should increase, “But thou, oh Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book even to the times of the end. *Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.*”—(12 c. 4th v.) You will observe, there are two signs of the end alluded to in this verse; first, is the increase of knowledge, and the rapidity of speed, which I have alluded to,—and secondly, the Revelation of prophecy, “shut up the words, and seal the book, *till the time of the end.*” The knowledge which has spent itself in the investigation of science, has likewise, when sanctified, been useful in the interpretation of prophecy, insomuch, that now there is no prophecy in Scripture which has not received, within the last few years, a satisfactory interpretation. A new school of

interpreters has arisen, whose minds have struggled successfully with the obscurities and difficulties that beset the study, and by their prayers and faith, they have opened up a channel of communication which sends a spark of heavenly intelligence to every believer in Christ. The seal is, therefore, now being taken off the book of prophecy, the mind of man can now look into these hidden mysteries, and each event that has passed us, or that may be soon expected, can now be defined by prophecy.

Get a knowledge of these things, my brethren, for they add much confirmation to our faith, and prove most satisfactorily, that we have "not followed cunningly devised fables." Be not satisfied in worldly knowledge, and worldly attainments,—these are necessary in their way and place,—for since the world has progressed, so should you, but see to it, that you are likewise progressing in "that knowledge which maketh wise to salvation." This is the knowledge that will avail you, when all here comes to a conclusion, when the heavens pass away, and "the elements melt with fervent heat." In these days prophecy must be the stronghold of the Christian; events have already overtaken us, and others are now gathering in the distance, which, to continue ignorant of, will be perhaps to add to our confusion in the time of trial.

Look at the prophecy before us for one moment; it was written more than 2000 years ago, yet see how accurately and faithfully it describes the world at the present crisis. In a few short words, it tells us the exact history of the day in which we live. "In *the latter day*,

many shall run to and fro." Are not lands and seas, hitherto remote, now made neighbouring to each other, by this "running to and fro;" and remember, within the last few years *only*, this state of things has appeared; therefore, this sign of the latter day, can be discerned by the most incredulous, and the God of Daniel may be wondered at, as the God who revealeth secrets, and before whom the nations have passed in rapid succession "to the time of the end." Again, "knowledge shall be increased in the latter day." There is a thirst for knowledge now, surpassing any thing that has ever appeared on earth. Every branch of science and literature is so simplified as to bring it down to the comprehension of children, thus "knowledge is increased." And although it may prove an increase destructive to religion, and even now assumes that position, in the exclusion of the word of God, or in a marked silence of religious instruction throughout our School system at home and abroad, yet, "the sign of the latter day" is before us, "knowledge" (not the kind) the prophet foretels, "*knowledge shall be increased in the latter day.*"

In conclusion, I would remind you, that when we speak on a subject like this, there is but one class to whom we expect to be useful,—the world, and its followers taste not the hidden manna in this subject. It will rather fill the votaries of the world with sneers and rebukings, and even he who speaks will be accounted visionary and trilling. But we have counted the cost; we are prepared for this—the world will not hear of its own downfall. It has no part in the kingdom of God and Christ. It will not be arrested in its busy prog-

—its spirit will not be changed—“the latter day,”
fraught with vengeance, may come; but the world has
other things to attend to, for, as “in the days of the
flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and
given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into
the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all,
SO SHALL THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN BE.”

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SERMON II,

CONTAINS TWO SIGNS OF THE APPROACH OF THE SECOND ADVENT.

FIRST SIGN—THE CONSUMPTION OR WASTING AWAY OF "THE MAN OF SIN BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD."

SECOND SIGN—"THE DESTRUCTION OF THE MAN OF SIN,"
PROVED TO BE CLOSE AT HAND, BY THE COMPUTATION OF YEARS.

That day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed—the son of perdition who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself to be God. 2d Thessalonians, ii. 3.

WE are at present considering the signs that are to precede the coming of the Son of God.

It is important as I have observed before, that we should understand what God has revealed to his servants concerning "the latter days."

Now, in the investigation of this subject, it is not pretended to bring forward anything new, but to arrange the truth in a simple and attractive form, so that the mere Bible reader may be able to investigate the signs of the Saviour's coming, and of "the end of the world."

The Thessalonians had been disturbed concerning this subject, a report had been spread abroad, that the time was at hand for the second Advent of their Lord, and so much excitement prevailed amongst them, that the Apostle saw it necessary to admonish and instruct them in

the Epistle from whence the text is taken. He seeks to prove his assertions by mentioning a sign that was to precede the coming, and he argues, that since that sign had not yet happened, so the coming of Christ could not take place, "that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself to be God."

We shall now consider—first, "the falling away."

In the writings of the Apostles, there are various heresies and errors alluded to, and a well merited rebuke administered in every case, but when St. Paul speaks of "the apostacy" or "falling away," as mentioned in the text, his language assumes the style of prophecy. In writing to Timothy, he is so accurate as to enumerate some of the leading features of the apostacy; the Spirit speaketh expressly, "that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God had created to be received with thanksgiving." Truth is never abandoned at once; it is only by small deductions or innovations, that her bulwarks are successfully attacked, and here it is, especially that "Satan transforms himself into an angel of light;" he will not remove the foundation,—this might excite suspicion—the gold of the temple he will spare, the precious things he will pretend to value, but he will build such a superstructure thereon, as to hide the

foundation, and deface the true ornaments of the temple; thus the simple are beguiled; and while they think they are following the truth, they are in reality "falling away from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils."

Such appears to be the character of "the falling away," as described by St. Paul, but there is a further description given, which demands our attention; he calls it the "mystery of iniquity," and he says, "it ALREADY works," only, "he who *now* letteth, will let, until he be taken out of the way." There are therefore two mysteries in the spiritual world, "the mystery of godliness," "God manifest in the flesh." This is the admiration of angels and of saints redeemed. This shows how God can be just, "and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus;" but there is an invisible antagonist to this spiritual mystery, even Satan, whose working is "with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish," and his work is such a masterpiece of skill, that St. Paul so far honours it by calling it, "a mystery," though, a mystery of iniquity. Now, you will observe, that this "falling away" from the faith of Christ, had *already* commenced when the Apostle wrote, and he alludes to a difficulty in its path, "he who letteth or hindereth, will hinder, until he be taken out of the way." The interpretation of this sentence, the page of history records. The Roman Empire, united under one potent government, being jealous of all other power and authority, prevented the establishment of that spiritual tyranny and usurpation, by which Satan would attempt to make his grand effort against Christianity. But as

soon as Rome would lay aside her Emperor, as soon as he should cease to hinder, or be taken out of the way, then, "the falling away" should be matured, and the iniquity then commencing,—the departure from the faith then appearing—should spread forth its branches and arrive at maturity. This is the meaning of the Apostle's language, but it would not have been prudent for him to have spoken just then so plainly, although the Christians for whom he wrote, and all the early Christians understood this verse as teaching, that Anti-Christ should not appear till after the downfall of the Roman Empire.

We have now seen that this apostacy, or "falling away," should have a two-fold development, first, "Seducing Spirits," or "doctrines of devils." This is its spiritual feature,—and, secondly, its temporal, or ecclesiastical position is shown us, by the removal of the Roman Emperor, and the substitution of this Anti-Christian power in its place. It is instructive to inquire, whether the prophets mention any thing of this? for most assuredly, a power thus invested with spiritual and temporal authority, having Satan, too, presiding over doctrine and discipline, must exert a direful influence over the best interests of man. Accordingly, we find a most faithful description of this apostacy. Some new features, not mentioned by St. Paul, are also described, particularly the number of years which God would permit it to continue.

In the 7th chapter of Daniel, there is a prophetic description of the dealings of God with the nations till the end of time—under the figure of a beast, he describes

a kingdom ; there passes before the mind of the prophet four beasts, representing the four universal empires, commencing from the Babylonian monarchy, to the beginning of the millennial period. These kingdoms were successively the Babylonian, Persian, Grecian, and Roman, but, as the three first kingdoms have passed away, we shall confine our attention to the scattered remnants of the fourth, for, amongst these, we ourselves have our lot cast, and the Church of God, which is the seat of prophecy, is described in its militant state, as amongst these. On this account, the prophet is more descriptive, and manifests more enquiry when he speaks of the fourth kingdom. We shall, therefore, attend to his description, Daniel vii. 7, and following verses. "I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly ; and it was diverse from all that went before it, and it had ten horns ; I considered the horns, and behold, there came up among them another little horn, and in this horn, there were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things."—19 v. "Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, and of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows. I beheld, and the same horn *made war with the saints, and prevailed against them.* Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, and the ten horns out of this kingdom, are ten kings that shall arise after them, and he shall speak great

words against the most High, and shall wear out the souls of the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws, and they shall be given into his hand until a time, and times, and the dividing of time." In the book of Revelations we also find a similar description of these events: "And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his head the names of blasphemy. And there was given unto him, a mouth speaking great things, and blasphemies, and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And it was given unto him, *to make war with the saints, and to overcome them.* Here is wisdom; let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man, and his number is six hundred three score and six. Rev. xiii.* In describing this apostacy, we perceive from these passages, a wonderful agreement between the apostle and the two prophets, while the apostle dwells more upon the "falling away from the faith," and describes it in its spiritual capacity;—the prophets reveal its position among the nations; the willingness with which the ten kingdoms give their power to the beast is mentioned, the seven heads alluded to, describes the seat of his dominion, and the spiritual powers with which he is invested, are also declared by both prophets. Daniel states, that "he made war against the saints, and prevailed against them," that he "spoke great words against the most High," and sought "to change times, and laws." St.

*Rev. xiii.—For the number of the beast, see note at the end of this discourse.

John states, "he had a mouth speaking great things, and blasphemies, that he made war with the saints and overcame them;" and finally, in the period allotted to him for his blasphemy, there is an agreement. Daniel states as the period of his continuance a time, times, and a half; or "the dividing of time," now, the word "time," in prophetic language, means a prophetic year, or 360 days; and "a time, times and a half," "mean" three and a-half of these years, or 1260 days, that is, literal years.—(Ezek. iv. 6, and Daniel iv. 16.) In the Apocalypse, we find the period for his continuance similar, only the expression is varied, "power was given unto him, to continue forty and two months, that is three and a half years, or 1260 days, literal years. Now, I consider it important for every Christian at the present day especially, to have a correct knowledge of these prophecies, that he should hold to the *Catholic* interpretation, for be it remembered, an erroneous, or Sectarian mode has *lately* been invented of explaining away these prophecies, and Satan favours the delusion, by blinding the understanding of the simple, lest they should recover themselves out of his snare.

I remember when preparing for the sacred ministry some years ago, I heard a lecturer explain these prophecies,—his views were utterly subversive of the only legitimate interpretation they can receive. My fellow students wondered equally with myself, what new light broke upon the mind of the lecturer? But we ceased to wonder when it was announced, that he was a constant reader of (what was only then commencing) "The Tracts for the Times," and other writings of that

heretical portion of the Church, known by the cognomen, "Tractarians."

With the prophecies now before us, let us seek the fulfilment. Let us enquire:—

First, Who is he that sits in the temple of God, speaking blasphemies, and wearing out the saints?

Second, What are his doctrines?

Third, Consider the signs of the second Advent's approach, furnished by this apostacy.

First, Who is he that sits in the temple of God, speaking blasphemies, and wearing out the saints?

Before I enter on the interpretation of this prophecy, I must premise, if I should speak plainly, and in accordance with what I believe to be true, let no one accuse me of want of charity, for I shall speak only of a *system*, and that too, as described by the prophets and historians, with *persons* I have nothing whatever to say; and moreover, should my interpretation of the prophecy seem to any individual incorrect, then I shall feel obliged to that person to set me right, and I shall take the first opportunity of publicly withdrawing the interpretation which I now place before you. With these preliminary remarks, I now ask, who is he that sits in *the temple of God*?" We are therefore to look for him in *the temple of God*, the Church of Christ! We need not seek him in heathen lands, or in Pagan countries, neither in Mahometan temples. No! In the Church of God, there he is to sit, shewing himself that he is God, "speaking words of blasphemy, and wearing out the souls of the saints!" Now, search the history of Christianity,—search the history of the world from the coming of

Christ to the present, and tell me who has appeared fulfilling the character here drawn? Has the Grecian Church exhibited in the person of her Patriarch any power like this? No! Have the seven churches of Asia? No! Have the African churches? No! The temple of God, or the Church of Christ, in these countries, even when Divine truth shone dimly therein, never intruded on each others' freedom, never exhibited one amongst them "speaking blasphemies, and wearing out the saints." But the Church of Rome, at a very early period, *whispered* of supremacy, then asserted it—and it being denied her, the thunder of excommunication commenced; century after century matured the presumption, till at length, Gregory the Great, A. D., 590, announced in the spirit of Caiaphas, "All things that were predicted are taking place, the King of Pride is at hand, and what is unlawful to utter, an army of priests is prepared for him." The year arrived, 606—then, "the little horn" commenced his reign, then, "the Vicar of Christ" assumed the universal control, both spiritual and temporal; and then it was that the ten kingdoms of Daniel gave their power to the beast; the place of his appearance and regal authority was Rome, which city, having seven hills, is represented by the prophet under the figure of seven heads; there, he sat in the temple of God, speaking words of blasphemy, and shewing himself to be God. We would now remove all doubt of the application of this prophecy to the Pope, or Church of Rome. In the "Notitia Romana," which is a work published by the Court of Rome, there is this standing order respecting the

installation of the Pope :—"After the Pope's election and proclamation, attired in the pontifical dress, he is borne in the pontifical chair of St. Peter, and is there placed upon the *high* altar, where he is saluted for the third time, by the cardinals kissing his hand, foot, and mouth, and in the meantime the "Te Deum" is sung, "we praise thee, oh God, we acknowledge thee to be the Lord," and when *the adoration* by them is over, the pontiff then descends from the altar. This is a literal fulfilment of the Apostle's description, "He sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." Now, if in addition to this, we consider the *titles assumed by the Pope, and given by his followers, we have the charge of blasphemy fully established, and we see the nations worshipping the beast, and giving him power. The next feature in the description is, "the wearing out of the saints of the Most High." It is scarcely necessary to shew the fulfilment of this in Rome. Her doctrines for the extirpation of heretics, bring her in as being guilty of the blood of the saints; her persecutions of the two witnessing churches, the Waldensian, and Albigenian, are on the page of history as well as of Revelation. Her Inquisition which sent forth emissaries as foes by night, and friends by day, her fearful massacres, committed through the instrumentality of her kings and princes, and all those unjust persecutions which consigned to the flames our sainted Cranmers, Latimers, and Riddleys, these and similar

*Titles of the Pope—Such as "My Lord God the Pope," "Infallibility," "Lamb of God," "Vicar of Christ," "His Holiness," &c.

events crowd upon our memory, when we describe popery as "wearing out the saints of the Most High."

But, secondly, let us glance at the *doctrines* which the apostle specifies as marking this apostacy, or "falling away from the faith;" he does not, it is true, give a summary of *all* the doctrines of Anti-Christ, he only mentions a few as a specimen of its commencement.— In writing to the Colossians, he warns them against "the worshipping of angels," this he condemns as "a voluntary humility," and an intrusion into mysteries not revealed to man." (Col. ii. 18.) This doctrine, he declares to be a rejection of Christ as Head, and a following of human ordinances which must perish with the using." In his former epistle to Timothy, (chap. 4,) he traces the development of this "falling away," and he leads us to suppose that "the worshipping of angels led on to the worship of demons, or departed souls," giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils, or, departed souls; "forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats;" these are a *few* of the doctrines which, according to St. Paul, were to characterise "the man of sin,"—the leaven was then at work,—the seed was then sown, which, by and by, should cast out branches more deadly than the Upas tree, and which should embrace beneath its death bearing shadow, the ten kingdoms of Daniel. I need now scarcely inform you where these doctrines, and similar ones, are to be found. The Church of Rome undertakes to reveal the invisible world, and thus is guilty of intruding into things which she has not seen, "she sends the souls of her deluded worshippers to a fancied place of punishment; and the pains and penalties

to be there inflicted are at the pleasure of him who sitteth in the temple of God. Thus, he assumes the sovereignty of Heaven and Hell, and fulfils to the letter, the Apostle's description, "he exalteth himself above all that is called God, or, that is worshipped."—The other doctrines of the apostacy, "or falling away," are all to be found in the Church of Rome. There we find the voluntary humility, and worshipping of saints and angels; there we find the command to abstain from meats, which God has created to be received with thanksgiving—and also "the forbidding to marry," which doctrine, although it is subversive of our nature, and tends to immorality and vice, yet, since it is commanded by him, in whose hands are both the laws of nature and of God, it must be obeyed. The other doctrines not enumerated by the Apostle, and which have been added to the black catalogue since he wrote, are known to you all. It took some centuries to mature the plan; witnessing saints opposed each doctrine as it appeared, but their testimony was given in sackcloth, their blood paid the penalty for opposing "the man of sin;" "he made war with the saints, and prevailed against them." When, my brethren, we view these things in the light of Scripture, and listen to the voice of Prophecy, I cannot but think that we have a greater safeguard against the errors of the Church of Rome, or any of those "unclean frogs"* which lately have croaked in her de-

* Rev. xvi. 13.—One of these frogs comes from the mouth of the beast, that frog has croaked now nearly 20 years; Tractarianism, its origin. Popery, its development; miracles its complete delusion.

fence, than if we were to read all human compositions, for here we have a testimony from those who cannot err, from those who lived hundreds of years before the evil appeared as now ; and who, therefore, were free from all those prejudices or prepossessions which oftentimes lead men either to oppose or to apologise.

Before, however, I pass to the immediate object which I have in view, in explaining the prophecies relative to this apostacy, I must pause for one moment, and ask, what are we to call this "falling away?" Daniel calls it "the Man of Sin," Paul, the Son of Perdition," and St. John, "the Apostacy," "Babylon," "the woman on seven hills." But what are we to call it? Shall *we* call it "a Church?" I think not, if we listen to the definition, which our Article enjoins, "the visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in the which the pure word of God is preached, and the Sacraments be duly administered according to Christ's ordinance." (Article 19.) If we try the Church of Rome by this Scriptural definition, then, the case is plain ;—Is "the *pure* word of God preached" therein? or can it! *dare* it be! when the Articles of Trent are followed? Are "the Sacraments administered according to Christ's ordinance?" How can this be, when there are seven Sacraments? A sacrament for every hill on which Rome is built! And the only two simple sacraments which Christ has ordained, though contained in these seven, yet, in the administration of even these, there is so much superstition and perversion, so much addition and subtraction, that we cannot say "they are administered according to Christ's

ordinance." But I suppose, for customs' sake, and in order to be understood, (for which reasons alone, I believe our Church retains the appellation, when speaking of this apostacy,) we must call it "a Church" too.

But should you ask in what relations are we to stand towards her? Scripture answers imperatively, "Come out of her my people that you be not partakers of her sins," and of her destruction. (Rev. 18, 4.) On this subject there is, of course, but one opinion amongst us, and therefore you have been astonished, equally with myself, on reading a contrary announcement in the late charge of our beloved and highly gifted Diocesan, a charge replete with wisdom and golden sentiments, were it not for this mournful exception. It proposes! what think you? a *truce* with Rome? Ashes of "the wearied saints," have ye gone to your resting places for nought? Can ye arise from the dust and tell us whether your contest with Rome was useless?—that a truce would have been wiser? for we are told, that "in this Province, a courteous and uninterrupted social intercourse has always been kept up between the Church of England and Rome; and moreover, that if both would make common cause, "socialism and infidelity would sink into insignificance." Now, if the writer of these sentences were a man of ordinary ability, if he held no responsible or prominent position, then the proposal might go for nought, but here is the pen of our Bishop, whose talents can scarcely be surpassed, who is justly respected and beloved by us all, as an able and zealous champion for our Church, and therefore nothing short of scriptural warrant, or of the Church's legitimate teaching must

he be clad in, who dare gainsay one single sentence in that mighty charge; feeling therefore convinced that I have *both* upon my side, I must lift my voice, though an humble one, against any truce with Rome, and moreover, declare my ignorance of any "social intercourse" having been kept up in this Province between the Church of England and the Roman Apostacy. The United Church of England and Ireland is a *witnessing* Church—a witness against the corruptions and innovations of Rome, separated from her in doctrine and discipline as widely as the poles. Dives and Lazarus were not more irrevocably separated from each other, as the Church of England from Rome. What "social intercourse," therefore, has existed or can exist? True, indeed, when any poor soul is so deluded as to have any "intercourse," he is immediately sent "a strong delusion to believe a lie," but is this an intercourse either to be courted or desired? Is this a system that we dare make common cause with in opposing infidelity and sin?—We must hope, my brethren, that these sentences of our beloved Diocesan went to the press too speedily, or that they may be so explained as not to bear a literal interpretation, for most assuredly, not for all the gold of Ophir, not for all the riches of a Solomon's temple, dare we make common cause with that which nullifies the word of our God, and "opposeth and exalteth itself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped." But my object in the series of discourses which I am now delivering, is to call your attention to a few of those signs which are to precede the Second Advent of Christ. Now this apostacy

has two signs connected with it, which forcibly remind us that the day is at hand when it must go into perdition. St. Paul foretells its consumption, and its destruction, "that wicked one shall be revealed, whom the Lord shall *consume* with the Spirit of His mouth, and *destroy* with the brightness of his coming," (2d. Thess. 2, 8.) Attend here to the first sign: "He shall *first* consume it by the Spirit of his mouth." We can scarcely realize, my brethren, the difference between the power of popery now, and at the time of the Reformation. *Then* it held bound as with an adamant chain the civil and religious liberties of Europe,—the darkness and blackness of centuries had then arrived at their height,—"the power of the keys" silenced all opposition. Kings and Princes were deposed at pleasure, their kingdoms confiscated, and even their subjects refused the rights of burial, if full allegiance to the Sovereign Pontiff were not given. The powers of the world to come were saleable; hell was deprived of its terrors on the payment of a few pence, and heaven promised on the ground of merit,—the kingdoms groaned beneath the bondage,—and if amongst them, one was found bold enough to witness against these abominations, he was seized with the silent hand of the destroyer, and hurried to a land of darkness, never more to see the light of heaven. Contrast this state of things with what we *now* enjoy—and you will see that popery is now a thing of nought, in comparison to what it was 300 years ago. The Lord is now *consuming* it with the Spirit of his mouth. This consumption commenced with the fires of Smithfield, a light was then kindled

amidst the darkness that shall never be extinguished. The nations have felt, (and are feeling more and more,) the moral power of the Reformation. While popery remains the same in doctrine and spirit, and puts forth now and then redoubled vigour for pre-eminence. So have I seen the mighty ox fall beneath the knife, I watched, and it put forth the mightiest struggles of all, just before the breast heaved and for ever grew still. So with "the man of sin," his death throes are nearly upon him, his power is crippled throughout the world, in consequence of the free and unshackled proclamation of the Gospel, during the last three centuries; this is the *consumption*, not by might or by strength, but by my Spirit saith the Lord, "whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth."

If we glance at those nations where popery is still acknowledged, where it is still the national creed, although we have evident tokens of its unchanging nature, still, the submission to its pretensions are not so blindly given. The seat of the beast—the vatican itself, a few years ago, manifested a reluctance to submit to his authority, and drove him from his throne; he was, it is true, reinstated, but the belief in his spiritual assumptions has practically perished even amongst his followers, so that, my brethren, popery, in comparison to what it once was, is a perishing and a consuming thing, and it will *continue* to be so until its destruction. But this is not to be achieved by human means, "the Lord shall destroy him by the brightness of His coming."

I have thus described to you one sign that is to precede the second coming of the Son of God, the con-

sumption or wasting away of popery by the Spirit of God,—this we see, this we realise,—this sign is nearly completed, the witnesses have nearly sealed their testimony ; and every one of you, my brethren, that fearlessly and conscientiously refuse to take the mark of the beast, I regard as a witness snatched in the providence of God from the errors of “ the apostate.”

These are days when religious and political feelings seem in favour of traffic and merchandize with the man of sin, he is fawned on, he is flattered, he is apologized for ; even the prophecies which have always warned the Church of God of his doctrines and tendency are perverted, nay, even his *existence* is denied. “ *Anti-Christ has yet to appear !*” So spoke the Jews of their Messiah, when he was in the streets of Jerusalem, and so they *still* speak, though 1800 years have passed. The Rabbies interpreted the prophecies so as to deceive the nation. In like manner, the interpretation of these prophecies is denied by a few, and a false one adopted by many Protestants, and hence they are not aware of the evil with which they tamper ; we really seem to forget the dangers from which we have passed, the sunshine of prosperity seems to have lulled us into a false security, our dissenting brethren (though truly Protestant all the while,) are *equally* at fault, for, the only barrier sustained by a good Providence to protect them, they are anxious to pull down ; and if they cannot accomplish it by Protestant hands, they seem too willing to gain unhallowed assistance from “ the man of sin.” How different the spirit of their founders ! How much better ! How much safer ! for all who receive the *essen-*

tial doctrines of salvation to protect each other, to honour and respect each others sentiments, and not to "go down to Egypt for assistance," either in warding off an evil or in perpetrating one. If the property of the Church of England is to be taken, (property secured to her by every right, and which has been faithfully used in extending her ministrations,) *then let Protestant hands perpetrate the suicidal act, or if that property is to be protected from invasion ; oh ! let none be invited to our rescue that we need be ashamed of ! better far to bow our heads beneath the dark Providence than make any Gibeonitish leagues or truces.* Victory, when using such means, would in reality be a defeat ; a humiliation, from which may God in his mercy protect us.

Let us now in conclusion, consider the Second Sign, in reference to the Apostacy, we have seen how "the wasting away of popery, by the Spirit of God," is prophesied of, as a sign to precede the coming of Christ, now let us briefly shew, how "the destruction," being near at hand, may likewise be regarded as a sign. St. Paul, in speaking of its destruction, says, "whom the Lord shall consume by the Spirit of His mouth," and "destroy by the brightness of his coming."

He is therefore to be in existence when Christ comes. Now, we have already seen from the prophecies examined, that his duration was to be 1260 years, and if we are correct in fixing the time of his commencement with nearly all the Interpreters of prophecy in the year A.D. 606, then the period of his destruction, and consequently of the coming of the Son of God, may be soon expected, 1866 ! There may be an error of a few years in this

calculation, and some allowance also to be made for the difference between solar and lunar years; but when we remember, that other signs of Christ's coming are now evident, therefore we assume it as extremely probable, that Bishop Newton's calculation of the rise and completion of this dire apostacy will prove correct, as I have just stated.

Suppose now, for one moment, that this computation, borne out by all the historical evidences necessary, should prove correct, then may we not say with truth, that "the coming of the Son of God is nigh, even at the doors." Oh! I fear to some of you, these are not good tidings. To those of you, whose hearts and minds are following this world, engaged in all its speculations, pleasures and vanities. To those of you whose souls are dead to the realities of religion, and who are yet unregenerate, unconverted!

Oh, brethren, haste from Sodom, flee for your life,—leave behind you those perishing idols which the fire is almost ready to consume; you have a great work to do, and no commencement yet, you have old habits to throw off, new ones to put on, old affections to deny, new ones to cultivate, all this is a great work, requiring care and time. But remember the time is short. In a little time he that will come, must come and will not tarry. We can already decipher in the mist of futurity the form of that mighty angel who is to stand upon the sea, and to lift up his hand toward Heaven, and to swear by Him that sitteth on the throne, that "time shall be no more." Arise then, ye "sleepers, and call upon your God," "the time is far spent, the day is at hand, cast off the works of

darkness, and put on the armour of light," for remember, at the glorious Advent of the Son of God, the fearful, and the unbelieving, and whatsoever loveth and maketh a lie, are equally to be condemned as "the man of sin." All must go alike into the bottomless pit, "the mean man," "the mighty man," the poor and the rich. All earthly distinctions shall then cease, and the only pedigree that will then avail us, is to be of the family of God. To have our names written in the Lamb's book of Life." If these considerations arouse you not, then I must say, "*Let him that is filthy, be filthy still,*" "*him that is righteous, be righteous still.*"

NOTE.—The number 666 assigned to the beast, I have purposely left out of the body of this discourse, through fear of being tedious, and preferring to call attention to it in a more marked manner, by a note. The satisfactory interpretation which this "number" has received, substantiates all that has been advanced in the interpretation of the prophecy, and removes any doubt that might arise as to the application. "Here is wisdom, let him that understandeth, count the number of the beast, his number is 666." God has given the wisdom and understanding to his servants to find out the beast from the number.

In the English language we count by figures, but in the Greek and Hebrew by letters. Let us then count 666, by Grecian letters:—

λ	=	30
α	=	1
τ	=	300
ε	=	5
ι	=	10
ν	=	50
ο	=	70
ς	=	200

λατινος 666 or "Latin man."

Thus "λατινος," in Greek, is "Latin man" in English, or man of Latium, which was the city from whence the Romans derived their name and language. Latin is still the language of the Roman Church. The prayers are Latin, the Theology, Latin! Canons, Latin! Bulls, Latin! In Hebrew also, the "Romiith," (or Roman) when reckoned by the numerical letters, contains exactly 666! This is a most extraordinary coincidence, and so truly surprising, that nothing short of "a strong delusion," can prevent the followers of the beast from being alarmed by it.—(See Faber, Newton, Scott, on the number 666.)

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SERMON III,

CONTAINS TWO SIGNS; FIRST, THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO ALL AS
A WITNESS.—SECONDLY, RESTORATION OF THE JEWS.

“This Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come.—Matt. xxiv. 14.

“Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.”—Luke xxi. 24.

THE two portions of Holy Scripture which I have now read to you, though taken from different Gospels, were spoken by our Lord on the same occasion. I have selected them as the subjects of our present discourse, since they contain prophecies of two of the remaining signs which yet remain to be examined. Were I to address you on the subject of any prophecy, without having some light thrown on it by opening events, then perhaps I might be liable to error, and your confidence might be shaken. You might, in that case, fear that I was soaring aloft in the regions of imagination, and very properly refuse to attend me. But as in the former discourses, so in this, I shall endeavour to place before you, such evidences as will force conviction—evidences which you have not to search after, but which are intuitively known as belonging to this period. I hope therefore, to be instrumental in leading you to feel an interest in the coming of the Son of God, for

when we interpret prophecy as I have proposed,—when we call attention to the events which explain the prophecy, then we are protected from the error of “private interpretation,” and we feel that,

“God becomes His own interpreter,”

“And He will make it plain.”

The text was spoken by our Lord as he sat upon the Mount of Olives, in company with his disciples; the temple was before them in all its magnificence, the stones of which attracted the attention of the disciples; “Master,” said they, “see what buildings are here.” Our Lord immediately prophesied their downfall, and on doing so, excited the curiosity of the disciples, they accordingly ask him three questions; first, “When shall these things be?” Secondly, “What shall be the sign of Thy coming?” and thirdly, “What shall be the end of the age or dispensation?” In reading our Lord’s answer, it is necessary to keep in view these several enquiries, as he answers each seriatim; first, he describes the destruction of Jerusalem in answer to the question, “When shall these things be?” he next dwells on certain signs to precede his coming to destroy the temple, such as there shall be false Christs, and false prophets; and thirdly, he draws a graphic description of the end of the world, and mentions two signs which are to precede it; first, “this Gospel shall be preached as a witness to all nations, and then shall the end come;” and secondly, “Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the time of the Gentiles be fulfilled.”

We shall now consider the first sign:

“The Gospel preached to all nations.”

It is supposed by many, that a millenium of righteousness is to precede the coming of Christ, and foremost amongst the passages selected to prove it, is the declaration that "the Gospel must be preached to all nations;" but when we consider how possible it is for the Gospel to be *preached*, and not a soul *converted*, we then must rescue this text from the misapplication of supposing, that it teaches universal conversion before the coming of Christ. The Gospel is preached among you, my brethren, but are you all converted? Have you all felt "the powers of the world to come?" Is it not true that lands, nominally Christian, manifest as much (probably more) sin, and profligacy, as Heathen countries? and this state of things will continue—this dispensation, as Simeon declared, is only "the taking out of us gentiles, a people to serve God." The Gospel is now merely as a "witness" amongst the nations. It is "the lifting up of the ensign," and all that is universal concerning it is, that God shall make provision before this dispensation closes, to have it preached to all nations, and when this period arrives, then our dispensation closes, for "the Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, as a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come."

Now, it is instructive to enquire, whether the Gospel has been as universally preached as the text describes, or, whether such agencies are only now in operation as shall soon complete the prophecy?

Before the apostles left this world, according to the express command of their Lord, they not only carried the light of the Gospel into many Heathen lands, but made provision for its further circulation throughout the

world, after they should be called from their earthly labour; so indefatigable were they during their lifetime, that it is supposed by some they visited every region of the known world, as otherwise their testimony would be incomplete. But there are two considerations which render this impossible; first, the short period of their ministry; and secondly, had they preached to all nations in the sense the text describes, then the end should have come, according to the prophecy. If then, we are not to look to the period of the apostles for the fulfilment of the prophecy in the text, then, assuredly, no other period from that to the present will answer the description, for after the apostles left the world, that missionary spirit which characterised their labours seems to have expired, and so far from the Gospel spreading, we find, that in many places where it had been planted in all its purity, it either became mixed with a false philosophy, or was supplanted by the errors of Hea-thenism.

The corruptions of Christianity also impeded its progress, and much valuable time was spent by settling internal controversies and disputes, instead of proclaiming to the nations in darkness the fundamentals of this Divine religion.

The Western world, under the teaching of popery, soon quenched the light of Divine truth, and therefore the nations under such instructions must be regarded as in darkness,—so also, the Eastern world, Mahometanism with its koran, prevented the nations under its sway from having “the Gospel preached.” The “false prophet and the beast” held the world in their grasp,

and although both were active in missionary exertions, still their labours were spent in spreading their peculiar errors rather than the Gospel of Christ. Here, we have a melancholy picture before us—century after century passed, and the Church of God was unfaithful to her commission, of evangelizing the Nations. The city set on an hill “refused to shine,” the candlestick remained hidden under the bushel, “and the nations for whom Christ died, and which he claims for his inheritance, were kept in ignorance of his *meritorious* offering, and of the nature of his kingdom. Thus, we see how the power given to the apostacy and the false prophet prevented the completion of the prophecy in the text—and what a poor safeguard the Gospel of Christ found even in the dwelling of visible Christianity. But at length “the mystery of iniquity” having risen to its height, God was pleased to raise up a band of witnesses who snatched the everlasting Gospel from the oblivion of ages, and caused it to be heard once more on earth as in the ancient days. This important period is described by St. John in language not to be misunderstood; after fully describing the reign of Anti-Christ, who should make war with the saints, having shown the extent of his power; how he causeth both small and great, rich, and poor to receive his mark, (13 ch. Rev.) he then witnesses an event, happy and fortunate for us, my brethren! (Rev. 14. 6.) “I saw another angel fly in the midst of Heaven having the everlasting Gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kingdom, and tongue, and people.”

The Gospel was first announced on the "hill of Bethlehem," "glad tidings to Jew and to *all* nations;" then, previous to our Lord's ascension, he entrusted that Gospel to his Church; but the Church proved unfaithful to her mission, instead of evangelizing the nations, she first corrupted the sacred deposit, and then locked it up under bar and bolt and cloister. When thus she failed, it pleased the Great Head of the Church to make a second announcement of his everlasting Gospel, and hence the angel descends from Heaven to spread the Gospel once more amongst the nations, and while popery was giving glory to the beast, and Mahometanism to the prophet, the angel cries with a loud voice, "fear God, *give glory* to him."

At "the glorious Reformation," (glorious I must call it, tho' deprecated *now* by deluded brethren,) this *second* announcement of the Gospel was made; Luther burst the chain which rivetted the nations, one simple sentence which he discovered in that book, so long "cast to the moles and bats," but now unclasped by the angel's mandate, enabled him, though single handed, to stand against "the man of sin," and with that moral power which always accompanies truth, he shook the powers of the Vatican, and made Rome tremble from her inmost recesses.

Calvin followed, and though he had (like Luther) a doctrinal tendency peculiar to himself, yet both were able and energetic champions for those glorious truths which alone belong to "the everlasting Gospel." Then each nation, hitherto in darkness, furnished witnesses for the truth, till at length witnessing Churches arose, each

asserting some evangelical truth hitherto forgotten, or corrupted; all holding the same Head, notwithstanding. These, I venture to call "Churches," because I think they fulfil the definition of our Article, "the Church is an assembly of faithful men wherein the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments administered according to Christ's ordinance." We *know* that these assemblies contain "faithful men," we know that "the pure word of God is preached therein," and moreover, that they receive and administer the *two* Sacraments ordained by Christ. In this view I feel supported by the great standard writer on our Articles, the admirable Bishop Burnet. "When we acknowledge (he says) that any society is a true Church, we ought to be supposed to mean, no other than that the covenant of grace in its *essential* constituent parts is preserved entire in that body, and not that it is true in *all* its doctrines and *decisions*." This distinction, if remembered, will preserve us from those violent extremes, now-a-days so prevalent and so prejudicial to Protestantism, and will enable us to feel the charity of good King Hezekiah, when he prayed for those in "schism," May the good Lord pardon every one that prepareth his heart to seek God—the Lord of his fathers, *though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the Sanctuary*"—2d Chron. 30, 18, 19.

But to return—a new state of things arose when the Bible got free once more; the "man of sin" and his "detestable enormities" received a calm and accurate investigation; the dross of tradition was refused; when lo! a missionary spirit and zeal unknown to past

ages sprung up, and an agency is put in operation which breathed the spirit of the angel's mandate, "to preach the Gospel to every nation, and kingdom, and tongue."

But there were impediments in the way. The nations had been so long in darkness, and the ignorance so gross, when Roman superstition was thrown off, that heathenism at home crippled the missionary spirit for a long period. Rome's restrictions are not to be thrown off in a day, and hence a century or two had to pass before any successful effort to preach the Gospel to the nations could be put in force. Not till the beginning of this century do we perceive any agency put forth likely to lead on to the fulfilment of the prophecy before us, and here we perceive one of the signs of the Saviour's coming. Never since the commencement of Christianity was there such a missionary spirit abroad—never so many societies formed for the express purpose of sending the Gospel to the nations. In the bosom of our own Church, these Societies are growing stronger and stronger, and their success surpasses our most sanguine expectations,—neither can I omit the mention of other evangelical exertions put forth outside of our Church, for, however I may differ on other grounds from them, yet since God has blessed them and given them seals, since "the wilderness and solitary places become glad for them," I must rejoice in their success, and wish them joy in being the honoured instruments of extending the kingdom of our common Lord, and thus winning a larger inheritance for him when he comes.

But while speaking on the evangelizing of the

nations, we must not forget to mention that one of the chief impediments which rendered it difficult to proclaim the Gospel to the nations hitherto, is at length overcome. The curse of Babel, which confounded human language, rendered it a work of time and difficulty to announce the glad tidings "to the nations." But now, through the exertions of various missionary associations, the Bible may be read in upwards of fifty tongues; thus the angel's intention, "to preach to every tongue" is about to receive its literal fulfilment, and one of the chief barriers in the way of the Saviour's prophecy is at length being removed. The Gospel now may speed on its way, unfettered through the nations; kingdoms, hitherto inaccessible, may now receive the truth; China, with its many millions, now promises a rich harvest to the Christian missionary; nay, even the kingdoms hitherto under the sway and jurisdiction of Rome, have manifested signs of reformation, and heralds of the cross are witnessing for Christ in the midst of the apostacy. The end is therefore fast approaching; the crisis is nearly come, when the Gospel shall have run its circuit; when it shall be preached as a witness to *all* nations, and "*then shall the end come.*" Let us speed on its progress in the words of the Christian poet:—

"Fly abroad thou mighty Gospel,
 "Win and conquer, never cease;
 "May thy lasting, wide dominion
 "Multiply, and still increase."
 "Sway Thy Sceptre, Saviour!
 "All the world round."

But it is time that I now call your attention to the other portion of Scripture selected for the text,—this

likewise contains another sign of the second Advent, and when I shall have explained this, I shall then conclude these discourses, having thus fulfilled my intention of placing before you, six of the most striking signs of the near approach of the Son of God. We are told in the portion of the text, which yet remains to be explained, that "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."—"The treading down of Jerusalem" still continues; it has been held successively by Romans, Mamalukes and Turks, the latter of whom possess it to this day. It is remarkable that the Emperor Julian, who was an apostate from Christianity, in defiance of this prophecy of the Saviour's, attempted to rebuild the temple, and to induce the Jews to settle there again, but his daring attempt was in vain, for history informs us, that balls of fire issued from the earth and destroyed his workmen. Thus, then, Jerusalem still remains—none to favour her—whilst her children are in the dispersion described by the prophet; "for the children of Israel shall remain many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice; without an image, without an ephod or teraphim. *Afterward*, shall they return and seek the Lord their God, and his goodness in the latter day." Hosea iii. 4, 5. During all this time "Jerusalem is to be trodden down of the Gentiles, till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

Now, from the prophecies already examined, in reference to the signs preceding the second Advent, we have every reason to conclude, that "the times of the Gentiles" are coming to a close, and if so, then Jerusalem's

restoration must be near at hand. Let us, therefore, consider :

First, What sort of a Restoration this will be ?

Secondly, Whether there are any evidences of it now ?

First, What sort of a Restoration awaits the Jew ?

There are many passages throughout the prophets which describe in the most glowing language the return of the Jews to their own land, and from these descriptions many entertain the opinion that no return to Jerusalem will take place till Christ comes to restore, and to lead them in triumph to the land of Judah. Now, although such a glorious and triumphant restoration does indeed await the Jew, yet it will not be at once, for there is to be a partial reformation *first*, and *then*, the glorious one to follow. That such a partial reformation must take place *before* the second Advent, is evident from the prophecies ; "behold the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee ; for I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken. Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle, and his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives." Here, we have the Jews assembled at Jerusalem ; all nations are arrayed in siege against them ; the battle of Armageddon takes place ; and when they have suffered double for all their sins, the Lord shall suddenly appear for their rescue. The first work *then* of His advent will be to destroy the assembled nations.

This scene cannot take place, neither the prophecy which describes it be fulfilled, unless the Jews, previous

to the second Advent, go up to their ancient land "and rebuild the waste places of many generations." The Jews are, therefore, to be regarded as the thermometer of the Church of God, as long as they remain careless or indifferent to the weal or woe of Jerusalem, so long the Lord delays his coming, and "the times of the restitution of all things" postponed—but the moment that the Jew manifests an anxiety for the welfare of his race, the moment that we find him thinking of the glory of Israel, and the nations removing those political restrictions which have hitherto been imposed upon him, then he will pass up from the nations to the land of his forefathers; a little company, as it travels, will soon become a thousand, till at length the weary pilgrims shall reach the desired haven, and shall commence to build the temple described by the prophet Ezekiel, (Ezek. xl. 41,) which they shall finish, making use in its construction of the knowledge derived in their dispersion amongst the Gentile lands. But scarcely does the dawn of their prosperity commence, when the nations, repenting of the liberty given them to rebuild, and to depart from amongst them, come to the resolution of pursuit and attack, like Pharaoh of old. Ezekiel describes each nation as saying to itself, "I will go up to the land of unwall'd villages, I will go up to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars or gates, to take a spoil, and to take a prey, to turn my hand upon the *desolate places*, that are *now inhabited*, and upon the people that *are gathered out of the nations*, which have gotten cattle, and goods, that dwell in the midst

of the land." Ezek. xxxviii. 11, and 12 verses. The prophets describe the former troubles of the Jews as nothing in comparison to what they have to suffer from this siege of all nations; then, they have to drink the last dregs of the cup of punishment,—and whilst their spirits are bowed down beneath these accumulated sufferings, *then*, we are told, "the Lord will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplication; and then the Son of Man shall suddenly appear for their rescue; the deed of Calvary is brought home to them, and they "shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn;" and while thus penitent, "he shall turn his hand upon Jerusalem, and purge away her dross, and take away her tin." Then her final restoration; then the first resurrection; then the glorious millenium.

We come now to the question proposed, whether the present period affords any evidences of Israel's return?

Till very lately, the Jews have been a persecuted, and despised people throughout all the countries whither they have been driven. In every kingdom, (not even excepting Britain), those privileges which our common humanity might demand, have frequently been denied them. Every indignity and reproach, that could be offered them they have borne now nearly 1800 years; the bush, (as well remarked), though burning all the time, has not been consumed;"—they still retain their characteristics as a nation in all those lands whither they have gone,—a standing miracle for the truth of God's

Revelation. Their country also bears evidence for the truth of prophecy ; " your country is left unto you desolate, your cities are burned with fire, your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate as overthrown by strangers, and the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city."

But He who declared, " I will make them a reproach among the nations," (Ezek. v. 14,) is now removing that reproach. He who procured favour for Joseph in the sight of Pharaoh, is now at work throughout the nations for the outcasts. In Christian lands the Jew is now respected, and even in England he is admitted to the highest privileges. The Continental powers likewise feel an anxiety about the present position of the Jews, and even the Pope, (as a matter of policy), has been obliged to relax some severe regulations respecting them. In the meantime, they are silently wending their way Zionward, Jerusalem is receiving a rapid increase, Israel is gathering gently, but surely, few observe it ; an occasional notice now and then in the newspapers of the day, record the fact, but the nations are too busy to think of the wanderers ; they are too insignificant to claim attention ; and thus it will be, till the nation is born in a day. Now, there is one great impediment, one great difficulty in the way, which must be removed, before Israel can go in any numbers to the land of Judah ; this is the Mahometan or Turkish power. It now holds possession of Palestine, and still is formidable enough to prevent the Jew from regaining it. But God has humiliation in store for that kingdom, and no doubt

a just retribution soon will overtake it. In our examination of the Roman Apostacy, it will be remembered that a gradual wasting away or consumption has taken place, and its final destruction will follow. So also with Mahometanism, or the Turkish power, that is to be destroyed, but not suddenly, its wasting away has commenced; this is prophecied in Revelations, xvi. 12; "And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates, and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the Kings of the East might be prepared." The seat of power in the Turkish Empire is the Euphrates and the drying up of this river intimates its decay or consumption. This commenced in 1826. Up to that period Turkey remained a powerful kingdom, possessed of the most valuable dependencies. Since then, a series of misfortunes has overtaken her, both from enemies abroad, and internal dissensions at home, so that it is now a broken sceptre, a river almost "dry;" an inevitable doom impends over it, and whoever attempts to save it, will find himself in the fearful position of fighting against God. But why is it to be dried up? the prophecy informs us, that "the way of the Kings of the East might be prepared." If it be asked who are these Kings, or leading men from the East? we answer, the Jews that live Eastward of Jerusalem; and their progress westward toward Zion, (after the Turkish impediments are removed), is described by Isaiah xi. 14; "They shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the West, they shall spoil them of the East together, and there shall be an highway for the remnant of his people, like as it was to Israel in the day that he

came up out of the land of Egypt." We have now glanced at the position held by the Jews at the present day among the nations ; we have seen how the many impediments hitherto preventing their return to the land of their forefathers are either removed, or about to be so, and that the Jews are even now wending their way towards Jerusalem. This is a visible sign of the coming of the Son of God, and if we need any further confirmation of this sign, the prophet Daniel will furnish it. In the eighth chapter, he sees a vision of a ram and at the end of the vision he heard two saints speaking, one said to the other, "how long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and host to be trodden under foot? and he said unto me, unto two thousand and three hundred days, then shall the sanctuary be cleansed."

The prophet did not understand this vision, and a voice said to him, "I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation :!" the ram which thou sawest are the kings of Media and Persia." Now, the vision does not allude to the commencement of the Medo-Persian power, for the ram does not *rise* out of the river, but *stands* by it, (3rd verse,) consequently we must commence to reckon the 2300 years at some period during the sway of these kings, and on selecting the most probable period therein, we find the 2300 years will terminate about the period assigned for the destruction of the Roman Anti-Christ ; this is truly wonderful as "the desolation of the sanctuary" and the reign of Anti-Christ are both "to continue till the end." We

must, however, bear in mind, that in computing prophecies by years, there is a wise obscurity observed in not mentioning the exact year from whence to begin the computation, and therefore, although there is a wonderful agreement amongst the writers on such prophecies as to the period of fulfilment, yet there can be no real certainty as to the exact year of their completion. Thus, our Lord's assertion continues literally true: "No man knoweth the day or the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh." It would appear, however, that the signs which are to precede the fulfilment of the prophecies fairly belong to the Church of God, rather than any calculation from years, although, when there is little difficulty in the computation, as in the case of the Roman apostacy, already alluded to, then a sign is furnished as the fulfilment *draws nigh*; and this I have regarded as one of the signs of Christ's coming now apparent. The other signs which I have called your attention to, are of a different nature, and perhaps it is more the mind of the Spirit of God, and more in accordance with the sobriety of Scripture, that we attend to such, rather than any computations from years, and hence it is, that when the disciples might have computed the destruction of Jerusalem by the number of years, our Lord, notwithstanding, called their attention to the signs preceding the fulfilment; and from the observance of these, he would have them know their redemption drew nigh; "then when ye see these things come to pass, know ye, of your own selves that it is nigh even at the doors." So, also, with us, my brethren, and in accordance with this view, I have placed before you

some of the most startling signs of the latter days, as described by the prophecies. These signs, thus mercifully revealed to us, and now apparent to a great extent, I consider the duty of every Christian to be aware of, and to examine for himself, for as the dark days of infidelity approach, and *approach they will*, so, we should arm ourselves for the contest, by laying hold of every evidence which God has given us to prove our religion true.

And now one word in conclusion.

If, my brethren, we can look into such things, and our faith receive no additional strength or confirmation ; if, with so many visible proofs before us of the winding up of this dispensation, so many signs which remind us that we stand on the very threshold of the most wonderful and awakening scenes ! we can *still* be careless and indifferent to our souls eternal welfare, oh ! then I ask, what further do you need to arouse you ? Depend upon it, Christianity is a reality—Infidelity a mockery,—an unsubstantial fabric without a foundation, and infidelity, on the subject of these discourses, is now very general ; perhaps, while speaking, there may be some poor trifler saying to his fellow, “since our time is so short let us make the most of it,” “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.”

This was the language of the old world, when Noah foretold impending doom. And we are assured by St. Peter, that the same impiety will prevail just previous to Christ's coming. “In the latter days scoffers shall arise, saying, where is the promise of his coming, for since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were.”

This subject then will only be of use to the servants of God,—“the wise virgins were slumbering.” The cry was made, “behold he cometh.” That cry to them, was as their resurrection trumpet, they arose and trimmed their lamps, “the foolish” remained “foolish still,” they were in no way benefitted by the warning. It only added to their dismay. It tormented them before the time.

He came! the wise virgins, being aroused by the signs of the coming, were awaiting him; they enter in, the door is shut; that door secured the happiness of the wise, it sealed the condemnation of the foolish. “Lord, Lord, open unto us,” was the entreaty outside the door. The time was passed for prayer, for hope, for repentance, and amidst the terrors of the impending judgment, the withering rebuke added to their confusion; “Depart from me, ye that work iniquity!” May this scene, drawn by no less a hand than Christ’s, be a warning to each of us and rescuing our affections from the pernicious influence of a world soon to be no more, may we now, in the *eleventh* hour, fervently breathe the prayer of the righteous. “Come Lord, Jesus, come quickly,”—take the kingdom—gather “the outcasts,” and receive the fullness of the Gēntiles.”

THE END.



A FRAGMENT,

TREATING OF

1. THE BIBLE AND PRIVATE INTERPRETATION.
2. "THE GOLDEN LINK," PRECIOUS RELIQU'

As to Churchmanship, the writer of the foregoing discourses professes to be neither "high" or "low," he is, therefore, unknown to either party assuming these titles. Although born, baptised and brought up in the Church, yet, his attachment to the Church is *exclusively* owing to the Scriptural nature of her Articles and formularies, as well as to the fact that she is the Church of the Reformation. What the Reformers taught, began and completed, he thanks God for, and what they left unfinished (if they left anything) he would not have touched for the world. Assuming these principles to be correct, the writer cannot but think, that the Church has a twofold danger in *all lands* to fear at the present time—a danger from within, and a danger from without,—the danger from within is the most serious, as it may deliver up the citadel, while the dangers from without may be guarded against by vigilance and caution. We shall at present shew a *little* of the danger from within, and in a future tract (should God permit) we shall treat of the dangers from without.

Some time since, I observed to a friend and brother, that the blessings arising from the Reformation, and from the free and open perusal of the Bible, were truly wonderful! When, to my surprise, he observed: "It is a question, whether more evil has not arisen from its *indiscriminate* perusal than otherwise."

"This idea," I observed, "has always been entertained by Romanists, and it is truly melancholy to find Protestants doubt the battle ground of our glorious Reformation."

Friend—"Look at the fruit of *private* judgment in religion—see the multiplicity of sects?"

"What then," I remarked, "would you think it better that these poor souls, along with your own, should be embraced in the errors of the Apostacy, having *external* unity, it may be but going headlong to perdition with a lie in the right hand?" On receiving no answer to this home enquiry, I observed further, "you are wrong, my friend, in attributing the multiplicity of sects abroad, and the contention which we witness in religious matters to the unclasping of the Bible, to its free and open perusal, for even in the bosom of Popery itself, where the Bible is sealed and locked upon as a suspicious book, even *there*, you have as many sects, and more than we find amongst Protestants; the Dominicans differ from the Franciscans, the Augustines from both, and the Jesuits from all,—other sects in the bosom of Rome I might mention, but, the *policy* of the man of sin is, to sanction all systems within its pale, to throw over each heresy, which will acknowledge the head—a cloak of uniformity, whereby like mariners in a storm, when every cordage cracks, and every timber creaks, they cry out, "unity!" "unity!"

It would appear, therefore, that the sealing up of the Bible, the prohibition of its free and open perusal, is the cause of all the sects, both in Popery and amongst Protestants."

Friend—"Explain yourself," was the meditative answer.

I accordingly proceeded. "The language of the Bible is plain and simple, every fundamental truth requisite for salvation is there laid before the mind, and any truth not so laid down, but requiring inferential argument to prove it, must exercise our charity in coming to a conclusion, but all the fundamental promises, hopes, and expectations necessary for the soul's salvation are so plain that 'the way-faring man, though a fool, shall not err therein!' and the unanimity that exists amongst all sincere Christians on these subjects, is truly wonderful, considering the infirmities of human judgement."

"Unanimity!" groaned out my friend, and then rather querulously, asked, "What think you of Mormons, Unitarians and Universalists?"

"This," said I, "is exactly what I wish to call your attention to; now, *you* in common with Romanists, attribute these contentions and errors to the free perusal of the Bible, I, on the contrary, attribute them to *the sealing up* of the Bible, for instance, the Mormon starts up, declares himself a prophet, he uses as much of the Bible as will suit his purpose, that much he will speak of and *that only*; his followers will seek the law at his mouth, they close the Bible and hand over the interpretation of it to Mormon and his emissaries; their own private judgment which guides them in all things else, they dispense with in the most important of all matters;

they call Mormon "the father," contrary to the express command of the Bible, "call no man your father;" here you have the Bible sealed, though in the hands, Popery without a Pope!"

"But, stop," said my friend, "we shall admit all this in the case of the Mormon, the free and open perusal of the Bible would indeed be his corrective. I shall rather confine your attention to the other evils alluded to, Unitarianism and Universalism."

"Precisely the same argument," I observed, "is to be applied to these evils; for instance, the Unitarian adopts a system, he is trained to support it. He takes hold of the Bible and brings his lexicons and dictionaries to upset its plain language. No man ever became a Unitarian from the open perusal of the Bible. It requires a Unitarian preacher and commentaries to find out such a system. The best and only cure for this evil is the Bible, *free of note and comment*, such as the Reformation hands to us. Its plain language, is "the Son of God is come, this is the *true God*, and eternal life," "without him was not any thing made that was made, 1 John, v. 20; and Gospel of St. John, 1, 3, 14. The sect, therefore, that denies this plain language, locks up the Bible with the key of human wisdom, and although they professedly receive it, yet it is cast to the "moles and bats" under bar and bolt of a Socinian vatican.

"Well," said my friend, "What say you of the Universalist?"

"The same," I answered, "the Scriptures condemn that error in as plain and grammatical language as Mor-

monism or Unitarianism." The Bible tells us plainly of a Hell, "where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched," Isaiah lxvi. 24; Mark lx. 44; Matt. xxv. 46. It declares all through, that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord, Heb. xii. 14; now he who denies a Hell, and extends the sacrifice of Christ to the unclean and unholy, cannot believe in the Heaven so plainly described in the Bible, Rev. xii. 27. Here then is the Bible clasped, sealed, and requiring a Universalist preacher and commentary to find out such a system, so that I imagine I have now briefly proved my point, that the *closing* of the Bible is the cause of the evils which you have erroneously attributed to the free and open perusal of that blessed Book, and if so, then the only remedy for existing evils is not "*The Church*," but *The Bible, free of note and comment.*"

"All this may be the case," said he, "but I am not a believer in the exercise of private judgment in religion, I think men ought to yield to the decision of the Church, and adopt her interpretations."

"Well," my friend, "*so they did*; this has been tried, long, long enough; for generations men did so, and what was the consequence? the Church led them blindfold to perdition, corrupted the Word of God, and doled out instead, some of the puerile reasonings of minds "under strong delusion;" the powers of the Church were so great, and her authority so recognised, that woe be to the poor soul who dared to exercise that natural judgment and reason which the God of nature implanted within him."

Friend—"But our Church surely would not do so?"
 "Even if it should not, there is no command in Scripture to yield our judgment and reason to any body Corporate.* You must *first* establish the infallibility of the Church, before I resign my judgment to her keeping, and therefore, "the Church of Rome" first saw it necessary to arrogate to itself infallibility before she forbad the exercise of private judgment."

"Sustain your argument from the Bible," added my friend, rather sarcastically.

I therefore proceeded; "the Bible is plain on the subject, and needs only to be read. When our Lord was on earth, he was truly infallible, yet, he asked none to believe him on that account, he sent his hearers to examine and interpret for themselves, to make use of their reason and judgment, which if they did not possess, they were not responsible beings. He accordingly said to the Jews, "*Search* the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and these are they which testify of me." The Christians at Berea were commended above others, because they *searched the Scriptures* daily, whether the things spoken even by the *Inspired* Apostles were true or not, and Saint Paul, in summing up Timothy's superior advantages, reminds him that "from a child he knew the Holy Scriptures, which were able to make him wise unto salvation through faith which was in Christ Jesus." Here then, we have infidel Jews sent to *examine* the Scriptures

*That even General Councils which are expressive of the voice of the Church "may err, and have erred," we are taught by our Church. Article 21.

for themselves, and even a child is entrusted with the sacred deposit, and derives therefrom that faith which was able to save his soul. Here is an open Bible placed before each, and no interpretation either from doctors or Church deemed requisite ; no commentaries, but the *private judgment* of each is appealed to, "Come now let us *reason together* saith the Lord," Isaiah i. 18.

I fear not, therefore, each man going to the Bible for his creed, I fear not the consequences to religion or to our Church. *It is God's plan*, and therefore I fear it not, for, to use the words of a standard writer* on this subject, "If a man, in reading the Scriptures, prays to God to direct him, and follows sincerely what he apprehends to be true, he shall then find out enough to save his soul, and even if he should fall into mistake, such shall either be cleared up to him by some happy providence, or shall be forgiven him by that infinite mercy, to which his sincerity and diligence shall be known."

Now, it may appear to you, gentle reader, incredible that any member of our Church should be so far astray on the subject here introduced, but so it is, a strange forgetfulness of the principles of the Reformation and Protestantism seems to be abroad.

Traetarianism has done all this, a plan plotted and devised in Rome, and hatched beneath the very altars of our own Church ; that poison has infused a leaven into many minds, insomuch, that some who think them-

* Bishop Burnet, on Article 6, page 91.

selves quite free from its tendency, yet, "confess that much good, notwithstanding, has been accomplished by it." Where is the good, I would ask? It has cast suspicion upon our Church, so that now, her scriptural standards are supposed to bear any interpretation. It has done more. It has created controversies and disputes amongst brethren of the same faith. It has given an air and assumption to many of our Bishops and Clergy, calling their minds off from the *spiritual* nature of the Church of Christ, and moulding their piety into a sort of materialism, which prevents them from thinking seriously of any thing beyond "the costly stones and buildings," the decorations of the temple, the "altar cloths," and "surplices." And further, it has infused a spirit of intolerance towards those who conscientiously differ from us, that provokes opposition, and proves destructive to that charity, which, if we possess not, we are as a "sounding brass, and tinkling symbol."

This, Tractarianism has done, and has not given us in return one *single good* as a compensation.

But what is this? I find a passage before me to this effect, "If, my brethren, but one single link in that golden chain of Apostolic succession had ever been lost or broken, then Christ's promise to be with the *ministers* of his church to the end of time, must have failed, the gates of hell must have prevailed against the Church of Christ." Now, reader! do you know where I find this consolatory passage? I find it in a sermon lauded to the very skies—published at the expense of the Synod, and sent to me in common with others, as a specimen of sound and eloquent theology! but, although I have

no press at my command to publish my heterodox sentiments, such privileges being only for the orthodox in these days, still, I must venture a little for the sake of the Church, and for the sake of Christ's promises. I know not whether this sermon is to be regarded as expressive of the views of the assembled Clergy and laity, I shall only speak for myself, when I say, *I most cordially dissent from any such theology.* I love our Church too much, to derive any "golden chain" from Rome, the Apostate! I respect Christ's promise too much, to make it depend upon the *contingency* of any *such* succession. I think our church's claim to Apostolic, rests upon far more important and undeniable evidence than any such succession, however "glowingly" described, or rendered attractive by meretricious "chains" and "links." But, what in *reality* becomes of our Church, if we interpret the promise to Peter, as "the eloquent" preacher of that sermon does? "Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock will I build my Church, and the *gates of hell* shall not prevail against her." This preacher, who addresses a Protestant Synod, believes that a *visible* Church with a successional ministry is here announced. If so, then also the other promise which follows is likewise for this successional ministry in Peter; "whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; whose soever sins ye remit they are remitted; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." The "Church of Rome" may surely rejoice after this! The Church of England,—our beloved Church,—may for ever hang her harp on the willows!—Rome's thunder may now reverberate; her

anathemas are sanctioned ; " Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven ! " Oh ! how precious is that link ! The preacher calls it " golden ! " That " golden link " against which the " gates of hell never prevailed, " and which has power to " bind and loose on earth, " hands us over as heretics, to the very " pit of hell, " curses us in every action of our life, whether we " eat, " " drink, " " walk, " or " sleep ! " Assuredly it would have been wiser if the Synod passed a resolution recommending the preacher to reconsider his theology, and to tremble as a Protestant, at the danger of asserting, that " if but *one* link in that golden chain "—Pope Joan for instance,— " had ever been lost or broken, then there exists not at this moment a valid ministry on earth ; " and the promise of Christ's perpetuity fails. The preacher farther remarks for *our consolation*, that " we belong to a church that can satisfactorily prove this *great fact*, when occasion requires. " I hope, therefore, we shall see this proof, for undoubtedly it is required. To your task, therefore, oh preacher of preachers ! commence your " endless genealogy, " and when it is proved, you will then have to address the Synod next time, as to the punishment of heretics, and further, to dilate on the great advantages which *we* are to derive from our " Apostolic golden chain ! " Oh ! precious relic ! !

I love our Church for her three-fold order of ministry, because I believe it was the model left by the Apostles, but he who tells me to love that ministry because it is a successional one, or he who tells me that a ministry cannot be valid because not successional, is guilty of

adding to the Scripture, and assumes the entire argument. When I look at Rome, abhorred ! and fallen !! I care little for a succession, as it may transmit error as well as truth, and when I read the history of the individuals through whom that succession came, then I find a class of monsters who excelled in nothing but vice and infamy, and who are represented in Scripture as "wearing out the souls of God's people, and speaking blasphemies against the Most High." But we need not fear Christ's promise to His Church,—*It has never failed.* The *faith* which Peter confessed was the Rock ;—on that faith, his Church was built—*his believing people*—not a *visible* city on seven hills !—not a pampered hierarchy !—but a band of true believers who *successively* held to Peter's faith, from which Rome departed. Rome was "the gate of hell," endeavouring to *prevail* against the faith of God's people—and long and loud did "the Apostolic chain" clank its "golden links," to destroy truth on earth, and to nullify Christ's promise. But the sainted Waldenses withstood the foe ; their blood paid the penalty for holding to the faith which had the promise, and when nearly *prevailed* against, we find the Albigenes, the Wichliffes, the Lollards, furnishing successive evidences that the faith of God's elect had not perished, till at length the glorious Reformation burst upon the world, and then the consumption of the man of sin commenced, his "chains" were then broken ; oh ! may no expressions of admiration, may no "golden" epithets ever tempt us to court *one* "link" of connection with him whose days are numbered, and whose plagues will soon be poured forth. A successional

church in the sense advocated by Rome, and the "eloquent" preacher of the sermon under review, is answerable for all the evil it has committed, for all the blood it has shed through successive ages,—and every drop it has shed being yet unavenged, shall be required seven-fold. "Woe unto you, (said the Saviour) to the *successional* church of the Jews, for upon you will come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar, and hence it is that when the angel descends from Heaven, (Rev. 18,) to destroy Babylon, "the man of sin," he first invites God's people to come out of her,—for even there God may have his people who sigh for the abominations.—"Come out of her my people, and be not partakers of her sins," "for her sins have reached unto Heaven, and God hath *remembered her iniquities.*" Oh ! let us then be wise in "time," let us say to every erring brother that would seek to rivet us, even by "one golden link !" "we fear any connection with those hands, which though *successional*,—yet murdered the saints of God—we fear any participation in their deeds, and we believe, that we are the people in common with the *continental* Churches, who at the Reformation, obeyed the angel's mandate, "come out of her my people lest you be partakers of her sins;" we have done so,—let us never there return, either for "valid ministry" or valid doctrine.

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