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THE FOUR GOSPELS

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THE FOUR GOSPELS

EXPLAINED BY THEIR WRITERS

WITH AN APPENDIX

ON

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

EDITED BY

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TRANSLATED BY

W. F. KIRBY

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. III

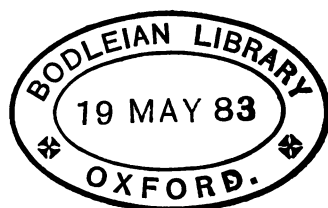
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PART II.

COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

It is the Spirit which quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you are spirit and truth.—JOHN vi. 64.

The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.—2 COR. iii. 6.

JOHN, CHAP. I.—VERSES 1-18.

The Word.—Mission of John the Baptist.

(1) In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was in the presence of God, and the Word was God. (2) He was in the beginning in the presence of God. (3) Through him all things were made, and without him nothing was made which was made. (4) In him was life, and the life was the light of men. (5) And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not hinder it. (6) There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. (7) He came as a testimony, to bear witness concerning the Light, that all should believe through him. (8) This man was not that Light, but came that he should bear witness to the Light. (9) The Light was the true Light, which lighteneth every man who cometh into the world. (10) It was in the world, and the world existed through it, and the world knew it not. (11) It came to its own things, and its own people did not receive it. (12) And as many as received him, he gave them power to become the children of God, to those who believe in his name. (13) These do not become so from blood, nor from the will of the flesh, nor from the will of man, but from God. (14) And the Word became flesh, and took up its abode in us, and we admired his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of love and truth. (15) John bore witness about him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I said, He who cometh after me was before me, for he was before me. (16) And we all received of his fulness, and grace for grace. (17) For the Law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. (18) No one hath ever seen God; the only-begotten Son, being in the bosom of the Father, hath revealed him.

§ 1. These verses have given rise to many interpretations and disputes, and have contributed to the ascription of
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divinity to Jesus Christ.* But men will abandon this error. Those who attach themselves to the letter, without comparing texts or seeking for the Spirit, cannot perceive the object of these words as the condition and means of the progress of humanity, and of its ascending course to light and truth. They cannot understand that when intelligence develops, its views are enlarged in proportion. If they would reflect seriously, without preconceived ideas, they would perceive that God has prepared and disposed everything to give men gradually and progressively what they were able to receive, and to dispense to each the daily bread of intelligence, according to his faculties and necessities. They would then perceive how wisely God has prepared everything by successive revelations to lead men gradually to a knowledge of the Father, God ; and of the Son, Jesus Christ. The spiritual era now opening before you through the perpetual and always progressive revelations of the Spirit of Truth, is to lead you on to the time of the second coming of Jesus, to manifest the unveiled Truth.

At the commencement of the Hebrew period, although the idea of the One God prevailed over the divinities worshipped by the masses, among all nations, yet it was only for the initiated, and the multitude were polytheists. This arose from the communication between the spiritual and corporeal worlds, which is one of the laws of Nature, and as eternal as that God from whose will it proceeds. The Oriental nations believed in gods in heaven, and sons of gods among men, who were miraculously born of virgins, and were afterwards raised to the rank of "gods ;" and the Jews had imbibed these popular ideas during the Captivity.

At the opening of the Hebrew era, the most civilized races of men had arrived at a phase when it was needful that the Divine Unity should be placed before the eyes of all, by a spirit-revelation of God, as One, Alone, and Indi-

* Although the Commentary on the first chapter of John is somewhat tedious, the importance of the subject compels me to retain many of the repetitions of the original.—TRANS.

visible, the Creator ; but not by the divisibility of his essence. Polytheism was then doomed to disappear gradually under the influence of successive revelations, in the course of ages.

God manifested the Divine Unity to all, when he gave men the Decalogue on Mount Sinai,* by the instrumentality of a superior spirit, and proclaimed through Moses, "Thou shalt have no other Gods but me." I am the One Eternal and Only God ; I am That I am."

Afterwards, conformably with the necessity for linking the present with the past, God, having thus proclaimed Monotheism, proclaimed himself the God of Gods, by the prophets in Israel, who were inspired and guided by the superior spirits, in the words (Ps. lxxxii. 1 and 6) : "God standeth in the congregation of the mighty ; he judgeth the gods." "I have said, Ye are gods ; and all of you are children of the Most High." God thus proclaimed himself to be the Uncreated Creator ; and that all creatures exist only from him, by him, and in him, and are thus distinct from him ; and that all spirits, whether called gods in heaven or on earth, whatever may be their purity and elevation, are all creatures ; all derived from the same principle, and having had originally the same origin. They are therefore his sons ; and all brethren, as regards each other. But the time was not yet come when men should thus understand the Divine words in spirit and in truth. That time was only to come through the advent of the Spirit, after humanity had been struggling for ages in the trammels of infamy, and had slowly and laboriously progressed through the stages of its childhood and youth, to the age preceding its manhood, under the empire of the veil of the letter, the shell of mystery, and the prestige of miracle.

The ancient polytheism was to be completely and finally uprooted in the course of ages, and was to disappear from the minds of the masses among civilized nations, whose mission it should be to advance those who were in an

* See the explanations given in Part III. relative to the manner in which the Decalogue was given, and promulgated.

inferior condition. Men were thus to be led to recognize God as one and indivisible, the Creator of all existing creatures. But for this, a transitional period was necessary, which was to be effected in a manner appropriate to the state of intelligence, and necessities of every age and era, by means of successive and progressive revelations, under the influence of the veil of the letter.

This transition could only be accomplished by a messenger from God sent among men on a superior mission ; and this could only be effected by Jesus. He alone was entrusted with the development and progress of men, whom he will lead to perfection, and whose efforts he directs, devoting himself to the completion of his work. Hence arose the necessity for the Hebrew Revelation, which announced the advent of the Messiah, and prepared the way for his earthly mission.

But Jesus being a spirit of perfect and immaculate purity, the architect, protector, and ruler of your planet, could not* assume a material body incompatible with his spiritual nature. Nevertheless, he could not appear among men to accomplish his superior mission without clothing himself (in accordance with the laws of Nature, and the immutable will of God, which never varies) with a body in harmony with his own nature, and relatively in harmony with your sphere ; and such as to create an illusion in the eyes of men. It was therefore needful for him to assume a body which, though not of the same nature as that of the inhabitants of the earth, should be similar to it, and possess the same form. Men could then regard him as one of themselves, and be attracted to him by this resemblance, in order that their hearts might be touched by his words, teachings and example, and that his pure and spotless life of devotion, charity and love, should show them how much nobler he was than themselves, that they might be led to love, admire and imitate him. But seeing that his actions were greater than those of men, they were astonished and over-awed, and led to perceive that he was a messenger of God, and that what he taught likewise proceeded from God.

* See the explanations given in vol. i. § 14, pp. 18-30, &c.

Therefore Jesus Christ was to be regarded by men, during his earthly mission, as a man like themselves : hence the necessity for his being apparently born of a human father and mother ; and although this origin was simply apparent, men were nevertheless to regard it as real. His earthly mission was designed to effect the transition which should uproot the ancient polytheism in the minds of men, preserve the knowledge of the Son, and the knowledge of the Father, and lead men on to the period when the Spirit could be freed from the letter. In order to attain this end, the Divine foresight and wisdom deemed it necessary to appropriate successive revelations to the popular opinions, prejudices, state of intelligence, and necessities of the age, and of the generations which were to follow. In consequence of these revelations, the superior mission of the Messiah, Christ, took place among the Hebrews. The masses had brought back from the captivity the popular idea of Sons of God living among men ; and hence, notwithstanding the monotheism which had been forced upon them,* they believed that God communicated with men directly, under the name of the Holy Spirit. The masses likewise held the belief that God was corporeal ; and this was the idea which Jesus designed to destroy when he said, " God is a Spirit." We shall explain the full sense and meaning of these words hereafter.

In accordance with the popular opinions of the age, and the monotheism taught by Moses and the prophets, which the masses did not understand in spirit and in truth, it was needful that a Divine man should appear, who should be regarded as both man and God, and who should be deified by men, owing to the veils and uncertainties of the Hebrew and Messianic Revelations, as the only Son of the Father, and equal to him. This belief was to be founded on the events of his earthly mission ; his pure and spotless life ; his mysterious (miraculous or Divine) origin ; the miracles which he accomplished ; his sublime apotheosis by his apparent death and resurrection, which men regarded as

* Compare Ex. chaps. xxxii., xxxii. and xxxiv.

real ; his appearances to the women and the disciples ; and his ascent to the ethereal regions.

This was necessary that men might purify their ideas by disentangling them from the trammels of the ancient polytheism, and by endeavouring to retain plurality in unity ; for the Son of the One Eternal God who had said, "I am the Lord thy God ; thou shalt have none other gods but me," could be none other than the only Son of the Father, the only God with him ; for you must remember that both the Hebrews and Christians believed that your earth was the whole Creation ; the only place inhabited by the creatures of the Lord.

Thus Jesus was to be regarded during his earthly mission as a man among men, the son of Mary and Joseph ; but after the accomplishment of his mission, and not until then, men regarded him as the son of the Virgin Mary, by the operation of the Holy Spirit ; and thus as the Son of God. Here the necessity and object of the Hebrew Revelation, announcing the coming of Him in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed ; the Messiah or the Christ. At first they openly proclaimed his human origin, as born of the posterity of Abraham, and of the house of David ; but afterwards the prophets of Israel announced, though under the obscurity of the letter, the miraculous and divine origin of a son born in the house of David, to whom the Lord himself would give a sign ; "that a virgin should conceive, and bear a son, whose name should be called Emmanuel." But the meaning of this remained hidden, until it was revealed by the Evangelist Matthew, who added, under spiritual inspiration, "That is, God with us." Consequently, when Jesus appeared on your earth, the Hebrews interpreted the prophecies to teach that the Messiah was to be a man like themselves, who should be of the posterity of Abraham, and the Son of David.*

Hence the object and necessity of the revelation made by the angel to Mary and Joseph, under such circumstances, that it remained secret till after the accomplishment of the

* Isaiah vii. 13, 14 ; Matth. i. 21-23.

earthly mission of Christ. The Apostles were secretly informed of it by Mary, and only proclaimed it to the world when it could be made known at a fitting opportunity, and with good results, under the inspiration of the superior spirits who aided and directed them in the accomplishment of their mission.

The successive revelations of Moses and the prophets, who announced the advent of the Messiah, and thus laid the foundation of his mission ; and the subsequent revelation made by the angel to Mary and Joseph ; the work of the earthly mission of Jesus, which was recorded by the Evangelists under the inspiration of superior spirits ; and, lastly, the earthly mission of the Apostles, were thus designed to uproot the old polytheism entirely, but by gradual stages, among the more civilized nations, who were destined to make known the truth to those who were less advanced. Thus men were to be brought to a knowledge of the One God, the Father ; of Jesus Christ, who is not God, but a spirit of perfect purity ; and of the Holy Spirit, who is not God, but figuratively represents the sacred phalanx of the good spirits of the Lord, who are the ministers of his will, providence and goodness, and maintain universal life and harmony on your planet, under the direction of Jesus, your protector, ruler, and master, who is the representative of God, the Father of each and of all.

Thus, too, men were led to know the nature and origin of Christ and of all created spirits, and were led on to the new era of the Christianity of Christ, which will bring you by successive revelations to the predicted time when you shall have arrived at perfection, and Christ will reappear among you, clothed in his full spiritual glory.

In order to give the men of that age, and following generations, what they were able to bear, it was necessary for Jesus to veil his nature and spiritual origin by the letter, as had likewise been done in the case of the previous revelations, to provide for the period of transition, and to lay the foundations of the future revelation of the Spirit of Truth. In order to be understood and listened to, he was obliged

to appropriate his language and actions to the intelligence and prejudices of the period, as well as to the traditions of the prophets of the old law, and the aspirations of the people, or his mission would have been unfruitful. But this gave rise to transitory opinions, by which he was first regarded by men as a man like themselves, and after the commencement of his public mission, as a prophet. Afterwards men ascribed divinity to him, and regarded him as both God and man, thus making the finite body of a man contain the Infinite, and representing the One Eternal God as subject to life and death in a mortal and perishable body ; that God who is, has been, and will be, throughout eternity, and who has alone possessed immortality from everlasting to everlasting.

All the aspirations and opinions of which you now perceive the necessity and object, were transitory and preparatory to the advent of the Spirit. All have been useful in the course of time ; and the efforts which have been made to pierce the darkness of the letter, have caused sparks to leap forth from the hidden depths of the Spirit, and have thus prepared the way for the Spirit of Truth to raise the veil from the letter, and to strip the shell from mystery and miracle, to manifest the light and truth within.

During the course of ages, and the ripening of human intelligence, these aspirations and opinions have led you on to the new era of the Christianity of Christ, and to the promised Revelation of the Spirit of Truth, who descends to you by the will of the Father, to tell you what Jesus could not tell during his earthly mission, and to teach you the truth which you are now prepared to support, by freeing the Spirit from the letter.

Jesus taught men to distrust the letter by saying, "It is the Spirit which giveth life ; the flesh profiteth nothing ; the words that I speak unto you are spirit and life" (John vi. 64).

It was the Apostle John who was chosen to record these words of the Divine Model, his beloved Master, under medianimic inspiration ; and the Apostle Paul, applying the

same words to human interpretations, says: "The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life" (2 Cor. iii. 6).

Interpretation according to the letter is death ; or, in other words, leads to error ; whereas interpretation according to the Spirit, is life ; that is, it leads to truth. But the kingdom of the letter is transitory in its nature, and preparatory to the advent of the Spirit. Still it was necessary at first, for the letter is for primitive nations, and for the infancy, childhood and youth of humanity, and the Spirit is for nations who have arrived at such a degree of intellectual development that they wish to understand what they should believe, and then blind faith under the veil of the letter is no longer sufficient, but produces only doubt or incredulity. That letter is then of no further use, but leaves faith without support. Such nations require the daily bread of intelligence according to their faculties and necessities. Thus the words of Jesus and Paul, which we have just quoted, were words of the future, and were only to be accomplished in the course of ages.

Jesus, having regard to the Hebrew and angelic revelations, arranged everything, both by words, actions, and events, to be useful for the present, and to prepare the future for the Christian era, under the veil of the letter, and at the same time to prepare for, and to sanction the New Revelation, which should free the Spirit from the letter, at the time of the Spiritual era, under the Empire of the Spirit.

The Apostles were inspired by the spirits of the Lord, who assisted and directed them in their mission, that everything necessary should be said and done ; and they followed the paths which Jesus had traced out. Jesus spoke words which were designed to arrest the attention of the people, and to be interpreted literally according to the intelligence of that and subsequent ages, and also pronounced words which were not to be much regarded until they could be explained in spirit and in truth by a new Revelation which had become necessary, and which should at the same time correct the erroneous interpretations which had served as the basis of the opinions which arose, according to the letter, in the

infancy of humanity. Even so, the Apostles John and Paul, following in the steps of Jesus, spoke words which were to attract the attention of men immediately, and to be interpreted literally; and others, of which they did not understand the exact meaning, and which men would only dwell upon, when they were explained in spirit and in truth, by the new Revelation, under the Empire of the Spirit.

It was the mission of the Apostles, and especially of Paul, to prepare the way for the Christian era under the dominion of the letter, and also to speak words of which the Spirit was to be purposely veiled by the letter, but which were to serve as the foundation, and anticipated sanction of the future Revelation.

The Apostles John and Paul obeyed the will of the Lord, like the other Apostles, and thus served the present, and prepared for the future. Each acted within the limits of his earthly mission, and under the conditions which the wise foresight of Jesus had arranged. You should not reject any of the words of John or Paul relative to the spiritual nature and origin of Jesus, for they must all be understood and explained according to the Spirit which giveth life; and therefore in spirit and in truth.

The words of John (i. 1-3, 14 and 18), should not be isolated from those spoken by Jesus himself, and recorded by the four Evangelists, nor from those which the Apostle Paul addressed, both to the Jews and Gentiles, to which we will refer you before explaining the former.

When the words of Jesus are illuminated by the Spirit which giveth life, they exclude all idea of the divinity attributed to him by men. They proclaim his inferiority to the Father, whom he declares to be the One True God, and whose messenger and servant he is; while, though veiled by the letter, they reveal his extra-human nature and origin. They refer to his appearance among men, to accomplish his superior mission as the Messiah. Beneath the veil of the letter, too, they disclose his position, as the formative, protecting and ruling Spirit of your globe, who is in direct communion with the Father, and who is alone entrusted

with the development and progress of your earth and its humanity, which he is to lead to perfection.

Jesus is never called God. Not only is it impossible to quote any of his words which would permit of its being said, or even imagined; but, on the contrary, they exclude the divinity which men have ascribed to him.

He said to his disciples, "Verily, verily I say unto you, he who believeth in me shall himself do the works which I do, and greater works than these shall he do, because I go to the Father,"* and if he himself was God, or equal to God, how could man ever succeed in equalling and surpassing the actions of Jesus?

When the rich young man called him "Good Master," he answered, "Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one; that is God" (Matth. xix. 16; Mark x. 17; Luke xviii. 18, 19). Consequently he is not God; otherwise, the attribute of "good" would have belonged to him, who was so supremely good among all men; but his words were an indirect and veiled protest against the divinity that he knew would be afterwards attributed to him.

When the scribe asked what was the first of all the commandments, Jesus replied, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is One Lord; thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy strength; this is the first commandment." The scribe answered and said, "Master, thou hast spoken truly, for there is none other but God, and there is none but he." And Jesus, seeing that he had answered wisely, said, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God" (Mark xii. 28, 29, 32, 34).

By thus quoting Deuteronomy (vi. 4, 5), and sanctioning with his approbation the answer of the Scribe, Jesus proclaimed the God of Israel to be the One, Sole, Eternal God; the Only True God, and that there is none other than he. He thus proscribed beforehand, in the name of the Hebrew Monetheism, the divinity which he foresaw would be attributed to him by men.

When the Jews wished to stone Jesus for saying, "I and

* See the explanation of John xiv. 12.

my Father are One," they said, "We are going to stone thee for blasphemy, because thou, being a man, makest thyself equal to God." Jesus answered, "Is it not written in your law, I have said, Ye are gods:—if then he called them gods unto whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), say ye to him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest, because I said, I am a Son of God?" (John x. 31-36).

When Jesus spoke thus, and quoted Psalm lxxxii. 6, purposely leaving part of his reply obscure, he prepared for the transitional period under the veil of the letter, and also proscribed any idea of his divinity which might be based on his use of the words, "Son of God," which led to his being regarded as a separate portion of God; and his words reassert and confirm what he said to the scribe. The passage in the Psalm (lxxxii. 1 and 6) runs as follows: "God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods. I have said, Ye are Gods, and all of you are children of the Most High."

In quoting this Psalm, Jesus proclaims that he is, like the Jews who accused him of blaspheming, and like all others, the Son of the Most High, the Son of God, the God of the Gods, and thus God, in the sense that all are equally the sons of the Most High. Thus he proscribes all idea of his own divinity beforehand, by condemning the sense in which the Jews understood the words which he had just used, "My Father and I are One," when they pretended that he called himself God. Again, by quoting the Psalm, he proclaims, when the spirit is freed from the letter, that he is the brother of men, being a created spirit, sprung from the same origin, and the Son of the Most High, the Son of God; and like all others, the Son of the God of the gods, who is his Father and God, and the Father and God of all men. Men, to whom the word of the Lord is addressed, are his brethren. He proclaims that the God of Israel is the One Sole Indivisible God and Creator, and by quoting the words of the Psalm, he proclaims himself to be God in the sense that men are Gods, either in the transitory polytheistic view

of the ancient Hebrews, or in spirit and in truth;* for all are Gods, as being sons of the Most High, the sons of God, the God of the Gods ; all creatures and created spirits being equally children of the Uncreated Creator.

When Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene he said, "Go to seek my brethren, and tell them from me, I ascend to my Father and your Father ; to my God and your God " (John xx. 17). And when he appeared to her and the other women, he said, "Go and tell my brethren to go into Galilee, and there shall they see me " (Matth. xxviii. 10).

After the Last Supper, and when he was about to deliver himself into the hands of men, he solemnly proscribed the divinity which would be attributed to him by human interpretations, and confirmed everything which he had already said which would exclude his divinity, by saying, "And this is the eternal life, that they might know thee, the Only True God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent " (John xvii. 3).

It is precisely because the Father is the Only True God that Jesus Christ proclaimed his own inferiority with reference to the Father ; and thus rejected, and condemned beforehand, the divinity which men would attribute to himself.

He said, "My Father is greater than I " (John xiv. 28). If he was God, and an indivisible, though separate portion of God, and equal to him, he would have been as great as his Father, who is at once his Father and God, and the Father and God of men.

He is the Son of the Most High, the Son of God, like men who are his brethren (John x. 36 and Psalm lxxxii. 1 and 6).

He is the Only Son of God (John iii. 18) as regards your planet, in virtue of his purity, spiritual elevation, and power.

He said to James and John, the sons of Zebedee, in the presence of the other disciples, "To sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is reserved by my Father." But if he

* Consult the further explanations given below on John i. 1, 2 ; and x. 31-36.

had been God, and equal to him, it would necessarily have been Jesus Christ, as being one with the Father, who might have placed James and John on his right hand and on his left. It is precisely because Jesus Christ is not God that he proclaims the supremacy of God over every created spirit, however elevated ; and that God only knows when a spirit is pure enough to sit on the right hand or the left of his messenger.

When Jesus was conversing with his disciples about the end of the world, he said, "But of that day and hour, knoweth no man, neither the angels in the heavens, nor the Son, but the Father only" (Matth. xxiv. 36 ; Mark xiii. 32). But if the Son, Jesus Christ, was God, or equal to God, he would have known all that God knew, indivisibly with him.

Jesus said, "My doctrine is not my doctrine, but the doctrine of him that sent me. . . . I speak only in the world that which I have learned, I speak only what my Father has taught me" (John vii. 46 ; viii. 26, 28). But if Jesus Christ had been God, or equal to God, the doctrine of him that sent him, and who was indissolubly one with him, would have been his own. He would have had nothing to learn from God, who was the same as himself, nor could he have been taught anything by him that sent him ; for he would have known everything from all eternity, equally with God. It is precisely because Jesus Christ is not God, but the brother of men, being a created spirit, and thus the son of his Father and their Father, his God and their God, that he proclaimed his inferiority to God by saying, "My Father who sent me is he who has instructed me beforehand what I should say, and how I shall speak" (John xii. 49). "I know that my commandment is eternal life ; and what I say unto you, I say as My Father has commanded me."

The words, "My Father and I are one" (John x. 30), are purely figurative. They have been taken literally, and materialized ; and as they have been isolated from the passages we have just quoted, or are about to quote, they

have served as a text for the human interpretations which have attributed divinity to Christ. The Jews understood these words literally and materially, and they based an accusation of blasphemy upon them, for they understood Jesus to mean that he was God, or that he attributed divinity to himself. But the reply that he made to the Jews, though purposely obscure and veiled, having regard to the transitional period which was to follow, when read in connection with Psalm lxxxii. 1 and 6, and interpreted in spirit and in truth, proscribed and rejected beforehand the divinity which was to be attributed to him by the false interpretations of men who have understood the words, "Son of God," and "My Father," literally.

The words, "My Father and I are one," are figurative, and are used to express the unity of thought already existing between God and Christ, which would afterwards exist between the disciples and the other men of your planet. This was soon to be established between the disciples and the Comforter, the Holy Spirit; that is, with the superior spirits who were about to descend to inspire and direct them in the accomplishment of their earthly mission. The union between the disciples and Jesus was to be accomplished by the intervention of these superior spirits; and this shows conclusively the connection of these words of Jesus with others (John xiv. 16, 17, 20; xvii. 1-3, 11, 20-23), which positively exclude the divinity which men have attributed to him.

Here read the following passages, which are explained in their place. (You know why it was necessary for Jesus to veil his words, in speaking of his own nature and origin, in view of the transitional period to follow.)

Matthew xxii. 41-45; Mark xii. 35-37; Luke xx. 41-44; John xvii. 1-5, 20-24; viii. 23, 25, 46; iii. 13; xiv. 16-20.

John the Baptist contrasted those who undergo human incarnation, and Jesus who did not suffer it, in order to proclaim the supremacy of Jesus as the ruler and protector of your planet (John i. 31-35). He was inspired by the

superior spirits who aided him in his mission, when he spoke thus to his disciples, who were disputing with the Jews. The words of John the Baptist and of Jesus, though purposely veiled by the letter, demonstrate the spiritual position of Jesus with reference to God, your earth, and its humanity, as the formative, protecting and ruling Spirit of your planet, possessed of all power, as the representative of God both in heaven and earth, over all the errant and incarnate spirits of the planet.

When the Jews took the words of Jesus literally, and not according to the Spirit, and accused him of making himself equal with God, he said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of himself but what he seeth the Father do, for all things that the Father doeth, the Son doeth likewise, for the Father loveth the Son, and showeth him everything that he doeth, and will show him greater works than these, that you may marvel."

Jesus thus protested against the accusation of making himself equal to God, and proclaimed his own personality as distinct from that of the Father, and inferior to him, and exerting no creative power, which belongs to God alone, but doing everything as his minister, and as inspired by him; for God shows him, and he thus learns, and acts as he is inspired to act; and God will show him, and thus teach him to perform, still greater works.

When calling God his Father, and speaking of himself as his Son, he addressed God, saying, "Thou hast given him power over all men, that he may give eternal life to all those whom thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John xvii. 1-3).

He said to his disciples, "My Father hath put all things into my hands" (Matth. xi. 27). He thus proclaims, in spirit and in truth, that God is One Alone, and Indivisible, and therefore that he, the Son, is not God, but a spirit created by God.

The following passages spoken by Jesus on different occasions, contain the same idea: Matth. xxviii. 18; John

xiii. 13 ; xiv. 6 ; xviii. 14. The words of Jesus, though always veiled, constantly exhibit him in direct communion with the Father, and alone entrusted with the development and progress of your planet.

Here read John v. 11, 18, 51 ; vi. 33 ; viii. 42 ; xii. 46. After saying (Matth. xi. 27), "My Father has put all things into my hands," he adds, "And no man knoweth the Son, but the Father, and no man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him." Jesus says also, "And this is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." He thus shows that God would make known "who is the Son," by the spiritual revelation, and that this knowledge could not be attained by men except in this manner. Again he shows that Jesus alone can give men the full knowledge of God ; that is, show them the unveiled truth, and lead them to perfection (read John xvii. 1-3, 11, 20-24, 26), all which passages are explained below, in their proper places.

Let us now consider the words spoken by the Apostle Paul with reference to the spiritual nature and origin of Jesus, and the nature of the body which he assumed for his earthly mission ; though all these things were veiled from Paul, as well as from the other Apostles by the letter of the Hebrew and angelic revelations, and by the letter of the words of Jesus. The words of Paul were designed to be useful during the transitional period of the Christian era, and to lay the foundations of the future revelation of the Spirit of Truth, when all which had been hidden under the veil of the letter should be explained. It was necessary for the earthly mission of Paul that he should be ignorant of the nature and origin of Jesus ; for men are always given what they are able to bear, and it was left for the promised revelation to reveal what was hidden, when men had become able to receive it. Paul, like the other disciples and the multitude, regarded Jesus as an exceptional being, whom human intelligence could not comprehend ; for, under the veil of the letter, and the influence of mystery and miracle, Jesus

was regarded as possessed of both a human and divine nature and origin.

The letter of the various revelations prepared everything needful for the progress of the human spirit, and as everything preparatory must contain the elements of future successive and progressive revelations, Jesus was the Son of David.

The Apostle Paul attributes the following human origin and nature to Jesus: he is sprung, according to the flesh, from the Patriarchs, the fathers of the Israelites (Rom. ix. 3-5), and thus proceeds from your humanity. He was a man subject to death for you; he died for the sins of men, and rose again (1 Cor. xv. 3-10; Rom. viii. 34). "What is man, that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou lookest upon him? Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels; thou hast crowned him with glory and honour, through the suffering of death, that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, through whom and by whom all things exist, in leading many sons to glory, to perfect the leader of their salvation by suffering"* (Heb. ii. 6, 7, 9, 10). "For verily he did not attain to the angels, but he attained to the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour those who are tempted. . . . Behold I, and the children whom God hath given me. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also in like manner took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him who hath the power of death; that is, the devil." (Heb. ii. 16-18, 13, 14.)

These words were taken for realities then, but were transitory, and preparatory to the advent of the Spirit. They have now led you to the new era when the Spirit of

* He who was God himself, or equal to him, needed to be perfected by being made for a time lower than the angels!

Truth has come to free the spirit from the letter in the Hebrew and Messianic Revelations, as well as in the records of the earthly missions of Jesus and the Apostles.

On account of the letter of the previous revelations, and the pure life, words, miracles, and Ascension of Jesus, Jesus came to be regarded as a mysterious being, and his origin and nature were looked upon as extra-human, but mysterious and veiled. Although the Apostle Paul asserted the human nature and origin of Jesus, according to the letter of the Hebrew Revelation, he likewise affirmed his origin and nature to be extra-human, and independent of any human origin, either as the son of Mary and Joseph, or as the son of the Virgin Mary alone; and implies the simply apparent nature of the miraculous birth of Jesus, though it was regarded as real by men. Paul thus asserts the extra-human nature and origin of Jesus, in accordance with the letter of the Hebrew Revelation, for the infinite wisdom and foresight of God provides daily bread for the men of every age, according to their faculties and necessities, and leads them on by successive and progressive revelations, as they are able to receive them, in the ways of light and truth.

It was God who formed the body of Jesus. The Son of God, entering into the world, says, "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire, but thou hast prepared me a body" (Heb. x. 5). And while saying that God formed a body for Jesus, Paul asserts him to be without father, mother or genealogy, like Melchisedec. "For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, Priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; To whom Abraham also gave a tenth part of all, first indeed being interpreted King of Righteousness, and then also King of Salem, which is King of Peace; without father, mother or genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like unto the Son of God, abideth a priest continually" (Heb. vii. 1-3.)

These words are veiled by the letter; but Paul asserts that Jesus appeared and accomplished his mission on earth clothed with a body which sprang from no human origin,

but which was formed by God. That is, it was formed according to immutable laws established from all eternity, but different from those which govern the formation of the body of man upon your planet.

Paul likewise asserts, under the veil of the letter, that the body of Jesus, which constituted his life to human eyes, but which was different to the body of the men of your planet, was not liable to human death, like yours, so that the death of Jesus, though real to human eyes, was simply apparent, like the human birth of Jesus. According to the spiritual meaning hidden under the letter, this Melchisedec who met Abraham, and who was without father, mother or genealogy, and was thus like Jesus, was a spiritual appearance, though visible and tangible. Hence the appearance and life of Jesus on earth was a spirit-manifestation, a visible and tangible apparition, or simply visible, according to the necessities and circumstances of his mission.

After saying that Jesus is a high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec (Heb. vi. 20; vii. 17), Paul adds that he is not established by the law of eternal succession, but by the power of his immortal life, which none could take from him; because, as he says, Jesus Christ is without father, mother, or genealogy, but God, who requires neither sacrifice nor oblation, has formed him a body. These expressions of Paul are an explicit consequence and application of the words of Jesus relative to the body which formed his apparent life, and which was the instrument and means of his earthly mission, and of all the events attending it." "I lay down my life to take it up again; no man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again; this is the commandment which I have received of my Father." Paul adds that this body is the image of the substance of God, and likewise affirms, under the veil of the letter, that the appearance of Jesus upon earth was effected with a tangible fluidic body, similar to that of the men of your planet, but of a different nature. He thus correlated the finite with the infinite; the creature with the

Uncreated Creator, as the image of the substance of that God who is essentially Spirit, Intelligence, Thought and Fluid. The Universal Fluid flows from God as the instrument and means by which he executes all creations, both in the spiritual, material, and fluidic order, and rules over all which derives its origin from him.

Jesus is the reflection of the glory of God (Heb. i. 3). All flesh is not the same flesh—there are earthly bodies and bodies terrestrial: the first man is of the earth, earthly; the first man, Adam, was made a living soul;* the second man is the Lord from heaven; the last Adam was made a life-giving spirit (1 Cor. xv. 39, 40, 47, 45).

All the words of the Apostle Paul respecting the nature of the body of Jesus, were written for the future, and were not intended to be understood until the time when the New Revelation should explain them as natural phenomena taking place in accordance with the laws of nature.

Paul likewise asserts, also under the veil of the letter, the spiritual nature and origin of Jesus. He is the brother of men, and consequently a created spirit like them, having had the same origin as all the other creatures of God, who all proceed from the same principle, the Father, who is pure Spirit, and a Spirit perfect for ever. "God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ." (Phil. iii.) "For both he that sanctifieth (Jesus Christ), and they who are sanctified (men), are all of one; wherefore he is not ashamed to call them brethren,† saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren; in the midst of the Church will I sing praise unto thee." (Heb. ii. 11, 12.) "He is holy, harmless, and undefiled, separate from sinners, and higher than the heavens" (which the Hebrews regarded as an integral part of the earth). "Who is perfected for ever." (Heb. vii. 26, 28.)

* The words contrasted in the Greek respectively denote the animal life and the immortal soul, and can hardly be rendered with precision in English.—TRANSL.

† The words quoted by Paul from Psalm xxii. 22, ought not to be isolated from those of Psalm lxxxii. 1 and 6, and when interpreted spiritually they attribute a common and divine origin to all created spirits, as springing from the same principle.

Paul likewise asserts, the indivisible unity of the Father as the Only True God, and proclaims the spiritual position of Jesus as the constructor, protector, and ruler of the earth, entrusted with the development and progress of men, whom he is to lead to perfection; when, to use the figurative expression, God will be All in All.

"One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." (Eph. iv. 6.) "Who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of those who rule, and the Lord of those who lord, who alone possesses immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man hath seen, nor can see; to whom be age-lasting honour and power" (1 Tim. vi. 15, 16). "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him." (Eph. i. 17.) "For of him and through him and to him are all things." (Rom. xi. 36.) "For in him we live and move, and exist." (Acts xvii. 28.) "And that there is no other God but the One. For though there be that are called gods, both in heaven and on earth, as there are many gods, and many lords; but to us One God the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him." (1 Cor. viii. 4-6.) "Christ, who is the Head." (Eph. iv. 15.) "The head of every man is Christ, and the head of Christ is God." (1 Cor. xi. 3.) "For he must reign till he shall have put all enemies under his feet. Death is the last enemy that shall be destroyed. For he hath put all things under his feet; but when he said all things are put under him, it is obvious that he is excepted who did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then also shall the Son himself be subject unto him that did put all things under him, that God may be all in all." (1 Cor. xv. 25-28.)

These were words which were only to attract attention at a future period when they were to be explained by the New Revelation. But you know the object and necessity of the transitional period which was to be accomplished during the Christian era, under the influence of the letter,

and of mystery and miracle, that men might be led on to the new era of the advent of the Spirit which giveth life. With this object, the Apostle Paul spoke the following words under the guidance of inspiration, which were intended to be taken literally, according to the Hebrew revelation.

“Jesus Christ, the Son of God.” (2 Cor. i. 19.) “The fathers, of whom Christ came, according to the flesh ; who is above all ; God be blessed in the ages.” (Rom. ix. 5.) (Here read Heb. ch. i., in which Paul quotes from Ps. ii. 7 ; xcvi. 7 ; cii. 4 ; xlv. 6-7 ; ci. 25 ; cix. 1 ; 2 Kings xii. 14.)

When these words of Paul are explained spiritually, they should be read in connection with the passages quoted, with Ps. lxxxii. 1, 6, and with the words of Christ. These passages should not be isolated, and made to contradict each other according to the letter, but should all be brought together, harmonized, and explained in spirit and in truth. Paul's words always place Jesus before us as the Son of God ; the Son of the Most High, according to the angel's words to Mary ; the Son, like all others, of the One only eternal God, and the brother of men, sprung from the same origin as theirs ; a spirit of perfect and immaculate purity, the son of the God of the gods, in which sense he may be called your “God,” the Founder, Protector, and Ruler of the earth ; your Only Lord, who is above all. He is superior not only to men, but to all the angels or spirits who are the ambassadors or ministers of God around Jesus, and who fulfil his missions, but who are inferior in hierarchical order, and in universal knowledge.

These words of Paul were addressed to the Hebrews, who believed that there existed but one world, the earth. To them the earth was the only creation of God, and the heavens or the firmament were a necessary and integral portion of it, the vault of the earth. The heavenly bodies, the sun, moon, and stars, were luminaries created and fixed in this vault for the earth alone, in order to divide day from night, to mark the times and seasons, and to enlighten your world. The sun was made to shine by day, the moon to shine by night ; and the stars were made to shine over your

world, and to separate day from night, and light from darkness. (Gen. i.)

It was needful that the language of the Hebrew Revelation should be appropriated to these ideas, or it would not have been understood or listened to ; and the Apostle Paul's words, extracted from the Psalms, should be read and interpreted in a similar sense.

God made Jesus the "heir of all things," as the founder, protector, and ruler of the world ; and thus created "the ages" by him. Jesus made the earth, and as the Hebrews supposed, the heavens, as a necessary and integral portion of the earth.

"And, again, when he bringeth in the firstborn to the world, he saith, 'And let all the angels of God do obeisance to him.'" (Heb. i. 6.) When God appointed Jesus the ruler of the world, he placed the angels or spirits who were appointed to assist in the formation of the world, and its development and progress, under his direction. They were filled with submission, reverence and love towards him who was, like them, the Son of the Most High, and who, as the direct representative of the will of God, was himself "God above all," and superior to all the angels or spirits whom God sent to exercise their ministry, under the direction of Jesus, towards those who should be heirs of salvation ; that is, towards all sincere and earnest men.

"Jesus is seated in the highest heaven, on the right hand of the Majesty on high." He occupies the first rank, and the place of honour, near God, as regards your earth.

"He is holy, innocent, and undefiled, and perfect for ever." That is, he is a pure spirit, having risen to perfection and holiness without ever having fallen ; and having been appointed by God the ruler of your earth, he is truly (in comparison with the angels or spirits who work under his directions) the only Son of the Father by his purity and perfection ; the head of all. It is thus that God is "his Father," and he is "his Son ;" and that God, to whom there is neither past, present, nor future, but to whom all is instantaneously present through all eternity, has "begotten "

him "this day;" for he is the Son of the Most High, and the brother of men. God created him as a spirit, according to the immutable laws which he has established from all eternity, and which govern the creation of every spiritual essence. He "begot" him for his appearance on your earth, by forming him a body apart from your humanity, according to the laws which govern the formation of such bodies in the superior worlds, but appropriated to the surrounding fluids of your planet which serve for the formation of your being; and thus his body was similar to that of the inhabitants of the earth, though not of the same nature. Thus he was raised above the angels, having received a more excellent name than they, and was anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows.

"He has loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; his throne will be everlasting, and the sceptre of his rule shall be a sceptre of justice" for your planet, until he has raised it to the regions of pure fluids, when it will no longer be accessible or habitable to any but pure spirits; and afterwards for all the other planets which he will be appointed to protect and govern according to the superior missions with which he will be entrusted by God in space and eternity.

God made him sit on his right hand, "until he shall have made his enemies his footstool;" until all your vices, and moral, physical and intellectual imperfections shall have been destroyed; and until the spirits inhabiting or surrounding your earth shall have arrived at moral human perfection, and taken rank among the pure spirits. When that period arrives, the mission of Jesus as your protector and ruler will have ceased; and "then shall the Son himself be subject to God," to receive a new mission.

The heavens and the earth shall perish, but Jesus will remain. They shall all wax old like a garment, and Jesus shall change them like a vesture, and they shall be changed; but Jesus will always remain the same, and his years shall know no end. The earth and all things dependent in it, like all the worlds which have been or will be created, shall perish; for they will be purified and transformed; but

Jesus, who is perfect for ever, a pure spirit who has attained to the eternal life of the spirit, will always remain the same in his perfect purity.

When Paul spoke of Jesus, as "God above all," and also said that he was sprung from the fathers, according to the flesh, he did not intend to attribute divinity to him, nor to exalt him above the Father who is the only true God; or to represent him as participating in the divinity of the Father; or even as equal to God; for Paul also says, "To us there is but one God, the Father." The figurative expressions, "God above all," and "God, even thy God," were designed to express the idea that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, like all men, and all created spirits, and is their brother. But he is God, as the Son of the One Eternal God; Lord above all, as regards men, and superior to all the incarnate and errant spirits who labour at the development and progress of your planet and its humanity, under his directions. Consequently the words, "God above all," and similar expressions, refer to the power which God has conferred upon Jesus relative to your planet, and to your humanity, over whom he is the only Lord.

We must call your special attention to the words of Paul in 1 Cor. viii. 2, 4-6. They are of the greatest importance at present, for they form part of the foundation and anticipated sanction of the New Revelation. They condemn the ancient polytheism of the past, and the human interpretations of the present and future, which led to the transitory and preparatory ideas of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. They condemn the human doctrines of the divinity of Christ and of the Three Persons, or the Trinity of the Catholics and orthodox Christians. These human doctrines are materialistic and literal interpretations of certain isolated passages in the Hebrew and Messianic Revelations, and in the words of Jesus; and represent Jesus as both man and a divided, though indivisible, portion of God, and equal to him. These human interpretations, combined with the influence of Hebrew ideas respecting the Holy Spirit, and the divinity attributed to Jesus, gave rise to the human

dogma of the Three Persons, which, nevertheless, sought to retain plurality in unity, without observing the Pantheistic character of this Trinity, which could only escape from Pantheism by falling into Tritheism; the plurality of Gods in the unity of God.*

Paul was not content to proclaim the undivided unity of the Father, as being God alone, one and indivisible; but he pursues the subject, and expressly condemns, the ascription of divinity to any but the Father (1 Cor. viii. 6). The words, "there are those who are called gods, both in heaven and on earth," refer to the divinity which human doctrines would attribute to Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine of the Three Persons, which united three distinct and impersonal Gods in one only. Paul alluded to the various contradictory expressions in the letter, that they might be useful for the transitional period which was to follow, and for the foundation of the future revelation of the Spirit, which was to be sanctioned beforehand by the labours of the Apostles, as well as by the earthly mission of Jesus. Paul speaks of those who are called gods "either on earth," by men, "or in heaven;" in space, by little-advanced spirits in the errant state; for when spirits return to the spiritual or fluidic state, they take with them their ideas and prejudices, which they retain for a longer or shorter time. Thus they retain their ideas respecting the divinity which men attribute to Jesus Christ, and respecting the Son and the Holy Spirit; whom they regard and worship as God himself.† Thus Jesus and the Holy Spirit are called Gods both in heaven and on earth.

There are also those who were and still are called gods, in heaven; that is in space. We speak of great spirits who are called gods, either by mistake, by ignorant spirits imbued with polytheistic ideas; or figuratively, according to the spiritual elevation of those who employ the term.

The meaning of Paul's words (1 Cor. viii. 2, 4 and 5),

* Compare vol. i. p. 158.

† Swedenborg, although strongly insisting on the deity of Christ, admits that the inhabitants of inferior worlds are permitted to worship the angel (or the society of angels) appointed to rule over them. "Earths in the Universe," § 130.—TRANS.

which were intended for future generations, is as follows, when the spirit is freed from the letter :—

“ We know that all the false gods of the ancient polytheism are nothing in the world : and that there is no other God but God alone, for although there are those who are called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (the Son and the Holy Spirit), as there be many gods and many lords, nevertheless, to us there is but one God the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him : and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him :” for he is the founder, protector and ruler of the earth, who is alone entrusted with our development and progress, and is alone appointed to lead us to perfection. He is our only Lord, relatively to us and to our world, for he is our only teacher and master ; our King, and the first minister of God. At the same time, Jesus Christ is the brother of men, like all creatures and spiritual essences, and sprung from the same origin : the Son of the Most High ; and God himself, as being the Son of God, the Uncreated Creator.

Thus the night which surrounds you in consequence of the darkness of the letters and of human interpretations, disappears before the dawning light of the Spirit. In truth, there is no other God but God alone, the Father, who is supremely happy, who alone is powerful, the King of kings, the Lord of lords, who alone possesses immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, and whom no man hath seen or can see.

Thus, the Son is not God ; but he is your only Lord, relatively to your planet and its humanity ; but he is also your brother.

The Holy Spirit is not God, for this figurative expression denotes the sacred phalanx of the pure, superior and good spirits, who receive inspiration either immediately or mediately, and who are the servants, ministers and agents of God in the order of the hierarchy and of their spiritual elevation. They are the agents of his providence, who accomplish his wishes and carry out his arrangements for progress in universal life and harmony ; and they are his special ministers to you, relatively to your earth. They bring you his inspirations

and providence, and thus God descends to you, by the Holy Spirit, through their missions.

I myself, John the Evangelist, when incarnate, personally shared the human opinions of the other disciples and the multitude respecting the divinity of Jesus Christ. But in what I write as an Apostle and Evangelist, I was, like others, the instrument of the will of the Lord, under the inspiration (though unconsciously to myself) of the superior spirits who aided and guided me in the accomplishment of my mission. The Gospel which I wrote at the time appointed, within the limits marked out by medianimic influence, was intended, like the earthly missions of Jesus and Paul, to aid in the work of transition, and to lay the foundations, and from the anticipated sanction of the Spirit of Truth. When what I write under the veil of the letter is taken as a whole, and explained in accordance with the Spirit which giveth life, it is in luminous harmony with the narratives of the three other Evangelists respecting the earthly mission of Jesus, the spiritual origin and nature of our beloved Master, his spiritual position as regards God and your planet, and the extra-human nature of the body which he assumed for his appearance on the earth.

As the Apostle Paul says, the letter killeth and the Spirit giveth life. I myself, under the inspiration which guided me, recorded the words spoken by Jesus : " It is the Spirit which giveth life ; the flesh profiteth nothing ; the words which I speak unto you are spirit and life."

When I wrote "The Word was God," I did not know the exact sense and meaning attached to the expression by inspiration. Thus I wrote words under inspiration, like the Apostle Paul, which, when taken literally, bear opposite and contradictory meanings ; but which, when understood and explained in spirit and in truth, then, and then only, stand forth in luminous harmony. Therefore despise the letter, for although I wrote that "The Word was God," and that men had seen the Word, and that he had dwelt among them, I also wrote, "No man has ever seen God."

Under the influence of inspiration, everything is linked

together in the missions of the Apostles, that the transitional period under the reign of the letter, and the influence of mystery and miracle, should take its course under the combined influences of the revelation of the angel, and the earthly mission of Jesus. Besides this, it was designed to prepare for, and lay the foundations of, the future revelation of the Spirit of Truth, when men were able and ready to receive it, when the Spirit should be freed from the letter, and when the apparently miraculous was explained according to the immutable laws of nature. What has been was to be, and has taken place as the condition and mode of human progress; and what is to be must now be accomplished.

(Verse 1.) "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

Every spiritual essence proceeds from God, the Creative Spirit. Thus, the Word, as Jesus is called, was with God, like every other spirit, from all eternity. He was God in the sense that all created spirits are Gods, and all Sons of the Most High, as possessed of a common divine origin, as regards their spiritual essence. But the distinction which places Jesus apart as possessed of an exceptional origin, is due to his never having fallen, nor alienated himself from this essence, having preserved the purity which was the type of his divine origin.

The word "Logos" denotes the Cause, or the Being. The Cause refers to the act which drew your planet from chaos; that is, from the mass of fluids which God had prepared to form the materials of your globe, and which contained the spiritual essences destined to become its living inhabitants, and the elements of which your planet is composed. "The Being" refers to the personality of Jesus (always distinct from that of God, the One Indivisible Creator), the direct instrument of God, who thus upholds everything by the power of his Word. This personality was placed before your eyes materially, at the time of the earthly mission of the Master. You know that Jesus is not the *only* Word of God. All the founders of the planets are

spirits of perfect and immaculate purity, who have preserved their original purity, and have attained to sidereal perfection without ever having fallen; and all these, like Jesus, are "Words of God."

You may also apply the term Words of God (no longer in the spiritual sense, but in the more general acceptance of the term) to those messengers of God who are purified spirits, able to approach the Fire of Omnipotence. They are the direct messengers of the Omnipotent Lord in the missions which they accomplish under the direction of the spirits who are the founders, rulers, and protectors of the planets. Refer to what has already been told you (vol. i. pp. 138-141, § 60) respecting the rulers of the planets, and remember that no one can or ought to try to penetrate the future. Content yourselves with fixing your attention on that which is revealed to you.

The Word was with God, and he was God in the sense that he possessed in himself the divine spark which had formed him, without ever having lost his original purity. You should despise the letter, and we cannot too often remind you that Paul and John assert that no man has ever seen nor can see God. But men have seen Jesus Christ, and he has dwelt among them; and if, as men suppose, Jesus was a separate, though indivisible portion of God, and equal to him, he would be as great as God. But Jesus said, "My Father is greater than I;" and when he quoted Psalm lxxxii. 1-6, in answer to the Jews who were about to stone him, because they accused him of making himself equal to God, he declared himself to be a spirit created by the One, Sole, Eternal God, and consequently the brother of men; and a creature, like them, of the One, Omnipotent Creator, who alone is God.

(Verses 2 & 3.) "He was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made which was made."

The words "in the beginning" relate here to the creation of your planet. God creates the universes, and consequently the materials which compose them. But the pure

spirits, the protectors of the planets, gather these materials together to form the worlds in which you dwell. God is the Creator, and the Messiahs are his first ministers. Thus, Jesus was with God at the time of the creation of your planet, for he acted under the inspiration and by the will of the Father ; and thus all things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made. Everything needful for the formation of your globe was formed under his directions by the spirits who aided him in his work, and was thus made by him.

You must not regard Jesus as a creative Power, for if you assign such power to him, you will multiply your gods. But you must look upon Jesus, like all those entrusted with similar missions, as only a minister. This is the position occupied by these spirits in the eternal kingdom of the Omnipotent Lord, without whose will they can do nothing. This is the reason that God, who is One, Alone, and Indivisible, permits you to render to his Messiah the homage which is due to him.

(Verse 4.) "In him was life, and the life was the light of men."

He had power to form your world, which is the centre of life; and it was given to him to lead and enlighten the human and spiritual existences which he was to aid in developing. The mission of Jesus was not limited to guiding your earthly bodies ; but it extends more especially to your spirits ; and we all remain under his benignant rule, until our own lights are sufficient for us. It is he who enlightens us ; and he is our beacon and our refuge.

(Verse 5.) "And the light shineth in the darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not."

This alludes to the ignorance which held men in bondage, and hindered them from understanding the ways of salvation in God. It alludes to all the efforts made to enable men to understand their destiny more readily, and to open their eyes to the light. These words refer chiefly to the earthly mission of Jesus, but you may apply them generally

to all attempts at reform ; for the revelation of God is permanent and progressive.

(Verses 6 & 7.) "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe."

These words are explained by the mission of John. Human spirits needed to be prepared for the event which was to change the moral face of the world. You are told, "that all might believe through him." This is not yet the case, but is not the mission of John continued in the Gospels, in the sense that whoever hears or reads them, finds them to contain the preparatory mission of John ; and does not the Forerunner always call men to repentance?

But the mission of John is not yet finished. Did not Jesus say, "He has come already"? And he must come again ; and his mighty hand must again open the door through which shall pass the Spirit of Truth ; Jesus as the completion and sanction of the Truth.

(Verse 8.) "He was not that Light, but he came to bear witness to that Light."

We tell you the same to-day. When he shall again descend among men, he himself will not be the Truth, but will bear witness to the Truth.

(Verse 9.) "That was the true Light, which enlighteneth every man who cometh into the world."

This alludes to the mission of Jesus, and to the empire which he exerts over your planet. Is not the protector and organiser of your planet he who watches more especially over the development of all things, and especially over your intelligence? Is he not the intelligent and devoted Governor who selects enlightened professors fitted to teach every class of the children whom the Great Father has entrusted to his care?

(Verse 10.) "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not."

This means, He existed before the world, and men were not at first able to understand either the task which was

assigned to him, or the benefits which they would derive from it. They did not know him, for they had not seen him ; and material spirits require something which touches and impinges upon matter.

The expression, "knew him not," alludes to the disposition of the minds of men before his earthly mission, and even afterwards. Have men known him since he dwelt among you? and have those who have professed to believe in him, followed in his steps? Even to-day, how many are there among you who can say, "I know Jesus?"

(Verse 11.) "He came unto his own, and his own received him not."

Those do not receive Jesus who do not keep his commandments.

(Verses 12 & 13.) "But to as many as received him, he gave power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name, Who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

Those who obey his commands are the children of God. But do you suppose that men believe in his name when they are false to his teachings? He who believes in his name, walks in his ways, because he trusts in his promises; and he who walks in his paths without turning aside, takes up his cross, forgives his enemies, and empties the cup of suffering without answering those who have poured it out for him, and thus becomes a child of God.

Those who have power to become the children of God are those who follow the steps of Jesus, whether he walks along the smiling banks of the Jordan ; or whether he hangs on the cross. But these are not born of blood, nor held in the bonds of the flesh. What is that which is able to raise itself, to understand, and to perfect itself? Is it your body, or your spirit? Is your spirit born of the flesh or the spirit? Has it a material or a spiritual origin? Its origin is spiritual, and the more it purifies itself, the higher it rises, and the more it slackens the bonds which chain it to matter.

Verses 12 and 13 may be applied to all who have received

Jesus, not only during and after his earthly mission, but before, and without knowing him, but who have practised the love of God and the neighbour, which the Ruler of your planet has proclaimed to include all the Law and the Prophets. Those who thus practise justice, love and charity, with gentleness, humility, and disinterestedness, in the sincerity of their hearts—these are and have been the children of God.*

(Verse 14.) "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

The spirit assumed a body visible to human eyes, and men beheld his actions and were able to appreciate them, and were thus led to understand that no creature like themselves could follow his steps without failing; and they were obliged to confess that he who could perform such actions must come from God. Jesus assumed a relatively material envelope; a real, but relatively fleshly body, for, as Paul says (1 Cor. xv. 39-41, 44, 45, 47), speaking words intended for the future, and the exact sense of which he did not understand, "All flesh is not the same flesh." Even as, "all flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds," so also is it with your flesh, and that of the inhabitants of higher worlds. Just as there are "bodies terrestrial," so also are there "bodies celestial." Just as the terrestrial man possesses an animal body, subject to corruption, and constructed according to the natural laws of

* Justin Martyr, whom the Roman Church numbers among her saints, expresses himself thus in his Second Apology for the Christians: "All those who have lived in a manner conformable to reason, and to the Word, are Christians, although not attached to any particular religion. Such men, among the Greeks, were Socrates and Heraclitus, and among the barbarians, Abraham, Ananias, Azarias, Misael, Elias, and many others whose names and actions would take too long to repeat. Similarly, those among the ancients who lived before Jesus Christ, and did not live according to reason and to the Word, have been the "enemies" of Jesus Christ, and have persecuted those who lived a good life in accordance with reason and the Word. But those who have lived, and are still living now, according to reason and the Word are Christians; they are above all fear, and are not troubled at anything."

your planet; and a spiritual body, which you call the perispirit, which is incorruptible, and which is the fluidic organ of the soul or spirit; so also the celestial man possesses a celestial body, not subject to corruption, fluidic in its nature, and formed, not by the combination of matter, but according to the natural laws which regulate higher worlds; and, as already explained (vol. i. p. 23), by fluidic attraction, which effects the incarnation, or, more correctly, the incorporation.

Relatively to the essence of Jesus, the perispiritic body which he assumed was flesh. It was real flesh, like that of any other man; that is, it was material to human eyes, in accordance with the idea which men were to form of it. It was from this point of view, which men were to retain until the New Revelation should explain the Master's appearance on your earth, that John wrote (2 John 7), "Many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an anti-Christ."

(Verses 15, 16.) "John bore witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me, for he was before me, and of his fulness have we all received, and grace for grace."

These verses confirm what we have told you about the origin of Christ, and his relations towards your planet.

(Verse 17). "For the Law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."

Moses issued his commands to men, as imperious orders which they were forced to obey. Jesus came to explain the reason of the commandments to men, and brought them grace by showing them the Eternal Father, who is always ready to forgive a repentant sinner. He brought them truth by teaching them the object of their existence on earth, and the reward for which they laboured. The veil which intentionally covered his words, is now raised by the New Revelation, which shows you grace and truth from both points of view.

(Verse 18.) "No man hath seen God at any time ; the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."

You cannot see God without arriving at a degree of purity which only the Messiahs, and the greatest spirits, can approach. But these verses contain a special meaning. There has never been any personal manifestation of God among men. Your degree of elevation, or in other words, your state of moral and intellectual inferiority and material incarnation should make you understand this ; and those disembodied spirits who speak to you of "God," and of the splendour of the regions where he dwells, either speak figuratively to incite your ardour, or in error, having mistaken the great spirits whom they are able to approach, for a vision or personification of the Most High. We say, figuratively ; or, if you prefer it, by hearsay. They understand the splendours which surround the Master of the Universe ; they feel them, and desire to inspire you with the same ardent desire of progress which they themselves feel, in order to penetrate to the Fire of all life.

None can see God, but the spirit who has arrived at the state of perfect purity, and become a pure spirit. To see God is to approach the unveiled Fire of Omnipotence. To see God is to comprehend his essence, and to be able directly, without an intermediary, to receive the action of his will, to transmit it by degrees of purity, down to your level, or even lower. The words "the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father," are figurative expressions specifying the elevation of Jesus in reference to your planet and its humanity, and to the spirits who work at your development and progress under his directions. It is a way of expressing the relations which exist between God and his messenger.

VERSES 19-28.

Testimony of John to himself and to Jesus.

(19) And this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem, to ask him, Who art thou? (20) And he confessed, and denied not, but confessed, I am not the Christ. (21) And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elijah? And he saith, I am not. Art thou the prophet? And he answered, No. (22) Then they said to him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to those who sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? (23) He said, I am a voice of one crying in the desert, Make straight the way of the Lord; as Isaiah the prophet said. (24) And those who were sent were of the Pharisees. (25) And they asked him, and said to him, Why baptisest thou then, if thou art neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the prophet? (26) John answered them, saying, I baptise with water, but there standeth one in the midst of you whom you do not know. (27) He it is who, coming after me, is preferred before me. I am not worthy to unloose the thong of his sandal. (28) These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptising.

§ 2. You have already received explanations on this subject (vol. i. pp. 92, 93, § 53), to which we refer you. The only point which we need stop to consider is the denial of John that he was Elijah. The question proves that the Jews expected to see Elijah live amongst them again, by means of a new incarnation; and John's answer shows that, like most other men, he did not remember his previous incarnations; for this recollection would have led to complications apart from the course which events were intended to follow.

Although most men forget their previous existences, this memory may be awakened in rare and exceptional cases. It has then some object directed, either to the necessities of the present life, or as a trial, by the vague ideas and regrets to which it gives rise, or by the fear which it sometimes inspires; while, in some cases, it is an evident proof, by which the incarnate spirit is predisposed to accept the new doctrine; or for others who hear and believe. In such cases, the recollection is generally produced when spirits are disengaged by sleep, by a spiritual communication received from the guardian angel, and the waking remembrance of which is preserved by his influence. Sometimes this recollection is produced in the waking state, by the inspirations of surrounding spirits.

The baptism of water (v. 26) has also been explained to you in the commentary on the three first Gospels. Immersion was regarded in all ages as a mode of purification ; hence John, while preparing the way for him who was to follow, poured over his disciples the water which typified repentance. But John the Forerunner was to announce the coming of the expected one, who was to baptize with the Spirit, by reversing the empire of matter. John was aware of his own inferiority as compared with him whom he knew to be sent on a superior mission, and who occupied an exceptional position towards the Father.

VERSES 29-34.

The Lamb of God.

(29) On the next day, John seeth Jesus coming to him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world. (30) This is he of whom I said, A man cometh after me who is preferred before me ; for he was before me. (31) And I knew him not, but that he should manifest himself to Israel ; on this account I came baptising in water. (32) And John bore testimony, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and resting upon him. (33) And I knew him not, but he who sent me to baptise with water, the same said to me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, this is he who baptiseth with the Holy Spirit. (34) And I have seen, and borne testimony that this is the Son of God.

§ 3. Jesus was compared to a lamb, in accordance with Hebrew customs. The lamb without blemish was the sacrifice of propitiation, and therefore John announced beforehand, in language appropriate to the intelligence of his hearers, that there would be a solemn sacrifice for the redemption of mankind. Was not the apparent death of Jesus the appointed method, and the lever which was to prepare for human regeneration, to lead you to the advent of the Spirit of Truth? Remember that there is nearly always a material side which can impress the senses of men, co-existing with the spiritual sense which is intended to be interpreted at a later period.

“ He who sent me, said to me ” (v. 34). While John was incarnate, he was imbued with the traditions of the period. He was not only a seeing and inspired, but a hearing

medium ; and he supposed the superior spirits who spoke to him in the name of God, to be God himself* ; for every manifestation which has been supposed to come from God himself, is thus produced among men. You must understand “He who sent me” to refer to the spirits who guided John ; for you are aware that God never communicates directly with men.

While John was incarnate, he had lost the remembrance of what Jesus was ; and Jesus appeared to him, as well as to others, to be a man like himself. But he also looked upon him as the Son of God ; a messenger whose elevation and mission were far superior to his own, but which he could not exactly explain ; for within the scope and limits of his mission, he was the instrument of the superior spirits who were appointed to direct his words and actions, that he should speak and act as his mission required.

You have already received sufficient explanations respecting the other verses (vol. i. pp. 89–103, § § 51–54).

VERSES 35–43.

The First Disciples.

(35) Again the next day John was standing, and two of his disciples. (36) And looking upon Jesus walking, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God. (37) And the two disciples heard him speaking, and they followed Jesus. (38) And Jesus turning round, and seeing them following, saith to them, What seek ye ? (39) And they said to him, Rabbi, which means, when translated, Teacher, where dwellest thou ? (40) He saith to them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and remained with him that day ; and it was about the tenth hour. (41) Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, was one of the two who heard John speak, and followed him. (42) He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith to him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. (43) And Jesus looking upon him, said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona ; thou shalt be called Cephas, which is, being interpreted, a stone.

§ 4. These verses require no explanation. The term Cephas, or stone, alludes to Peter's earthly and spiritual mission, as the corner-stone of the Church of Christ (vol. ii. pp. 106–123, § 184).

* As in the case of Swedenborg, and others.—TRANS.

VERSES 44-52.

Philip and Nathanael.

(44) On the next day, Jesus wished to go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith to him, Follow me. (45) And Philip was from Bethsaida, from the city of Andrew and Peter. (46) Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith to him, We have found him of whom Moses in the Law, and the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. (47) And Nathanael said to him, Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see. (48) Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile. (49) Nathanael saith to him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said to him, Before Philip called thee, while thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee. (50) Nathanael answered and saith to him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel. (51) Jesus answered and said to him, Because I said to thee, I saw thee under the fig-tree, dost thou believe? thou shalt see greater things than these. (52) And he saith to him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter you shall see the heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.

§ 5. Nathanael believed because Jesus saw him when he was concealed from all human eyes. Every incarnate spirit, who is gifted with what is called second sight, requires assistance before he can see. He must be aided by his guides, and placed under the influence of spirit-magnetism, which does not always produce sleep, but which develops the spiritual faculties. Jesus, who was superior to all the spirits around him, and who had never been subjected to human incarnation, saw at a distance, far beyond what human vision could perceive; for he was clothed with a perispritic body, and was always a spirit, though visibly incarnate to the eyes of men. He thus preserved his spiritual sight under this human appearance, and the perfect knowledge of his origin, as well as the independence of his spiritual nature and faculties. His words to Nathanael (v. 52) were figurative. Certainly the exceptional life of Jesus, and the dangers which he seemed to men to escape from miraculously, might have made them believe in the intervention of angels. But their intervention was not protection, but obedience and assistance, for Jesus was always surrounded by superior spirits ready to obey his commands.

CHAP. II.—VERSES 1—11.

Marriage of Cana.

(1) And on the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. (2) And Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the marriage. (3) And when they ran short of wine, the mother of Jesus saith to him, They have no wine. (4) Jesus saith to her, Woman, what is that to thee and me? my hour has not yet come. (5) His mother saith to the servants, Whatever he saith unto you, do it. (6) And there were six stone waterpots according to the purification of the Jews, each containing two or three measures. (7) Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water; and they filled them up to the brim. (8) And he saith to them, Draw out now, and bear to the governor of the feast. And they bore it. (9) And when the governor of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was (but the servants who drew the water knew), the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, (10) And says to him, Every man sets out the good wine first, and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse; but you have kept the good wine till now. (11) Jesus wrought this first beginning of signs in Cana of Galilee, and displayed his glory, and his disciples believed in him.

§ 6. You know enough of magnetic effects in general to understand the nature of this event, which is called a miracle, though perfectly natural. Jesus possessed great power over the fluids; and it was by magnetic agency that the water assumed the flavour of wine, which Jesus conferred upon it; but it was not changed into wine, as was commonly reported by those who were ignorant of the nature of the occurrence. Do not wonder that water which had thus acquired the flavour of wine by magnetism, was actually mistaken for wine; or that those who were ignorant of the cause should have spread the report that a miracle had been wrought, and that water had really been changed into wine. When Jesus was asked to make the change, the feast was drawing to a close, and the day was declining. The waterpots from which the servants drew were stone amphoræ, and the master of the feast tasted the liquid brought to him from one of these, and it was handed round the table in jars of nearly the same shape and material. Are you not aware of the effect produced in men by magnetism, whether human or spiritual?

As regards the magnetic action which Jesus exerted from


a distance upon all the guests, you may reflect that a powerful human magnetizer can act from a very great distance, as it appears to men, upon a suitable subject. Jesus possessed this power in a supreme degree ; and even if his own power was insufficient to act on all the guests (which is a gratuitously false assumption), the superior spirits who surrounded him in incalculable numbers, and who were always ready to obey his will, would have strengthened his magnetic power, and would have exerted their own to prepare the subjects to receive his influence ; but this was needless.

This is what you often see when a medium falls asleep without a magnetiser approaching him. In the present case, when the flavour of wine had been given to the water, spirit-magnetism was exerted on the mind, and this prepared the way for the belief which was intended.

Jesus has been accused of taking part in a drunken feast, and providing the materials ; but those who speak thus forget that the Orientals have always been noted for sobriety. The feast was almost over, and although the guests had drunk much, they had only made a joyous repast, without drunkenness or revelry.

Although I myself, John the Evangelist, spoke of the water as changed into wine, it was because I knew no more of the causes of the event than others, and related the fact as it was currently reported, without seeking for an explanation which it was both useless and undesirable for me to give ; and I was thus left to my own personal impressions, in this as in similar cases.

When Jesus answered Mary, he had not yet worked a "miracle," and reminded her that she should not have asked for one under the circumstances, as the time had not yet come for him to commence his public mission. These words were not spoken to Mary personally, but were intended for those among whom he was seated. For when Mary asked for a miracle by saying to Jesus, "They have no wine," and told the servants to obey his orders, she spoke under unconscious spiritual inspiration. This manifestation



was intended to prepare the way for Jesus by bringing him into notice.

The words addressed by the ruler of the feast to the bridegroom (v. 10) merely allude to the customs of the period.

This event was a preparatory work on the part of Jesus. You may conclude from the ruler's words that Jesus gave the guests a perfect beverage in place of the inferior liquor which they had previously been drinking.

§ 7. It has been said that Jesus, his mother and disciples, were invited to a wedding ; and that wine ran short at the end of the feast. When the guests were drunk, Jesus had the stone jars, each holding two or three large measures, filled with water, which he changed into wine. It has been calculated that these eighteen measures were enough to intoxicate all the little town of Cana. The miracles of Jesus had generally some useful end or moral signification ; but where was the utility or morality of changing water into wine for people who had already drunk too much ? Though Jesus informs us that the Jews called him gluttonous and a wine-bibber (Matth. ii. 19), we know him to have been a pattern of temperance, and if he had performed a miracle, it would have been more natural for him to change wine into water, and thus to have given the intemperate guests a lesson of sobriety.

You will find the answer to this criticism in what we have already said. These observations would not have been made, if it had been known that although Jesus gave the water the flavour of wine by magnetic action, he did not communicate any alcoholic principle to it.

As for the moral question, you have been told that the event was preparatory, and produced a much stronger impression on the minds of men because it appealed to their material senses. It confirmed the faith of the disciples who were present at the wedding, and who were only just beginning to assemble round Jesus (v. 11). There was no miracle, in the sense of a derogation from the laws of nature. It was a natural event, which was supposed to be a miracle from ignorance of the causes which produced it ; and was taken for a real change of water into wine. As for the stone waterpots, Jesus said, "Fill the vessels with water." The servants filled them as full as they could, out of derision, expecting some mystification. But it was only the water which was handed to the ruler, and distributed among the

guests, upon which Jesus conferred the flavour of wine ; for this was all that was necessary. You are not told that the ruler examined the water in the vessels after the feast was over, and the guests had left. It was perceived that the water remained in its natural state, and it was thrown away, and no more was thought about the matter. If this fact had been reported to the crowd, who knew nothing of the cause, it would only have been one more "miracle." The water was first changed to wine, and then the wine was changed back into water. Their ignorance, which led to incredulity on the part of those who had not witnessed the fact, and could not explain the phenomenon, led the guests at Cana to suppose that the water had really been changed into wine. The fact appealed to their material senses, and they could not explain or understand it otherwise than by supposing that it was a miracle.

VERSES 12-25.

Jesus in the Temple.

(12) After this, he went down to Capernaum, he and his mother and his brethren, and his disciples, but they did not remain there many days. (13) And the passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. (14) And he found in the Temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves ; and the money-changers sitting. (15) And he made a scourge of small cords, and drove them all out of the Temple, both the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the money of the money-changers, and upset the tables. (16) And said to those who sold doves, Take these things hence ; make not my Father's house a house of merchandize. (17) And his disciples remembered that it is written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up. (18) Then the Jews answered and said to him, What sign showest thou to us, that thou doest these things ? (19) And Jesus answered and said to them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. (20) Then the Jews said, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou raise it up in three days ? (21) But he said this concerning the temple of his body. (22) Therefore when he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this to them, and they believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus said. (23) And while he was in Jerusalem at the Passover, on the feast-day, many believed in his name, when they saw his signs which he wrought. (24) But Jesus did not trust himself to them, because he knew all. (25) And needed not that any should testify of man, for he knew what was in man.

§ 8. The Evangelists adhered to no chronological order, but confined themselves to recording the events which they

had seen and heard. These verses do not all relate to the same event, but are connected together, so as to give a summary of the events which took place.

In one sense the Gospel of John is linked with the other three, since they mutually complete each other, for although John omits some events of which the others have spoken, he mentions others which they have not recorded.

We have given you full explanations respecting the traders being driven from the Temple at vol ii. pp. 267-272, § 244.

You will observe that the words of Jesus (v. 20) refer to his resurrection; and John speaks (v. 25) of events witnessed by the apostles and disciples, as well as by himself.

Compare these with other words of the Master in which he alludes to his "death;" the disappearance of the body from the sealed tomb; his resurrection; and his disappearance during his public mission whenever he was absent from the gaze of men (John x. 17, 18; viii. 23; vi. 38; iii. 13), and you will then see that the words, "He needed not that any should testify of man, for he knew what was in man," bring out in strong relief the extra-human origin of Jesus, who was always a spirit, and clearly read the thoughts of man, and penetrated their intentions. He suffered real death to human eyes; but his death was simply apparent; and, at the time of his resurrection, he resumed his perispiritic, and apparently human body.

CHAPTER III.—VERSES 1-21.

Interview with Nicodemus.

(1) And there was a man among the Pharisees whose name was Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. (2) This man came to Jesus by night, and said to him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a Teacher come from God, for no man can perform the signs which thou doest, unless God be with him. (3) Jesus answered and said to him, Verily, verily I say unto thee, Unless a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. (4) Nicodemus saith to him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born? (5) Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Unless a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. (6) That which is born of the flesh, is flesh, and that

which is born of the Spirit, is spirit. (7) Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. (8) The Spirit breathes where it will, and you hear the sound of it, but you know not whence it comes or whither it goeth, so is every man who is born of the Spirit. (9) Nicodemus answered and said to him, How can these things be? (10) Jesus answered and said to him, Art thou the teacher of Israel, and knowest not these things? (11) Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen, and you receive not our testimony. (12) If I have told you earthly things, and you believe not, how shall you believe if I tell you heavenly things? (13) And no one hath ascended up into heaven but he who came down from heaven; the Son of Man who is in heaven. (14) And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so also must the Son of Man be lifted up. (15) That every man who believeth in him should not perish, but should have age-lasting life. (16) For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that every man who believeth on him should not perish, but should have age-lasting life. (17) For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. (18) He who believeth in him is not condemned, but he who believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God. (19) And this is the condemnation, that light came into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. (20) For every man that doeth evil hateth the light, and doth not come to the light lest his deeds should be exposed. (21) But he who doeth truth, cometh to the light that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

§ 9. You know that the question of Nicodemus and the answer of Jesus are confirmatory of reincarnation, to which Jesus desired to call the attention of men. You have already perceived it shining through the veil of the letter, in his words and teachings recorded by the first three Evangelists, and which we have already explained. The words of Jesus imply that if man does not recommence his life until he has attained the limit assigned to it, which is perfection, he will not enter into the kingdom of God; that is, into the pure and radiant existence which is the true life of the spirit. We must give you needful explanations respecting each separate idea.

(V. 1-3.) Nicodemus was conscious of the mission of Jesus. So also were the rulers of the synagogue; but their pride and self-interest caused them to act towards Jesus as they had often before acted towards the prophets.

Nicodemus understood the Hebrew interpretations of the prophecies respecting the Messiah to imply that he would be a humble and simple man, who wrought miracles which could only be effected by the hand of God. But his false

shame and fear of being talked about were so strong, that he dared not openly enter the humble dwelling of the carpenter's son. The fear of ridicule barred the way ; and Jesus read his heart, and said, " Man must be born again."

The Master's reply was specially addressed to Nicodemus, and equally applies to all those who are afraid to acknowledge their thoughts and opinions, however honourable or holy they may be. As regards Nicodemus, these words signify, Man must lay aside his worn-out body, composed of prejudices, selfishness, ignorance, and vile passions, to be born again, free, pure, and fitted for progress. He must be innocent in the eyes of God as the new-born child is innocent in its mother's eyes ; he must be pure as the child presented in the Temple is pure ; he must be holy as the child consecrated to God is holy.

Verse 3 is an affirmation of the natural law of rebirth, of reincarnation, and of the necessity of living again, which is the only means of purification and progress for the spirit to attain to perfection, and thus to enter into the kingdom of the heavens. The Master's thought was only to be fully understood by future generations, when the promised spiritual revelation should reveal the principle, object, and consequences of this great law. He who does not cast away the cloak of imposture and iniquity which covers him, to assume the pure white robe of the Levite, will not enter into the kingdom of the heavens ; for none can enter without the wedding garment of the parable.

But it is not enough for the spirit to cast its robe of flesh away before appearing before its Judge. Is it sufficient to lay aside the body, that all the vices and imperfections to which it has ministered may be buried with it ? By no means ; just as the body cannot originate vices and imperfections, but is only a passive instrument moved by the spirit, so the spirit does not lay aside all the burdens which it has brought upon itself. When the spirit assumes a body, it takes with it all the good and evil principles which it carries in itself ; and the body merely aids in their development.

The spirit directs the instrument which he uses ; but it is for him to use it and to direct it rightly. If the spirit leaves the body, the latter is only a mass of corruption, incapable of any movement. If the workman lays aside the instrument which he uses, it falls to the ground and rots. But the Master of the workman requires an account of the work, not from the instrument, but from him who has made use of it. He desires to know what work has been done ; and if it has been done badly, he says to the workman, "You must begin again, but the instrument which you employed is worn out. Here is another ; take it, and try to use it better, for the work must be done, and done perfectly ; find out for yourself what has misled your eye and hand ; cast aside everything which might turn you from your course ; and when you show me that the work is done, you shall receive the reward promised to the diligent labourer."

Say, beloved ones, whether this natural doctrine is not more consolatory and encouraging than the human doctrines taught by the Church ? The Church teaches the doctrine of eternal torments for the guilty spirit, a doctrine equally false and monstrous, but which, nevertheless, has had its use, though it has now run its course, and only gives rise to incredulity. The Church teaches the doctrine of a Purgatory, which is vague, obscure, and false, offering you expiation through its torture, but giving no information of the manner in which the guilty spirit who leaves your earth can obtain the means of reparation and purification which will lead him to that moral and intellectual perfection of purity and knowledge which alone will permit him to enter the kingdom of the heavens.

When the penalty of death is executed on the pilferer as well as the murderer, what does it matter to a man who feels himself condemned already, whether he commits one crime more or less ? He would have no confidence in the compassion of the judges, or in the promises of the guards. If he had failed, he would continue to fail ; you could not expect it to be otherwise.

Is not the idea of reincarnation, and the opportunity of

recommencing a task which has been badly performed, more encouraging to him who has led a reprehensible life, and who sees with anguish the moment of his departure drawing near? If he is void of faith he waits for annihilation to engulf him; or else his recollections of childhood lead him to ask if there is a God; and he beholds a sword raised over his head to strike him, as the only answer.

Is not the thought that an unfinished labour may yet be completed, sweet to the mind of a man who is animated by a great and generous idea, and who dreams of the progress of his brethren and of humanity, and feels great possibilities springing up in his mind, but perceives blind and pitiless death about to remove him from the scene of his labours? Remember that when man looks forward only to an eternal life of contemplation, the death of the body means the paralysis of the soul. When the soul is separated from its envelope, it is no longer a being, but becomes an abstraction which no longer regards the struggles of the past, and the course of progress, and hopes for absolutely nothing beyond in the future, unless, indeed, some inattention to the laws of the Church condemns the poor wandering soul to the torments of purgatory. Is not the doctrine of rebirth, or reincarnation more consoling than this on the approach of death? He who has failed in his work, or in his trials, may say, "I have failed indeed; but my Father, God Almighty, will permit me, in his infinite justice, goodness and mercy, to recommence the task which I have performed so ill. It is true that I must expiate my faults after death in the errant state by moral sufferings proportioned to my misdeeds, aggravated by the remorse arising from a guilty conscience. But when I am repentant and submissive, and ardently desire reparation and progress, I will ask the favour of a new birth, to recommence the task which I have performed badly, and God, my Father, whose mercies are inexhaustible, will grant it me. After I have experienced the moral fire of expiation, I shall recommence my task by means of reincarnation, with the aid of new experiences."

He who has left a task unfinished, which he had under-

taken for the happiness of his brethren and the progress of humanity, may say, "Doubtless I had undertaken great things ; and perhaps humanity might have profited by my labours and genius. It may be, however, that these projects were sullied by some leaven of worldly pride which my provident and tender Father desired to extinguish at its origin. Perhaps the plans which I had formed, and the enterprises which I desired to undertake, required something to bring them to maturity which I was still unable to supply. Then let me go to my indulgent and infallible Master, to study what I am still ignorant of, and to perfect myself in what I know. I shall return stronger and younger in body, and more intelligent and better fitted to finish the task which I had undertaken. Death is welcome, for it will restore my youth, strength, benevolence, and knowledge."

Is not this a sweeter idea than the old doctrine that everything is over at death ?

(V. 4, 5).—Although Nicodemus was an intelligent man desirous of instruction, yet he was imbued with the ideas of his age, as you are with the ideas of your own ; and he was unable to understand the purport of the words of Jesus. He dreaded ridicule and sarcasm ; he was afraid to confess his belief openly, and his failure to take the first step darkened his intelligence. Nevertheless he played with the words, for his conscience made him understand the sense which Jesus put upon them ; and therefore Christ contented himself with reaffirming them (v. 5).

Christ has told you, "The kingdom of God is within you" (Luke xvii. 21). It is in the midst of you, and you know not how to discover it. Man bears within himself the kingdom of God, because he finds the means of attaining it in the exercise of his own faculties. But he can only hope to attain it gradually, from progress to progress, and from ascent to ascent. The kingdom of God is not a circumscribed locality, as men have supposed ; it is not a happy abode into which they can penetrate ; but it is moral human perfection ; it is boundless virtue ; it is the union of souls purified in the furnace, by rebirth, and successive and

progressive lives, which are first expiatory, and finally glorious, until they culminate in sidereal perfection. The plurality of existences is correlated with the plurality of worlds, in their progressive and ascending course.

Every age is addressed in language appropriate to its ideas, its scientific interpretations, and its traditions. Thus Jesus appropriated his language in his answer to Nicodemus (v. 5). According to the scientific interpretations of that age, and especially among the Hebrews, who relied upon the traditions of Genesis (i. 2, 6, 7, 9-11, 20; ii. 1, 4-7), which reflected them, water was generally regarded as the primitive generative principle, the organizer of all things, and as the generative element in both the organic and inorganic kingdoms of nature; the principle and source of the bodies of the living animals which it had produced, and of the body of man. Thus "to be born of water," means to be born anew with a body "and of the Spirit," by the soul coming to animate and to inhabit the body. This was rebirth or reincarnation; a reality, and not an allegory. Such is the true explanation of the words contained in the second answer of Jesus to Nicodemus, which affirmed the first, by the use of expressions, the meaning of which was defined by the sacred book of the Hebrews. Some have understood them in this sense; and have maintained the doctrine of rebirth, though it has not been generally accepted.

I myself, John the Evangelist, understood and applied the word *water* in the sense of the primitive, generative, and organizing principle of the body of man, when I said (1 John v. 8), "And there are three which bear witness on earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three are one."

These words refer to man; the Spirit bears witness to the Spirit, the Father; the water and the blood bear witness to the existence of matter united to spirit; and these three are one, Man.

This is a symbol. The water represents the primitive organizing principle of the body of man; and the blood, as the element of life, is derived from this principle.

It is thus that I, John the Evangelist, said, when speaking of Jesus under spirit-influence, of which I was unconscious in my incarnate state (1 John v. 6) that Jesus is "come of water and blood, not of water alone, but of water and blood." This asserts, in spirit and in truth, that Jesus really dwelt among men; and came not only of water (that is, with a body), but with water and blood (that is, in a living body, inhabited by his spirit); a body altogether similar to that of men, but not of the same nature, as regards "water;" the organic principle, and "blood," that is, the element of life; for all flesh is not the same flesh, and there are bodies celestial and bodies terrestrial.

(V. 6.)—The birth of man does not concern the flesh only, which is matter derived from matter; and it is the spirit alone which animates it. By thus distinguishing between the body and spirit, Jesus desired to bring prominently forward the idea which he had just expressed respecting rebirth by water and by the spirit; by matter united to spirit; by a body, and by a spirit which comes to animate and to inhabit it; just as, to be born again, man assumes a new body which his spirit comes to animate and inhabit by rebirth, and by his reincarnation.

The Church has interpreted birth by water and the spirit to refer simply to the purification of baptism, and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. As the Church admitted and still admits only one world, your earth, and only a single corporeal existence for the spirit, and after the death of man assigns him no destination but the separate and circumscribed localities of an "eternal hell," or purgatory, or "paradise," which is set apart for an eternal life of inaction, it has not admitted the true sense of these verses; that is, the reality of rebirth and reincarnation; and has therefore been obliged to interpret them figuratively.

When the exact words spoken by Jesus are correctly translated, they run as follows: "Verily I say unto you, If a man is not born again of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

The Church says (altering both the words of the Master,

and the original text), "If a man is not born again of water, and of the Holy Spirit."

If you consider this incorrect translation, and the sense attributed to the word *water*, as signifying purification by the baptism of water, you will find that these words, attributed to Jesus, but which are different from what he pronounced, necessarily imply rebirth or reincarnation, as a reality and not an allegory. If the words "born of water and of the Holy Spirit," are understood to refer to the baptism of water they certainly cannot refer to such a baptism as it has pleased the Church to imagine, but only to the baptism of water as practised at the time that Jesus conversed with Nicodemus. You must not suppose that the baptism of water which John administered to his disciples, and which the Church has continued, was a new institution. It was new in form, but not in essence. John's baptism of water was the emblem of a purification from bodily impurities, as preparatory, by repentance, to the purification of the spirit. In the Jewish purification, the newborn infant was brought to the Temple, and washed to be purified. The time only was changed, for John poured the water of baptism on the heads of those who were able to understand the importance of the act; whereas the Jewish purification, like the baptism of the Church, is merely a simulacrum or image, which is employed without the thought or knowledge of those who receive it.

What the Church has added to her baptism of water, is the emblematic sense which she attaches to this baptism; giving it to blot out an original sin, with which the newborn infant (although its soul was created expressly for the body which it has come to inhabit, and would thus be pure, since nothing impure can proceed from the hands of the Creator) was tainted, as coming from "Adam," who had transmitted to it hereditarily a personal fault of his own; and thus made it responsible for the fault of another. But the progress of the human spirit has long ago rejected this doctrine.

We have given you the explanation of what the Church calls "original sin," (vol. i. pp. 108-146, §§ 59, 60), in

speaking of the origin of the spirit ; its fall, its aims, and its destinies, both as regards its original fall, at the time of its human incarnation, and its relapse during reincarnation. The meaning of a new birth by the baptism of water, as taught by the Church, can only be determined by the object of this baptism, employed, either as in the Jewish purification, to purify the body, or as in the baptism of John, which was the emblem of the purification of the flesh by the ablution of the body, as preparatory to the purification of the spirit.

The baptism of water which John administered to his disciples, was the purification of the body by ablution, as a baptism of penitence preparatory to the baptism of the Holy Spirit, that both body and mind might be purified. Thus "to be born of water and of the Spirit" (or of the Holy Spirit), means to purify one's self by the body and the intelligence. The body only received one baptism of water, whether the infant received the Jewish purification in the Temple, or whether baptism was administered by John, or according to the rites of the Church. But in order that the body should be born again of water (that is, that it should be purified and renovated), it is necessary that it should be renewed ; in short, that the spirit should assume a fresh body to receive again this material emblem of purification. Thus, if you regard the question from the standpoint of the incorrect translation of the words of Jesus sanctioned by the Church, you will still find that the new birth is real, and not an allegory.

Thus, the baptism of water applies to the man who is born again, and who receives a fresh body as a child, free from blemishes, which it is his duty to preserve unsoiled. It is the new vessel which has been washed that it may be in a fit state to receive the spirit which is enclosed in it. Let not the spirit misuse it, and sully its purity. The birth of man concerns only the flesh ; and it is this matter only which is purified by the water of baptism, to remind man that the body is nothing in itself, and is unstained by any action of its own. The flesh without the spirit is inert, and

incapable of any action, and consequently of any fault ; and the spirit which animates this perishable matter is alone responsible.

The spirit is born of spirit ; for it proceeds from the supreme Intelligence which governs all things. As spirit has no affinity with matter, it can only be baptized by the Spirit ; enlightened by the intelligence, and aided by the Holy Spirit ; that is, by the good spirits around it, which are to it as an emanation of the Divinity, since they are His chosen instruments.

The Church and its theologians take the words of Jesus to be an allegory, and not a reality. They admit only one terrestrial existence for the spirit, and reject the law of rebirth and reincarnation. Ask them to explain, if they can, without reincarnation, the words which Jesus addressed to his disciples concerning the end of the world, and the things which were about to happen. " Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away until all these things be fulfilled." These words proclaim that some of the generation to whom they were spoken, would be living on earth at the time of the end of the world.*

The Church rejects Reincarnation, and condemns every man as incapable of salvation who has not received her baptism ; and who has not been thus received into the bosom of the Church as her son. She rejects him absolutely, although, being unbaptized, he may have followed every duty and virtue. But Christ, addressing himself to all men without distinction, has declared the love of God and the neighbour to contain all the law and the prophets. The Church rejects such a man simply because he has not received her baptism, especially if he does not desire it, and has abstained from it, regarding it as a useless material action.

This is a human invention, which will not bear examination. How could Christ, the type of goodness, justice, and love (even supposing that only those who are born again of water and of the Spirit, as the Church teaches, are saved), reject all those from the peace of the Lord who are outside the pale of the baptism of water given by the Church ? It is true that the Church admits that those who follow the natural law may be saved. But what is this law, and where are its limits ? The cannibal obeys the natural law ; should

* Compare the explanation given in vol. ii. pp. 336, 337, § 271.

his position, therefore, be equal to that of one of the Fathers of the Church? If he does not attain to the same degree of happiness, why has the absolute Master of the Universe cast the lot of this wretched creature on these wild coasts, so far from the baptismal founts of the Church and the gifts of the "Holy Spirit?" Can the "Holy Spirit" really stoop to such abject creatures? What says the Church?

We will not enter into details regarding the Church, with her prejudices and exigences, but confine ourselves to asking every thinking man, What is most in accordance with the justice of the Lord, and his goodness and love towards all his creatures? Is it the law of the Church, who admits only those whom she hath gathered into her fold, regardless of their faith or virtue, if they have only conformed to her dogmas; or is it the natural law of rebirth, which admits all the creatures of the Lord to equal rights and equal opportunities of success? The Lord only regards actions when they accord with conscience, and disregards good feelings unaccompanied by good actions. He does not separate charity from faith, for whoever believes, loves; and whoever loves sincerely must believe and hope. John the Baptist has told you that hope is the sister of faith, and these are both daughters of charity and love.

We have spoken of the Church and her doctrines only from her own point of view. In truth the Church asserts that faith is wholly confined to the observance of her dogmas. He who conforms to them openly may sin before God; for if he declares himself penitent, absolution will be always ready to open to him the gates of "Paradise;" but if he offends against her dogmas, although she acknowledges that they are a semi-human work, she shows herself stern, and sometimes inexorable.

What is the absolution granted by the priest to the dying man? It is a dogma of human invention, for Jesus never spoke of it; and although the sick man may have neglected to summon a priest to comfort his last moments, does the Church reject the negligent, or ignorant child, and refuse him ecclesiastical burial? If she sometimes passes

over these formal details, is it human reverence which restrains her, or the fear of public opinion? Remember that in all we have said, and even in the very form of our language, we have been speaking solely from the point of view of the Church.

Some have asked why Jesus did not make a clear and precise statement, in answering the question of Nicodemus (verse 4), and have spared Christianity and the Church from the error which has retarded human progress, by denying reincarnation. Jesus might have said, "When a man is old, his spirit must assume another body after death, that he may have a new life; for he must be born again as many times as is necessary for him to become a good spirit, by purifying himself in the crucible of reparation and progress, so that he need return no more to this earth. When he has become a good spirit, and passed through the inferior worlds, he must be born again successively and progressively in worlds higher than yours, and he must undergo this rebirth until he has attained to sidereal perfection, and become a pure spirit."

Those who speak thus either do not know, or else they forget, that the words of Jesus were not intended to bear a positive meaning to all minds, any more than when he said, "In my Father's house are many mansions." If Jesus had thus enlightened Nicodemus, the conversation must have extended to details respecting reincarnation and the plurality and habitability of worlds, which would have been more extended than men were then able to receive and comprehend, and this would have been neither possible nor convenient, having regard to the conditions of human progress.

We have already told you that reincarnation, and the relations between the invisible world and humanity, were to remain veiled from the majority. This was a necessity; for you must understand that the progress of your race has not suffered, any more than the tree suffers from being pruned and cut back in spring, when its development is desired. Trust to the wisdom of the Lord for the progress of your planet, and lend your assistance to the efforts which are now being made to draw you from the trammels of infancy, and to prepare for the period preparatory to your manhood. You must never forget that a child cannot, and ought not to, be treated like a man; but that every age requires the amount of knowledge which it is able to bear.

(V. 7).—Here Jesus repeats his words, to recall Nicodemus to the manner of the rebirth of man by a new incarnation ; the reincarnation of the spirit.'

Those who represent the Church explain verse 7 as follows : "Whoever knows the human heart well, will not be surprised that man needs a new spirit, a new heart, and a new principle of life and action ; and it is this which gives the right of asking for a new spirit on all occasions, and praying that Jesus, the Holy One of the holy, may send his Spirit and inspirations to be the principle of the new life."

And it is in one existence only that the Church expects that man should thus be changed into a new man ; or, to use the expression of the Apostle Paul, the natural man into the spiritual man ; whether he is a Polynesian or African cannibal, or a civilized European ; for the Church cannot, without denying the infinite justice of the Lord, deny to all his creatures equal rights and equal claims to success.

But as she supposes this cannot always happen, she has devised two determinate localities, where she sends the spirit which could not become changed into a new man during its one and only existence, according to the manner in which her dogmas have been infringed upon. These localities are, firstly, an eternal hell ; and secondly, purgatory.

The eternal hell is the kingdom of Satan, who is the actual rival of God in eternity, and is in one sense more powerful than God. Here the guilty spirit is given over eternally to incessant tortures, which some represent as material, and others as moral. It may be the prodigal son, forbidden to enter his father's house, because he has returned too late, although the Great Father always waits for him on the threshold. Nevertheless the Church declares that the treasures of the mercy of God are inexhaustible. It may be the wandering sheep, whom the gentle and benevolent Shepherd can no longer take upon his shoulders to carry to the fold, because he did not find it till too late. The prodigal son cries in vain to God his Father, who has become inaccessible or deaf both to his repentance and to his prayer that he may expiate and repair his faults, and recommence the work which he has done so badly, that he may at length receive the reward promised to the diligent labourer.

Purgatory is a place of temporary and undefined tortures, which is to lead the guilty spirit to Paradise, since, according to the Church, it has not been born again of water and of the Holy Spirit during its bodily life ; that is, provided it has not, during the sole earthly existence which she assigns to it, obtained a new birth, which has changed it into a new man, and fitted it to enter the kingdom of God, which she calls Paradise.

Ought not the Church to bow before the new Revelation, and to understand the words of Jesus as it explains them ? Ought she not to understand that his words imply Reincarnation, which includes hell, purgatory, expiation, reparation and progress, in the successive phases of the spirit, at the close of each existence, and in successive reincarnations, each preceded by a phase of spiritual existence in the errant state, when appropriate moral sufferings lead the guilty spirit to repent, and to desire to repair his errors, and to progress towards good ? Ought not the Church to seek there for the means by which the Omnipotent God requires man to be changed into a new man ?

Ought not the Church to perceive that successive reincarnations form the holy ladder which man must ascend until he has attained the moral human perfection which conducts him to God ?

Certainly: God wills that all his children should be saved,* and that they should all be brought to the knowledge of the truth; the savage of Oceaniæ, as well as the civilised European; the Australian, the Laplander and the Esquimaux, as well as the "Fathers of the Church;" and that they should so fulfil the words of Jesus, "Be ye perfect as your Father in the heavens is perfect," that they should all arrive at the Father's house.

(V. 8.)—Jesus was born of the Spirit; and every man who lives according to his intelligence and not according to his body, may say, like Jesus, that he is born of the Spirit. The body springs from the body; but how few there are to-day, as in the time of Nicodemus, who can say whence the Spirit cometh, and whither it goeth; what is its essence, and at what moment it animates the vase of clay which envelops it! What is the intelligence of man? Is it a palpable and sensible body; and can you define the moment of its presence or of its absence? Do you know whence the Spirit cometh and whither it goeth? Only he who is born of the Spirit can know this. There are but few among you who are able to live by the spirit. Understand, friends, that we are not speaking now of advanced minds, or of your leading men. The profundity of science is in proportion to its character, but alas! most of your scientific men have advanced, but a very little way, and never think of comprehending the mysteries that surround them, even on your earth, in the scale of beings and worlds, and in the presence of space and infinity; and the matter of the body is the substance which they choose for their principal divinity. But we speak of those minds who are simple, not in the ironical sense in which men use the word; nor through ignorance or incapacity; but through humility of heart and mind, and who free themselves from the trammels of the flesh as far as their humanity permits them, and really live the human life, but as if they took no part in it; not, indeed, with reference to any of its animal necessities, but with reference to the necessities of the

* Compare 1 Tim. ii. 3, 4.

mind and intelligence. Only those who understand their divine origin, and strive to draw nearer and nearer to their divine model, know that they are born of the Spirit. They know whence they come and whither they go ; they know that the Spirit breathes where it will, and they hear its voice, and know whence it cometh and whither it goeth.

When we tell you that every man who lives according to his intelligence, and not according to his body, may say, like Jesus, that he is born of the Spirit, you must understand that the intelligence of such a man is illuminated by the torch which the spirits of the Lord raise up to shed its light upon him, to inspire him, or to reveal the truth to him. He alone is born of the Spirit who is prepared to understand the mysteries that we are unveiling to your eyes. But among those who receive light, there still remain many blind, and among those who hear, there are still many deaf. It is not enough to receive the revelation to know whence you come and whither you go ; you must live as those live who are born of the Spirit, in the sense that the spirit rules over matter, and struggles more and more to approach the Divine Model. But how few are yet released from the slavery of matter ! Do not excuse yourselves from fulfilling the necessities of life, or your material obligations, or the laws of society, for you ought to fulfil all the duties needful for your personal and collective progress in the great human family, and should set an example of all virtues, according to the law of love, by practising justice, charity and fraternity. There is nothing in all this which is incompatible with spiritual life. Amid the turmoil of existence, you can turn your eyes towards the beacon which we lift, ever shining, above your heads. You will then rise, without soiling yourselves, above all the basenesses of humanity, and above all the artificial necessities which make you greedy, hard and avaricious ; all the proud ambition which leads you to crush all who are above you, and tread them down that you yourselves may rise ; and all those animal propensities which cause you to rush into all kinds of excesses and crimes. No ; it is not enough to have heard the revelation, and then

to live as if you had not heard it. It is not enough to know whence you come and whither you go, if you wander from your course, which you can then only recover with great difficulty.

(V. 9.)—Nicodemus had a confused idea of rebirth (a term which we designedly employ), but he regarded it as an ancient superstition. He was struck by the words of Jesus and wished for an explanation which would enlighten him; and the reply of Jesus convicted him of ignorance, and reminded him that his words sanctioned a reality; a truth which had been already discussed by the priests, Scribes, and other learned men, and had become known to the masses.

(V. 10.)—These words imply, “You are ignorant of what I tell you of rebirth, and the necessity of being born again, and of a renewed life. But you ought to know these things, for you are a master in Israel, and many others have already taught what I myself tell you.” Jesus referred to his words, “Do not wonder that I said unto you, Ye must be born again,” as a reality which had already been recognized in the past, and not as an allegory containing a new doctrine or idea; nor yet to sanction future human interpretations of the Church concerning a new and purely spiritual birth, through her baptism of water, and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

In the ancient books of the Temple, from whence the Levites drew all their knowledge, rebirth was stated, not as an article of faith, but spoken of as an ordinary fact. The Magi communicated with spirits, as you are aware.* They were mediums, and had some knowledge of reincarnation, but under less developed conditions than those now taught you by the New Revelation. All ancient nations, before the appearance of Jesus on your earth, were acquainted with the law of rebirth; as you will find, if you consult the history of antiquity in Asia and in Europe; for this belief was universal, although at the time of the mission of Jesus, the knowledge of rebirth was mingled with truth and error,

* Comp. vol. i. pp. 68-73, § 43.

and was confined to a small number of learned initiates. Among the masses, too, the idea of reincarnation still prevailed, but it was surrounded with uncertainty and obscurity, as well as with superstitions which made it scarcely intelligible.

You will find traces of this belief everywhere. It is positive at first, and then passes into the stage of old wives' fables ;* but this recollection of the past, and knowledge of your origin, has penetrated into the popular beliefs. This germ was to exist until the time came for it to throw out strong and vigorous shouts ; and in order to preserve it, Jesus referred to rebirth, though under a veil, in his words and teachings. We have shown you the doctrine shining through the veil in the three first Evangelists. Jesus proclaimed it to be an accomplished fact in the person of John, the son of Zacharias and Elizabeth, and again proclaimed it in his conversation with Nicodemus ; leaving to the promised revelation the task of explaining the natural and universal law of rebirth, in its principles, applications, and consequences, as the corner-stone of the edifice, and the method by which the spirit accomplishes its purification and progress, and succeeds in attaining to moral human perfection.

But this very important question was to remain for a time in obscurity. Reincarnation necessarily involves spiritual relationships ; and the relations of your humanity with the invisible world was a weapon which you were not yet capable of handling, and which, instead of being useful, would have been injurious to the work of regeneration, and to the course of progress. To how many of your ministers might you not apply the words, "What, are you masters in Israel, and know not these things?" If the doctors in Israel had laboured to instruct themselves, with the ardent desire to instruct others, and not to make use of the light as a weapon against the vulgar, they would have known these things as

* This is expressly stated with reference to opinion in Northern Europe, in the Edda of Sæmund, at the end of the Second Lay of Helgi Hundingsbana (Thorpe's translation, ii. p. 36).—TRANSL.

well as Nicodemus ought to have known them; but ignorance is the daughter of pride. The proud man always thinks that he knows enough; he always thinks that he has attained the pinnacle of knowledge because he meets with some who are more ignorant than himself; and he sometimes fears to penetrate to the depths of certain sciences, lest he should there find his own condemnation. How many such "doctors in Israel" are living among you now!

(V. 11.)—These are prophetic words which apply equally well to all men in all ages. Incredulity, like its companion ignorance, is the daughter of pride. He who believes himself to be learned, will not listen to what is said by anyone whom he believes to be humble and insignificant. He will not even take the trouble to study the question that he rejects; why should he? What is, is good; why should he seek for anything else?

These words of Jesus declare that he bears witness (respecting reincarnation) of what he has seen. He thus manifests his extra-human origin by the knowledge and memory of what he declares himself to have seen. But he could not have possessed this knowledge if he had undergone human incarnation as you undergo it; for he could only have known this in the spiritual state. But he possessed it because he was always a spirit, although clothed in a tangible perispritic body. The words, "You have not received our testimony," were specially prophetic in the sense that the Jews, the Church, the dissenting Christian sects, and others who took the popular view, would, like Nicodemus, misinterpret the Master's words, and would thus reject Reincarnation, until the time of the new spiritual revelation.

(V. 12.)—Nicodemus and the leaders of the Church ought to have known the mysteries of Reincarnation, so far as it had been revealed in the past. But the ignorance of some (proceeding from their want of desire to know, and not from want of opportunity), and the interested motives of others which caused them to conceal what they knew, kept them in darkness.

The words of Jesus, "when the spirit is freed from the

letter," signify, "If you do not believe when I speak of the re-birth of the spirit in a new body, a thing which you ought to have known, and which takes place before your eyes, how can your limited and rebellious intelligence raise you high enough to understand things which take place in a centre from which you are far removed? How can you' understand heavenly things (that is, the secrets of the intelligence, of the stars, of nature, and of the whole creation) if you do not understand the material phenomena which take place under your very eyes?"

O man, devoid of intelligence, but inflated with pride, you desire to rise towards the regions inhabited by the Spirit who is the essence of all principles, and yet your eyes are so darkened that you are incapable of seeing what passes at your feet! You would know the origin of the spirit, and do not even know the transformations of the body. Study and raise thyself, ignorant man, and then shalt thou comprehend.

(V. 13.)—These words signify, "I alone know what passes in heaven, because I alone have descended to you to fulfil a high and holy mission. I have preserved the remembrance of my country, and I alone upon your earth can return to my Father; I alone, of a different essence to yours, can live among you, and at the same time live among my brethren, and rest my head on the bosom of my Father; and therefore I alone can know what passes in my Father's house; for although I left it to visit you, I have not abandoned it, and shall speedily return to it."

If you disengage these words from their figurative character, you see that Jesus, who always speaks in reference to your planet, asserts his spiritual position and his extra-human nature. "No one has ascended to heaven except the Son of Man," implies that he alone among you has attained to sidereal perfection. "No one has descended from heaven except the Son of Man, who is in heaven," means that he alone of all living among the men to whom he spoke, came to the earth as descended from heaven, and is in heaven, being always a spirit, and free in space. Jesus thus affirms that

he alone among you is not subjected to the bondage of a material body, but is clothed with a body which leaves his spirit complete liberty and independence either to appear to men, or to return into space. At the same time he asserts his extra-human origin and nature, in possessing this tangible perispritic body ; and declares that he is in constant communion with the Father ; that he knows what passes in space ; and that when he is released from the necessities of his earthly mission, he will resume his place in the celestial hierarchy.

(V. 14.)—This alludes to the apparent death which Jesus was about to undergo, and which was to serve as a rallying point for all who desired to walk in his steps. His "death," and the events which followed it, have served to impress the minds of men, and to attract their gaze.

O men, whoever you may be, turn your eyes with confidence towards the Cross ; and remember the virtues of him who was exposed to its humiliation, to human eyes ; and be assured that if you walk in his steps, no matter how humble your condition, you may succeed in raising yourselves on the cross of misery and humiliation to attain the kingdom of the heavens, which is moral human perfection.

Whoever turned his eyes towards the brazen serpent that Moses raised up in the desert, was cured of his physical sufferings ; for Moses dealt with a material people materially. But Jesus raised up on the Cross of Calvary, attracts the eyes of all who suffer morally, and those who turn to him with hope and faith will find the cure for their sufferings ; for they will learn to suffer with courage, resignation, and even gratitude, especially if they are enlightened by the spiritual light which shows them that human existence is the only mode of purification and progress for the spirit.

How was the physical cure effected by the Brazen Serpent ?

By the aid of protecting spirits. Moses was a spirit on a mission, and was therefore aided by spirits who were equal, or even superior, to himself. He was a powerful medium, and was guided by the secret benevolent influences around

him. The Brazen Serpent was only a material object to arrest the attention of the Hebrews, who were always fickle and rebellious ; and it taught them the power of faith, since faith alone effected the cure. The spirits of the Lord acted on their material bodies by spiritual magnetism, and by applying the fluids which were necessary for their cure.

(V. 15.)—"That every man who believeth should not perish, but should have age-lasting life." In order that all who walk in his steps may purify themselves, and ascend to higher and higher worlds, until they have attained to sidereal perfection, which gives them access to eternal life in the purely fluidic regions ; which is the life of pure spirits who are exempt from every material influence, and are no longer liable to any incarnation or incorporation, whether fluidic or material. Believe in Jesus, for this is to practise the sublime morality personified in his teaching and example.

(V. 16.)—God has sent you a model to imitate, to help you to save yourselves, and to stimulate the work of repentance. He has sent you a guide to show you the path. Follow him with confidence ; for he holds the torch which shines in the kingdom of God ; and he is alone entrusted with the development and progress of your planet and its humanity.

(V. 17.)—God has not sent a judge to men, but a guide and a friend. Trust in him, and let your confidence merit this great proof of love which has been given to you ; and let your submission and gratitude show the Father that what he has done for his children has not been fruitless.

(V. 18.)—Those who do not believe in Jesus do not try to follow his steps ; and only those who walk in his ways can hope to succeed. You cannot succeed by invoking the name of Christ, or by making protestations of gratitude, or by assuming a prerogative of salvation ; but by walking humbly, patiently, and submissively in the path which is opened to you ; and by resting all your hopes in God, and using all your intelligence to live a holy life according to the inspirations of your conscience. No matter what may be a man's religion, he has a High Priest who guides him, and teaches

him to honour God by his acts, and not by his words. This is his conscience, to which he listens ; and Jesus watches over its teachings. He who allows it to guide him walks in the ways of the Son of Man.

(V. 19.)—He who has been guilty of no fault need fear no judgment. Whoever endeavours to walk in the steps of the Model that has been set before you, is on his guard against committing a fault, and has therefore no judgment to fear ; for you must understand the word judgment to be used as equivalent to condemnation, in the sense that a man condemns himself by the fault that he commits, by the verdict of his own conscience, which is the tribunal of God. “ But he who believes not, is condemned already,” for he has failed. They who wander from the paths of Jesus only do so because they think them too difficult to follow. They prefer to skirt the flowery edges of the precipice, over which they fall.

If we take the words, “ Because he does not believe in the name of the only-begotten Son of God,” literally, like the Roman Church, we might understand that he who does not believe in the earthly mission, and divinity of Jesus, is condemned already ; that is, as the Church teaches, damned to all eternity. Or we might say that anyone who does not believe in the spiritual origin and position of Jesus, according to the New Revelation, is condemned already ; that is, subjected to expiation in the errant state, and then to re-incarnation on this earth, or on other inferior worlds. Is it a perversion of the words to suppose that a good man is condemned because he does not believe in the real nature of Jesus ?

The Roman Church led men away from the interpretation according to the Spirit, which gives the true sense of the letter, because she desired to keep them in the path which she had traced out for them ; for everything has its object, according to the conditions of progress for the human spirit.

We repeat that actions are the principal part of human existence. Faith in God is the foundation of action. Believe in your God, and act from love to him ; be charitable, gentle, and humble in heart, and obey the precepts of Jesus, whether you attribute them to a messenger of the Lord, according to the spiritual truth of the Gospels, or to

God himself, according to the dogmatic error of the Church, or attribute them (not from pride but from ignorance) to a creature like yourselves, but gifted with intelligence above that of his fellows. Whatever you believe, follow his precepts and his morality, and you will be Christians. Let human vanity glory in words. What does it matter to the Divine Greatness, or to the brightness of the torch of truth, whether you render him in words the homage which is his due, or are led by error or ignorance to reduce his greatness to your own level? March onward in the path which Jesus has opened before you, whether you think you walk by the light of the divine torch, or the print of the foot of man. March onwards ever, and you will find him, at the end of your journey, ready to receive you, and to show you the true light.

Thus a man who does not believe in the true nature of Jesus, and yet lives a good life, must disbelieve in ignorance and good faith, and not from pride, or any feeling inspired by it?

Certainly; for even actions are dead works if they are only dictated by pride, or fashion, just as they are likewise dead if they are dictated by selfishness. He who sees the light, and feels the effect of its vivifying heat, but who rejects or denies it from material interests, or from pride or worldliness ceases to be a "Christian." In fact, he no longer follows the steps of his Guide.

We are speaking only of sincere men who do not believe because they do not understand, and do not accept the truth because their intelligence is still undeveloped. Thus they live in ignorance because no one has enlightened them, or because they have been badly instructed. We are speaking of simple and conscientious men, and not of the vagaries of incredulity or hypocrisy.

(V. 19.)—Here a twofold explanation is necessary; one "Christian," and the other "Spiritual." At the time when Christ was made "man," those who saw him closed their eyes because they were unwilling to reform their conduct in such a manner as to walk in the way of salvation. The spiritual explanation is the same. Do you believe that the Lord holds that man innocent who is enlightened by the

New Revelation, but who refuses to receive it, not from incredulity, but to avoid imposing on himself too heavy a yoke ; not from conscientious scruples, but because he does not wish to be forced to listen to the voice that has cried to him so long, "You are walking along a path covered with flowers, but they exhale a subtle poison, and you will die before you have finished your course."

Yes, those are judged and condemned who reject the reformation because they do not wish to reform, and reject the light because it enlightens them, and they prefer the darkness ; they reject the word of truth, because the lie is sounding in their ears, and they prefer its deceitful accents to the severe remonstrances of conscience. These are condemned, for they are their own judges, and inflict the punishment upon themselves.

(V. 20.)—This verse sums up what we have just said. He who rejoices in his iniquities, or even in his errors, will not accept the law which compels him to reject that which ministers to his pleasure or his vanity. Thus he prefers darkness to light, and silence to the friendly voices of conscience and duty. He prefers the darkness, and has made his choice ; he has judged and condemned himself ; he has chosen the penalty, and will have to suffer it.

Pray, beloved ones, for these poor hardened sinners who refuse to hear anything. Say with us, "Lord, thou hast permitted thy light to descend to warm our hearts ; revive our intelligence, and awaken our dull senses. Father of mercies, permit that we may all, without exception, share in the blessings of this regenerative light. O Father, may it shine equally for all ! O Lord, send thy spirits to those who are still far from the truth, and let them tear away the veil which covers it, and display all its beauty to those who turn from it ; and let them be so attracted by its charms that they may thrust from them with horror the vain idols which they worship, to turn to the light, and follow it with love.

"Father of mercies, permit our feeble voices to be raised to utter words of persuasion to our brethren, permit our regenerated hearts to raise our wandering brethren to an emotion of

love ; and enable us to love them, that we may draw to us all who fear, or suffer, or deny, or wander. Let us fold them in our arms, and press them to our living hearts, that we may bring them to thy feet, O Lord, like a handful of choice flowers whose perfume may ascend to thee !

“God of mercy, second our efforts, and give us persuasion, gentleness, perseverance, the strong faith which moves mountains, and the confidence which nothing can shake. O Lord, grant us the love which leads us to thee, and which thou extendest over all thy creatures.”

JUDAS ISCARIOT.*

(V. 21.)—He who acts according to the truth will always endeavour to conform his words and actions to the divine law, as Jesus proclaimed it, when he declared it to include “all the law and the prophets.” Such a man loves the light, for it alone can guide him ; and he seeks it, for there is no shame in him which it can bring to light.

O beloved ones, rank yourselves with those who thus seek light, and can stand naked in the rays of the divine sun, without shame or remorse. Come, children, whom we love, to receive the rays of dazzling light which stream on all sides ; come to warm your frozen hearts and stiffened limbs ; for we will sustain you, and lead you on like little children, till you are able to approach nearer and nearer to the light, and to rest in its blessed rays.

VERSES 22–36.

John bears Testimony to Jesus.

(22) After these things, Jesus and his disciples came into the country of Jordan, and he dwelt there with them and baptised. (23) And John also was baptising in Ænon, near Salem, for there were many waters there, and they came and were baptised. (24) For John was not yet cast into prison. (25) Therefore there was a discussion between the disciples of John and the Jews concerning purification. (26) And they came to John, and said to him, Rabbi, he who was with thee beyond Jordan, and to whom thou hast borne witness, behold this man baptiseth, and all men come to him. (27) John answered and said, A man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven. (28) Ye your-

* Compare his previous communications, vol. ii. p. 365, § 262.

selves bear me witness that I said, I am not the Christ, but I am sent before him. (29) He who has the bride is the bridegroom, but the friend of the bridegroom, who standeth and heareth him, rejoices in his joy at the bridegroom's voice; this my joy, therefore, is fulfilled. (30) He must increase, but I must decrease. (31) He who cometh from above is above all; he who is from earth is of earth, and speaketh of the earth; he who is come from heaven is above all. (32) And testifieth of that which he hath seen and heard, and no man receiveth his testimony. (33) He who hath received his testimony hath solemnly affirmed that God is true. (34) For whomsoever God sendeth, speaketh the words of God, for God giveth not the spirit by measure. (35) The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things unto his hand. (36) He who believeth in the Son hath age-lasting life. But he who is not persuaded by the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth in him.

§ 10 (V. 22.)—The exact circumstances were as follows: Jesus baptised by his disciples, and not with his own hands; but as his disciples acted in his name, the act was personally his own, just as you say, "He has received the baptism of Christ." This has been expressly explained (John iv. 1, 2). Jesus caused his disciples to administer the baptism of water which John had already given, in order to preserve its symbolical and material character. This is what the Church should have understood. She ought to have continued it without altering its object and end, and especially without attaching erroneous dogmatic interpretations to it, which have falsified and perverted its meaning.

(V. 25.)—The dispute which arose between the disciples of John and the Jews, concerning baptism, or purification, which are used here as synonymous terms, arose from the Jews not understanding that Jesus had the right to act as John did. You must remember that John was already regarded as a prophet sent to the house of Israel, at the time when Jesus commenced his mission. Consequently Jesus was generally regarded as an impostor who usurped the reverence due to John, or as an unfaithful disciple who led the multitude away from his master. They supposed that the Messiah would have announced himself with more pomp. You must remember that they were expecting a temporal ruler who should re-establish the kingdom of Israel. (V. 26.) This dispute led John's disciples to lay the matter before him. Some had witnessed what passed between Jesus and John on the banks of the Jordan, but, from

want of medianimic faculties, they did not see or hear the spirit-manifestations; and, notwithstanding what they had heard John say, they were influenced by the idea that the promised Messiah would have performed more surprising actions at his first appearance than the work of baptism or purification performed by his forerunner.

John bore witness to Jesus in his answer to his disciples, under spirit influence and medianimic inspiration, and humbled himself before him. As he declared, his mission was to prepare the way for the divine messenger; and he therefore renders homage to his superior by affirming his divine mission. We must free the spirit from the letter, and explain the real meaning of John's reply to his disciples.

(V. 27.)—These words imply that if Jesus had not possessed the right to purify sinners, he would not have assumed it; nor would John himself have permitted it, if he had not been really the Christ. After having reminded his disciples that he had already said that he was not the Christ, but that he was sent before him (v. 28), John said to them (verses 29, 30), "He who has the bride is the bridegroom, but the friend of the bridegroom, who standeth and heareth him, rejoices in his joy at the bridegroom's voice; this my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease."

We have had occasion to tell you that these expressions "the bridegroom,—the friend of the bridegroom," allude to Hebrew traditions and customs. John used the figurative expression, "the bridegroom," to designate Jesus, on account of the honour given to him who took a wife among the Hebrews. Jesus, who descended from heaven to accomplish his mission on your earth, was represented as a pure young man who lays aside his nuptial crown to undertake the responsibilities of a family.

"The bride" of Jesus typifies your humanity, which Jesus governs as the protecting spirit of your planet, and which is his in the sense that he alone is entrusted with its development and progress, and that he alone had a superior mission to perform when he descended on the earth.

John used the expression, "the friend of the bridegroom," to designate himself, because the bridegroom's friend was the nearest and dearest to him. "The friend of the bridegroom who standeth and heareth him, rejoices in his joy at the bridegroom's voice," denotes John as the forerunner and devoted auxiliary of Jesus. John was filled with reverence and love towards Jesus, and obedient to his voice, and was overjoyed at having witnessed the commencement of his earthly mission. John is in the fulfilment of this joy; and Jesus must increase, but John must decrease. John has witnessed the commencement of the mission of Jesus, which must develop, whereas his own, which was only preparatory, must pale away and come to an end.

Thus, when these figurative expressions (verses 29, 30) are spiritually explained, John says to his disciples, "Jesus is he to whom your humanity belongs as the ruler of your planet; and he alone has a superior mission to address to it, when he has descended to it. But I, John, am only his precursor and devoted auxiliary, filled with love and reverence towards him, and obedient to his voice. I am overjoyed to behold the commencement of his mission; it has already begun, and it must develop; whereas mine, which is merely preliminary, must fade away and disappear."

Thus John spoke words, in affirming the mission of Jesus, under unconscious spirit-influence, which he himself did not clearly understand, relative to the nature of Jesus, and his origin, position, and powers in regard to your planet, your humanity, and the spirits who work, under his direction, at planetary and human development and progress.

(V. 31-35).—John makes a comparison between Jesus and himself in these words. John himself is an earthly man subjected to human incarnation, and his words are earthly. But according to the Spirit which giveth life, John affirms the extra-human origin of Jesus. He came from above, and did not derive his origin from the earth. He is not of the earth, but has come from heaven; and he is therefore not "the earthly man," clothed with an earthly body, but "the

heavenly man," who is clothed with a heavenly body, fluidic in its nature, but bearing the human aspect, and visible, tangible, and material to human perceptions.

John asserts that Jesus is superior to all incarnate or errant spirits, whether in the stage of development and progress on your earth, by means of trials and expiations; or on a mission, aiding Jesus, and working under his directions at the progress of your planet and your humanity. "He is above all."

He asserts the superiority and supremacy which he exercises, as the protecting and ruling spirit, wielding the unlimited powers which he derives from the Father. "The Father loves him (that is, has confidence in him), and has committed all things into his hands."

He asserts that Jesus is in direct communion with the Father, and speaks only as the direct organ of the Omnipotent. When he speaks, he testifies of what he has seen and heard, and he who receives his testimony affirms that God is true. As he is not of the earth, his words are not of the earth. But being a heavenly man, in direct communion with the Father, and fulfilling his will, which he alone knows, and which he communicates to others by giving each a task in proportion to his strength, he speaks only the words of God, who has not given him his spirit by measure. He knows the mysteries of the divine will, and the truth; and being qualified to understand, and to behold the splendour of the light, there is no need to veil anything from him.

(V. 36.)—By these words, John asserts that Jesus is your model and guide, entrusted with your development and progress, who must lead you to perfection; and it is only by walking in his paths and following his steps that you can succeed in reaching your appointed goal.

The explanations which you have already received on verses 15–18 (§ 9, pp. 65–68) give you the spiritual meaning of these words. It is easily understood. He who believes and loves, obeys and succeeds; but he who does not believe wanders from the path, errs, and is judged. He will not see life, but will remain in the dark paths of human.

incarnation ; “but the wrath of God abideth on him ;” the justice of the Lord holds him liable to expiation.

We have also already explained (pp.67 & 68, on v.18) what you should understand by the words, “He who believeth on the Son.” We will now add, Jesus personifies the morality which he has declared to contain all the law and the prophets, and which preceded his appearance on earth. Every man (whether Jew or Gentile, Catholic or Protestant, Christian or Muslim, to whatever nation he belongs, and whatever may be his religion or opinions), believes in the Son, and knows him the moment that he follows, in simplicity of heart and humility of mind, the path traced out by justice, love and charity.

Do not forget that he who is living to-day under the title of a Jew, for instance, was perhaps yesterday a missionary of the Christian faith, and may be one of its martyrs to-morrow. The words of John, like those of Jesus, apply to spirits in the paths of reincarnation, and do not apply, strictly and literally, to the spirits incarnate at the moment, but to those about to come into being.

John’s words, “No man receiveth his testimony,” are to be understood in the same sense as those which Jesus addressed to Nicodemus, “And you have not received my testimony.” (Compare the explanation of v. 11 at p. 64, § 9). John’s words were true at the time with reference to his disciples, who had not recognised the mission of Jesus ; and they also applied, both then and afterwards, to the Jews, and others who would misunderstand his mission, and would neither listen to the Master’s voice, nor walk in his ways.

CHAP. IV.—VERSES 1–26.

The Woman of Samaria.

(1) When therefore the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptised more disciples than John, (2) Though Jesus himself baptised not, but his disciples, (3) He left Judæa, and went back again into Galilee. (4) And he must needs go through Samaria. (5) He cometh therefore into a city of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. (6) And Jacob’s well was there. Therefore Jesus, being wearied with the journey, sat thus on the well. It was about the sixth hour. (7) There cometh a woman

from Samaria to fetch water. Jesus saith to her, Give me to drink. (8) For his disciples were gone into the city to buy food. (9) Then the Samaritan woman saith to him, How is it that you, who are a Jew, ask me to give you to drink, for I am a woman of Samaria. For the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. (10) Jesus answered and said to her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is who saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked him, and he would have given thee living water. (11) The woman saith to him, Lord, thou hast no bucket, and the well is deep; whence then hast thou the living water? (12) Art thou greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank of it himself, and his sons, and his cattle? (13) Jesus answered and said to her, Everyone who drinketh of this water shall thirst again. (14) But whoever shall drink of the water that I shall give him shall not thirst in the age, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a fountain of water, springing up into the age-long life. (15) The woman saith to him, Lord, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw. (16) Jesus saith to her, Go and call thy husband. (17) The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus saith to her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband. (18) For thou hast had five husbands, and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband, this thou hast spoken truly. (19) The woman saith to him, Lord, I perceive that thou art a prophet. (20) Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, and you say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship. (21) Jesus saith to her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh when ye shall worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. (22) Ye worship ye know not what; we worship what we know, for salvation is of the Jews. (23) But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father also seeketh such to worship him. (24) God is a spirit, and those who worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. (25) The woman saith to him, I know that Messias cometh, who is called Christ; when he is come, he will tell us all things, (26) Jesus saith to her, I who speak to thee am he.

§ 11 (V. 1, 2.)—We have already explained how Jesus baptised through his disciples (§ 10.) The conversation between Jesus and the woman of Samaria is of the greatest importance, both as regards the comprehension of the Master's words according to the Spirit, and the explanations which we are commanded to give you because you are now able to receive them.

You are told that Jesus was wearied with the journey, and sat down on the edge of the well to rest. This was the idea of those who narrated the circumstances; and the Evangelist faithfully echoed their narrative; for, like them, he regarded Jesus from the standpoint of human life. For you must remember that Jesus appeared to the woman, as well as to others, to be a man like yourselves, clothed with a

material human body, and thus exposed to the necessities and infirmities of human existence.

Jesus sat there because he foresaw the coming of the woman, just as he asked for drink to open the conversation. You are not told that the woman gave him drink, or that he drank. The conversation commenced immediately, and Jesus conducted it in such a manner that the lesson flowed from it like living water from the rock. Everything (the place, the person, and the object for which she came to the well) was arranged according to the prejudices and traditions of the age, that it might give occasion for the conversation and the lessons which were to proceed from it, according to the necessities of the present and the future, and which would only be fully developed when future generations were prepared to receive the New Revelation.

The first lesson of Jesus is contained in v. 9-15. His answers to the woman's questions were intended to teach men that in the eyes of the Father there are neither heretics nor orthodox, but only children, more or less advanced and submissive, to whom he imparts his instructions, whatever may be their country or religion, provided that their hearts turn towards him, and are ready to receive his lessons and his mercies with joy; and that the Christ, God's heavenly messenger on your earth, gives all earnest men, who ask (whoever they are, and whatever may be their religion, opinions, or nationality), those instructions and blessings which open the paths of progress to the spirit, and lead it towards perfection.

The Jews looked upon the Samaritans as heretics, for they pretended that they alone were the children of the Lord, and possessed the sole right to inherit the kingdom of God, because they were the orthodox. The woman replied to Jesus as to an orthodox Jew, for the Jews used "Samaritan" as an expression of hatred, insult and contempt. But he answered, "If thou hadst known the gift of God, and who it is who said to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked him, and he would have given thee living water."

The words of Jesus were spirit and life. But the woman

understood them literally and materially, and continued the conversation.

Jesus, being the direct messenger of the Father among you, gives the living water in the Father's name, to every one who recognises the gift of God, and knows himself, whatever his country or opinions. The Hebrews looked upon the gift of God as the Holy Spirit ; that is, the inspiration and aid of the good spirits, which God grants to every man, wholly irrespective of his religion, opinions, or nationality, who raises his heart towards the Father, and who is prepared to receive his lessons and his mercies. Man receives the inspirations of the good spirits either consciously or unconsciously, and they open up paths of progress to his mind, intellect, and heart, both in the moral, physical, and intellectual order, and lead him on towards perfection. What you call inspiration or genius, in either knowledge or charity, and which man attributes to himself in his pride and ignorance, is the gift of God.

"To know the gift of God" is to know that God can give men the assistance and inspiration of his good spirits. "To know the Messiah, or the Christ," is to know the morality which he came to sanctify among you by his teaching and example. This is the Divine Law, as eternal and immutable as God, which is written in the conscience of every man.

The water of Jacob's well is the emblem of matter which nourishes the body. The living water is the emblem of the eternal truths of moral progress, which feed the soul, and give the spirit the preponderance over matter, so that it is no longer subservient to it.

Thus, when the spirit is freed from the letter, the answer of Jesus is as follows : "I have taken the opportunity of asking you to give me drink to prove to you that I am the Messiah, that is, the Christ, the chosen messenger, to all men, whatever their country or opinions, whether Samaritans, Jews, or Gentiles ; for with God there is no favour shewn to persons. He is the Father of all, and all men are his children. If you had known that God can give men the aid and inspiration of his good spirits ; and the end and

object of these blessings; and if you had known the morality which I personify, you would yourself have asked to drink. Had you been inspired by the Spirits of the Lord, they would have moved you to ask me to give you drink, and I would have given you living water; that is, the spiritual water which flows from the source of eternal truths, and renovates the soul by opening the paths of all progress to the intelligence and hearts of men.

“Whoever drinks of water such as that of Jacob’s well, will still be thirsty. He who lives by the body and for the body, under the dominion of matter, will still thirst for material things; whereas he who drinks of the water that I shall give him, and nourishes his soul with the spiritual water, which I have drawn at the source, from the fountain of eternal truths, will be changed, and led to practise the morality which I personify. He will then never thirst for material objects; but the water which I shall give him shall be in him a fountain springing up into everlasting life. It will be a spring of moral progress which will rise up to perfection; for all progress is indivisible and solidary, forming a new advance in the path of perfection, and tending towards that end.”

The woman did not understand these answers, and said, “Lord, give me this living water that I thirst not, neither came hither to draw.” How few of these answers of Jesus have been understood by those who have professed to be his representatives on earth! Instead of waiting till their brethren whom they called “heretics” asked them for the living water, and giving it to those who desired it, they have practised intolerance towards the brethren whom they ought to have loved, and persecuted them with moral and physical tortures, and handed them over to death. How many among your priests, your Levites, and your doctors of the law, are still unable to understand the Master’s answers in spirit and in truth, and do not practise the teaching which flows from them!

Verses 19–26 contain several lessons which require special explanations.

After the impression that the conversation had made upon the woman of Samaria, from her point of view, and according to her intelligence, Jesus gave her an instance of his extra-human faculties which she regarded as a direct inspiration from God, and her next question was to lead to further teachings which Jesus desired to give to men.

She was struck by the fact that Jesus, whom she regarded as a Jewish prophet, should have spoken to a Samaritan; and she then asked him the question which led him to acknowledge himself to be the Messiah.

The Master's answers were only to be fully understood and practised in spirit and in truth, by generations which shall succeed your own, as the result of the New Revelation.

(V. 21.)—The thought of Jesus included the present and the future. He predicted the gradual disappearance of all the external forms of worship which still divide and separate men. He foretold the worship of the Father, apart from all external forms of religion, whether present or future, practised in temples built by men's hands in any place whatever, by material practices, or external ceremonies. Apart from all these, he foretold the worship of the Father in the heart, which when pure, is the only true temple, where his sanctuary is the conscience. There he is worshipped by the homage of thought, and by the performance of good actions, with sincerity and humility, justice, love and charity, which is spiritual prayer, the inner worship of the soul, the only true worship which men render to the Father, by thus raising themselves towards him, in spirit and in truth.

The words of Jesus were words of the future, and are so still. Are there not still various external forms of religion which divide and separate men? Are there not still Jews and Samaritans, heretics and orthodox? Has not the Church misunderstood both the teaching and the example of the Master, and deviated from the line traced out for her by the Apostles, who prepared the way for the One Universal Church? Has she not perpetuated the prejudices and pretensions of the Jews and the rulers of the synagogue, and

after usurping these pretensions, has she not denounced and rejected the Jews as heretics? Has she not retained the principle of orthodoxy which the Jews arrogated to themselves, and denounced and persecuted as heretics, and even put to death all who professed opinions contrary to her human dogmas and interpretations? Does she not declare that only those in her fold are the children of the Lord, and that they alone will inherit the kingdom of God? Does she not worship "in Jerusalem," and reject all others who worship "on the mountain?" Men, we tell you in the name of Jesus, "Believe that the time is coming when you shall no more worship the Father in Jerusalem, nor on the mountain. The time will come when all the external forms of religion which now divide and separate you will fade away and disappear. You will then assemble in tolerance and fraternity, in the name of that which constitutes all the Law and the Prophets, under a banner bearing the motto, "Love and charity," and you will worship the Father in all places alike, whether you happen to be "on the mountain" or "in Jerusalem."

(V. 22.)—These words had a special sense, applicable to the Samaritan at the time. But they had also a general sense, as a lesson to men, and included the future. The last words, "salvation is of the Jews," explain the meaning of Jesus in spirit and in truth, from both points of view. He alluded to the Messianic incarnations of an order relatively inferior to his own, which had taken place continually in the Jewish nation, to maintain the pure idea of God, and to prepare for the advent of the Word.

As regards the Samaritan woman, and all others in whose minds the pure idea of God has become impaired, either by gross errors, or by an idolatrous religion, "Ye worship ye know not what," because the idea of God has not been maintained pure among you; we know what we worship because the idea of God has been maintained pure among the Jews by the prophets.

These words of Jesus still apply to all those who have abandoned the pure idea of God, and have multiplied their

God, the Father, One and Indivisible, by trying to retain plurality in unity.

These words apply to the Church of Rome as well as to all the sects of Christian dissenters who uphold the doctrine of the Three Persons, and worship not only the Father, but "the Son," and the "Holy Spirit," although Jesus proclaimed the unity and indivisibility of the Father, the God of Israel, as strenuously as Moses and the prophets, by addressing the Father in the words, "Eternal life consists in knowing Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."

"Ye worship ye know not what." You ought to worship only the Father; and you worship you know not what, when you worship the Son and the Holy Spirit; for you know not who is the Son, nor who is the Holy Spirit. You worship the Son, who is a creature of God, the well-beloved Son of the Father; his only-begotten Son, so far as you are concerned, and relatively to your planet, in virtue of his purity, and of the power which the Father has given him. He is a spirit of perfect and immaculate purity, your Messiah, your protector and your ruler, but he is also your brother, for he rose originally from the same origin as yourselves, to arrive at his present dignity; and he attained to perfection by always remaining pure in the path of progress, without ever having fallen; and the origin of his perfection is lost in the obscurity of past eternities.

You adore the Holy Spirit, but this figurative name represents the creatures of God, who reflect the divine will; the pure, superior, and good spirits of the Lord, who are appointed to carry out the wishes of the Father, and to transmit the divine inspiration to yourselves; and on the inferior planets, lower still. It is a figurative expression which includes the Messiahs, the protectors and rulers of the planets, like Jesus, who are the vicegerents of the Father, and all other envoys and messengers, his ministers and agents, in the order of the hierarchy, to which their spiritual elevation assigns them.

Has not the Roman Church rejected the Father, by latterly directing her external worship exclusively to the

Son? And does not the worship of Mary threaten in its turn to supersede the worship offered to the Son?

(V. 23.)—These words relate both to the present and the future. They were true in the time of Christ, for his disciples worshipped the Father in spirit and in truth. Since then, there have always been more enlightened spirits among you who have rejected materialistic worship, and have raised themselves towards the Lord by the homage of their thoughts, hearts, and actions. This worship, which alone is pleasing to the Lord, is spreading among you more and more, and will finally prevail.

Apostles of the New Revelation, beware of falling into the exclusiveness of the Roman Church, and making a sect of the great spiritual progress which embraces your planet and its humanity, or of that Spiritism which is one of the phases of the permanent and progressive revelation of God. There are many who are not Spiritists in name, and who have no belief in any manifestations from the other world, who nevertheless worship the Lord in spirit and in truth.

The true worshippers whom the Father seeketh to worship him in spirit and in truth, are all those who (whatever may be the outward religion in which they have been born through reincarnation) reject a materialistic worship, and recognize no other temple of the Father but the human conscience. They lift themselves towards the Father by worshipping him in thought, heart, and actions, and by their serious and sustained endeavours to practice the love of God above all things, and of their neighbour as themselves. They look upon all men as their brethren, and are gifted with faith in God, and charity in all its forms, according to the law of love. Thus they always strive, in the sincerity of their hearts, never to act towards others as they would not have others act towards them; but to treat others well, according to what is true, just and right, both in word and action, and as they would have others act towards themselves.

Spiritists and Spiritualists, apostles of the New Revelation, avoid dogmatism, or you will become sectaries, and will

fail in the task that is entrusted to you, and falsify the mission that the Spirit of Truth has come to accomplish on your earth. The eternal truths which are successively and progressively revealed should be freely accepted by man ; but their acception must be the work of time, and of the progress of the human spirit.

Men, all, whomsoever you are, and whatever the position which you occupy among the races of men, whether savage or civilized, you are all called upon to accept these eternal truths, with the aid of time and reincarnation, in full liberty of conscience, reason, and free enquiry. You are all called upon to believe in the Father ; God, One and Indivisible ; the Son, Jesus, your Messiah, the protecting and ruling spirit of your planet, to whom alone is entrusted the care of its development and progress, and that of your humanity, until it shall attain perfection ; and in the Holy Spirit ; the spirits of the Lord, who labour or concur in this development and progress, under the direction of the Master.

But be ye the worshippers of the Father in spirit and in truth, and band yourselves together, whatever may be your opinions, or whatever external forms of worship may still divide and separate you. Band yourselves together by the law of love ; for its practice will bring in the reign of the law of friendship, fraternity, liberty and equality, and will lead you to perfection.

(V. 24.)—These words were also words of the present, and words of the future. In the first place, Jesus for ever removes from men the idea of the materiality of God. He spoke thus chiefly with reference to the Gentiles, for the Jews already regarded God as a spirit ; but it was necessary for him to destroy the belief in the materiality of God among them also, more especially among the common people. His words were adapted to the intelligence of his hearers. Moses defined God by an epithet which was vast in its simplicity, “I am ; the Eternal ; the Only Eternal ; I am that I am ;” God Is ; his essence fills all space ; the infinite universe is his residence, and neither limits nor measures can define him. He Is ; but the thought is so vast that your intelli-

gence, with two thousand years' additional development, does not yet comprehend it ; and it was too far above the men who listened to Jesus. To be, meant to them to live a life almost like their own ; hence the mind of the majority (we speak of the vulgar) was possessed with an idea of the material corporeity of God. Jesus destroyed this by saying, "God is a Spirit, and those who worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." That is, God is Intelligence, and intelligence has no palpable form. God is Thought ; and thought is impalpable : God is fluidic at the same time that he is infinite, and he is not therefore circumscribed by any description of body.

These words were also words of the future, being designed to prepare more and more for the knowledge of the Father by teaching men what is a spirit, and by the distinction which they were obliged to make and to recognise between the finite and the infinite ; between that which is limitless and that which is circumscribed ; and thus between the uncreated Creator and the creature.

God is a Spirit, in the sense that every intelligent principle emanates from the Supreme Intelligence ; and God is the Spirit of spirits, in the sense that these human words express the superiority of his essence.

If human words could express the divine idea, we would endeavour to teach you to understand God.

God is Intelligence and Thought, and thus the Uncreated Creator. He is also Fluid ; for the universal fluid flows around him and proceeds from him as the instrument and means of all the creations in infinity and eternity, according to the laws of nature which he has established, which are as immutable and eternal as his own thought and intelligence. Thus, from both these points of view, God is the Uncreated Creator, the essence of all life. God is the universal intelligent principle acting by the power of his will upon the universal fluid and its combinations and transformations, according to these immutable and eternal laws. Thus the universal fluid produces the universal creation which you call Nature, and leads everything onwards by the immutable law

of progress and harmony, from the infinitely little to the infinitely great, in the spiritual, fluidic and material order. Is not God the motive power of everything which exists? Is he not the main support which upholds the whole machine? the fly-wheel, which drives the cogs of all the rest? And would the spirit have any existence without him? Is he not the emanative principle of all things; and of everything which lives, moves, and has its being in space and eternity?

God, as the Apostle Paul says (1 Cor. viii. 3) is, in virtue of being, the Uncreated Creator, the Father, from whom all things derive their being; and he has made us for himself, in the sense that all his creatures must necessarily act upon nature, in all the kingdoms, and in all the creations, according to his immutable and eternal laws, under the influence of his superior will, that universal life, progress and harmony may be maintained.

Your intelligence and modes of thought are too limited to enable you to comprehend God in his essence and his principles of action as the Uncreated Creator. Nevertheless, you may compare God to the sun of the infinite universe; the dazzling light which the eagle of purity alone can behold face to face. His warmth spreads throughout all worlds, and fertilizes them. He is the Supreme Intelligence, and his breath creates intelligence. His gaze creates life, and nevertheless (O poverty of your language, and weakness of your intelligence, which compels us to restrict the immensity of God to material comparisons!), God, the Principle of principles, the inexhaustible Source of all life, has no limited body, as men seek to understand it. God is the one sole principle of all that is; the light of all that sees, the fertility of everything that is produced. God is the Cause of all the causes which your gross senses strive in vain to comprehend; but this First Cause is ineffable, and so far above all intelligence that only those who approach him can comprehend it.

Have you not worshipped the materialisation of God, and is not the pure and holy spirit who stooped to your level to

teach you to love, to feel, and to live in him, the most striking image that God could give you of himself?

All that we have just told you respecting God, prepares you to understand the words spoken by the Apostle Paul, under spiritual influence and inspiration, which he did not exactly comprehend, and the full scope of which it is not yet given to you to understand.

“In him, we live and move and have our being.” (Acts xvii. 28.) “For of him, and through him and to him are all things.” (Rom. xi. 36.)

We must now explain the words written by the Apostle John in a similar manner. “There are three that bear witness in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are in one.” (1 John v. 7.)* These were words which were useful in the present, and preparatory to the future; and the New Revelation alone was to lead men to understand them in spirit and in truth, according to the Spirit which giveth life.

The Church was led by Hebrew ideas and interpretations relative to the Holy Spirit, which was supposed to be God himself acting upon men, to make the Holy Spirit a divided, though indivisible portion of God, and equal to the Uncreated Creator. Influenced by these ideas, and by the divinity which was attributed to Jesus, the Church took these words as the basis of her human doctrine of three Gods in one, always distinct, though unipersonal, which she called the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. This is one of her errors which she will have to correct.

There are three who bear witness in heaven. Firstly, the Father, the Creator, the sole cause of all, who is God, the Father of all, who is above all, and extends his providence over all, and is thus the same to all; secondly, the Word, the palpable and visible manifestation of the action of that Creator whose watchful eye never loses sight of you, and sends you anchors of safety, on which you can and ought to rely; the Word, your Messiah, the pure and holy spirit,

* This verse is regarded as undoubtedly spurious by all critics; but compare the remarks in the Preface.—TRANS.


who is the protector and ruler of your planet, and who yet is your brother, because he is a creature of God like you ; and God is his Father and your Father ; his God, and your God.

The Holy Spirit, which is inspiration in the sense that it is a reflection of the divine will which flows to you, by the mediation of the celestial messengers, the spirits of the Lord, who are also your brethren, because they are, like yourselves, the creatures of God, who is their Father, and your Father, their God, and your God. The pure, superior, and good spirits of the Lord are comprised under the figurative expression of the Holy Spirit, as being the intermediaries between the Father and you ; and generally the personification and agents of the divine will, in space, and in the universal creation ; and in a special and peculiar manner relative to your planet and its humanity, for the maintenance of universal progress, life and harmony.

“And these three are in one.” These words are figurative, and must not be materialised. The three are in one, because the Word and the Holy Spirit (or the spirits of the Lord who mediate between you and the Father) depend on that ineffable Cause, whom you call God in your human language. Do not the branches, leaves and fruits depend on the tree from which they spring ?

They are in one, because they are animated by the same thought. They are one, as your body is one, as long as the limbs obey the impulse of the brain. But it is impossible to establish an exact comparison in human language relative to subjects which are wholly in the spiritual regions. They are not one as regards personality, but only in thought. Be well assured that after the spirit has attained to moral human perfection, which is sidereal perfection, it preserves its individuality as before, to all eternity, whatever advances it may have made, or whatever its superiority in knowledge may be ; for progress in knowledge is without limits, since no created spirit can ever equal God.

Men who call themselves philosophers, and believe that they have penetrated to the secret principle of all things, assert that the universal



Whole is God, and that it is an error of weak minds to assert that the Uncreated Creator is a distinct personality from nature, and from everything which exists in the order of nature.

These profound thinkers are very simple. They call the universal whole the First Cause of all things. If they change the form of expression, they will find God, the Universal Whole, the instrument and means of the Creation of all things, which results from the action of the Creative Power; God, the Uncreated Creator, the First Cause. Nothing can exist without a First Cause. The generative cause of everything which you regard as a first cause, is God; for he is the creative principle of all generation, in whatever kingdom it may take place.

Ask these learned men, who are like poor blind men trying to sort out colours, the nature of the Universal Whole from whence they derive all things. Let them explain it if they can, without God, the Uncreated Creator, who is Intelligence, Thought and Fluid, acting by the universal fluid, as we have already explained, by universal spirit-action, and by laws which form part of his very essence. They will talk of nature, universal laws, perhaps even chance; but where will they find the First Cause, the root of the tree? Are not the primitive and generative forces of nature, chance, and universal harmony merely words which these reasoners are themselves unable to comprehend and to explain, and which simply disguise the profound idea which can only be expressed by the word God?

God, the Uncreated Creator, is personally distinct from the creation, as the cause is personal and distinct from the effect, although one is derived from and connected with the other. Do not act like children in their nurses' arms, who see the flame of a candle shining, and rashly endeavour to grasp it. Pain is the consequence of their rashness; but wait till you are out of leading strings before you endeavour to understand what is incomprehensible to your nature. Wait till you are sufficiently purified to be able to comprehend; for we can only tell you, "The Being who is from

all eternity and will be to all eternity is our God, the kind and gentle Master who rules over all things; the Supreme Intelligence which guides everything in the Universe, in space and in infinity."

How far you must progress, poor little children, who have not yet opened your eyes to the light, to be able to endure the lustre of this brilliant star! We use this expression, for you have no words in your human language to express so exalted and divine an idea. Leave all speculators to dream at their ease, but march forward, and remember that although light is not made for the blind, those who gaze on it imprudently may be struck with blindness.

VERSES 27-42.

Testimony of the woman of Samaria—words of Jesus to his disciples.

(27) And after this came his disciples, and wondered that he spoke with the woman; nevertheless no one said, What seekest thou? or Why speakest thou with her? (28) Then the woman left her waterpot, and went away into the city, and saith to the men, (29) Come and see a man who told me all things whatsoever I did. Is not this the Christ? (30) Then they went out of the city, and came to him. (31) In the meantime his disciples asked him saying, Rabbi, eat. (32) But he said to them, I have food to eat, which you know not of. (33) Then the disciples said to one another, Hath anyone brought him anything to eat? (34) Jesus saith to them, My food is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. (35) Say not, There are yet four months, and the harvest cometh; verily I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, for they are white already for harvest. (36) Already the reaper receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit for age-lasting life, that both the sower and the reaper may rejoice together. (37) For in this is the saying true that one is the sower and another the reaper. (38) I sent you to reap that on which you toiled not; others have toiled, and you have entered into their labour. (39) And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him, through the saying of the woman who testified, He told me all things whatsoever I did. (40) So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to remain with them. And he remained there two days. (41) And many more believed through his word, (42) And said to the woman, We believe no longer through your gossip, for we ourselves have heard, and we know that this is truly the Saviour of the world, the Christ.

§ 12. These verses present two distinct series of ideas and events, one relating to the woman and the Samaritans, and the other to Jesus and the disciples.

The woman was chiefly impressed by the evidence which Jesus had given her of his extra-human faculties. She was much less impressed by his assertion that he was the Christ ; this was not enough to convince her, and she still doubted. Race of sceptics as you are, can you not understand her doubts ?

Is there any occasion to give you an explanation regarding the Samaritans ? (v. 30, 39-42). Are there not many Samaritans living among you still, who cannot believe without being able to attest facts which you call divination, while others are convinced by pure moral teachings, and neither seek nor ask for anything else ? Do those among you who ought to believe first, first receive the truth ? Not so ; but it is those who are scorned by men who believe that they have the privilege of faith. It is the heretics who first assemble round the Master, and say, " Lord, thy word has found its way into my heart ; I perceive the light, and I believe." It is the same with you as it was with the Samaritans. Many will believe in the Spiritual Revelation on the report of persons whom they believe to be worthy of credit respecting physical manifestations which necessarily presuppose extra-human action, especially if the persons have witnessed them themselves. But many more will believe, after having heard the spirits of the Lord speak in intelligent spirit-manifestations. They will then say, " We no longer believe on the ground of the reports of others, but on account of what we have seen ourselves ; for we ourselves have heard, and we know that they are truly the organs of the Spirit of Truth."

(V. 31-39.)—The words of Jesus were always designed to turn the minds of his disciples towards heavenly things, and to show them that the work of human progress had already been commenced by those who had come before them, and that they must continue the task. He also alluded to the reward which awaited their efforts. His words were expressly designed to show them that his sole thought and object was to pursue the work of regeneration which he had under-

taken. He was nourished with food which he alone possessed, for it is his purity which raises him above all humanity, and all necessities. Hasten to receive this divine nourishment which satisfies the spirit which seeks for life and truth.

(V.31-34.)—In making this reply to his disciples when they pressed him to eat, Jesus affirms, under a veil, that he is not subject to the material needs and requirements of humanity. and he thus asserts his extra-human nature. His answer also illustrates what we have already explained to you (cf. vol. i. p. 166 § 65) that Jesus only took food in appearance, either when it was necessary to convince men of the humanity which they were to believe him to possess, that his mission might be accepted, or to give them some lesson or example of charity, pardon or love.

(V. 35-38.)—The fields white for harvest represent the countries to which Jesus sent his disciples before him, where men dwelt who were prepared to receive the good news, to preserve the word of truth, and to join the disciples, and follow the Master. Jesus was the sower, and his disciples the reapers, who by working at the progress of their brethren, would find their reward in their own personal progress, and would thus gather fruits which would open the path to perfection to them.

(V.38.)—Jesus here alludes to the spiritual influence which prepared men to receive the words of the disciples. The spirits prepared the fields, where Jesus sent his disciples to gather the harvest. He also alludes to the errant or incarnate missionary spirits who had worked at the progress of the human spirit before his disciples. They had prepared for the advent of the Word, and would continue the work. The thought of Jesus likewise embraced the future period of the Christianity of Christ ; the new era now opening before you.

Jesus is still the Sower, who sows by the spirits of the Lord, the organs of the Spirit of Truth.

Apostles of the New Revelation, and all who follow the steps of the Master, and strive to spread the faith, and lead

back the wandering sheep to the fold ; you sow with Jesus, who is the Spirit of Truth, as the fulfilment and sanctification of the truth. You are the "reapers," and you partake the joy of the Master in seeing the ears of the next harvest shoot forth.

"The fields which are already ripe for harvest," are all men who hear the words of truth, weigh them, consider them, and return to the true faith, and worship in spirit and in truth. Are they not joyful, and do you not share their joy with them, and with those who reap, for they also, in their turn, will become those who sow and reap with Jesus ? But it is chiefly in the Father's presence that you will experience transports of joy and gratitude in beholding both sowers and reapers assembled in closest harmony, to sing the praises of the Lord. May it be thus with you, beloved ones ! This is the benediction pronounced by those who watch over you.

VERSES 43-54.

Cure of the Son of a Nobleman at Capernaum.

(43) And after the two days, he departed thence, and went into Galilee. (44) For Jesus himself testified that a prophet hath no honour in his own country. (45) Therefore when he was come into Galilee, the Galileans received him, having seen all the things which he did at Jerusalem at the feast ; for they also went to the feast. (46) Then Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum. (47) He heard that Jesus was come from Judea into Galilee, and went to him, and asked him to come down and heal him, for he was at the point of death. (48) Then Jesus said to him, Unless you see signs and wonders, you will not believe. (49) The nobleman saith to him, Lord, come down before my son die. (50) Jesus saith to him, Go thy way, thy son liveth. And the man believed the word which Jesus said to him, and went. (51) But already as he was going down, his servants met him, and informed him saying, Thy son liveth. (52) Then he inquired of them the hour at which he began to amend, and they said to him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him. (53) Then the father knew that it was in that hour that Jesus said to him, Thy son liveth. And he believed, and his whole house. (54) This again was the second sign which Jesus wrought, when he came from Judea into Galilee.

§ 13. We need not repeat explanations which have already been given in many passages of the commentary on the three first Gospels, relating to similar cures effected by Jesus.

CHAP. V.—VERSES 1-16.

The Pool of Bethesda.

(1) After these things was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. (2) Now there is in Jerusalem a sheep-pool, which is called in Hebrew Bethesda, having five porches. (3) In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, and withered, waiting for the moving of the water. (4) For an angel descended at a certain season into the pool, and disturbed the water; then whoever went down first after the disturbance of the water, was cured of whatever disease he had. (5) And a certain man was there who had been sick for forty years. (6) Jesus, seeing him lying there, and knowing that he had already been thus for a long time, saith to him, Wilt thou be made whole? (7) The sick man answered him, Lord, I have nobody to throw me into the pool when the water is disturbed, but as I am going in, another goes down before me. (8) Jesus saith to him, Arise, take up thy couch, and walk. (9) And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his couch, and walked, and it was the Sabbath on that day. (10) The Jews therefore said to the man who was cured, It is the Sabbath, it is not lawful for you to carry your bed. (11) He answered them, He who made me whole, this man said to me, Take up thy couch and walk. (12) Then they asked him, Who is the man who said to thee, Take up thy bed and walk? (13) And the man who was healed knew not who it was, for Jesus had turned away, and there was a crowd in that place. (14) After these things, Jesus findeth him in the Temple, and said to him, Behold thou art made whole, sin no more, lest a worse thing happen to thee. (15) The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him whole. (16) And on this account the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill him, because he did these things on the Sabbath.

§ 14. The story of the cure at Bethesda, as related by John, is the summary of the popular opinions which he shared. The spring at Bethesda was sometimes agitated by volcanic influences, and its warm and medicinal waters were good for various diseases; but as the cause of the phenomenon was unknown, it was attributed to miraculous agency, and was greatly exaggerated by popular rumour. This phenomenon did not recur at regular intervals, but was preceded by shocks which slightly ruffled the surface, sometimes before the water became turbid from the calcareous substances which were thrown up by subterranean agencies.

You are told that whoever went into the water first was cured of whatever disease he had. Those who entered the water with faith were cured. Those who were afflicted with diseases to which the waters were beneficial, were aided by spiritual magnetism, whereas those who were attacked by

diseases on which the waters had no effect, were cured solely by spiritual magnetism. The spirits of the Lord who approached them exercised invisible magnetic action by means of fluids appropriate to the nature of the disease, and thus effected the cure.

You know the power of faith. He who plunged into the water with perfect confidence, gratitude, and especially submission to the will of Providence, might hope to be cured ; but in those days, perhaps, even more than in your own, men were led away by the crowd, or performed a mere selfish formality in going to the spring, which did not allow their spirits to ascend in thankfulness to Him who is the author of all perfect gifts. Hence many sick persons were not cured, which caused it to be supposed that some special condition was needful to success. Afterwards, to avoid the confusion caused by the eagerness of the sick to plunge into the water, the elders and the learned men promulgated the idea that only he who entered the water first was cured. Thus, the waters preserved their reputation, and when several cures took place (for there were always sick persons who were eager to be cured, and several always plunged in at once, each hoping to be first) it was supposed that it was due to the haste of the patients cured, who had plunged in at once, but if no cure took place it was thought that those who were not cured could not have been the first to plunge in.

The narrative shews you that the man who had been ill for thirty-eight years was a paralytic. You have only to refer to the explanations already given, for all needful information concerning this cure ; as well as for full explanations concerning the cures which Jesus performed on the Sabbath.

VERSES 17-30.

Constant Action of the Father and of Jesus.

(17) And Jesus answered them, My Father works until to-day, and I work. (18) On this account, therefore, the Jews sought the more to kill Jesus, because he not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was his own Father, making himself equal to God. (19) Then

Jesus answered and said to them, Verily, verily I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do ; for whatsoever things he doeth, the Son also doth these things likewise. (20) For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things which he himself doeth, and he will show him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. (21) For as the Father raiseth the dead, and maketh alive, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. (22) For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son. (23) That all men may honour the Son even as they honour the Father. He who honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father who sent him. (24) Verily, verily, I say unto you, He who heareth my word, and believeth on him who sent me, hath age-long life, and cometh not into condemnation, but hath passed from death into life. (25) Verily, verily I say unto you that the hour cometh and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they who hear shall live. (26) For as the Father hath life in himself, so also hath he given to the Son to have life in himself. (27) And hath given him authority also to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. (28) Marvel not at this, for an hour cometh in which all who are in the tombs shall hear his voice. (29) And shall come forth, those who have done good things to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil things to the resurrection of condemnation. (30) I can do nothing of myself. As I hear I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will, but the will of my Father who sent me.

§ 15. The words of Jesus are veiled and figurative, and were only intended to be understood in spirit and in truth; by future generations.

(V. 17.)—By these words Jesus taught the Jews that there is no day of rest from good works. But this is not all ; for under the veil of the letter, he declares that the action of the One, Indivisible God, from whom all things derive their being, is unceasing in space and eternity ; and that he himself, like all the other Messiahs, likewise acts unceasingly, like the Father. But the Father, the Only God, has alone the power of creating, and Jesus has the power of ministering, and thus acts as God's agent in the accomplishment of his mission, which commenced at the formation of your globe, over which he presided. Afterwards he manifested his mission by his appearance on your earth, and he continues it, in order to lead you to perfection.

Under the veil of the letter, he proclaims the continual and eternal activity of God, as well as of the spirit ; for every created spirit also labours, according to his degree in the spiritual scale of creation, for the universal progress, life, and harmony, in space, in the errant state, and in the

various worlds. This action proceeds from God, and is communicated by him to the pure spirits, and by them to the superior and good spirits according to their elevation and degrees of purity.

(V. 18.)—On account of Jesus speaking of God as “My Father,” the Jews accused him of making himself equal to God. They understood the words, “My Father,” in a literal, exclusive, and personal sense, and were irritated at the pretensions to divinity which they supposed that Jesus had made. But the Christians have upheld his divinity on the strength of words which revolted the children of Abraham, although when the Jews accused Jesus of making himself equal to God, he declared, in veiled and figurative language, his relatively inferior and dependent position in reference to God; while, at the same time, he asserted his position and power as the Messiah, the messenger of God.

(V. 19.)—“The Son can do nothing of himself.” This was the reply to the accusation of the Jews: Jesus declares himself inferior to the Father, and dependent on him. But when explained according to the Spirit, these words have a wider sense and scope, as we will explain presently, in treating of v. 30.

“He does only what he sees the Father do.” Speaking generally, the spirit has not senses like the body. In the case of the exalted spirits, Thought is Light, and the divine will is visible to the great spirits who approach the Fire of Omnipotence, and of all life; and it is in this sense that Jesus says that he does only what he sees the Father do. This likewise means that he does nothing except the Father’s will, which he beholds as it really is.

Do not misunderstand the force of the word “sees.” We did not refer to simple intuition on the part of Jesus, but rather to a light enlightening his intelligence, like that of every great spirit who ascends towards these pure regions. Thought is a visible and palpable substance to the spirit, and the more it is purified the more luminous it becomes to it. Thought is thus visible and palpable to the spirit

in the sense that it is conveyed and transmitted by a fluidic current; and you must understand that it is the light enlightening the intelligence of the pure spirit by a pure fluidic current flowing from God, which is the vehicle of the divine Thought. Do you not know that the universal fluid, in all its stages of combinations and transformations in space, is the vehicle of thought, under the attractive influence of the fluids which determine the relationships of spirits among themselves by analogy of nature and species?

“Whatsoever things the Father doeth, the Son also doeth these things likewise.” This alludes to the formation of the planets, over which the pure spirits preside. God created by his will the fluids which surround him on all sides, and which are designed to contain the spiritual essences, and all the germs from which the worlds and all the kingdoms of nature are to derive their being, to be conducted, according to immutable and eternal laws, from the infinitely little to the infinitely great. The Messiahs create the worlds which are formed of these fluids, with the aid of the spirits appointed to assist them, who condense and combine the fluids under their directions.

(V. 20.)—“The Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him whatsoever he doeth.” The Father has confidence in the Son, and permits him to see and to comprehend the actions which he performs as the Creator, because he has attained to the knowledge and purity which qualify him to see and understand. He has communicated to him prevision of events and progress to come, both planetary and human.

“And he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.” Jesus thus alludes to the events and progress that the Father will shew him, or, in other words, which will take place by the will of the Father, and by the intervention of the Son, both during his earthly mission, and afterwards. The generation whom he addressed would marvel, because all those spirits who should not be purified at each epoch of these events, and this progress, and should still be bound to your globe, would witness them,

either in the errant state, or incarnate; whereas all the spirits who should then be purified, and should have arrived at the superior worlds, would likewise witness them, and be present, either from the superior worlds, or as incarnate or errant spirits, on a mission to your earth.

But Jesus spoke to men who were incapable of comprehending his thought, according to the Spirit; and his meaning was veiled from them by the letter. Nevertheless, his words were intended to convince them of his relatively inferior and dependent position in respect to God. The rest of his meaning neither they, nor the men of the Christian era which followed, were capable of understanding, under the veil of the letter.

(V. 21.)—Jesus here alludes to men as “the dead;” and to the spiritual life; which is “life.” “The Father raiseth the dead, and maketh alive,” relative to all the spirits who have failed, and have been cast into the dark places of incarnation, and who are thus spiritually “dead.” The Father raises them, and makes them alive, by making them ascend the scale of progress by reincarnations which are expiatory at first, and then by more elevated reincarnations which lead the spirit to perfection. The spirit is thus made alive, and its life is restored to it, for it is then in definite and permanent possession of the spiritual life which is the normal life of the spirit, and which it had lost. The Father makes alive the spirit whom he has created pure, and who is spiritually “dead,” through having failed, by giving him the means of purifying himself. He restores his life, by the progress he has acquired, and by purity and perfection, until he has become a pure spirit, and is no longer liable to any incarnation.

Thus the Son giveth life to whom he will. That is, to those who render themselves capable and worthy to receive it; for the object of the mission of Jesus is to raise men from the sepulchre of the flesh, in which they delight, and to restore them to spiritual life.

(V. 22.)—“The Father judgeth no man.” The Lord awaits with long suffering the estranged children who

approach him gradually, and will certainly finally reach him; for the law of progress is as immutable as God himself from whom it proceeds, and is the essence of everything which exists; and the spirit, the work of the divine will, created capable of perfection, and endowed with the knowledge of good and evil, is unalterably subject to this law, whatever may be the oscillations, wanderings, and perturbations of its free-will.

When Jesus said, "My Father judgeth no man," he spoke from a human point of view. Men then looked on spiritual actions, as most do still, from a human aspect, and regarded "judgment" as a sentence pronounced after faults have been exposed; after spirits appointed to defend the accused have spoken; even after an investigation, if necessary, and after due deliberation.

The judgment of God exists in fact; because it exists from all eternity. It is a law as immutable as gravitation, day and night, or ebb and flow. It is even more immutable in one sense, for the earth may pass away during its planetary revelations and transformations, without the spirit slackening its ascending course; and the law which governs the spirit cannot and will not pass away.

The judgment of God is not a judicial act, because judgment receives no formal application in consequence of isolated judgments, pronounced against any criminal in consequence of a formal inquiry into his crimes, faults, or deficiencies.

The judgment and its fulfilment exist from all eternity, in the law of spiritual attraction, which determines the relations of spirits to each other according to the character of each, by the attractive influence of the fluids, which are drawn together by analogy of nature and species. This law of attraction connects all the worlds in the universe, and all the spirits, whether incarnate or not, by means of the magnetic fluids. It is the universal bond which encircles all spirits like a single being, and aids them to ascend to God by the union of their powers, the superior spirits working incessantly at the progress of the lower.

The spirit applies this law freely to himself, with the knowledge of good and evil which God has given him; and to its decisions he is unalterably submitted. The spirit possesses free will; and he must repair his errors, and return from his wanderings of his own accord. If he is firmly resolved to renounce evil, and to enter on the path of well-doing, he attracts good influences, and enters into relationships with good spirits, animated by the same desires and sympathies as himself, who aid him to progress, and under their inspiration and protection he advances, and the judgment of God does not fall upon him.

But if the spirit, on the contrary, delights in evil, and does not listen to the friendly voices which strive to divert him from it, and to lead him to enter on a better course, he attracts evil influences, and unconsciously enters into relations with evil spirits, both incarnate and errant, who are animated by the same desires and sentiments as himself. He remains stationary, for the spirit does not retrograde, and the judgment of God falls upon him.

The judgment of God is want of progress. It is the immutable law of suffering, which sooner or later falls upon the guilty, and leads to remorse. This is as certain and inevitable as the knowledge of good and evil existing in the guilty spirit, and the law of perfectibility which proceeds from God.

Time passes away without bringing any relief, or satisfying the aspirations of the spirit; but he does not always aspire towards progress. He may also incline towards crime, idleness, malice, luxury, intemperance, pride, envy, selfishness or avarice. Do you not perceive that the moment these passions are left unsatisfied, he experiences part of the condemnation which his evil tendencies inflict upon himself? In short, the judgment of God is the fruitless struggle which continues as long as the spirit has not formed the firm resolve to renounce evil, and enter on the path of well-being; for from the moment when he becomes guilty, and cannot advance towards God, the attractive influence of the magnetic fluids which he assimilates to himself retains

him among the inferior spirits in the spheres of expiation, and he is forced to renew his trials until they have led to progress, and to suffer fresh ones until he has acquired the progress necessary to free the spirit from reincarnations in the spheres. This is what we have to tell you concerning the judgment of God. But beware of attaching to the things of the spiritual world the same ideas as to those of your own, for you would be led into error. We can only use human words to endeavour to enable you to understand subjects which are above human intelligence.

The "judgment" of God is a human expression which has enabled man to understand that as God is the source and origin of all things, everything which exists proceeds from him. But the word should be retained, although from some points of view it has no existence, for it is the only one which reminds the spirit of man of the incessant action of divinity on everything which exists. But for this expression, "the judgment of God," the fate of spirits after leaving human life, would appear to most incarnate spirits an inevitable fatality, without either reason or object. But the "judgment of God" assigns to each his real position in the eyes of all.

"But hath committed all judgment to the Son. (V. 23.) That all men may honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He who honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father who sent him." These words cannot be fully understood or explained, if isolated from the context. Man's judgment is followed by condemnation, and it is from this human point of view that Jesus said, "You judge according to the flesh, but I judge no one."

Jesus waits, but does not condemn, for it is man who condemns himself by his own actions. Judgment is the inevitable consequence which springs from human actions. Do not forget that everything bears fruit, and the main thing is to know when to gather it. Jesus only applies the law; but it is the guilty spirit who freely judges and condemns himself.

From this point of view Jesus says, "The Father has committed all judgment to the Son." He is the interme-

diate agent who watches over the path of everyone ; he urges one forward, checks the haste of another, and aids all the sheep entrusted to his care to follow the path which leads them to the fold.

The repression of guilty spirits is not a sentence followed by condemnation, but merely a paternal method of leading them back to the path of well-doing, and of helping them to save themselves by forcing them to behold the light against which they had closed their eyes ; and thus to prepare them to enter on the path of expiation, in order that they may judge and condemn themselves. It is in this sense, and as the mediator between God and yourselves, that Jesus has received from the Father the power to judge ; that is, to watch over the development and progress of men, and to aid them to advance, by all methods, and according to the faculties and necessities of each ; "that they may honour the Son even as they honour the Father."

Jesus typifies the morality which leads to God, and the only way to honour the Father is to obey his law. Consequently he who does not practise the morality which leads to him, does not honour him, and therefore he who does not honour the Son, because he does not practice the morality which he personifies, does not honour the Father, for this morality is the Father's doctrine, and not that of his messenger.

(V. 24.)—He who can walk so purely in the steps of Jesus as not to deviate from them, and thus obeys the precepts which lead to God, enters upon a new phase of progress and experience which aids him to advance towards perfection, and he is not liable to enter upon expiation, but has passed from "death" to "life," as regards the path of progress, and relatively to his degree of purification ; for he is no longer kept in exile in the spheres of expiation, but can, if his degree of purification is sufficient, be released from the material experiences of your planet, and is no longer obliged to return to a body of flesh like yours, which is figuratively a tomb to him.

(V. 25.)—This alludes to the prophets and missionaries,

or the spirits sent on a mission, or with a message to mankind, as well as to the righteous who were incarnated before the earthly mission of Jesus, and who were then already "alive," in the sense that they were sufficiently purified to be released from the material experiences of your planet ; and because the degree of purification which they had acquired rendered it unnecessary for them to resume a body of flesh. They "live" because they had heard the voice of the Son of God. Jesus thus alludes to his position as the spiritual ruler of your planet, entrusted with the development and progress of your humanity.

The "dead," that is, the incarnate, who shall hear the voice of the Son of God, shall live. Jesus thus foretells and promises that all those who shall walk in his steps subsequently to his earthly mission, shall also be delivered from the material trials of your planet, and from a body of flesh like yours.

(V. 26.)—Jesus still proclaims his relatively inferior and dependent position before all. The Father hath life in himself, because he possesses all perfections ; and he hath given to the Son to have life in himself, by enabling him to acquire all perfections.

(V. 27.)—"And has given him the power of judgment." We have already given you the meaning of these words under v. 22. The judgment of Christ is nothing but that law which he inevitably applies to every human spirit ; the law of progress if he endeavours to improve, and the law of stagnation if he persists in his faults.

"Because he is the Son of Man." This is a figurative expression, and means, "Although he has acquired superiority by his labours, he nevertheless retains his relationship to the labourers who are still at work."

(V. 28.)—The time is coming when all those in the tombs (that is, all the incarnate spirits, for your fleshly bodies are the tomb of your spirit) shall hear the voice of the Son of Man. Jesus alludes to the results which were to spring from his earthly mission, and from the accomplishment of the mission of the Apostles ; but more especially to the

fulfilment of his promises by the Spirit of Truth, and to the time of his second coming.

(V. 29).—These expressions are still figurative, and always embody the same class of ideas. Those who have progressed will be required to continue their ascending course, according to the degree of purification which they have acquired, either on your planet or on the superior worlds; but the hardened and guilty spirits will be compelled to remain on the inferior worlds, and will be reincarnated there, according to their degree of guilt, the conditions of expiation which they must suffer, and the necessities of the progress which they have to make. The tombs always mean those bodies of flesh which are the true sepulchres of the spirit. The resurrection to life is rebirth or reincarnation, which opens anew the ascending course in the path of progress; but the resurrection of condemnation is rebirth, or reincarnation to renewed trials in the spheres of expiation, to recommence the work which has been badly done.

(V. 30).—Jesus “can do nothing of himself,” because he applies the universal and immutable law of reincarnation and trials, and thus executes the eternal degrees and immutable will of the Father. He regulates the effects and consequences of the free-will of man, and of the use which he has made of it, and classes the spirit for rebirth, according to its fluidic state. When the spirit rises victorious from its trials, it enters into conditions appropriate to its faculties and capacities of progress; and the guilty spirit likewise enters into conditions appropriate to its need of reparation and progress.

“I judge as I hear, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will, but the will of him that sent me.” You must not understand the word “hear” literally. The division of the senses does not exist to the pure spirit, whose sensations and perceptions are in all his being, without his possessing a single material and special sense.

It may be said that Jesus judges as he hears and sees, for the immutable law of progress or stagnation is only

applied by him as a consequence of the thoughts and actions of the incarnate spirits, and his judgment is just, because he does not seek his own will, but the will of him that sent him. That is, he is faithful to the inspiration which he receives directly from God, and only obeys his will in executing his immutable, eternal, and universal laws.

VERSES 31-38.

The Father's Testimony to Jesus.

(31) If I bear witness of myself, my testimony is not true. (32) There is another who beareth witness about me, and I know that the testimony which he beareth concerning me is true. (33) You sent to John, and he bore witness to the truth. (34) But I receive not the testimony from man, but I say these things that ye may be saved. (35) He was the burning and shining light, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light. (36) But I have a testimony greater than that of John, for the works which my Father hath given me to finish, the same works which I do bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me. (37) And the Father who hath sent me, he hath borne witness concerning me; you have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape. (38) And you have not his word abiding in you; for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not.

§ 16. It is by the work that you judge of the workman and his employer.

(V. 31-33.)—Man should never set himself up as an example, but he ought to serve as one. His works and example ought to bear witness in his favour; and this is the only testimony which can be rendered of him; but others, and not himself, should bear this testimony to him. Such is the lesson to be drawn from the Master's words (v. 31.)

In v. 32 he asserts his perfect knowledge of his origin, and his certainty of the future, in reference to the mission which he has received from the Father, and which he must fulfil. He thus shows that his spirit retains its independence and liberty under the envelope which he assumed to make himself visible to men.

(V. 33-36.)—John had borne witness to the truth when he informed the messengers of the Jews that he was not the Christ, but only his Forerunner; but it was from God

that Jesus received the testimony of his mission as a celestial messenger.

"I say these things that ye may be saved." Those who believed in his mission were enabled to save themselves by receiving his words and teachings with confidence and faith, and by walking in his steps.

John was a superior spirit on a mission. The Jews had heard his words as those of a prophet, a messenger of God ; but his mission was preparatory, and was only to last a short time. The Forerunner was to sink into obscurity in the presence of the Christ, and to see his task finished, when Jesus entered in his public mission. Jesus had a greater testimony than that of John in the actions which he performed, the power which was given to him, and the "miracles" which he wrought, and which bore testimony to him that he was the messenger of the Father. "And my Father who hath sent me, himself beareth witness of me." Jesus here alludes to the spirit-manifestations which took place when he was with John on the banks of the Jordan, and afterwards at the time of the Transfiguration on Mount Tabor: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased ; hear him."

Jesus adds (v. 37), "Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape." These words were used by Jesus in a twofold sense. He told the Jews that they had not been present at the spirit-manifestations on the banks of the Jordan, and on Mount Tabor ; and he also desired to declare that God never manifests himself personally to men.

(V. 38.)—As Jesus was the messenger of God to men, his words were as the words of God. The Jews not only disbelieved his mission, but rejected his morality, his teachings, and his example, and therefore the word of God did not abide in them ; but they retained the prejudices, vices, and passions with which they were imbued.

He who denied the name and mission of Jesus, from ignorance or scrupulousness, and in sincerity, but nevertheless believed in the morality which he personified, and acted

as if he had believed in the mission of Christ, would be, not in name, but in fact, just as much his disciple as the prophets and just men in Israel, before his coming upon your earth. This will always be so. Whatever may be the opinions of men, and to whatever religion or sect they belong, they are actually disciples of Jesus (although they may deny his name in the present incarnation), if they act as if they believed in him, by practising the morality which sums up the divine law, and includes all the law and the prophets. In this case their denial of the name of the Master is due to prejudice, and to the effect of the surroundings amid which they were born and have lived; and their acting as if they believed in Jesus is the reflection of a previous incarnation.

VERSES 39-47.

The Scripture Testimony to Jesus.

(39) Search the writings, for you think you have age-long life in them, and it is they which testify of me. (40) And you will not come to me, that you might have life. (41) I receive not glory from men. (42) But I know you, that you have not the love of God in you. (43) I have come in the name of my Father, and you receive me not; if another shall come in his own name, him you will receive. (44) How can you believe, receiving glory from others, and seek not the glory which cometh from the only God? (45) Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye have hoped. (46) For if you had believed Moses, you would have believed me, for he wrote concerning me. (47) But if you believe not his writings, how shall you believe my words?

§ 17. These verses are intelligible in themselves, especially after the explanations which we have already given.

(V. 39-41.)—Jesus asserts that he is the Messiah promised to the Hebrews, according to the interpretations given to the words of Moses and the prophets; and that the Jews did not receive him, because he does not receive glory from men; that is, because he is not a material liberator. He came to give them spiritual life, and they would not come to him to receive it.

(V. 42.)—Jesus declares that he reads and knows their thoughts, and likewise asserts his extra-human faculties, origin, and nature.

(V. 42, 43.)—"I am the messenger of God, and you do not receive me; but if another should come to you in his own name, and present himself to you as a material liberator, him you will receive. How can you believe, or accept my mission, which is purely spiritual, and walk in my steps; you who seek for independence and glory in the material life, and do not seek the glory which flows from God alone, which is spiritual life?"

(V. 44.)—Had the Jews followed the law of Moses purely and faithfully? No; Jesus had already said, "I know that you have not the love of God in you."

(V. 45, 46.)—Moses had announced the coming of the Messiah, that is, the Christ, and he taught the Jews the love of God, and of the neighbour as oneself, which implies and includes the observance of the Decalogue. To believe Moses, and to believe what he had written was therefore to believe in the mission of Jesus, by extending the law which Moses had laid down to all men.

"If you had believed Moses, who announced my coming as Messiah, you would also believe me, when I tell you that I am the Messiah; because he wrote of me. If you do not believe what he has written (that is, if you do not faithfully follow his law by observing the Decalogue and practising the love of God, and of the neighbour as oneself), how can you believe what I tell you; for I come to lead you back to the pure practice of that law, by guiding you into the paths of light, justice, charity, and truth? How then can you accept my teaching and follow my commands, and my example?"

(V. 44.)—These words were designed to teach men that, whoever they are, and whatever may be their opinions, whether Jews or Gentiles, Christians or Mohammadans, it is their actions which testify for or against them, before God.

Let us consider the words of Jesus (v. 39, 45, 46), and the following passages from the Old Testament. "And in thy (Abraham's) seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed my voice," (Gen. xxii. 18); "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet until Shiloh come, and unto him shall

the gathering of the people be." (Gen. xlix. 10) ; "The Lord thy God shall raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him." (Deut. xviii. 15-18.) Is it correct to say that when Jesus quoted what Moses said of him, he expressly excluded all divinity for himself, or any possibility of supposing that he was God, and thus condemned beforehand the divinity which was to be attributed to him by the erroneous interpretations of men?

Certainly; but you should observe that Jesus not only refers to what Moses wrote of him, but to what was written of him by the prophets likewise, as you may perceive by his referring the Jews to the Scriptures (v. 39.)

We tell you, for Jesus, and with Jesus, as he said to the Jews, "Search the Scriptures," both of the old law and the new law, and you will find in the writings of the old law, the Revelation given through Moses and the prophets, which was purposely veiled in order to meet the necessities of the time. This Revelation, always supplemented by human interpretations, announced the coming of the Messiah. Thus the old Revelation prepared the way for that made by the angel to Mary and Joseph, respecting the appearance of Jesus on earth; it also prepared for his earthly mission, both as regards the transition which was to be accomplished under the veil of the letter, and as forming the basis of the future Revelation of the Spirit of Truth, at the time of the new era.

Search the Scriptures of the old law, and refer to all the texts which we have quoted (§ 1) on this subject, and you will then see that the Hebrew revelation represents the promised Messiah, the Christ (with reference to the transitional period which was to be provided for), as an exceptional and mysterious being, possessing at the same time both a human and extra-human, or miraculous, nature and origin. According to his human origin, he was to spring from the posterity of Abraham, and of the house of David. He was to be the Son of David, and a prophet like unto Moses, but he was also to be one in whom "all the nations of the earth should be blessed," and of whom God said

through Moses, "unto whom shall ye hearken." According to his extra-human origin, which appeared to men to be miraculous and divine, he was to be the object of a prodigy given to the house of David, and was to be born of a virgin; he was the Lord of David, and the Son of God "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee; I will be his Father, and he shall be my Son." He founded the earth, and also the heavens, which the Hebrews regarded as an integral part of the earth.

Compare the Scriptures of the old and new law, and refer to all the texts quoted in § 1, and you will see that the Hebrew Revelation, as interpreted by Paul, represents the promised Messiah in such a manner as to lay the foundation of the future Revelation of the Spirit of Truth. I represent him as Melchizedec who appeared to Abraham and blessed him, and received from him a share of the spoils, but who was without father, mother, or genealogy. God, who desires neither sacrifice nor oblation, formed him a body for his entrance into the world; and he knew neither beginning of life nor end of days, being a priest forever after the order of Melchizedec, not by the law of carnal succession, but by the power of his immortal life, which none could take away from him; and to whom he said through the prophets, "Thou art my Son," "O God," "God your God." But according to the words put into his mouth, "I will proclaim thy name to my brethren," "God hath taken his seat in the assembly of the mighty; he judgeth the Gods;" "I said, ye are Gods, and ye are all the Sons of the Most High," the God of the Son is the only Eternal God, the God of Israel of the Hebrew monotheism. Thus the Son was the Son of the God of the Gods, and God like his brethren,—men,—as being the Son of the Most High God. But what makes him the only Son of God, as regards you spirits who have failed, and are consequently cast into the dark places of human incarnation, is his being holy, innocent, and undefiled, separate from sinners, and perfect for ever, having founded the earth, and being entrusted with its government.

Search the Scriptures of the new law, and you will see how the appearance of Jesus on your planet, and the circumstances of his earthly mission were appropriated to the Hebrew revelation, and were accomplished conformably with it. You will see that his appearance took place, according to the Revelation made by the angel, under such circumstances that it remained secret during the earthly mission of Jesus, during which it appeared to men that he had a human father and mother, of the descendants of David. But after the fulfilment of his mission, he appeared to men to be miraculously born of a virgin by the operation of the Holy Spirit, whom the Jews regarded a manifestation of God himself. Thus you see Jesus, during his earthly mission, appearing to men as the son of Joseph and Mary, and thus by descent the son of Abraham, the son of David, a man like themselves, and a prophet like Moses. You see Jesus likewise declaring himself to be a prophet, and the son of David, calling God his Father, and at the same time calling his disciples his brethren, and saying, "My Father and your Father; my God and your God," and addressing himself to the Father in the words, "Thou, who art the only true God." He thus did all that was necessary to lead men to believe in the humanity which was attributed to him, and also gradually prepared them to receive the announcement of the Revelation of the angel, subsequently to the accomplishment of his earthly mission. You can see that the revelation of the angel was purposely veiled that it might be useful to prepare for the period of transition. You behold Jesus also purposely veiling his words, and arranging everything for the transitional period which was to follow as a necessary condition and means of progress, so as to be useful for the present and future under the veil of the letter; while, at the same time, he prepared the foundations of the future Revelation of the Spirit of Truth, the precursor of his second coming. This is the present Revelation, which replaces the letter by the Spirit which giveth life, and teaches men that the appearance of humanity and of human descent given to the Messiah by the two veiled

revelations of the old and new law, was transitory, though needful to lead men on to your days, which are the dawn of the advent of the Spirit.

But is it not a perversion of the words of Genesis, "He who shall spring from thee;" and of Deuteronomy, "a prophet like unto me," to question the extra-human nature of Jesus, as it is revealed?

The majority borrow from the revelations of the old and new law, and admit the authority of one portion, and reject that of another.

But we repeat that these two purposely veiled revelations exhibit Jesus as the Messiah, and his advent as at once human, and extra-human.

The words of Moses just quoted are only one of the phases of the revelation of the old law, and preparatory to the new law, which was itself to lead men on to your own days. This question should be raised; but if you reflect, you will understand that Moses could not announce a fact to the Hebrews which they would have been unable to understand, and which he himself in his incarnate state was equally incapable of comprehending. It would have been just as useful to have given him the mission of Jesus, and to cause him to sow good seed where nothing but darnel could yet grow. Every age has its appropriate missionaries. It is true that Moses was inspired, but for that very reason he only said what it was fitting that he should say; and in his incarnate state, he was ignorant of the mission and nature of the Messiah. It was the same with the prophets who succeeded Moses, and who revealed the extra-human nature of the Messiah. They too, were inspired, but they also said only what it was fitting for them to say; and in their incarnate state, they knew no more than Moses, for even those who were living during the earthly mission of the Messiah were not to comprehend it. Every age and era only receives what it is able to bear.

Are you not aware that revelations are successive and progressive, appropriate to the conditions and means of progress of your human generations, in such a manner as to lead them on their ascending course, while each revelation

prepares for that which is to follow? The Hebrews, who were not intended to understand the veiled revelation of the old law, were led by the human interpretation, which had been handed down to them, to look upon the Messiah as a material liberator who was to revive their independence and nationality, and to extend and establish the dominion and empire of Israel over all the nations of the earth.

The Christians, who were not to understand the revelation of the new law, regarded Christ as the promised Messiah, according to the human interpretations which they received, and ascribed divinity to him. They regarded him as a man who was clothed with a material human body like themselves, and equally subject to death; and also as a God miraculously incarnated.

And now, as a result of the magnetic and spiritual sciences which God has revived, by causing them to rise up prominently before the eyes of all, the New Revelation shows you Jesus, such as he is in spirit and in truth; a spirit who had originally the same starting-point as yourselves, but who always remained pure in the path of progress, and arrived at sidereal perfection, and thus became a pure spirit without ever having fallen; and yet he is your brother, although the founder, protector and ruler of your planet.

CHAP. VI.—VERSES 1-15.

Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes.

(1) And after these things Jesus departed across the sea of Galilee, of Tiberias. (2) And a great multitude followed him, because they saw the miracles which he performed on the sick. (3) And Jesus went up into the mountain, and sat there with his disciples. (4) And the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand. (5) Then Jesus lifting up his eyes, and seeing a great multitude come to him, saith to Philip, Whence should we buy loaves that these may eat? (6) And he said this to try him, for he knew what he was about to do. (7) Philip answered him, Two hundred denarii worth of loaves is not sufficient for them, that each of them should take a little. (8) Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, one of his disciples, says to him, (9) There is a lad here, who has five barley loaves and two small fishes, but what are these among so many? (10) And Jesus said, Make the men lie down. And there was much grass in the place. Then the men lay down, the number being about five thousand. (11) And Jesus took the loaves, and having given thanks, he

gave them to the disciples, and the disciples to those lying down; likewise also as much as they desired of the fishes. (12) And when they were filled, he said to his disciples, Gather up the remaining fragments, that nothing be lost. (13) Then they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained to those who had eaten. (14) Then the men, seeing the sign which Jesus did, said, Truly this is the prophet who was to come into the world. (15) Then Jesus, knowing that they were about to come and seize upon him, to make him a king, went out into the mountain himself alone.

§ 18. The explanation previously given of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes (vol. ii. § 173, pp. 76–80) is fully applicable here. You are told that Jesus, knowing that the crowd who witnessed the “miracle” desired to make him a king, withdrew again to the mountain alone. You also know the object of the Jews, who looked upon him as a material liberator; but he had said, “My kingdom is not of this world.” You have also been told what became of Jesus, when he was absent from men, and was supposed to have retired to the desert, or to the mountains.

VERSES 16–24.

Jesus walking on the Lake.

(16) And when it was evening, his disciples went down to the lake. (17) And embarking in the boat, they went across the lake to Capernaum. And it was already dark, and Jesus had not come to them. (18) And the lake rose on account of a great wind that blew. (19) Then when they had rowed about twenty-five or thirty stadia, they see Jesus walking on the lake, and coming near the boat; and they were afraid. (20) And he said to them, It is I; be not afraid. (21) Then they wished to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land to which they were going. (22) On the next day the multitude who had remained on the other side of the lake, seeing that there was no other boat there, except that in which his disciples had embarked, and that Jesus did not go with his disciples in the boat, but that his disciples had gone away alone; (23) But there came other boats from Tiberias, near the place where they ate bread, after the Lord had given thanks; (24) When therefore the multitude saw that Jesus was not there, nor his disciples, they also got into the boats, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus.

§ 19. Here, as elsewhere, the Gospel narratives mutually complete and explain each other; and we have already explained the phenomenon of Jesus walking on the water (vol. ii. § 174, pp. 81–84).

VERSES 25-40.

The Mission of Jesus.

(25) And finding him on the other side, they said to him, Rabbi, when camest thou here? (26) Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, You seek me not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were satisfied. (27) Labour not for the food that perisheth, but for the food which endureth to age-long life, which the Son of Man giveth you; for this has been determined by God, the Father. (28) Then they said to him, What shall we do that we may work the works of God? (29) Jesus answered and said to them, This is the work of God, that you should believe in him whom he hath sent. (30) Then they said to him, What sign dost thou perform, then, that we may see and believe in thee? what dost thou work? (31) Our fathers ate manna in the desert, as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat. (32) Then Jesus said to them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not bread from heaven, but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. (33) For the bread of God is that which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life to the world. (34) Then they said to him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. (35) And Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life; he who cometh to me shall not hunger, and he who believeth in me shall never thirst. (36) But I said to you that you have also seen me, and believe not. (37) All that the Father giveth me will come to me; and he who cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. (38) For I came down from heaven not to do my will, but the will of him that sent me. (39) And this is the will of my Father who sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I shall lose nothing, but should raise it up on the last day. (40) And this is the will of him that sent me, that everyone who seeth the Son and believeth in him, should have age-lasting life, and that I should raise him up at the last day.

§ 20. The multitude, who had been present at the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, and who said, "This is truly the prophet who was to come into the world," perceived that Jesus had crossed the sea without making use of any boat; and as they supposed that another miracle had taken place, they said to him, "When camest thou here?" Jesus did not tell them that he had walked on the sea; for if they had known it, it would have made a still greater impression upon them, and would have again aroused their idea of making him a king by force. His mission was to be fulfilled, and to take its natural course.

He took the fact of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes as his text, in order at once to make a veiled revelation of his origin and mission, and as a lesson. But this revelation and lesson were not to be explained until men were

prepared to support and understand them. Jesus asserted his extra-human nature and origin, and his mission, which is not merely to nourish the body, but rather to nourish the soul by the true "bread of heaven;" the "bread of God;" the "bread of life," which he multiplies for those who believe in him, and who endeavour to walk in his steps.

(V. 27-33.)—Jesus here asserts his extra-human nature and origin, his mission, and his powers. God has set his seal upon the Son of Man; for he is, by his nature, the image of the substance of God, being a pure spirit, clothed with a tangible fluidic body, to render him visible to human eyes. We have already explained how, as being descended from heaven, he is the celestial man, clothed with a celestial or fluidic body.

Jesus, as the messenger of God, gives life to the world by his earthly mission, for he has laid the foundations of human regeneration. He still gives life to the world, for since his earthly mission he continues the work of human regeneration. Jesus also gave life to the world as the founder of your globe; and still gives life as its protector and ruler, for after having watched over its formation, he continues to direct its development and progress.

In v. 38 Jesus declares his dependence and inferiority in relation to God, and that he only acts according to the inspirations which he receives directly from him, and according to his will.

(V. 28, 29.)—What men must do to work the works of God is to love God above all things, and to love their neighbour as themselves. The work of God is to believe in Jesus, and walk in his ways; for he who walks in his ways practises the love of God and of the neighbour.

(V. 32-35.)—The true "bread of heaven," which the Father gives to men, is the morality of the Master, and his lessons and examples, which you are told is not his doctrine, but the doctrine of him that sent him. He who comes to Jesus, and believes in him; that is, he who endeavours to walk in his ways, and to practise his morality, teaching, and example, shall never hunger or thirst for material thing.

He will be able to rule matter by spirit, and to use it as a means of charity, love, personal progress for himself, and collective progress for his brethren.

(V. 36.)—You have seen my works, and do not believe either in my mission or in my word.

(V. 39, 40.)—The words, "I will raise them up at the last day," allude to the termination of material incarnations. Is not the spirit which is subjected to material incarnation "dead" to spiritual life? And ought not the efforts which are made to bring it to perfection, to lead to its resurrection on the last day, when it has attained the degree of purification which will deliver it from contact with the material body?

The thought of Jesus embraced both the present and the future, and applied to the men to whom he spoke as well as to those of future generations.

And, firstly, respecting the period at which he spoke. According to the Father's will, he will lose none of these whom the Father has given him. That is, he will guard them with a watchful eye, and aid them to advance. All those who asked to gather round him as his disciples during his earthly mission have been obedient to the advice of their guides, and asked for some mission or task, from devotion, in proportion to their strength and capabilities. He will likewise deliver all those from material incarnation who have listened to his words, followed him, and endeavoured to walk in his steps; when they shall have attained to the necessary degree of purification.

Secondly, as regards the future. According to the will of the Father, all those whomsoever who see Jesus in his works, which personify him, and believe in him, and practise his morality, teachings, and example, shall have eternal life. They will pass from progress to progress, from ascent to ascent, to perfection, and will attain to the life of pure spirits, which is the eternal life of the spirit.

And Jesus will raise them up at the last day, by delivering them from material incarnation when they shall have attained the necessary degree of purification.

(V. 37.)—Jesus never rejects those who come to him. He never casts those down to the inferior worlds who enter upon the practical paths of his morality; nor will he cast those out who shall have entered on the path of progress at the time of the purification of your planet. Even the guilty and hardened spirits who will be removed from your earth will not be lost, for although they have been called like others, and have not yet been elected, they are destined afterwards to be so. Their exile on the inferior worlds is only a means of expiation, reparation and progress, to enable them also to attain to the "resurrection at the last day," and to "eternal life."

VERSES 41-51.

The Jews murmur against Jesus.

(41) Then the Jews murmured about him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. (42) And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph? Do we not know his father and mother? how then does this man say, I came down from heaven? (43) Then Jesus answered and said to them, Do not murmur among yourselves. (44) No man can come to me, unless my Father who sent me draw him; and I will raise him up at the last day. (45) It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God; therefore everyone who hath heard and learned of my Father, cometh unto me. (46) Not because anyone hath seen the Father, except he who is from the Father, he hath seen the Father. (47) Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath age-lasting life. (48) I am the bread of life. (49) Your fathers ate manna in the desert, and have died. (50) This is the bread which came down from heaven, that anyone may eat of it, and not die. (51) I am the bread of life which came down from heaven. If any one shall eat of this bread, he shall live during the age. And the bread also which I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

§ 21. Here you see an illustration of what we have already told you. Even those who were present at the appearance of Jesus on your earth, and during his mission, were not to understand him. No more can be given to any age than it is fitted to receive; and during his earthly mission, Jesus was to be regarded by men as a man like themselves, the son of Joseph and Mary.

The words, "I am the bread of life which came down from heaven," impressed the Jews strongly, although they could not understand them. They had a confused idea that

they implied the celestial and superhuman origin of Jesus, and said, murmuring, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?" Jesus avoided answering their questions, for the revelation of the angel was to remain secret during his earthly mission, and was itself not intended to be understood. The question was only to be answered in your own days by the Revelation of the Spirit of Truth, when men should be better fitted to support and comprehend it.

Jesus contented himself with saying to the Jews, "Do not murmur among yourselves;" and then repeated the words which he had just said, and strengthened them by fresh illustrations (verses 44, 47-51), which our previous explanations (§ 20) will enable you to understand.

(V. 49.)—The incarnate spirits who ate the manna in the desert, were ignorant and material, and needed to be purified in the furnace of reincarnation.

(V. 50.)—The morality which I personify must regenerate men. I bring it them, coming among them from the celestial regions, that those who practise it may succeed in freeing themselves from material incarnation by arriving at perfection, and thus will not die.

(V. 44.)—These words were designed to emphasize the action of spirits on men, and to teach that only those incarnate spirits who obey the inspirations of good spirits, can advance towards Jesus, by earnest and sustained efforts to practise his morality, teaching and example. You must not imagine that God is a spiritual and fluidic centre, who attracts spirits immediately to himself. If this were the case, all spirits would be equally attracted to him. But it is not so; and the Lord exerts no such determinate action except upon those spirits who are sufficiently purified to be able to feel and submit to it. This action is only direct in the case of pure spirits. In the case of incarnate spirits, it only acts indirectly by the mediation of the superior and good spirits, according to their degree of elevation.

The attractive influence of God upon man can only make itself felt when the spirit has arrived at a certain degree of

purification which permits him to assimilate to some extent some of the divine emanations. The inferior spirits will also arrive at this point, at a fitting time and place, through the exertions of the good spirits who guide them, and urge them onwards. But the words of Jesus were addressed at the moment directly to those around him; otherwise he would have said, "will not be able to come to me," and not, "cannot;" which sufficiently shews that he spoke of the different degrees of advancement of the incarnate spirits who surrounded him, which led some to follow him, and others to persecute him.

(V. 45.)—According to the Spirit which giveth life, the meaning of these words is the same, and follows from what we have just said in explanation of v. 44.

The spirit in the path of progress and purification feels the impulse given by the good spirits more directly, and receives their inspiration, which has its source in the Lord; and he is consequently disposed to listen to him whom the Lord has sent.

"It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God," by his messengers and missionaries, whether incarnate or errant, and by the inspiration of his good spirits. Consequently, all those who have received the inspiration of the good spirits, which is the Father's voice, and have been taught by him through his missionaries, are disposed to listen, and to follow Jesus.

(V. 46.)—These words, according to the Spirit which underlies the veil of the letter, were designed to teach that no man incarnated on your planet could be in direct communion with God; and that only Jesus, a pure spirit, could receive his inspiration directly. When Jesus said of himself, "He who is born of God," and "I am descended from heaven," he asserted his extra-human origin.

VERSES 52-58.

The Morality of Jesus.

(52) Then the Jews contended among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? (53) Then Jesus said to them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and

drink his blood, ye have not life in yourselves. (54) He who eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath age-lasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day. (55) For my flesh is truly food, and my blood is truly drink. (56) He who eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me, and I in him. (57) As the living Father hath sent me, I also live through the Father, and he who eateth me, he also shall live through me. (58) This is the bread which came down from heaven ; not as your fathers ate the manna, and died. He who eateth this bread shall live through the age.

§ 22. You must not take these sayings literally, like the rulers of the Church ; for here as almost everywhere in the words of Jesus, the letter is an envelope which covers the spirit. All the words of Jesus are figurative, and all the thoughts veiled by these words are spiritual. Jesus alludes to the morality which he came to preach. This is his flesh and blood, for he is essentially pure, and practised to the fullest extent the principle of love which he came to preach. Thus those who cherish this love, figuratively feed on the flesh and blood of him who is wholly love. This food will not perish, nor will he who chooses it, for it can only strengthen him, and cause him to live for ever in the joy of the Lord.

Is it not incredible that sensible and well-informed men should have erred so far as to liken the spiritual essence of the Saviour Christ, to material food, subjected in part to maceration in the stomach, and liable to be carried away by digestion? O poor humanity! You have already received sufficient explanations respecting this materialistic human doctrine of the Real Presence (vol. ii. §§ 283, 284, pp. 366-373.)

Those who established this dogma would have avoided the monstrous error caused by blindly following the letter, and would have understood the words of Jesus according to the spirit which giveth life, if they had sufficiently meditated upon and understood the words spoken at the Last Supper, "Do this in remembrance of me ;" as well as those which we shall presently see Jesus address to his disciples, because some of them murmured precisely on account of the figurative expressions which we are now explaining. "It is the Spirit which giveth life ; the flesh profiteth

nothing; the words that I speak to you are spirit and life."

He who practises the morality which Jesus came to preach by his teaching and example; and thus practices human brotherhood; he and he alone eats the "bread of life," the "flesh and the blood," which he personifies by this morality. He alone has eternal life, and advances on the path of progress, and is sure to attain to perfection, and to the life of the pure spirits, by his perseverance. Jesus "will raise him up at the last day," and will release him from material incarnations when he shall have attained the degree of purification which will release him from contact from the material body; for the morality of Jesus is truly meat and drink to the spirit, thus nourishes itself with love, drinks from the source of all progress, and of the eternal truths, progresses, and purifies itself.

Yes, he who practices the morality of Jesus, he and he alone abides in Jesus and Jesus abides in him; for the principle of love unites them. Just as God who sent Jesus on a mission to the earth has all existence in himself from all eternity; and as Jesus, a pure essence, lives by the Father, because he is in direct communion with him; even so, he who practices the morality of Jesus will live by him, being in direct communion with him, when he shall have acquired the necessary degree of purification; and he will live for ever, for he will attain to perfection, and the life of the pure spirits.

If man does not practice the morality of Jesus, he has no life in himself. He will neither progress, nor purify himself; but will remain stationary, for the life of the spirit is progress and purification; and he will therefore be subject to material expiatory incarnation.

VERSES 59-71.

Murmurs of some of the Disciples of Jesus.

(59) Jesus said these things teaching in a synagogue at Capernaum. (60) Then many of his disciples who heard it said, This saying is hard, who can listen to it? (61) And Jesus perceiving in himself that his disciples murmured about this, said to them, Does this offend you? (62)

What if you should see the Son of Man rise up where he was before ? (63) The Spirit is that which giveth life ; the flesh profiteth nothing ; the words which I speak unto you are spirit and life. (64) But there are some among you who do not believe. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who believed not, and who it was who should betray him. (65) And he said, On this account I have told you that no one can come to me unless it be given him from my Father. (66) From this time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. (67) Then Jesus said to the twelve, Do you also wish to go away ? (68) Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go ? Thou hast the words of age-lasting life. (69) And we have believed, and know that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. (70) Jesus answered them, Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil ? (71) And he spoke of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, for this man who was one of the twelve, was about to betray him.

§ 23. Some of the auditors of Jesus understood his words literally, as did the Church afterwards.

We have already explained the reference to Judas Iscariot (vol. ii. §§ 281, 282, pp. 361-366). The words neither imply predestination nor anticipated condemnation ; but merely denote that Jesus foresaw the weakness of a man who had undertaken a task above his strength. The expression "devil," is an incorrect interpretation, in the sense which the Church attaches to it. Jesus simply meant to call Judas an evil spirit, knowing that he was a proud spirit who had been led to undertake a task beyond his strength from ambition, and not from pure disinterested devotion. You are aware that he was ruled by pride, ambition, and the desire of speedy success. This "devil" is now a purified spirit, who has become one of the faithful disciples of Jesus, and one of his devoted auxiliaries in the work of human regeneration.

After his disciples began to murmur Jesus added, "What if you shall see the Son of Man rise up where he was before ?" He alluded to his "ascension," made a strong impression on the minds of his disciples, and especially on the Apostles ; and again affirmed his extra-human nature and origin. Jesus had never suffered human incarnation, and was a native of the ethereal regions, to which he would return when his mission was completed. We have already shown you that the idea that Jesus suffered material incarnation like yours, underwent

real death, and afterwards appeared and ascended as a disincarnate spirit which had left its body by death, is absolutely inadmissible. We insist upon this point, for if you admit it you must also admit that the disciples were both tricksters and madmen, for they would have sacrificed their lives to uphold the dreams of one whom they regarded as an impostor. Jesus could have been nothing less, from the time that his disciples were obliged to make away with the Master's body, in order to convince themselves beyond a doubt that his words were true; and is such madness conceivable? And can you not account much better for the lively and ardent faith of the Apostles in the fulfilment of the promised "Resurrection?"

He who would dive too deep loses himself in the darkness of the abyss; and he would remain on the surface, creeps over the roughness of the soil, and bruises himself.

Men do not understand and will not admit that fluidic incarnation which could alone clothe a spirit of the nature of Jesus, because they are too much blinded by matter. Let them wait a little, and their intelligence will develop itself, and allow them to study more seriously and profoundly. They will then understand the reason and necessity of a fact which now appears to them to be impossible and useless, and will bow before the goodness of the Lord.

(V. 63.)—Jesus designed to teach men that they should not interpret figurative words expressing only spiritual thoughts, according to the letter, but according to the spirit. But the human mind was only to understand this fully through the New Revelation. It is the Spirit which giveth life, for it is the cause and source of life, and of human intelligence. The flesh profiteth nothing, for it is in itself only inert matter, and is only the material means which the spirit employs for the manifestations of life and intelligence, in the state of human incarnation. The words of Jesus are spirit and life as emanating from a perfect spiritual essence, and not obstructed by the material and perishable flesh.

(V. 64, 65).—When the spirit asks to fulfil a special mission, God grants his request, although foreseeing the

consequences. Thus, the missions given to the Apostles were to yield the fruits of love and faith ; but the missions of Judas and many others who gathered round Jesus as disciples, were to yield only evil fruits, or to remain sterile, because the spirits who had undertaken them, had undertaken a task beyond their strength, either from pride, or from the desire of reaching the goal more quickly, and did not attain their end.

The omniscience of the Lord shows him the results, but the spirit always possesses his free will, even before being incarnated ; for he is always shown the good or evil chances of the trials which he requests. He is even forewarned by his guides of their consequences ; and it is for him to decide whether he will risk them or not. Thus Jesus, being in direct communion with God, and participating in his omniscience in this respect, knew from the beginning (that is, from the time that the spirits had demanded their missions and trials) who would yield fruits of love and faith, because they had not asked for a mission or task above their strength, and were moved by feelings of devotion. These were those whom the Father had given him, for they had obtained their mission and trial in accordance with the advice of their guides. Jesus also knew from the beginning whom they were whom the Father had not given him, and who had demanded and obtained a mission or trial beyond their strength, contrary to the advice of their guides, in the hope of advancing more quickly, or else from pride ; and these having relied on their own strength, would not reach the goal. This explains why several disciples withdrew from the side of Jesus ; and also his foreknowledge of this defection, the future treachery of Judas, and the fidelity of the other Apostles, who accomplished their mission, with its full results.

CHAPTER VII.

VERSES 1-9.

Incredulity of the relatives of Jesus.

(1) And after these things Jesus walked in Galilee, for he would not walk in Judæa, because the Jews sought to kill him. (2) Now the

Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand. (3) Then his brethren said to him, Depart hence, and go into Judæa, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest. (4) For no one does anything in secret, and seeks to be in openness himself. If thou doest these things, show thyself to the world. (5) For neither did his brethren believe in him. (6) Then Jesus said to them, My time is not yet come, but your time is always ready. (7) The world cannot hate you, but me it hateth, for I bear witness that its works are evil. (8) Go ye up to this feast ; but I go not yet up to this feast, for my time is not yet fulfilled. (9) And having told them this, he remained in Galilee.

§ 24. These verses are easily intelligible. We have already explained that it is the relatives of Jesus who are intended by the term "brethren." (Vol. ii. § 163, pp. 57—59).

The relatives of Jesus were among those spirits who are so materialized by their envelope that they require to touch and to see before they can believe, and yet do not always rely on their own senses. They were among those who gathered round Jesus to aid in his work, but who had fallen asleep in matter.

Verses 6 and 8 allude to the period at which Jesus would preach and act openly, in order to bring about the events which were to follow.

VERSES 10—53.

Jesus at the Feast of Tabernacles.

§ 25. We must explain the ideas and events in order, and divide the chapter as necessary.

(10) But when his brethren had gone up, then he himself also went up to the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret. (11) Then the Jews sought for him at the feast, and said, Where is he? (12) And there was much murmuring about him among the multitudes, for some said, He is a good man ; and others said, No, but he deceives the multitude. (13) But no one spoke of him openly, for fear of the Jews. (14) And when it was already about the middle of the feast, Jesus came into the Temple and taught.

You can understand why Jesus acted thus. If he had gone up to Jerusalem with the other travellers, he would have attracted public attention beforehand, and the Scribes, Pharisees, and chief priests would have been prepared for his presence. He therefore waited till all were assembled before he appeared in the Temple, and spread his teachings

among the multitude, who heard them under the influence of the different conjectures which they had formed respecting his absence.

(15) And the Jews wondered, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned? (16) Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. (17) If any man desires to do his will, he shall know the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak from myself. (18) He who speaks of himself, seeks his own glory, but he who seeks the glory of him that sent him, is true, and unrighteousness is not in him. (19) Did not Moses give you the Law, and none among you obey the Law; wherefore do you seek to kill me?

The Jews knew well that Jesus had never studied; how then did he know the Scriptures? Where is the man undergoing material human incarnation, who could know the Scriptures without having studied them? The reply of Jesus, though evasive according to the letter, answers the question according to the spirit. By saying, "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me," he affirms his knowledge of everything in the Scriptures, without having studied them. He asserts that he knows everything which he teaches, being in direct communion with him that sent him, and that his knowledge, and consequently his nature and origin, are extra-human.

He incited the Jews to reflect on what he said, by referring to what men should do according to the law of Moses, to fulfil the will of God. He led them to perceive that his doctrine emanated from a divine source, and that he is the direct organ of the Lord, not seeking the vanity of human glories, but the glory of him that sent him, and that his words are words of justice, love, and truth.

(V. 19.)—The law was included in the Decalogue; in the love of God above all things, and of the neighbour as one's self, which was taught in Leviticus and Deuteronomy; but none of them obeyed the law.

(19) Why seek ye to kill me? (20) The multitude answered and said, Thou hast a devil; who seeks to kill thee? (21) Jesus answered and said to them, I have performed one work, and you all marvel. (22) On this account Moses gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers) and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. (23) If a man receive circumcision on the Sabbath, that the law of Moses be not broken, are you angry with me because I healed a man

on the Sabbath? (24) Judge not according to appearance, but judge just judgment.

We have already explained the lesson relative to the Sabbath, and the cure of the paralytic, to which Jesus alludes.

Circumcision was a custom which the Patriarchs adopted from sanitary motives; and Moses made it an obligatory religious law.

When the charge of breaking the Sabbath was brought against a good work, it had the appearance of respect for the law. It appeared to the Jews to be a violation of the law, because it was an action, and every action was forbidden on the Sabbath; but in justice it ought to be admitted that there is no day when it is forbidden to perform a good action; and even if there were, it would not be the day consecrated to the Lord. To accuse a man of breaking the Sabbath when he performs a good work is not to observe the law.

The idea contained in the words of Jesus is a general lesson to men. Never allow yourselves to be led away by the letter, but reject all literal interpretations which the Spirit condemns as unjust. Always act justly towards your brethren, and rejoice with heartfelt sincerity at their good works. Free yourselves from all formalism, and from every sectarian feeling which would interfere with your practising justice and charity towards all; or which is an obstacle to the accomplishment of the law of love, which should lead men to fraternity and unity.

(25) Then some of the inhabitants of Jerusalem said, Is not this man him whom they seek to kill? (26) And behold he speaks in public, and they say nothing to him. Do not the rulers know of a truth that this is truly the Christ? (27) But we know whence this man is, and when the Christ shall come, no man knoweth whence he is.

You have here another testimony to the origin of Jesus, and an illustration of the error into which the Jews fell in attributing a human mission to the Messiah. But how could they suppose that him whom they expected to be the descendant of David should rise up amongst them as a man, without their knowing whence he came? The prophecy, or

rather the result of the prophecy according to human interpretations, and the consequences which had been deduced from it, applied wholly to the spiritual and extra-human origin of Jesus.

(28) Then Jesus who was teaching in the Temple, cried out and said, Ye both know me, and know whence I am, and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not. (29) But I know him, because I am from him, and he hath sent me.

The Jews knew the outward appearance of Jesus, and they all knew where his human residence was; but they knew not, and would not believe when he told them that there was nothing material in his mission, and that his nature was immaterial. His incarnation was immaterial relatively to men, for it was accomplished apart from the laws of your planet, but this was beyond the comprehension of the men of that age, and will not be much understood by your contemporaries.*

Jesus alone among men could know him that sent him, by his spiritual essence (verse 29), and in this verse he alluded to his extra-human nature, and his spiritual essence and position, which allowed him, during his earthly mission, to retain his knowledge of God, and to remain in direct communion with him.

(30) Then they sought to strike him, but no one laid his hand upon him, because his hour was not yet come.

Jesus acted on those around him magnetically and by the power of his will, to turn them from the thought of seizing him, but if the time had come, he would not have withdrawn himself from the pursuit of those who wished to put him to death.

You know the power of the will of the human magnetiser on man, and can understand what that of Jesus might be, who possessed magnetic power in a pre-eminent degree.

(31) And many of the people believed in him, and said, When the Christ shall come, will he perform more miracles than this man has done? (32) The Pharisees heard the multitude murmuring these things about him, and the Pharisees and high priests sent officers to seize him. (33) Then Jesus said to them, Yet a little time am I with

* These words were medianimically dictated in December, 1864.

you, and I go to him who sent me. (34) You shall seek me, and you shall not find me, and where I am, you cannot come. (35) Then the Jews said to themselves, Where is he about to go that we shall not find him? Is he about to go to the dispersed among the Greeks, and to teach the Greeks? (36) What is this saying which he says, Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me; and where I am, ye cannot come?

Some of your translations read, "And you cannot come where I shall be." The original text is, "Where I am." These words were only to be understood at the time of the New Revelation by the explanation of the extra-human nature and origin of Jesus, which he thus asserted under the veil of the letter. He was apart from humanity by the nature of his body, which was fluidic and perispritic, although rendered visible to human eyes by its tangibility, and therefore he was always a spirit in the ethereal regions.

When Jesus said, "Where I am, ye cannot come," he alluded to the material human incarnation of the Jews, which bound them to the earth, because they were of the earth. He did not suffer a material incarnation like theirs, which did not permit them to follow him to the ethereal regions, whence he came. He was thus from heaven, and possessed the power of returning thither at will, by making himself invisible to human eyes. He also alluded to his final return to the ethereal regions, at the time of his "Ascension," when he resumed his own spiritual nature. In this sense, the idea may also be translated, "Ye cannot come where I shall be." The Jews were not pure enough to follow him to the regions to which he was about to return; and would still have to search for him a long time without finding him. They were material spirits, and did not understand that when Jesus said, "Yet a little time I am with you, and I go to him who sent me," he alluded to his apparent death and resurrection, as well as to his return to his own spiritual nature at the time of the "Ascension," when he finally left the earth.

(37) And on the last and great day of the feast Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink. (38) He who believeth in me, as the Scripture hath said, rivers of living water shall flow out of his belly. (39) And he said this concerning the Spirit, which those who believed in him were about to receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

The language of Jesus was always figurative, and the idea

wholly spiritual. He attracted the attention of his hearers by material images.

John, the narrator, recorded the interpretation which had been specially given with reference to the Master's thought concerning the men to whom his words were addressed, and who walked in his steps, and received the "Holy Spirit," either visibly, like the Apostles, or occultly, like the other disciples who joined them; the Holy Spirit being the assistance and concurrence of superior and good spirits. But Jesus designed these words to apply to all ages, and to all men, and according to the Spirit which giveth life, they signify, "If any man thirsts for progress and purification, let him come to the source which I personify by the morality which I have preached, and let him drink a deep draught from the full cup of love and charity, the living water, which purifies the soul, and gives it eternal life.

"If any one follows the morality which I personify, and walks in the path which I have traced out, he will produce abundant good works in the sincerity of his heart, and will labour with ardour and perseverance at his own personal progress, and at the progress of his brethren; and will be inspired, aided and sustained, either consciously or unconsciously, by good spirits."

(40) Then many of the people, hearing the saying, said, This is truly the prophet. (41) Others said, This is the Christ. Others said, No, for does the Christ come from Galilee? (42) Does not the Scripture say that the Christ cometh from the stock of David, and from Bethlehem, the village where David was? (43) Then there was a division in the multitude on account of him. (44) And some of them wished to seize on him, but no one laid hands on him. (45) Then the officers came to the chief priests and Pharisees, and these said to them, Why have you not brought him? (46) The officers answered, Never man spoke like this man. (47) Then the Pharisees answered them, Are you also deceived? (48) Have any of the rulers, or of the Pharisees believed in him? (49) But this multitude, who know not the law, are accursed.

These divisions among the Jews respecting Jesus show you that the Revelation which the angel delivered to Mary and Joseph had remained secret, as was intended, for reasons which we have already explained; and that the appearance of Jesus at Bethlehem was either unknown, or had been

forgotten by the Jews ; for everything was to conduce to the success of the work.

Some of the Jews desired to seize Jesus, but no one laid hands on him, and the officers returned without arresting him. This is explained under verse 30. The language of the Pharisees is that used by the leaders of sects at the beginning of a New Revelation. Do not the Pharisees of your own days often speak like this ?

(50) Nicodemus, who was one of them, the same who came to him by night, said to them, (51) Does our law judge the man, unless it first hear him, and know what he does ? (52) They answered and said to him, Art thou also from Galilee ? Search and look, for out of Galilee riseth no prophet. (53) And each went to his house.

The Pharisees shared in the ignorance of the Jews respecting the place of the appearance of Jesus.

The words of justice spoken by Nicodemus, should not be lost sight of from the point of view of social progress, and the sacred right of defence and judgment. They served to bring into relief the great and sublime personality of Jesus.

CHAPTER VIII.

VERSES I—II.

*The Adulteress.**

(1) And Jesus came to the Mount of Olives. (2) And in the morning he went again to the Temple, and all the people came to him, and he sat there and taught them. (3) And the Scribes and Pharisees brought to him a woman taken in adultery, and having sat her in the middle, they say to him, (4) Teacher, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. (5) But Moses commanded us in the law that such should be stoned ; what, therefore, sayest thou ? (6) And they said this to try him, that they might have an opportunity to accuse him. And Jesus stooped down, and wrote with his finger on the ground. (7) And as they continued to ask him, he raised himself up, and said to them, Let him among you who is without sin, first cast the stone at her. (8) And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. (9) And they who heard, were convicted by their conscience, and went out one by one, beginning from the elders to the last, and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. (10) And Jesus raised himself, and seeing

* This passage is believed to be extracted from the lost Gospel to the Hebrews, probably a genuine book.—TRANS.

no one but the woman, he said to her, Well, woman, where are thy accusers? Hath no one condemned thee? And she said, No one, Lord. (11) And Jesus said to her, Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more.

§ 26. (V. 6-8.)—Jesus stooped down twice to give the men around him time for reflection, without embarrassing them by his observation, or leading them to decide on anything in opposition to their conscience.

The Master commissions us to tell you what it was that he thus wrote twice on the ground, and which contained and embodied the whole of the lesson which he desired to give. In reply to the first question, he wrote, "Never do to others what you would not have others do to you." The second time, after saying, "Let him that is without sin among you cast the first stone," he wrote, "When you would judge your brother, reflect in your own heart, and appeal to your conscience." But the man who explores his own heart, and questions his conscience, will never cast the stone at his brother, for he will perceive that he also is a sinner, and that he must pardon others, as he would be pardoned himself, and he therefore abstains from doing to others what he would not have done to himself. The words spoken by Jesus to the adulteress are likewise a lesson and an example of mercy and pardon which men ought to apply to themselves; and urge all men to make every effort to avoid falling into a fault a second time.

VERSES 12-24.

Address of Jesus to the Jews.

§ 27. Here also we will divide the verses according to the ideas which they contain.

(12) Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, I am the light of the world. He who heareth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. (13) Then the Phari-ees said to him, Thou bearest witness of thyself; thy witness is not true. (14) Jesus answered and said, Although I bear witness of myself, my witness is true, for I know whence I came, and whither I go; and you know not whence I came and whither I go. (15) You judge according to the flesh, but I judge no one.

Jesus is in truth the light which enlightens men, but until now, no one has given an exact account of his origin; no

one has been able to follow him to the place where he went; he alone knew whence he descended among men; and he alone knew his origin, and could give a correct account of it.

"You judge according to the flesh," said he to the people and the Pharisees, "and you know not whence I come, and whither I go;" that is, according to the Spirit. You ascribe to me a human nature and origin like your own, and you know nothing of my extra-human nature, my spiritual origin, and my mission.

"Though I bear witness of myself, my witness is true, because I know whence I come and whither I go;" because I myself, who speak to you, know my nature, origin, and mission, having preserved the liberty and independence of my spirit, under this envelope which renders me visible to your eyes.

The words, "I judge no one," have been already explained. When Jesus said, "You judge according to the flesh," he alluded to the human sentence of condemnation which would soon be pronounced against him.

(16) And even if I judge, my judgment is true, for I am not alone; but I and my Father who sent me.

Jesus thus asserts that, although present with men during his earthly mission, yet he is nevertheless always in direct communion with God, who is Absolute Truth.

(17) And it is written in your law that the testimony of two men is true. (18) It is I who bear witness of myself, and my Father who sent me beareth witness of me.

Jesus bore witness, not of human actions, but of his superhuman nature, and spiritual origin. Thus, he whom all regarded as a man, bore witness that his spirit proceeded from a purer source than any other, and that the Lord also bore witness to him by the actions which the will of the spirit could accomplish.

(19) Then they said to him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, You neither know me nor my Father; if you had known me, you would have known my Father also.

If men had understood the origin of Jesus, and the nature of the spiritual hierarchy, they would certainly have

understood the relations existing between the Supreme Creator and the missionary spirit, sent to lead back men who had strayed, to the path of salvation and progress. Such is the meaning of the words of Jesus. It is certain that in your own days, amid the first beams of the New Revelation, you are still far from knowing the Father, inasmuch as you know not how to define him ; but there is a great difference between defining him and knowing him.

(20) Jesus said these words in the Treasury, as he was teaching in the Temple ; and no one took him, for his hour was not yet come.

You should not see anything fatalistic in these words. It was always the fixed intention of the chief men among the Jews to arrest Jesus ; but as the fitting time had not yet arrived, they were always prevented from executing their design, by spiritual or magnetic action, according to circumstances. You are aware that Jesus could act on the masses by his magnetic action, and likewise on those who were embittered against him. You also know that the elevated spirits who surrounded him were the faithful attendants who executed, not his orders, but a feeling still more rapid than thought, and of which human words and intelligence could give you no idea. The magnetic action of thought passed from spirit to spirit.

(21) Then Jesus said to them again, I am going away, and you shall seek for me, and shall die in your sin ; where I am going, you cannot come. (22) Then the Jews said, Will he kill himself, that he says, Where I am going you cannot come ?

When Jesus was then addressing men whom he knew to be very backward, and who could not, therefore, even attempt to approach the spheres to which his nature recalled him, his real meaning was that no spirit could raise himself to his level ; but the Jews thought that suicide, by violently and wilfully destroying the body, deprived the spirit of its prerogatives, and plunged it into annihilation. Those who listened to Jesus would have taken care not to imitate him, if he intended to annihilate himself, which was, from their point of view, the result of suicide. The notion of the Jews that suicide destroyed the soul as well as the body, was

based upon their annals and traditions, whence the learned Rabbis had derived much information, not directly, but by deduction.

(23) And he said to them, You are from below ; I am from above ; you are of this world, I am not of this world.

Here Jesus expressly asserts his extra-human nature and origin, and the spiritual character of his presence and mission on your earth, though under the veil of the letter.

(24) "Therefore I told you that you should die in your sins, for if you do not believe that I am he, you shall die in your sins."

These words signify, "If you do not believe that I am a special messenger of God, who descended among you from the higher spheres to teach you the way of life, and if you do not abandon the devious paths on which you have entered, to advance on the luminous path which I open before you, you will remain stationary in darkness, and will not attain to the progress which can alone raise you towards God."

VERSES 25-45.

Continuation of Christ's Address to the Jews.

§ 28. We must still divide these verses, that we may give distinct and special explanations.

(25) Then they said to him, Who art thou? And Jesus said to them, That which I have already told you from the first.

Here again, under the veil of the letter, Jesus asserts his spiritual position as the founder of your planet, and the protector and ruler of everything which exists, arises, and depends upon it, in every kingdom of nature, subject to the superior impulse of the will of God, and the immutable laws which he has established from all eternity.

(26) "I have many things to say, and to judge concerning you; but he who sent me is true, and I speak to the world those things which I heard from him."

Jesus came among men to fulfil a mission of peace and love which very few would receive ; and as the messenger of the Lord, he received divine impressions, and acted upon this superior influence. The words, "I speak what I have

heard from him," were intended to assert the inferiority of Jesus as compared with God, and likewise to affirm that he received direct impressions from him as his envoy.

(27) They did not know that he spoke to them of the Father.
 (28) Then Jesus said to them, When you shall have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall you know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself.

Jesus wished to state definitely, under the veil of the letter, what he had just said, and which the Jews did not and could not understand according to the Spirit.

The expressions of verse 28 had a twofold sense. They had a positive sense, relative to the punishment which would be inflicted on Jesus ; and a prophetic sense, relative to the present Revelation, which is sent to show men him whom they have worshipped under an erroneous title, while they have neglected his counsels and precepts. The Revelation raises Jesus in the eyes of men, by restoring him to the position which he ought to occupy, without which the impossibility of the received opinions stretches a veil between man and his Saviour.

"When you shall have lifted up the Son of Man," therefore, means, "When you have lifted me up, in the sight of all, on the Cross of Calvary, and when you have learned that I am from above, and that I am not of this world, and after your human interpretations have made me both a man and a God ; and finally, when you shall have accepted the Revelation of the Spirit of Truth, which I promised and predicted, which will be given you in due time when you are able to receive it, you will restore me to the position which I ought to occupy, and you will then know, in spirit and in truth, what I am, because I only act by the will of God, being his agent and minister ; and I am likewise his direct representative among men, being his envoy. I speak only what I have learned from him, for from him I derive the perfection which I have acquired ; and also my pre-science of the future."

(29) "And he who sent me is with me. The Father does not leave me alone, for I do always those things which please him."

During the earthly mission of Jesus, the purity of his

spiritual essence and his extra-human nature placed him in constant communion with him who had sent him. Thus Jesus, a pure spirit who had never erred, is always in communion with the superior principle whom in your human language you call God.

(30) When he said these things, many believed in him. (31) Then Jesus said to the Jews who believed in him, If you continue in my word, you are really my disciples. (32) And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

It is obvious that he who enters in the way of Christ, but stops short at the commencement, cannot call himself his disciple. He alone can be his disciple who follows him as closely as possible; and only he who perseveres shall know the truth, and the truth shall make him free. He shall know that it is only by work, justice, love and charity that he can progress, purify himself, and advance towards the knowledge of eternal truth; and he will find liberty in progress and purification, for he will acquire the power of acting both physically and morally in such a manner as to free himself from the bondage of sin. The truth, to men, is what is good in the practical work of human life; and everything which is just and right is truth. Everything is evil which turns man from justice, love, and charity, and from the spirit of union and brotherhood which are the only true and durable bases of liberty and equality; for these are the qualities which progressively raise the spirit from the tomb of the flesh, and gain it admission to the superior worlds.

(33) They answered him, We are the seed of Abraham, and were never in bondage to any man; how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?

(34) Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that every one who committeth a sin is the slave of the sin. (35) And the slave does not remain in the house for the age, but the son remaineth for the age.

(36) Therefore, if the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.

You can understand that the slave does not always remain in the house, for he has not finished his work, and must work at it again till he has finished. But he whom Jesus has emancipated has walked in the ways of the Lord. He has won his liberty, and is given the right to enjoy it; and he descends no more to the world of slavery.

Do not take this explanation literally, and imagine that

your planet is always destined to be the abode of masters and slaves, the powerful and the humble. The reign of liberty—human liberty—will at length arrive, but you must prepare the way for it.

Liberty ! The sound of the word deafens you, and your obscured intelligence no longer comprehends its meaning. Liberty ! To you this word means only change of masters, and different hands drawing the chains of abuses ; but these chains always exist, whether cast from on high, or raised from below. Men ! you will never attain to Liberty as long as you are not prepared to receive her into a society of brethren and a united family—the great human family, which is your entire humanity, and whose dwelling-place is your planet. Liberty is respect for the laws on the part of some, and mildness and justice on the part of others ; and mutual help and aid on the part of all. It is a mutual association, moral, physical, and intellectual, which composes a continuous chain ; and this beneficent chain will resist pride, avarice, envy, hatred, ambition, violence, and revolt. Liberty soars above your heads, but she will never descend upon you until she meets with hearts pure enough to receive her, and hands pure enough to lead her into all ranks of society.

(37) I know that you are the children of Abraham, but you seek to kill me, because my word does not abide in you. (38) I speak what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have seen with your father. (39) They answered and said to him, Abraham is our father. Jesus said to them, If you were the children of Abraham, you would do the works of Abraham. (40) And now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth, which I have heard from God ; this did not Abraham. You do the works of your father. (41) Then they said to him, We are not born of fornication ; we have one Father, God. (42) Then Jesus said to them, If God was your father, you would love me, for I proceeded forth and am come from God ; for neither came I of myself, but he sent me. (43) Why do you not understand my speech ? Because you cannot hear my word. (44) You are from your father the devil, and the lusts of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and standeth not in the truth, because there is no truth in him ; when he speaketh what is false, he speaketh from his own, for he is a liar, and his father. (45) But because I speak the truth you do not believe me.

You should also be able to understand the meaning of

these words according to the spirit. Although figurative, they were appropriate to the intelligence of those to whom they were spoken, and to their prejudices and ideas, based on the interpretations given to their traditions ; and they were also appropriate to the end which Jesus desired to attain.

"You wish to kill me," said Jesus. He insisted on this point, for he repeated the words, which the Jews understood to imply, "I am a mortal man like you," that he might always counterbalance the divinity which was to be attributed to him under the veil of the letter. We have already explained the reason for this belief, which nevertheless was to be disputed in due time, and to disappear before the rays of the New Revelation.

"I speak what I have seen with my Father." "I have descended from the higher spheres, and am always in communion with the Lord, and I therefore preach that pure morality which can alone lead men to the feet of the Eternal One ; and which is practised in the higher spheres by the pure, superior, and good spirits."

"You do what you have seen with your father." Jesus alludes to the origin of the spirit, and the path he follows when he is free to choose his way. He mistakes it, and subjects himself to incarnation. The expressions, "Your father," and "You are the children of the devil," are figurative. In this place the devil is the purely symbolic personification of evil, which has its source in pride, envy and presumption. Then rebellion leads to the fall of the spirit, and makes it the son of sin, when it enters on a course of wrong-doing by its own free-will and deliberate action. Its sympathy for the inferior spirits, which has misled it, proceeds from its own disposition ; and it is only after its fall that similar relations are established between them.

Thus, the men to whom Jesus spoke were "children of the devil." They were the "sons of sin," having been the children of rebellion ; they had fallen, and being incarnate, they suffered punishment, the inevitable consequence of spiritual deviation ; besides, they would fail again.

"You do what you have seen with your father." You have failed once, and you will fail again. "You do the works of your father." You continue in evil, for your works are always evil.

(V. 44.)—In the minds of the Jews, the words of Jesus aroused the recollection of the parable of Cain slaying his brother Abel. We say parable, for the figures of Cain and Abel are emblematic, like those of Adam and Eve, and relate to the origin of the spirit, its fall, and the consequences resulting from it. The posterity of Cain figuratively represent the succession of guilty spirits, who have failed, and who suffer incarnation on the inferior worlds. The emblematic figure of Cain represents the spirit who was guilty from his origin, having turned aside from the path which was open to him, and become the murderer of himself ; for he has devoted himself to spiritual death, by condemning himself to incarnation ; and he has also been the murderer of his brother, who by his own free-will and act has gone with him in the wrong course, and has established similar relations with him. Although these relations depend on the sympathy which his brother has experienced for him, and proceed from his own disposition, and thus the murder is the result of his brother's free will, he is, nevertheless, his murderer, having devoted him to spiritual death by his suggestions and influences.

In the idea of Jesus, the truth is goodness. It is the purity which the spirit preserves in the path of progress, which raises him in the spiritual hierarchy, and which leads him to perfection, and thus to God, who is Absolute Truth.

The lie is everything which is derived from evil ; falsities, errors, and false doctrines, which mislead both in word and action.

The true meaning of the words of Jesus is as follows : **"You, fallen spirits, are the sons of sin and rebellion, and you desire to yield to the inspirations of evil which have caused you to fall, and to fulfil your evil thoughts and designs by shedding the blood of the just."**

(V. 37-43.)—The men to whom the Master spoke

were bound down by the opacity of their perispritic fluids in the inferior regions, delighting in their iniquitous surroundings, and constantly acting like impure and backward spirits.

(V. 42.)—If they had been more elevated, and thus truly the children of God, they would have loved Jesus, because there would have been a greater affinity, and therefore sympathy and attraction, between their fluids. Jesus was perfect and immaculate purity, and was therefore sent by God as his messenger to men.

“But when I tell you the truth,” by preaching to you the pure morality which can alone lead men to the feet of the Eternal One; and by showing you the path of progress and purification, “you do not believe me,” for you do not believe in my word and mission.

VERSES 46–59.

Conclusion of the Conversation between Jesus and the Jews.

(46) Which of you convicteth me of sin? And if I speak truth, why do you not believe me? (47) He who is from God listens to the words of God, therefore you do not listen because you are not from God. (48) Then the Jews answered and said to him, Do we not say well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil? (49) Jesus answered, I have not a devil, but I honour my Father, and you dishonour me. (50) And I seek not my glory; there is one who seeketh and judgeth. (51) Verily, verily, I say unto you, If anyone shall observe my saying, he shall not see death in the age. (52) Then the Jews said to him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets, and thou sayest, If anyone shall observe my saying, he shall not taste death in the age. (53) Art thou greater than our father Abraham, who is dead; and the prophets are dead; whom makest thou thyself? (54) Jesus answered, If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing; it is my Father who glorifieth me, of whom you say that he is your God. (55) And you know him not, and if I said that I knew him not, I should be like you, a liar; but I know him, and observe his word. (56) Abraham, your father, rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad. (57) Then the Jews said to him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? (58) Jesus said to them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was born, I am. (59) Then they took up stones to cast at him, but Jesus hid himself, and came out of the Temple, passing through the midst of them, and thus went his way.

§ 29. These verses are perfectly intelligible. The men to whom Jesus spoke were impure and backward spirits, who always understood his words literally, being incapable

of understanding them in spirit and in truth. They called Jesus a Samaritan, which they intended as the strongest expression of their hatred, contempt, and insult. They said he was possessed of a demon, and thus accused the direct messenger of God to men of being subjected to the worst influences of error and lying.

We must call your attention to those words of Jesus which require explanation, that men may understand the exact meaning, when the spirit is freed from the letter.

(V. 51.)—To the spirit in the path of progress, stagnation is death. Progress is life. “If anyone observes my word,”—that is, practises the pure morality which I preach without ever deviating from it, “he shall not die in the age;” his spirit will never remain stationary; he will progress continually, and will always advance towards perfection by purifying himself more and more, and will thus live. The idea of Jesus is wholly spiritual. It does not concern the life of the body but the life of the spirit.

In reply to the Jews, who asked Jesus if he was greater than Abraham and the prophets, and who he professed to be, he made a reply which was veiled by the letter, as usual, and was not to be understood by that and succeeding generations; for the true spiritual meaning was only to be revealed by the New Revelation, when men had become able to receive it.

(V. 54, 55.)—In these words Jesus gives men a lesson and example of humility, showing them that they ought not to presume on their personal importance, or on their superiority over their brethren, and teaching them that they derive their worth or elevation, as well as their existence, from God.

When Jesus said that he knew God, he affirmed, under the veil of the letter, that he was a pure spirit; for to know God is to know his essence, and to approach the Fire of Omnipotence and of all life; and this belongs only to the pure spirits.

(V. 56.)—Jesus alluded to his earthly mission, and the joy which the advent of the Messiah caused to the spirit of Abraham; for if this advent was expected by men, it was witnessed with great joy by all the spirits who were working

at the development and progress of your planet and its humanity under the direction of your ruler and protector.

The Jews always took the words of Jesus literally; and supposing that he spoke of the day of human birth, they said, "Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?" Jesus answered, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was born, I am."

Jesus thus proclaimed, under the veil of the letter, that he did not suffer the human incarnation of your planet, and that, beneath the envelope which he assumed to make himself visible to human eyes, he was always a free and independent spirit, belonging to a creation anterior to that of Abraham; and that he was really a spirit, both when the spirit of Abraham was created, and when the spirit of Abraham witnessed his appearance on earth as the Messiah. "Before Abraham was, I am;" my nature is extra-human, and my existence among you is apart from your humanity.

CHAPTER IX.

VERSES 1-12.

Cure of a Man Blind from his Birth.

(1) And passing by, he saw a man blind from his birth. (2) And his disciples asked him, saying, Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? (3) Jesus answered, Neither did this man sin, nor his parents; but that the works of God may be manifested in him. (4) I must work the works of the Father while it is day, for the night cometh, when no man can work. (5) When I am in the world, I am the light of the world. (6) Saying these things, he spit on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said to him, (7) Go and wash in the pool of Siloam, which is, being interpreted, Sent. Then he went and washed, and came back seeing. (8) Then the neighbours, and those who had seen him before, that he was blind, said, Is not this he who sat and begged? (9) Others said, This is he; and others, It is like him; but the man himself said, I am he. (10) Then they said to him, How were your eyes opened? (11) The man answered and said, A man called Jesus made clay, and anointed my eyes, and said to me, Go to the pool of Siloam and wash; and I went and washed, and received sight. (12) Then they said to him, Where is this man? He says, I know not.

§ 30. When Jesus was about to accomplish his mission on earth, a company of spirits assembled, who were appointed to aid him in his mission, or to aid in the accomplishment

of his work. The man, blind from his birth, was one of those devoted spirits who were incarnated to contribute to the fulfilment of the Master's work. For this purpose, he had selected blindness from birth, as an expiation, and thus finished his trials.

The disciples asked Jesus if this man had sinned, or his parents, that he was born blind. But if the man's own sin were the cause of his being blind from birth, he must have already sinned as a man at the time of his birth. That is, he must have had a previous existence in which the sin was committed ; which necessarily implies the pre-existence of the soul and reincarnation. As for the other alternative, is it conceivable that the fault of the parents should thus be laid on the child, and atoned for by his blindness ?

The disciples did not think of this, but they unconsciously prepared men to understand the reply of Jesus, when his words should be explained in spirit and in truth. You must remember that the disciples were but little advanced in their incarnate state ; and their spirit, under the restraints of the flesh, was burdened with matter. Philosophical considerations did not come within the scope of their thought or intelligence ; and this shows that the question was asked by spirits who, so far as they were incarnate, were in a state of infancy.

Jesus answered, in the sense of the disciples' own words, "Neither did this man sin, nor his parents." It is not the faults of this incarnation which he expiates ; and still less those of his parents.

"But that the works of God should be manifested in him." It is necessary that the expiation imposed on every guilty spirit should run its course. This man does not suffer the punishment of the present life, nor does he atone for the sin of another, but he pays a debt which his spirit has contracted. The power of God is manifested in him : for his blindness is the expiation which he has selected for faults previous to his present incarnation, and the cure of his blindness is the end of his expiation ; and he thus contributes to the fulfilment of the mission of the messenger of God.

There was no necessity for Jesus to anoint the eyes of the blind man with clay in order to effect the cure. The cure was effected by magnetic power, and he only used clay that he might tell him to wash in the pool of Siloam. The waters of the pool were considered healing, and Jesus sent the man whom he had cured there, that the fact might be more widely reported, for the place was greatly frequented.

(V. 4, 5.)—It is needful for me to do all the works which God has charged me to accomplish by my earthly mission, while it lasts.

I am the light which enlightens men—while I am among men ; but the time is coming when my mission will cease ; and no one can prevent its coming to an end.

VERSES 13-34.

The Blind Man and the Pharisees.

(13) They bring to the Pharisees him who was once blind. (14) And it was the Sabbath when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes. (15) Then the Pharisees asked him again how he saw. And he said to them, He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and I see. (16) Then some of the Pharisees said, This man is not from God, because he does not keep the Sabbath. Others said, How can a sinful man perform such a miracle ? and there was a division among them. (17) They say again to the blind man, What sayest thou about him that he hath opened thine eyes ? And he said, He is a prophet. (18) Therefore the Jews did not believe that he had really been a blind man, and saw, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight. (19) And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, whom you say was born blind ; how then does he now see ? (20) His parents answered them, and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind ; (21) But how he now sees we know not ; or who has opened his eyes we do not know ; he is of age ; ask him, and let him speak for himself. (22) His parents said these things, because they feared the Pharisees, for the Jews had already arranged that if any one should assert that he was Christ, he should be cast out of the synagogue. (23) On this account his parents said, He is of age, ask him. (24) Then they asked the man who had been blind, a second time, and said to him, Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner. (25) Then he answered and said, I do not know if he is a sinner, but this I know, that I was blind, and now I see. (26) And they said to him again, What did he do to thee ? how did he open thine eyes ? (27) He answered them, I have told you already, and you would not listen ; why do you wish to hear again ? do you also wish to become his disciples ? (28) Then they abused him, and said, You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. (29) We know that God spoke to Moses, but we know not whence this man is. (30) The man answered and said to them, For this is the wonderful thing, that you know not whence he is ; and he has

opened my eyes. (31) And we know that God does not listen to sinners; but if any one is devout, and does his will, him he heareth. (32) It was never heard from the beginning of the age that any one opened the eyes of one who was born blind. (33) Unless this man was from God, he could do nothing. (34) They answered and said to him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out.

§ 31. These verses require no commentary. You may compare the circumstances with those which take place in your own day.

VERSES 35-41.

Jesus and the Blind Man.

(35) Jesus heard that he had been cast out, and found him, and said to him, Dost thou believe in the Son of God? (36) The man answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I should believe in him? (37) And Jesus said to him, Thou hast also seen him, and it is he who speaketh with thee. (38) And he said, Lord, I believe; and he did homage to him. (39) And Jesus said, For judgment am I come into this world, that they who see not might see, and that they who see might be made blind. (40) And those of the Pharisees who were with him heard these things, and said to him, Are we also blind? (41) Jesus said to them, If you were blind, you had no sin, but now you say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.

§ 32. Jesus came into the world for judgment, because he came to enlighten men concerning the path which they ought to follow; and to preach the pure morality, which is the standard by which they must acquit or condemn themselves at the inward tribunal of conscience, by the serious examination of their words and actions.

(V. 39.)—The meaning of these words is wholly spiritual, and relates to moral, and not to physical and material blindness. They apply to all ages, for man should always strive to obtain spiritual sight by endeavouring to understand and practise the pure morality of the lessons and examples of the Master. These words have also a primary special application to the men who were living during the earthly mission of Jesus; and also to those who are living at the time of the revelation of the Spirit of Truth.

As regards the men then living, the material action of giving sight to a man who was born blind was the emblem of the object of the mission of Jesus, and of all the actions by which he appealed to the senses of material men, in

order to restore their spiritual sight, and to cure their moral blindness by his morality, teachings and examples. In saying "that those who see not might see," Jesus alluded to those who were deprived of material vision, and to whom he gave it, and who, thereupon recognized his mission, and perceived the spiritual light which enlightens the heart and intellect. He likewise alluded to those who although enjoying material sight were afflicted with moral blindness, and who beheld the deeds which he performed, recognized his mission, and perceived the spiritual light which would cure their moral blindness.

In saying "that they who see might be made blind," Jesus alluded to those who saw the actions which he performed, but would not believe them, nor recognize his mission, and thus plunged into darkness, because they could not distinguish objects in the light.

(V. 40, 41.)—Jesus alluded to the blind man whom he had cured, who was a devoted spirit, and had just witnessed the end of the expiation which he had chosen, and had recognized the mission of the Master.

"If you were blind"—that is in the place of this man, "you would have no sin, but now you say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth." These last words follow from what Jesus had just said, "that they who might see might be made blind."

"But now you say you see." You say that you possess the material sight which enables you to perceive my actions, without being willing to believe in them, or to acknowledge my mission; therefore your faults, vices, and evil passions, which spring from your moral blindness, and which make you guilty, remain with you.

The Pharisees recognized the mission of Jesus in their inner consciousness, but they would not acknowledge it, thinking more of worldly good than what they regarded as the hypothetical benefits of heaven. You need not wonder at their conduct towards Jesus. Does not the history of the Jews show you how the prophets were treated when they came into collision with the powerful?

As regards the present era of the New Revelation, and the men now living, do you not find matters very much in the same condition as at the earthly mission of Jesus? Do not the spirits of the Lord, the organs of the Spirit of Truth, meet with the same reception as that accorded to Jesus? Is not the prophecy of Jesus respecting the advent of the present revelation received like that which announced the advent of the Messiah? Are there not some among you who witness physical and intelligent spirit-manifestations, and recognize the mission of the Spirits of the Lord, and the advent of the new era predicted and promised by the Master, and who perceive the spiritual light which comes to enlighten their hearts and intellect?

Are there not some among you who witness these manifestations and do not recognize the mission, nor the advent of the new era, but withdraw from the light, because they are unable to perceive objects in the light? Are there not Pharisees in your own days, who speak and act with respect to the New Revelation, and towards those who accept it, and propagate it by word and example, as the Pharisees spoke and acted towards Jesus and those who accepted his mission? Do you not see them labouring to plunge themselves into darkness by their own free-will, in order to protect their contemptible worldly interests? To such men the answer of Jesus to the Pharisees is applicable.

CHAPTER X.

VERSES 1-10.

Parable of the Door and the Sheepfold.

(1) Verily, verily, I say unto you, He who enters not into the sheepfold through the door, but climbs up some other way, this is a thief and a robber. (2) But he who enters through the door is the shepherd of the sheep. (3) To him the porter opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name, and leads them out. (4) And when he leads forth his own sheep, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. (5) And they will not follow a stranger, but they fly from him, for they know not the voice of strangers. (6) Jesus spoke this parable to them, but they knew not what things they were which he spoke to them. (7) Then Jesus said to them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.

(8) All who ever came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. (9) I am the door; if any man enter through me, he shall go in and out, and find pasture. (10) The thief cometh not except to steal and kill and destroy; I am come that they might have life, and might have it abundantly.

§ 33. Jesus is the door of the sheepfold. It is he who opens the intelligence, enlightens it, and leads the spirit to the dwelling of the Father; to perfection.

Those who have not walked in his ways, but have turned men from them by inciting them to hatred, pride, vengeance, and cupidity, have been "thieves and robbers," and have not entered the human heart by the only door which can give access to the shepherd; love and self-renunciation.

The parable and the explanations given by Jesus were appropriate to the period, and to the men who heard him, and whom he desired to impress strongly. He called the attention of all to the false shepherds of the age, and to those of following generations, who called themselves his representatives and disciples; and pointed out the signs by which the true and false prophets might be recognized. He also proclaimed his full and absolute authority over your planet and its humanity, the salvation of men by practising his morality, and the greatness and object of his earthly mission.

(V. 1.)—He who is chosen to instruct men, and who instead of teaching them the pure morality of Jesus, leads them astray from the simple and direct paths of justice, love, and charity, is a thief and robber of souls, a false shepherd.

(V. 2.)—He who teaches and practises the morality of Jesus is the true shepherd.

(V. 3.)—The Lord opens his intelligence, and gives him light; and his instructions penetrate the hearts of the men who know him, and make them obedient to his call. "And he leads them forth" out of the path laid down by the false shepherds; and out of the sheepfold which they had turned into a den of darkness. He thus alludes to what had happened to the law of Moses, and to what would happen to the Christianity of Christ, before the New

Revelation came to recall men to the practice of the pure morality of the Master.

(V. 4.)—Those who walk in the steps of the true Shepherd, by practising the morality of Jesus, will no longer allow themselves to be turned aside, and will follow him with ardour.

(V. 5.)—Those who have been charmed with this divine harmony, will no longer permit themselves to be led astray by the discordant sounds of human voices, which seek to turn them aside from it.

(V. 6.)—Men can only arrive at perfection by practising the morality of Jesus, and walking in the paths which he has traced out for them by his teaching and example. They can only succeed by his aid, which develops their intelligence, and enlightens it by every means which the providence of God has put into his hands, and which he, the protector and ruler of your planet, dispenses according to the faculties and necessities of every man, and of every period.

(V. 8.)—This is figurative, and alludes to the various human missions which were more or less impeded by the weakness inherent in humanity, and which had not the power and importance of the divine mission of Jesus. Jesus speaks figuratively, because he alone has complete authority, and thus asserts its special character by an image which was strong enough to create a great sensation among the men who rejected him in the name of the prophets, and who, although expecting the Messiah, refused to recognize his advent.

“And the sheep did not listen to them.” Is it not a fact that men have departed from the principles which the various messengers had impressed upon them? They have listened to them for the moment, but have wandered from them little by little.

Jesus has been rejected by many; but he has been received by a small number, which is increasing daily, and must multiply indefinitely now; for the time is coming when men will hear his voice, and when the transformation and puri-

fication of your planet and its humanity, will accomplish his predictions ; and there will be but one fold and one shepherd. (V. 9.)—If anyone follows my morality, and thus walks in my ways, he will purify himself, and follow the ascending course which leads the spirit to perfection. He will enter human life and come forth from it, and in all conditions he will find the bread which does not nourish the body but elevates the soul.

(V. 10.)—"The robber comes only to steal, to kill, and to destroy;" for you may observe that all previous missions have excited to bloodshed, whereas Jesus always preached peace, union, and fraternity. Although blood has been shed in his name, yet let it recoil upon the memory of those who called themselves his disciples, but who were only devouring wolves. Pray for those who have not yet expiated their sanguinary blindness—"I am come that they might have life, and might have it abundantly." Jesus came to bring men the means of regeneration by his earthly mission. This he did by his pure morality, which is the bread of life of the soul, in which it finds abundant nutriment, which strengthens, purifies, and elevates it.

VERSES 11-21.

The Good Shepherd.

§ 34. These verses are of great importance in connection with the extra-human life of Jesus; and also as regards his mission and its results. Divide them, and we will explain them separately.

(11) I am the Good Shepherd ; the Good Shepherd lays down his life for his sheep. (12) But the hireling, who is also not a shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, sees the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep, and flies, and the wolf seizes them, and scatters the sheep. (13) But the hireling flies, because he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

These figurative expressions apply to all ages. Those who were entrusted with feeding the flock of the Good Shepherd, did not feel strong enough to resist the vices by which they were attacked ; and they abandoned themselves to them, as well as the flock which they should have


protected. But the Good Shepherd, the shepherd of souls, watches over his flock, and walks round them continually, urging with voice and gesture the faithful guardians on whom he can rely, and who aid him to gather together those who were liable to stray away. The Good Shepherd knows neither personal interest nor fatigue.

(V. 11.)—These words prepared men to understand the allusion which Jesus was about to make to his “death,” and the events which followed.

(14) I am the Good Shepherd, and I know my own, and am known of mine. (15) As the Father knows me, I also know the Father, and I lay down my life for the sheep. (16) And I have other sheep which are not of this fold; these also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd.

Here Jesus alludes to his earthly mission, and to the fruits which it was to yield, as well as to his spiritual mission as protector and ruler of your planet, and to its results.

The “sheep” of Jesus are all the spirits of your earth, whether incarnate or errant. The sheep which know him are those who practise his morality, and recognize his mission. The other sheep, who are not of this fold, but whom Jesus must bring in, are those who either do not practise his morality, or practise it, but do not recognize his mission. Yet they will not prove rebellious to progress, but will purify themselves continually more and more in the furnace of time and re-incarnation. They will thus perceive more and more of the light and truth which Jesus brought to men, and which the New Revelation is about to fan into a brighter flame. Thus, the thought of Jesus embraced the whole of your humanity, and included all generations of spirits on the path of purification; both those who were already incarnated on your earth before his earthly mission, those who were incarnate there at the time, and those who were still to be incarnated upon it. All these were destined to be obedient to his voice as the Messiah, and to the voices of the incarnate and errant missionary spirits, the organs of the Spirit of Truth; and all must rise from progress to progress, and from purification to purification, until they arrive at moral perfection. Then there will be only one



fold and one Shepherd, under the dominion of the law of love and unity ; and then will Jesus, your protector and ruler, appear in his full spiritual glory as the visible sovereign of his purified creatures, on your equally purified planet. He will come as the Spirit of Truth, to lead his own to the life of pure spirits, to take their rank among the direct ministers of God as his active and devoted agents in the work of universal progress, life and harmony ; for the purity which they have then acquired will enable them to live in constant activity, eternally drawing fresh progress in universal knowledge from the infinite source of all power, all love, all justice, all knowledge, and all truth.

(17) Therefore my Father loveth me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. (18) No one taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father.

These words have not received sufficient attention, or been regarded as very important ; but they confirm what we have already told you of the nature and origin of Jesus.

(V. 17).—" My Father has entrusted me to accomplish the great sacrifice, and the events which must follow in consequence of my earthly mission, as well as for the fulfilment of my spiritual mission. Thus I lay aside my apparent human life to resume the wholly spiritual life which belongs to me."

(V. 18).—If Jesus had been a man of material flesh like you, he would have received death at the hands of men. Doubtless he might have offered himself as a victim, of his own free will, but he would nevertheless have suffered death by the action of the executioners. But Jesus, a fluidic, perispritic, and tangible incarnation, laid aside the life which he had assumed of his own free will. No one could deprive him of it, any more than men could take it from a spirit fluidically incarnated in the superior worlds, who had assimilated his fluidic envelope to the regions of your planet, to appear there visibly and tangibly. He voluntarily resumed the wholly spiritual life which belonged to him, by laying aside his fluidic envelope, just as the spirit, fluidically incarnated in the superior worlds, voluntarily resumes the

spiritual life which is natural to him by leaving the fluidic envelope which he has assimilated to appear visibly and tangibly on your earth.

Jesus thus, under the veil of the letter, implies his extra-human nature, and the fluidic nature of his perispritic covering, which could only suffer an apparent death—though it appeared to be real to men—because it was necessary that men should believe, first that he died for them as a man, and then as a God.

“I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again.” I have power to lay down the apparently human life which I have taken up, and to resume it again, to appear among men according to the requirements of my earthly mission, and to return into space with the wholly spiritual life which belongs to me; I have power to lay down my apparently human life to consummate the Great Sacrifice, and I have power to take it up again to rise again, and to rise up from the earth before the eyes of my disciples when my earthly mission is finished.

All this results from the Divine Will, which has permitted the manifestation, and has thus sanctioned the accomplishment of my work for human progress.

(19) Then there was again a division among the Jews on account of these words. (20) And many said among themselves, He has a devil, and is mad; why do you listen to him? (21) Others said, These words are not like those of a demoniac; can a demon open the eyes of the blind?

These discussions will always arise when a truth which is novel in the eyes of those who suppose they know everything, claims its right to be recognized by humanity without having been sanctioned by the scientific authorities. At first, a few who are attracted by curiosity will come over to the side of the novelty, and will then attach themselves to it by conscientious conviction. These men will always be considered as simple-minded, ignorant, or foolish, until the truth has won its claim to recognition, and is, perforce, recognized and admitted by the learned societies, who will then pour out their contempt upon those who are still

unwilling to believe, at their bidding, what they have at last condescended to admit.

VERSES 22-42.

Jesus replies to the Accusations of the Jews.

(22) And it was the feast of Dedication in Jerusalem, and it was winter. (23) And Jesus walked in the Temple, in Solomon's Porch. (24) Then the Jews gathered round him, and said to him, How long do you keep us in suspense? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. (25) Jesus answered them, I have told you, and you will not believe. The works which I perform in the name of my Father, these bear witness to me. (26) But you do not believe, for you are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. (27) My sheep hear my voice, and I also know them. (28) And they follow me, and I also give them age-long life. And they shall not perish in the age; and no one shall snatch them out of my hand. (29) My Father who gave me them is greater than all, and no one can snatch them out of the hand of my Father. (30) I and my Father are one. (31) Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. (32) Jesus answered them, I have shown you many good works from my Father; for which of these do you stone me? (33) The Jews answered him, saying, We stone thee, not on account of any good work, but that thou, being a man, makest thyself God. (34) Jesus said to them, Is it not written in your Law, I said, Ye are Gods? (35) If he called those Gods to whom the word of God came (and the writing cannot be broken), (36) Say ye to him whom the Father loveth, and hath sent into the world, Thou blasphemest, because I said, I am a Son of God? (37) If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. (38) But if I do, and if you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him. (39) Then they sought again to seize him, but he escaped from their hands. (40) And he went away again to the other side Jordan, where John was baptizing at first, and remained there. (41) And many came to him, and said, John performed no miracle, but all things whatsoever that John said about this man were true. (42) And many believed on him there.

§ 35. The explanations which you have already received should enable you to understand the meaning of these verses. We need only call your attention to those passages which require a special explanation.

(V. 24-28.)—These words of Jesus must not be isolated from those which he had spoken before, and which we have already explained (v. 14, 16, pp. 155, 156).

Everything in the Master's words is linked together, and forms an harmonious whole. The Jews to whom Jesus spoke were not his sheep, because they were impure and backward spirits, who did not practise the principles of justice, love, and charity, which had been preached to them


by Moses and the Prophets. Besides, in rejecting him they rejected also the pure morality which he proclaimed, not under a selfish aspect, as regards their nationality, but towards all men, whether Jews or Gentiles. They rejected his teaching, his example, and his mission, and thus did not listen to his voice, or follow him.

But although they were not then in the fold, they were all destined to be brought into it by the Good Shepherd. They were all called upon to practise the morality of Jesus, and to recognize his mission, and thus to behold his words accomplished in themselves. "My sheep know my voice, I know them, and they follow me. I give them age-long life, and they shall never be destroyed, and no one shall snatch them out of my hands." This must and will come to pass upon your earth, as regards the Jews, as well as all others who shall be obedient and persevering in the path of progress and purification, which will enable them to perceive more and more light and truth.

(V. 19-30.)—God has given them to Jesus, and God is above all, and no one can pluck them out of his hands. God has given Jesus power over your planet by appointing him its founder, ruler, and protector.

"My Father and I are one," said Jesus. There is unity of thought between God and Jesus, on account of the affinity which unites Jesus to the Creator, and which places him in direct fluidic communion with him.

(V. 31-36.)—The Jews accused Jesus of making himself equal to God, because he said, "I and my Father are one." They always understood his words literally, for they were unable to comprehend them. When the answer of Jesus is understood in spirit and in truth, it excludes the divinity which they accused him of arrogating to himself; and it also asserts that he is, like the Jews who brought the charge against him, one of God's creatures, deriving his being, like them, from the Father, the uncreated Creator, the only God; for he had originally the same Divine origin as all others, as regards his spiritual essence, although his mission, purity, and power, render him superior to all others on your planet.



(V. 34-36.)—This reply, opposing the letter by the letter, was peremptory, but appropriate to the accusation, which the Jews based on a misconception ; and was fitted to baffle and refute their accusation. Under the veil of the letter it contained the elements of the full explanation of the words of Jesus, in spirit and in truth, when men had become capable of receiving it.

The words quoted by Jesus respecting those to whom the word of God is addressed, "I said, Ye are gods," were intended to raise men in their own eyes, by showing them the links which connected them with the Divinity. "Ye are Gods," in the sense that you are formed (spiritually) of the vital principle emanating from God ; and when you are once created, you are bound to him by the infinity of your existence. Thus, you participate in the Divinity, in the sense that you become as eternal as Itself ; but you can enjoy your prerogatives (that is, find yourselves in direct fluidic communion with God, and one with him in thought) only so far as your perfection shall have deserved it. "You are gods," in the sense that the spiritual essence which emanates from God, has its inheritance in eternity. It derives from him both its principle of intelligence, and the fluidic principle which renders the spirit free, independent, and responsible, to be led on to its eternal individuality, from the infinitely little to the infinitely great ; for eternity in evil would no longer be Divinity. Therefore, those to whom God has specially addressed his word are called "gods," as being further on the path of infinite perfection than others.

Thus Jesus claimed, in the eyes of men, to participate in the Divinity, in the same manner as every spiritual essence, and to enjoy the prerogatives which he had gained by his perfection, being in direct fluidic communion with God, and one with him in thought.

After the words, "I said, Ye are gods," the Psalm adds, "and ye are all sons of the Most High." Jesus confined himself to saying to the Jews, "I said, Ye are gods." You can understand why he did not finish the verse. Besides

its being inappropriate to the object which he desired to attain, his doing so would only have led to a fresh discussion with men who were unable to understand the words of Scripture according to the Spirit, and the manner in which the Master applied them to rebut their accusation.

Truly "Ye are gods, and ye are all sons of the Most High." You participate in the Divinity, for, as we have just explained, you proceed from God, and you are all his creatures. You shall all, guilty children, prodigal sons, return to the Father's house, and the Father himself is standing on the threshold to welcome you with open arms.

You now understand the sense and meaning of the answer of Jesus in spirit and in truth. "Is it not written in your Law, that all spirits derive their being from God, and are from him, and thus participate in his Divinity? Thus, all are his creatures, and all will individually return to him by the word which he addresses to them, and by the perfection which they shall have deserved. If it is thus (and the Scripture cannot be destroyed), why do you say that I blaspheme? God has sanctified me, because I have deserved perfection by my works, and he has sent me as his messenger to proclaim his word to you. Why say you then that I blaspheme when I call myself the Son of God, by the purity and perfection which I derive from him; a creature united to the Creator by the spiritual affinity which permits me to be in direct fluidic communion with him, and thus one with him in thought?"

(V. 37, 38.)—Jesus spoke these words for the future as well as for the present, and more especially for the period of the revelation of the Spirit of Truth which he predicted and promised (which is the present revelation), and the period which is to follow.

Men, whomsoever you are, who do not yet believe, at least believe in his works by practising his morality, that you may finally recognize the position which he occupies with respect to God. You will then know and believe that his purity places him in direct communion with the Creator; and that he was his celestial messenger, the promised Messiah,

who descended among men, and is the protecting and ruling spirit of your planet, who watched over it from its formation. You will thus finally know and believe, because you will progress and purify yourselves, and will thus receive light and truth.

(V. 39.)—This event furnishes additional evidence of the extra-human nature of Jesus. He escaped from the hands of the infuriated Jews, who desired to stone him, and who surrounded him on every side, by laying aside his tangibility.

CHAPTER XI.

VERSES 1-45.

Raising of Lazarus.

(1) And a certain Lazarus was sick at Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. (2) And it was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. (3) Then the sisters sent to him, saying, Lord, behold he whom thou lovest is sick. (4) And when the Lord heard it, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it. (5) And Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. (6) Then, when he had heard that he was sick, he remained two days longer in the place where he was. (7) Then after this, he saith to the disciples, Let us go again into Judæa. (8) The disciples say to him, Rabbi, the Jews of late sought to stone thee, and art thou going there again? (9) Jesus answered, Art there not twelve hours in the day? If any one walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. (10) But if any one walks at night, he stumbles, because there is no light in him. (11) He said these things, and after this he says to them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth, but I go that I may awaken him. (12) Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleeps, he will recover. (13) But Jesus spoke of his death, and they thought that he spoke of the repose of sleep. (14) Then said Jesus to them plainly, Lazarus is dead. (15) And I am glad on your account, that I was not there, that ye may believe; but let us go to him. (16) Then said Thomas, who is called Didymus, to his fellow-disciples, Let us go too, that we may die with him. (17) Then Jesus came, and found that he had already been four days in the tomb. (18) Now Bethany was not far from Jerusalem, about fifteen stadia off. (19) And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them about their brother. (20) Then when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she met him, but Mary sat in the house. (21) Then said Martha to Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. (22) But even now I know that whatsoever thou shalt ask of God, God will give it thee. (23) Jesus says to her, Thy brother shall rise again. (24) Martha says to him, I know that he shall rise at the Resurrection at the last day. (25) Jesus said to her, I am the Resurrection and the Life; he who believes in me shall live, even if he die. (26) And every one living who believeth in me, shall not die in the age; dost thou believe

this? (27) She says to him, Yea, Lord ; I have believed that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, who cometh into the world. (28) And saying these things, she went and spoke to her sister Mary privately, saying, The Teacher has arrived, and asks for thee. (29) When she heard this, she rose up quickly, and went to him. (30) And Jesus had not yet entered the village, but was at the place where Martha had met him. (31) Then the Jews who were with Mary in the house, and comforting her, saw her rise up and go out quickly, and followed her, saying, She is going to the tomb, to weep there. (32) Then when Mary came to where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. (33) Now when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her weeping, he groaned in spirit, and was himself troubled, (34) And said, Where have you laid him ? They say to him, Lord, come and see. (35) Jesus wept. (36) Then said the Jews, See how he loved him. (37) And some of them said, Could not this man, who opened the eyes of the blind man, have also caused that this man should not have died ? (38) Then Jesus, again groaning in himself, cometh to the tomb. And it was a cave, and a stone lay over it. (39) Jesus saith, Take away the stone. Martha, the dead man's sister, saith to him, Lord, he stinketh already, for he has been buried four days. (40) Jesus saith to her, Did I not say to thee, that if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God ? (41) Then they removed the stone from where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father I bless thee that thou hast heard me. (42) And I know that thou hearest me always, but I said it on account of the multitude who are standing round, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. (43) And saying these things, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. (44) And the dead man came forth, his hands and feet bound with grave clothes, and his face bound round with a napkin. Jesus saith to them, Loose him, and let him go. (45) Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and saw the things which Jesus did, believed.

§ 36. The men who believed that the son of the widow of Nain, and the daughter of Jairus, were really dead, and raised again in the sense which men attach to the idea, by the return of the spirit into the decaying corpse, would also believe in the real death and resurrection of Lazarus, when he came out of the cave where he had been laid four days previously.

Lazarus was not dead, any more than the two others. It was simply a case of apparent death, although men regarded it as real. Lazarus appeared to all but Jesus to be dead ; but Jesus declared that his sickness was not unto death. He was sleeping, like the daughter of Jairus ; and Jesus went to awaken him. The case of Lazarus, and its attending circumstances, appeared to men to be one of the greatest acts of the mission of Jesus. It made them acknowledge

that he was the Messiah, the messenger of God, and caused them to accept his mission, that it might yield its fruits both for the present and future generations, as well as at the time of the present Revelation of the Spirit of Truth. This event, which was called a "miracle," was one of the foundations of the divinity which men attributed to Jesus.

Martha and Mary also believed that Lazarus was dead ; for they both said to Jesus, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." Did not the Jews come to console them for the loss of their brother, and to weep with them ? And did they not say to each other, "See how he loved him. Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have caused that this man also should not have died ?"

Does not the Evangelist, who shared with others the belief in the real death of Lazarus, reproduce the human interpretation of the event, as in the case of the widow's son, and of the daughter of Jairus, by saying, "Martha, the dead man's sister ;" and "the dead man came forth," &c. ?

What all others believed, the disciples, who were present at the event, also believed. If you follow the Gospel narrative attentively, you will see the letter on one side, and the spirit on the other. On one side you will see the opinions and interpretations of men, and on the other, the words of Jesus veiled by the letter. You will see that Lazarus was really dead in the eyes of men, and raised again in the sense which they attached to the word. But you will see that in the eyes of Jesus, Lazarus was only apparently dead. He was sleeping, and Jesus went to awaken him, and did so. You will see that Jesus declared that he was performing one of the most important actions of his earthly mission, and united his veiled teaching with the action itself, which was also veiled from the comprehension of the men of that period, and of future generations, and could only be explained when you were fitted to understand it.

When Martha and Mary sent to inform Jesus that Lazarus was sick, he said, "This sickness is not unto death."

Consequently, Lazarus was not dying; and although men believed that he had died of his sickness, it was not so in reality, but only appeared to their eyes to be so. This death was only apparent in the eyes of Jesus; but because men were to believe that Lazarus was really dead, and raised again by the power of Jesus, he added, "but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it." This implies "It is only to demonstrate, before the eyes of men, the power of God whose instrument I am, through the action which I am about to perform; and thus only for his glory, by developing faith in him in their hearts. Men shall believe from this that I am the Messiah, and the messenger of God, that the mission which he has given me shall be accepted and yield its fruits; and I am thus glorified by this action."

It appears strange to men who regard the letter only, and humanize everything in the mission of Jesus, that Jesus loved Martha and Mary and Lazarus, and yet knowing that Lazarus was ill, and being able to cure him, he remained where he was for two days, instead of going to him immediately with all haste.

Jesus loves all men, being the Good Shepherd, as he says himself; but it is recorded that he loved Martha and Mary and Lazarus, as a lesson and example, teaching men that those who walk in the ways of the Omnipotent Creator draw near to him, and establish with him and his celestial envoy, relations corresponding to those of friendship in your humanity.

You are aware that Lazarus and his sisters were devoted spirits, who were incarnated to aid in the fulfilment of the earthly mission of the Master; and Jesus delayed in order that the action which he was about to perform might take place under circumstances foreseen and designed to make a deeper impression upon men. After this, Jesus said to his disciples, "Let us go again into Judæa." But they did not comprehend the conditions of his mission, nor the hidden motive which had delayed his departure, and answered, "Rabbi, the Jews of late sought to stone thee, and

art thou going there again?" Then Jesus answered, always veiling his meaning under the letter, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any one walks in the day he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. But if any one walks at night, he stumbles, because there is no light in him."

In the thought of Jesus, these words had a twofold meaning, one personal to himself, and the other including a lesson for men. In the former sense they imply, "Is not my mission fixed, and must not all the acts connected with it be fulfilled? I work for its accomplishment as is necessary, and I do not wander from the path, because I have the will of God as a lamp to enlighten and guide me here below; but if I listened to your words, I should place myself beyond my mission, and wander from the path, because I should no longer obey the will of God, who is the light without which I can do nothing to accomplish my work."

But these words also include a lesson for men. Has not human life its limits for every incarnate spirit, whether it is a life of trials or expiations, or a mission; and ought not man to complete his trials or his mission while it lasts? He who fulfils the trials which he has chosen, or the mission which is entrusted to him during his human life, has not failed, because he has been faithful to the inspirations of his conscience, and has been aided and directed by good spirits whom the Lord has sent to him. But he who wanders from the path of his trials or mission, has failed, because he has yielded to evil influences which have led him astray.

After speaking thus to his disciples, Jesus said, "Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I am going to awake him." Lazarus was then already dead to the eyes of men, and his body had been laid in the cave which was to form his tomb. Jesus expressed this in his next reply; for the disciples were to share the opinion of others respecting the real death of Lazarus, as well as of the widow's son, and of the daughter of Jairus.

His disciples said, "Lord, if he sleeps, he will recover." And Jesus answered, "Lazarus is dead, and I am glad on your account that I was not there, that you might believe." The full meaning of this reply is as follows:—

"Lazarus is dead, in your eyes, as well as in those of others; he is dead to all eyes but mine; but to me he sleeps, like the daughter of Jairus, whom you also supposed to be dead. I am about to awaken him, and not to raise him from the dead, in the sense in which you understand the term, for he is not actually dead, although men believe him to have died of his sickness; and I told you before that his sickness is not unto death."

Therefore Jesus added, "I rejoice for your sakes that I was not there, but waited for two days to make a deeper impression on men, that you, as well as others, should believe that Lazarus is dead, and that he was restored to life by the return of the spirit into a corpse that had already lain in the tomb four days; you shall therefore believe that I am the Messiah, and shall believe in my earthly mission, and consequently in your own, which you have to accomplish." Jesus thus told his disciples plainly, according to the Spirit, what it was needful for them, as well as others, to believe.

When I myself, John the Evangelist, said, "Jesus spoke of his death, but they supposed that he spoke of the repose of sleep," I expressed, under unconscious spiritual influence, as it was intended I should, the idea which men attributed to the words of Jesus, and the human interpretation which they placed upon them.

While the apostles, the disciples, and the people were incarnate, they were incapable of explaining the nature of this action, which they regarded as a miracle, for they believed that Lazarus was really dead. And this human belief, which Jesus was not to correct, was necessary then, being useful at the time, and innocuous in the future, for the beloved Master had arranged and cared for everything. This belief was necessary until your own times, when the era of the New Revelation is unfolding; and it contributed greatly to the acceptance of the mission of Jesus, and to

the development of the fruits which it was to yield, according to the conditions and necessities of human progress.

Thus, the reply of Jesus was fitted to be interpreted either according to the letter, or according to the Spirit. If Jesus had shown his disciples the whole meaning of his words, and avoided any contradiction between them, he would have been obliged to explain how and why it was that Lazarus was dead to them, and not to him. But it could not be thus. Jesus was not to reveal spiritual secrets to men, because they were not yet fitted to receive them, and to make a good use of them. He therefore addressed them in the only language which they would be able to understand for many centuries, and which, being given up to human interpretations, prepared men for the future period of the New Revelation, which following on studies and observations in human magnetism and somnambulism, has initiated you into spiritual science and the secrets of the other world, and has thus fitted you to receive the true explanation of the words and actions of Jesus.

Lazarus was really dead to all except Jesus; for none but Jesus, or those to whom he had delegated the power, would have been able to stay the spirit when it was about to take its flight to the ethereal regions. Human science has frequently investigated the effects of a prolonged state of catalepsy. While it lasts, the spirit leaves the body; and if the period of its return is retarded, the link which binds it to its prison is ultimately broken, and the body remains materially dead, while the spirit recovers its original spiritual life.

Lazarus lay in this state of complete catalepsy for several days. The fluidic bond of the perisprit, which unites the spirit to the body, became more and more attenuated, being no longer sustained by the vitality of matter. Jesus waited for this extreme limit, that the sight of the powerful action of his will might make a deeper impression on the beholders. Lazarus was thus dead to all except Jesus, for although the link which bound the spirit to the body still existed, it was become so feeble that the action of Jesus only could restore and re-establish life.

The spirit of Lazarus was submissive and devoted, like those of the widow's son, and of the daughter of Jairus, and was prepared to return to the body ; but the body which he had left needed the powerful action of the Master's will to imbue it with the fluids which were necessary to immediately restore its nearly extinct force and vitality.

Let not those who worship the letter say that if we deny the real death of Lazarus, the widow's son, and the daughter of Jairus, and their "resurrection" in the sense which men attached to the word, but which Jesus never sanctioned, we accuse Jesus of trickery and lying, and of having deceived the Apostles, the disciples, and the multitude, as well as the Evangelists, and all those who have understood his words to imply real death, and a resurrection by the return of the spirit to a decaying corpse. There was neither trickery or lying ; and who dare blacken the name of Jesus by connecting it with such words ?

Men have fallen into error on account of their not understanding the thought underlying the words of Jesus, and the nature and character of the action which he performed, and the real existence of life, though latent, in the supposed dead bodies of Lazarus and others. Men have believed that Lazarus was really dead, because they isolated the words of Jesus, "Lazarus is dead," from the context, and understood them literally, without reflecting on what he said before and afterwards. They have not understood that the words of Jesus cannot be rationally interpreted without being considered as a whole, in such a manner as to be brought into perfect harmony, and not in such a way as to contradict each other. They have not understood that when Jesus said, "This sickness is not unto death ; our friend Lazarus sleepeth, but I go to awaken him," Jesus himself qualified the reply which he afterwards made to the remark of his disciples, "Lord, if he sleeps he will recover." They have not reflected that when Jesus said, "Lazarus is not dead," he was merely expressing the opinion of men, and not his own, which he had already expressed, and was again about to declare. They did not understand the motive and object

of the words of Jesus, and the manner in which they were designed to serve both the present and the future, until they should be explained at the time of the present revelation.

In order to establish the real death of Lazarus, men have quoted the reply of Jesus to his disciples, and have thus rendered the whole of his words contradictory. On this account alone, their human interpretation is necessarily false, just as the human interpretation of the words of Jesus relative to "the end of the world, and its signs" is likewise obviously false. When his disciples asked, "Tell us what shall be the signs of thy coming, and of the end of the world," Jesus answered, "Verily, verily, I say unto you that this generation shall not pass away till all these things shall be fulfilled." (Matthew xxiv. 33, 34.) Jesus could not reveal the hidden sense of these words, any more than that of those relating to Lazarus. They were left to human interpretations, and were destined to be interpreted at first according to the letter, and afterwards explained in spirit and in truth by the revelation which the Master had predicted and promised.

The Apostles were only to know what they were able to receive in their incarnate state, and what it was necessary for them to know and understand, and teach to the men of that age in pursuance of the mission which they had to fulfil. The Evangelists, like the Apostles, possessed the simplicity of Faith. They were docile instruments of the Lord, and did not seek to go further than they were led, lest they should go astray. They were inspired historical mediums, and said what it was necessary for them to say under unconscious spiritual influence; and like your own mediums, they used the words at their disposal to relate the events which took place, and the words spoken during the mission of Jesus, as well as the opinions and interpretations of the men who were then living.

Jesus could not explain the sense concealed under his words respecting the end of the world, which is, as you know, as follows:—"There are some of this generation of spirits, now incarnated, and to whom I speak, who will be living again on your earth at the predicted time of the end

of the world ;" "the end of the world," being also itself a veiled expression, which was only to be interpreted at the time of the New Revelation. He could not explain this without revealing to men the spiritual secrets of the other world, which they were unfitted to receive, being incapable of supporting them, and turning them to good account. At that time it would have been premature, and contrary to the methods of progress which your humanity was to follow for centuries, to reveal the natural and immutable law of rebirth, and the principles and consequences of reincarnation.

In like manner, the words of Jesus respecting Lazarus could not have been explained without revealing to men a long series of mysteries which they were unfitted to receive, and which could only be explained when spirits had become fitted by time, spiritual knowledge, and reincarnation to receive the light of the present revelation.

Let those who follow the letter strive to grasp the vast horizons of the present and the future which were revealed to the eyes of Jesus, and embraced in his thoughts, words and actions ; and let them understand that the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life. Let them understand that during his earthly mission Jesus gave the men of the age what they were able to receive, and veiled from their eyes by the letter what they were not qualified to grasp according to the Spirit, and that he arranged everything in accordance with the conditions of the progress of your humanity, both in the present and future, so that each epoch should receive what it was able to bear ; while everything was also prepared for the progressive revelation of the Spirit of Truth, which he predicted and promised.

When Jesus arrived at Bethany, he was met by Martha ; and we must now explain the spiritual meaning of the words which passed between them.

"Lord," said Martha, "If thou hadst been here, my brother had not died."

She believed that her brother was dead, and was permitted to believe so for the same reason as the disciples and all others.

Jesus answered, "Thy brother shall rise again."

Jesus always used the words "rise again," and "resurrection," figuratively, in a sense hidden from men, and with different meanings, according to circumstances, either in cases of apparent death, or in his teachings, but never in the sense of the return of the spirit into a decaying corpse, after real death, which was the sense in which men understood it, according to the state of their intelligence.

"Your brother will rise again, returning to bodily life and its conditions" (He had already said to his disciples, "This sickness is not unto death—Lazarus sleeps, and I go to awaken him.") "Your brother shall rise again to the eyes of the men who believe him dead, in the sense in which they understand the word 'resurrection ;' and he will also rise again in your eyes ; for you also believe him to be dead."

The reply of Jesus presented itself to the mind of Martha in a two-fold sense ; and might be understood either of the actual resurrection of a dead man, or of the resurrection which shall take place at the last day. Martha understood these words according to the popular Hebrew ideas, and the Catholic doctrine of the Last Judgment founded upon them, which only admit the complete resurrection of body and soul, in the case of the resurrection of the dead, and think that it can only take place at the end of the time fixed for the duration of your planet.

You find Jesus continually opposing this idea, and reminding the Jews that the soul alone exists in the eyes of God, and that the soul is the intelligent and responsible being, while the body is the tomb in which it is buried for a time ; for you may notice that Jesus often speaks allegorically of spiritual death, when alluding to material incarnations, which suspend all memory in the spirit who suffers them.

You may remember that the belief in the immortality of the soul was not firmly established among the Jews, but was admitted by many ; by some as an hypothesis, by others as an article of faith, and by others again, out of deference to popular superstitions. This opinion had spread widely

since the time of the Maccabees, who had revived and maintained it ; but it was not believed by all.

When Martha said, "I know that he will rise again in the Resurrection at the last day," Jesus answered, "I am the Resurrection and the Life ; he who believeth in me, though he die, shall live ; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall not die in the age ; believest thou this ?"

Martha understood these words literally, as alluding to an actual resurrection of him who was dead, and might be restored to life, by the power which she supposed Jesus to possess, and she therefore answered, "Yea, Lord, I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, who comest into the world."

But the meaning of these figurative words was only to be explained in spirit and in truth by the present revelation. Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life ; for it is by practising the morality which he preached, and which he personified by teaching and example, that the spirit succeeds in freeing itself from spiritual death, both in the errant and incarnate states. After the spirit is separated from the body, it returns to the clairvoyant life which it possessed before. If it has lived, before God, as a good man on the earth, its clairvoyance becomes more and more enlarged, its faculties become developed, and it may, according to its merits, be exempted from returning to your earth of oblivion ; whereas, a spirit who has buried himself deeper and deeper in evil, has to suffer spiritual death after material death. His intelligence is darkened, and he neither recovers the memory of the past, nor the clairvoyance of the future, until he has returned to better thoughts. Thus, material incarnation is spiritual death, because it blots everything from the memory of the spirit who suffers it ; and there is another spiritual death of the spirit after leaving the body, as explained above.

He who believes in Jesus (that is, practises the morality which he has preached, and the instinct of which is planted in the heart of every man), though he is dead shall live. He shall not die the spiritual death ; for after material death,

he shall return to the clairvoyant life which he possessed before his incarnation, and this clairvoyance will extend further and further as his faculties develop. Whoever lives, and believes in Jesus (that is, practises his morality without ever deviating from it) shall not die, but live for ever; he will not return to spiritual death, but will be freed from material incarnations.

But we repeat again, for we cannot insist too much upon a point of such importance, that when Jesus said, "He who liveth and believeth in me," did not threaten everyone with spiritual death who refuses to range himself under his banner by taking the name of a Christian. Such a sentence would be a monstrous assertion in the mouth of him who was the type of all charity. These words always relate to the natural law of love, fraternity, and reverence towards the Lord, which is written in the heart of every creature, and which manifests itself by actions corresponding to the intelligence of man, and the surroundings into which he is born.

Every man, whatever his opinions or his external religion, is a "Christian" if he loves his fellows, and endeavours to do them as much good as possible, making every effort to improve himself, and to aid in the progress of his brethren. He is then a Christian, being a follower of Christ, and one of his sheep.

Christianity, properly so-called, and as you are taught, is a very, very narrow fold! and can only include so small a proportion of humanity that it might be said that the universe is rejected, if none but the "Christians" are saved. The Christianity of Jesus is the Beautiful and the Good wherever it is found, and wherever it is unselfishly practised for the love of humanity.

Mary was informed of the arrival of Jesus by her sister, and went to meet him at the same place where Martha had met him; and the Jews who were with her followed; and she also said, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died."

Mary and the Jews believed that Lazarus was dead; and

you are told that when Jesus saw their tears, he groaned in spirit, and was troubled ; and said, " Where have you laid him ? " They answered, " Come and see ; " upon which Jesus wept. This was the human aspect of the circumstances, which, together with the remarks of the Jews among themselves, was reproduced in the narrative.

Jesus, the type of gentleness and love, gave men a proof of his tenderness and sympathy for human sufferings.

Do not suppose that the breaking of the bonds which unite you to the flesh sunders all sympathies. Do you not perceive that the good spirits who surround you are afflicted at your sorrows, and rejoice in your joys within the limits of purity ? How much more should he who broods over you, as it were, with his love, that you may one day come forth radiant with purity ? Should he not feel pity for you ? Jesus let those around him perceive that he shared in their grief, that he might give men a palpable proof of his tenderness.

He knew perfectly well where Lazarus had been laid, but under these circumstances, as in all others, it was necessary for the fulfilment of his mission, that he should allow men to believe in his humanity, as he allowed them to believe in the death of Lazarus.

Jesus went to the tomb, and then said to the people around him, " Take away the stone. " Martha said, " Lord, he stinketh already, for he has been dead four days. "

She believed that Lazarus was dead, and as she was not in the cave which formed his tomb, it was natural for her to suppose this, from the length of time that had elapsed since the apparent death of Lazarus, which she thought to be real. Lazarus has suffered from a putrid fever ; but the body was not putrid in the sense that Martha supposed, for as actual death had not yet taken place, decomposition had not commenced.

Then Jesus answered : " Did I not say to thee that if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God ? " Martha connected these words with what Jesus had said to her before, when she met him, and understood them literally. These words meant, taken according to the letter, " Did I not say

to thee that if thou believest in my mission, and in the power which God has given me as his envoy, that thou shouldst see thy dead brother raised again by my power?"

But these words were veiled by the letter, and should not be separated from those which Jesus addressed to his disciples before going to Bethany. When his thought is explained in spirit and in truth, the words signify, "As I said to my disciples, Lazarus sleeps, but I am going to wake him. His sickness is not unto death, but only for the glory of God, and that his Son may be glorified thereby. It is only to manifest the power and glory of God, whose instrument I am, before the eyes of men, by developing faith in him in their hearts, and in order that men should believe that Lazarus is dead, and that I raised him again, in the sense in which they understand it. They will thus believe that I am the Messiah, in order that the mission which God has given me should yield its appropriate fruits. You will behold the action which I am about to perform; and you will see the men who believe like you that Lazarus is dead, believe that he has been raised again, receive faith in God, and believe like you that I am the Christ, the Son of the living God, who is come into the world."

After the stone was taken away, Jesus confirmed what he had said to his disciples, according to the Spirit, when he announced the motive and object of the act which he was about to accomplish. Raising his eyes to heaven, he pronounced these words, "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me," in that this act of my mission is about to be accomplished. "And I know that thou hearest me always," that my mission must be fulfilled in all points as thou hast given it me, "but for the sake of these I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me."

"Then he cried out with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth! And immediately Lazarus came forth with his hands and feet bound with grave clothes, and his face bound up with a napkin. Then Jesus said to those around, Loose him, and let him go."

The death of Lazarus was simply apparent, though it

would certainly have been complete, but for the intervention of Jesus, for the body was exhausted by the disease ; but the spirit had not entirely left it. It was still bound to it by a slender thread, which might be compared to a film of caoutchouc, stretched till it is just on the point of breaking. Jesus then recalled the spirit of Lazarus, who joyfully resumed his chain, for it was a means of promoting the great work which the Christ had undertaken ; and Jesus, while recalling the prisoner, restored by his powerful will the prison of which he was to resume possession. Consequently he exerted a magnetic action on the body to restore it to health, and a spiritual action on the spirit of Lazarus, to recall it and to restore the fluidic cord.

We have already told you in speaking of the son of the widow of Nain, and of the daughter of Jairus, what we will now repeat. God never compels the spirit to unite itself to corruption, and his immutable will never derogates from the immutable natural laws which he has established from all eternity. When real death has taken place, and the spirit has entirely abandoned the body which it has left, by the separation of the spirit and perisprit from the body, it can no more resume corporeal life, except by reincarnation.

VERSES 46-57.

Conspiracy against Jesus.

(46) But some of them went away to the Pharisees, and told them what Jesus had done. (47) Then the chief priests and Pharisees assembled a council, and said, What shall we do, for this man works many miracles. (48) If we let him alone thus, all will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation. (49) And one of them, named Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, (50) You know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should be destroyed. (51) And this he said, not of himself, but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus was about to die for the nation. (52) And not for that nation alone, but also that he should gather together in one the children of God who were dispersed. (53) Therefore, from that day they took counsel together that they might put him to death. (54) Therefore Jesus walked no more openly among the Jews, but departed thence into the country near the desert, to a city called Ephraim, and dwelt there with his disciples. (55) And the Jews' Passover was at hand, and many went up to Jerusalem from

the country before the Passover, that they might purify themselves. (56) Then they sought for Jesus, and said to each other as they stood in the Temple, What think you ; will he come to the feast ? (57) And the chief priests and Pharisees also gave command that if any one knew where he was, he should tell it, that they might seize him.

§ 37. These verses are perfectly intelligible. We need only call your attention to the fears expressed by the chief priests and Pharisees, and to the words of Caiaphas, and the Evangelist's observations upon them.

The Jews supposed that if Jesus continued his work, he would gather the people of Israel under his flag, and free them from the Roman yoke. Such was the popular report ; and Caiaphas being a leading man among the Jews, knew that the nation was incapable of regaining its freedom, and proposed to sacrifice this pretended leader, to save the rest of the people who were in danger of being overwhelmed by the Roman legions. It was, therefore, with a view to the present material interests of the nation, that he prophesied concerning the mission of Jesus and its results, when he said, "You do not consider that it is expedient that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish."

John says that Caiaphas did not say this of himself. He spoke under unconscious inspiration, like many other persons who suppose that what they say proceeds from themselves, but who have received inspiration, and are directed by it. Caiaphas considered that it was needful for Jesus to die, to save the people from rushing upon their own ruin by rebelling against the Roman dominion.

But the spirit who guided his inspiration, gave the words a prophetic meaning and application, which John, likewise under unconscious spiritual inspiration, quotes as referring to the mission of Christ to the human race.

CHAPTER .XII.

VERSES I—II.

Mary perfumes the feet of Jesus.

(1) Then Jesus came to Bethany six days before the Passover, where Lazarus was, who was dead, and whom he raised from the dead. (2)

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Then they made him a supper there, and Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those reclining with him. (3) Then Mary, having taken a pound of essence of spikenard, very precious, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair, and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. (4) Then said one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, who was about to betray him, (5) Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred denarii, and given to the poor? (6) But he said this, not because he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and carried what was put into it. (7) Then Jesus said, Let her alone; she hath kept this for the day of my burial. (8) For you have the poor always with you, but me ye have not always. (9) Therefore a great multitude of the Jews knew that he was there, and they came not on account of Jesus only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he raised from the dead. (10) And the high priests took counsel together that they might put Lazarus also to death. (11) For many of the Jews went away, and believed in Jesus on his account.

§ 38. We have already given you sufficient explanations relative to Mary and the perfume; the embalming of Jesus, the words spoken by Judas and Jesus (verses 1-9) and the raising of Lazarus. You may ask what became of Lazarus, whom the chief priests proposed to put to death. Like most of the followers of Jesus, he hid himself as long as he thought he had reason to fear the immediate anger of the Master's enemies.

It is said that at the time of the Crucifixion, the numerous sick persons whom Jesus had healed, and the multitudes who crowded round his path, had all disappeared.

This need not surprise you. Most of them were humble persons; and what could they have done to help Jesus? They would only have increased the bitterness of the hatred which was felt towards him, by any demonstration; they followed the stages of the divine drama, but without casting themselves in its path, and leading to needless complications. They had no part to fulfil; but as soon as the mission of Jesus was completed, and his doctrine was formed into a school, they gathered round the disciples, and became the first Christians. Where was the necessity to transmit their history to posterity? It is lost, like that of all those first Apostles of the faith who lived for God only, and through him.

VERSES 12-19.

Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem.

12. On the next day a great multitude who came to the feast, hearing that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, (13) Took branches of palm trees, and came out to meet him, and cried, Hosanna; blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord, the King of Israel. (14) And Jesus, finding a young ass, sat upon it, as it is written. (15) Fear not, daughter of Zion, behold thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt. (16) And his disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about him, and that they had done these things to him. (17) Then the multitude who were with him when he called Lazarus from the tomb, and raised him from the dead, bore witness. (18) On this account also, the multitude met him, because they had heard that he had wrought this sign. (19) Then the Pharisees said to each other, Do you not see that you prevail nothing? behold the world follows after him.

§ 39. The narrative of John is a summary of facts which the three first Evangelists had related in detail, respecting the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem.

We have only to add to former explanations that the words "when Jesus was glorified" (v. 16) would be better interpreted "when he returned to his glory." They signify, "when Jesus had returned to his own spiritual nature."

VERSES 20-26.

The Gentiles desire to see Jesus.—His Remarks.

§ 40. Divide these verses that they may be explained more clearly.

(20) And there were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at the feast. (21) Then they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, saying, Lord, we wish to see Jesus. (22) Philip goes and tells Andrew, and again Philip and Andrew tell Jesus.

These were recent converts to Judaism. They were called Greeks, because they were looked upon as infidels and idolators; for even after the lapse of centuries, foreign converts were regarded as inferior to the pure children of Israel, who did not perceive that there was more merit in choosing what is good than in unconsciously conforming to it.

We must state one objection beforehand. Every spirit, before incarnation, selects the medium in which he is to live, and the opinions and form of worship under which he

will range himself, always with a view to advance them by his own progress. This is the case ; but he who has incarnated himself as a trial, in a medium inferior to that in which he ought to live, and in an order of belief and worship different to those to which he ought to belong, in order to advance them by his own progress, has then the merit of taking the initiative of rising from it while his vision is obscured by the flesh ; whereas he who is placed in a progressive centre, and remains voluntarily in *statu quo*, does not fulfil his duties, and is false to his obligations.

Progress is always in proportion to the degree of intelligence. God does not expect the South Sea Islander to become a Howard ; but he requires that he shall not exaggerate the brutal instincts which animate him ; and that he should not be ferocious simply because he takes pleasure in ferocity. Everything is proportional, and the obligations of humanity are always in proportion to its faculties. The savage who spares an enemy does as great an action as the civilized man who sacrifices his life and fortune to save a brother. Relatively to his condition the sacrifice is as great, or perhaps even greater ; and his progress is proportionate to his sacrifice.*

(23) And Jesus answered them, saying, The time is come that the Son of Man should be glorified. (24) Verily, verily, I say unto you, Unless the grain of wheat which falls into the ground, dies, it remains alone ; but if it die, it bears much fruit.

Jesus alludes to the necessity of his approaching "death," and to the fruits which it should yield by his earthly mission, when it should be diffused, both in the present and the future, but more especially at the then future period of the new era, when all men, both Jews and Gentiles, shall range themselves under the same banner of love and charity, by practising the pure morality preached by the Son of Man, and personified in his teachings and examples.

Nothing in the universe exists without a first cause. The seed produces the fruit, but it must first suffer the necessary

* "A missionary is often as incapable of perceiving the use of an idol to a savage, as is a grown man of appreciating the value of a doll to a child."—(*Tylor.*)—TRANS.

transformations. Thus, the sacrifice of Jesus could not yield its fruits until it was completed. What would have been the power of his word, and his exhortations to self-denial, love, and devotion, if he had not preached the virtues which he came to impose upon men by his own example? If he had not suffered, all would have said, "What effort did it cost him to do good, and to be pure and virtuous? Was he not a privileged spirit by nature? Was not his essence superior to any other?" If his origin had been revealed, would it not have furnished a pretext to deny his sacrifice and its merits?

Some may still say, "He had not to suffer like men; and his nature was not like theirs. Are not his passage through the world, his privations, sorrows, and death, only an insulting phantasmagoria to the men whom he urged to follow in his steps, when he knew that human matter is condemned to external sensibility which he could not have felt; and bound to a life which it is painful to quit, so much the more, as besides the suffering, there is the uncertainty respecting man's fate to come; whereas Jesus suffered neither pain nor uncertainty."

Did not Jesus suffer? How do you know? O men, who only understand and believe in what concerns you materially, and regard moral sufferings as so little, you do not comprehend how far they surpass physical sufferings. O men, who disregard the importance of the sacrifice of Jesus, because he was not clothed with corruptible flesh like yours, look into the depths of your own hearts, and ask yourselves sincerely whether you would prefer to suffer bodily torture or to endure to behold the ingratitude, baseness, and crime of those whom you love better than yourselves? You who are not buried in selfishness; fathers, mothers, children, humanitarians, who look upon all men as beloved brethren; what sufferings do you experience when you behold the objects of your tenderest love repel you with contempt, and cast the stone at you!

Is it said that Jesus could not suffer like other men, because he was not of their nature? It is true that he did

not suffer in the same manner as the material men of your inferior planet ; but if his sufferings were of a different nature, would they not be greater than those of your humanity ? His fluidic body was incapable of feeling material pain, because the sensations which Jesus experienced had no similarity with the painful feelings of a limb which is lopped off, or a part that is struck and bruised ; but Jesus was pre-eminently sensitive to impressions falling, with a violence which you cannot understand, upon the moral nature. It is on this account that we tell you that Jesus, the willing victim to his love for his protégés, the men of your planet, though not suffering physically, yet suffered most acutely. Consider the moral sufferings felt by some highly refined natures among yourselves ; the blow which they experience on receiving bad news, and the tortures which they feel at the sight of ingratitude and malice, when they, or the objects of their tender affection, are the victims of calumny or persecution. Would not these sensitive spirits prefer physical pain to the constant moral suffering which they are obliged to endure ? And does not this moral suffering, if pushed to a certain point, equal or even surpass material bodily suffering ? Does it not sometimes affect the physical frame to such an extent as to destroy it ? Do you not see uneasiness, vexation, and finally consumption, wear away the organism ; and do you refuse to acknowledge how intolerable moral sufferings may become ?

What might not be the sufferings of Jesus from this point of view ! How great must be his sorrow when he beholds you so ungrateful, so slothful, and so guilty ! He suffered, and suffers still ; and the sacrifice which he performed always lasts, and will last, so long as he has not gathered all his sheep under the folds of his protecting mantle.

Do not say, " What is the use of an imaginary sacrifice ? " The sacrifice was real, and so much the more real that the spirit alone was capable of feeling the suffering. The moral sufferings of Jesus are caused by your sloth and negligence. His anxiety on your behalf did not begin when he appeared among the Jews, but the day when your

globe arose from the primeval nebula, and became fitted to receive the spiritual essences designed to follow the phases of their development, corresponding to the development of matter. He then worked unremittingly at the progress of the newly-formed spiritual essences, and led them and your planet on to the period destined for the appearance of man on your primitive earth, which was then fitted to receive the human incarnation of those fallen spirits whose degree of guilt rendered it needful for them to endure this severe, but necessary trial. He has incessantly urged on and renovated progress in all the kingdoms of nature, at all points of your globe; and has likewise urged on and renewed his appeals to repentance and progress by incessantly incarnating spirits at every point of the globe, who were always superior to the masses, and commissioned to give them a new impetus. These appeals are repeated again and again, and his anxiety is constantly on the alert, and will never rest until you shall have attained to the superior regions to which you ought to aspire.

Is it said that human matter clings to a life which it is painful to it to quit, especially as it is uncertain of its future destiny, and that Jesus was incapable of feeling either the suffering or the uncertainty? Would you sink Jesus to the level of your own moral inferiority, which has not even yet permitted you to comprehend that the body is only a temporary covering for the spirit; the instrument of its trials, expiations, and progress, and that death is the deliverance of the spirit, for it restores it to liberty, as the prisoner is restored to liberty when the gates of his dungeon are thrown open; and that death is also the commencement, source, and means of fresh progress. Jesus being always a pure spirit beneath his tangible fluidic envelope, possessed full knowledge of his origin, and the certainty of his future. He foresaw the results which he would attain, and his charitable efforts were addressed still more to future generations than to the generation living at that period. He experienced none of the horrors and sufferings which men, and especially material men, suffer at the approach of death,

when they cling to a life which they are unwilling to leave. Jesus has told you that no one took away his life, but that he laid it down of himself, having authority to lay it down and to take it up again, for the fulfilment of the earthly mission which God had given him ; for he descended among men to teach them to live and die in view of the progress of the spirit ; and to this object all his efforts were directed.

Is it said that the passage of Jesus on earth would have been a mocking phantasmagoria of humanity? Let men who might be tempted to use such language reflect, and raise their thoughts above the narrow level which restricts their intelligence within the bounds of matter, and darkens it, and leads it astray. They will then understand the vast designs of Providence respecting your planet and its humanity; and the infinite wisdom of the Lord who watches over the progress of men, and gives every age and period what it is able to receive, leading the generations of men in their ascending course, according to the needs and faculties of every age, under the obedient or rebellious action of the free-will of men, and its deflections, deficiencies, or even opposition.

They will then understand that the successive revelations are each proportioned, like the missions and events which control them, to the necessities and state of intelligence of the period. Each is effected by the incarnation of spirits who are always superior in comparison to the masses, and are commissioned to urge them onwards; and each revelation yields its fruits, in such a manner that each prepares for that which is to follow; and is, in turn, explained and developed by the next.

They will understand that each of the earlier revelations was handed over to human interpretations, under the empire of the letter, and was to prepare for the advent of the Revelation of the Spirit of Truth, which Jesus predicted and promised. This is the present revelation, which comes to explain those which have preceded it, in spirit and in truth; and the new era now opening before you will have its first Messianic years marked by the incarnation of missionary

spirits, always superior to the masses, sent to prepare the way for the second coming of Jesus, as the Spirit of Truth. Consult the history of your humanity; consider each revelation, and the surroundings amid which it took place; follow the course of the revelation delivered by Moses, and by the prophets of Israel; mark its development and phases; and the advent of the Messiah, which they prepared and foretold. Consider the manner of his appearance, under the two-fold aspect veiled by the letter, of a human and extra-human nature and origin. Follow the course of events and human interpretations until the appearance of Jesus on your earth. Consider the revelation of the angel to Mary and Joseph, which was linked with that which had preceded it, and which preceded and announced the appearance of Jesus; which revelation remained secret until it could be conveniently revealed, that it might yield its fruits. Follow its development and phases until your own times, amid the efforts and discussions of human thought and interpretations. Consider the surroundings amid which Jesus appeared to accomplish his earthly mission; consider his words and actions, and the course of events and of human interpretations during his earthly mission, and afterwards. Consider the advent of the Spirit of Truth, which he predicted, and for which he prepared, and you will then understand that what took place was the necessary condition and means of the progress of your humanity, and that the hour of the present revelation has arrived.

Jesus could not have accomplished his mission in the spiritual state, amid the disincarnated spirits of your planet, that he might then send them forth purified on the high road of progress. Do not forget that the spirit must pursue its course, linked to an earthly body, as one of the conditions of its progress. Consequently, in order to be useful, the means of progress are given to incarnate spirits only. The spirit progresses in the free state, but *only in proportion to the impetus which it has received during incarnation*. This is the inevitable law, from the moment when it has been condemned to incarnation till the moment when its sentence

(which is its own work, as being the consequence of its own actions) is lifted from it. This is the reason that Jesus met with so much opposition, for the spirit possesses its free-will, and its degree of moral development, and is freely open to the reception of good or evil influences. Thus, it was necessary that the mission of Jesus should be accomplished on the earth ; thus, the opposition which he met with, though foreseen and expected, was none the less opposition ; and thus it is, too, that his mission is still incomplete, and can only be completed in the course of ages.

The material men of that age needed first the human aspect of the revelation, and material sufferings, the only ones which they could understand or estimate. Then they needed the "miraculous" aspect of a revelation which was veiled by the letter, and which afterwards led them to look upon the celestial messenger as God-made man, subject like themselves to death, and as having experienced material sufferings and death.

Regarded in this light, the "death," and the earthly mission of Jesus, were to serve the present and to prepare for future spiritual progress, and thus to train the intelligence of men to understand moral sufferings, and to receive the New Revelation, and the grandeur and object of his mission.

(25) He who loveth his life shall lose it, and he who hateth his life in this world shall keep it in age-long life.

To love one's life is to sacrifice everything to present well-being, sensual pleasures, pride, and selfishness. This is to lose one's spiritual life, by remaining within the bounds of material incarnation.

To hate is a strong expression in your language. In the Hebrew sense, it only means that you should not make an idol of life, and sacrifice to it what honour, reverence, and love of God should lead men to respect. This is to preserve one's spiritual life by walking in the paths which lead to perfection.

(26) If anyone would serve me, let him follow me ; and where I am, there also shall my servant be ; and if anyone shall serve me, the Father will honour him.

This needs no explanation. To serve Jesus is to obey

the law of love ; and whosoever follows it is worthy to be a Son of God.

VERSES 27-36.

Continuation of the Words of Jesus.

Divide these verses, and we will give you special explanations.

(27) Now is my soul troubled ; and what shall I say? Father, deliver me from this hour? But on account of this I came to this hour. (28) Father, glorify thy name. Then a voice came from heaven : I have also glorified it, and will glorify it again. (29) Then the crowd who stood there and heard it, said that it was thunder ; others said, An angel spoke to him. (30) Jesus answered and said, This voice came not on my account, but on yours.

(V. 27.)—Jesus set men an example of submission to the decrees of Providence. These words have the same object, as regards men, as those which have already been explained (Vol. ii. § 287, pp. 378-384) : “ Father, if it be thy will, let this cup pass from me ; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.”

Christ prepared those who heard him for the events which were to follow, that his words might return to their memory, and bring forth fruits of faith. He addressed himself to his Father in Heaven that he might always raise the spirit of man towards his Creator, and teach him from what source he can draw strength and faith, and on whom he must rely to reward his efforts.

The voice was an effect produced by the spirits around Jesus, and was designed to prove positively that Jesus was really a celestial messenger, and that whenever a man raises his spirit to God, with confidence, his power sustains and strengthens him.

The words, “ I have also glorified it, and will glorify it again,” mean that God! has obliged men to glorify his name and power by the manifestations which he has already permitted to arrest their attention ; and that he will do so again whenever they depart from him.

Jesus said, “ This voice came not on my account, but on yours.” Jesus needed no manifestations which men could

perceive to convince him that his voice had reached his Heavenly Father ; but it was needful to produce a material impression upon material men.

(31) Now is the judgment of this world ; now shall the ruler of this world be cast out.

These are figurative expressions. The Messianic manifestation being the grandest which has yet taken place, or would take place until the advent of the Spirit of Truth, was that which ought to produce the strongest positive effect. It is this which has diffused the law of love which must envelop the earth like a protecting mantle. Consequently, it is by this mission of love that the world must be judged, that whatsoever in it is evil, as being contrary to this faith, may be cast out, and will be completely so at the time of the purification of your planet and its humanity, by the removal of the spirits who shall then still remain guilty and rebellious, who will be cast down to the inferior planets. The manifestation of the Spirit of Truth by the spirits of the Lord, both errant or incarnate, on missions, is the continuation and development, and, at the same time, the confirmation of the work which Jesus accomplished by his earthly mission ; and it is preparatory to his second coming.

(32) And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. (33) And he said this, signifying by what kind of death he was to die.

Jesus alluded to his approaching " death ;" but he alluded more especially to his Resurrection and the following events, up to and including his return to the ethereal regions at the time of his Ascension. " I will draw all men unto me," signifies that after Jesus had risen again and ascended to heaven, his precepts were to become more widely extended ; and he was not speaking only of the events which were about to take place (his apparent death, resurrection, and ascension) but also of the incessant progress which men would make, tending constantly towards fraternity and unity.

(34) The multitude answered him, We have heard in the Law that the Christ abideth during the age ; and how sayest thou, The Son of Man must be lifted up ? Who is this Son of Man ? (35) Then Jesus said to them, Yet a little time is the light with you. Walk while you

have the light, lest the darkness should overtake you ; and he who walks in darkness knows not where he goes. (36) If you have the light, believe in the light, that you may be the sons of light. Jesus said these things, and departed, and hid himself from them.

Men who understood very little concerning the immortality of the soul, attributed to their Messiah an immortal material existence on earth. Jesus might have answered them by explaining the immortality, development, and progress of the soul ; but would he have been understood ? Would these still unenlightened intelligences have been better fitted to understand these revelations of the spiritual nature than a little child to understand algebraical definitions ?

Jesus contented himself with saying, "I am the light," because he brought them light and not consuming fire. He developed their sight, but not to plunge them into darkness by dazzling them. Look at the sun, and when you turn your eyes away, all is darkness around you. Thus it is with your intelligence. It is needful to show you celestial light through a darkened glass which tempers its rays ; else your feeble sight would be unable to endure it. Grow and develop yourselves, and you will be able to soar to spiritual heights, and view with clear eyes the splendours which await you.

The Jews said to Jesus, "We have heard in the Law that the Christ abides during the age." In common parlance, everything taught by the Rabbis was considered to form part of the law ; and the popular notion which the Jews expressed was the result of the commentaries of learned men on the ancient books included in the Old Testament.

VERSES 37-43.

Unbelief of the Jews.

(37) But though he had wrought so many miracles before them, they did not believe in him. (38) That the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, who said, Lord, who hath believed our report, and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed ? (39) On this account they could not believe, as Isaiah said again, (40) He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart, that they should not see with their eyes, and understand with their heart, and repent, and I should heal them. (41) Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory, and

spoke of him. (42) Nevertheless, even among the rulers many believed in him, but would not confess it on account of the Pharisees, lest they should be cast out of the synagogue, (43) For they loved the glory of men more than the glory of God.

§ 42. Does not that which took place with regard to Jesus repeat itself in your own days with regard to the New Revelation? Do you not witness the incredulity of the men of your own age, who no more believe in this revelation and its instruments than did the Jews believe in Jesus and in his mission? Do you not see many among those who believe in the new revelation, who dare not openly avow their spiritual faith, on account of the Pharisees of your own days, and for fear of being cast out of their "synagogues?" Do they not thus love the glory of men more than the glory of God?

The words of Isaiah are still fulfilled in your own days, for there are still impure, backward, ignorant, and, above all, proud spirits, who are in bondage, like the Jews, either to their material interests, and their human prejudices and traditions, or to their vices and passions; and reject the revelation of the Spirit of Truth and its instruments, or embitter themselves against them, just as the Jews rejected Jesus and his mission, and embittered themselves against it.

But time, expiation, and reincarnation, will lead to progress, and the light will then shine forth in the sight of those who cannot yet see it, that, according to the words of the prophet Isaiah, "they may see with their eyes, and understand with their hearts." We are speaking of those afflicted with moral blindness, whose intelligence is still too much darkened by matter and material influences.

VERSES 44-50.

The Light of the World.

(44) And Jesus cried out, and said, He who believeth in me does not believe in me, but in him that sent me. (45) And he who seeth me, seeth him that sent me. (46) I am come a light into the world, that whoever believeth in me, shall not remain in darkness. (47) And whoever shall hear my words, and shall not believe, I judge him not; for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. (48) He who rejecteth me, and receiveth not my word, hath one that judgeth

him ; the word that I have spoken ,this shall judge him on the last day. (49) For I have not spoken from myself, but my Father who sent me hath given me commandment what I shall say, and what I shall speak. (50) And I know that his commandment is age-long life ; therefore, whatever I say, as the Father said to me, so I speak.

§ 43. The explanations that you have already received will enable you to understand these words. He who follows the morality which Jesus preached, does not practise a morality which proceeds from him, but one which proceeds, through his instrumentality, from God himself.

When Jesus said, " He who sees me, sees him that sent me," he did not speak of his body, which was material to the eyes of men, but of the spiritual being, conformed by his inspirations to him that sent him. Never materialize the words of Jesus, but always seek for the spirit.

Jesus came to save the world ; for he is, as he said, " a light," by the morality which he preached ; and all those who practise it progress and purify themselves by advancing on the road which should free them from the darkness of material incarnation, and from the darkening of the intelligence, and expiation after death. Jesus came not to judge the world, but to save the world, for he came to teach men to live and die with the progress of the spirit in view. He came to regenerate your humanity by teaching and exemplifying all virtues, and by pointing out to all men the path which ought to lead them to fraternity and unity.

We have already explained the words, " My Father judges no one ; I judge no one." Man judges himself for each of his actions, and on the last day of his body, the judgment pronounced by his conscience, but which he is often unwilling to hear, will be rendered clear and precise to him. It is the pure morality which Jesus preached, and which he has declared to be all the law and the prophets, which is the criterion of judgment for the conscience of man.

CHAPTER XIII.

VERSES 1-13.

Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet.

§ 44. Divide these verses, and we will give you the

special explanations required on the verses which have not been dealt with already in the commentary on the three first Gospels.

(1) And before the feast of the Passover, Jesus, seeing that his hour was come that he should depart from this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. (2) And when supper was ended, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, (3) Jesus, knowing that his Father had given all things into his hands, and that he came forth from God, and departed to God, (4) Rose up from supper, and laid aside his garments, and taking a towel girded himself. (5) Then he poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which he was girded.

Do not fall into the error of some who call themselves "Christians," in supposing that Judas was "possessed by the devil" when he resolved to betray Jesus. You know that you should understand by such expressions an evil influence or inspiration. A bad man may be guided by his own spirit, which is to him a devil; but this does not lead reflecting men to think that God predestines some of his creatures to be the prey of contrary influences stronger than themselves, that they may serve as passive instruments for the accomplishment of his designs. Not so; God has created the spirit free, and responsible for his actions, which are his exclusive work, or into which he is led by the evil influences which he attracts by his own instincts, and which he is at liberty to accept or to reject by virtue of his free-will.

Jesus, knowing his superior origin, desired to give the men whom he called his brethren an example of humility and self-renunciation by the emblematic action of washing their feet. He therefore likened himself to a slave, and fulfilled the service of one.

Ah, how far are those who would practise this ablution, from him who set the example! Are they the servants of the poor and humble? And after fulfilling this vain formality, do they remember to imitate the humble life of him who said, "My kingdom is not of this world," and "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has not where to lay his head?" Is it not a parody, when they fill one of the kingdoms of the earth, and live in a sumptuous palace?

In order to manifest the importance and object of this example of humility and self-abnegation, John quotes the words spoken by John the Baptist, and by Jesus himself, on his nature, origin and mission (v. 3).

Jesus was fully conscious of his nature, origin and powers. He knew that he was about to resume his own spiritual nature, and thus to return to God; and he, the Divine Model, desired by the emblematic action of washing his Apostles' feet, to show men the path which he opened and traversed among them, and in which they must walk to raise and purify themselves, and thus return to God by perfection. This is the path of humility, simplicity, and self-abnegation. It is followed by abstaining from all the passions which mislead and disgrace your humanity—and which are well called "deadly sins"—and by practising the law of love towards all.

(6) Then he comes to Simon Peter, and this one says to him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? (7) Jesus answered and said to him, What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know after these things.

Peter's opposition to the act of Jesus was the natural consequence of his reverence for his Master; but Jesus insisted, and made him understand what was needful for him who would feed the flock of the Lord.

The answer of Jesus, "What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter," relates to the position which Peter was to hold, and the rank which all those who desire to be his successors ought to hold. It alludes to the light that the apparent death and resurrection of Jesus would shed upon his words.

Those who call themselves the successors of Peter would really be so if they followed in his steps, and thus fulfilled their obligations. Every man who acts like Peter may call himself, and assuredly is, his successor. Let all who find themselves in circumstances which enable them to teach, preach, and serve men, act, in word and example, with humility, self-renunciation and love, and they will then be the successors of Peter. Let those who assume this title officially, descend from their thrones. Let them be humble

and gentle, pure and devoted, and go to bring consolation, courage, and faith to others. Let them wash the feet of their disciples, not pompously before the crowds who cross themselves devoutly, but every hour of the day by their secret actions and humble virtues. Let them set the example of what they preach, and of what Jesus preached ; and let them not pervert his words of infinite love by turning them into words of hatred and vengeance. Let them preach peace instead of discord. Let them give alms instead of receiving for themselves, through the priests, the pence intended for the poor ; and they may then call themselves the successors of Peter ; the shepherds of the flock of Jesus, whose flock is your entire humanity.

(8) Peter says to him, Thou shalt never wash my feet in the age. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. (9) Simon Peter says to him, Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head.

Peter's reverence for his Master was as great as his love, and it suffered from seeing him perform this menial service ; but Jesus insisted, to teach him the necessity of humility in man, since he himself practised it. Peter did not yet understand the hidden object of the action, and believed at first that a purification by ablution was necessary to enable him to equal the Master, and he therefore asked to be washed all over.

But the words of Jesus embraced your whole humanity, both in the present and future. "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me," means, spiritually explained, that if man does not submit to the purifying law of Christ he will not attain the object which he seeks.

Do not forget that it is not necessary to call oneself a Christian to be a disciple of Jesus, and to follow the law of love. Remember, too, that ablution, as a means of purification, was carried to such an extent among the Jews that they never took a meal without first washing their hands, that they might not soil their food, in case they had inadvertently touched anything impure.

(10) Jesus says to him, He who is washed has no need but to wash his feet, but is wholly clean, and ye are clean, but not all. (11) For

he knew who would betray him ; and on this account he said, Ye are not all clean.

These words are figurative. You should understand, from what we have just said respecting verses 3-5, that the washing of the feet was another emblem of the way in which the disciples were to follow the new path on which they were about to enter, after having had their feet purified by the Master from all the stains that the old road had left upon them.

As regards Judas, he was not disposed for any purification at that moment ; and it is plain that in the eyes of Jesus the outward action was worthless in itself, in so far that it was material, and that it had only an emblematic meaning, since, while purifying the other Apostles, it did not purify Judas. Jesus knew that Judas would betray him ; for he knew that he had undertaken a task above his strength, and would fail ; and he read it in his thoughts.

(12) When therefore he had washed their feet, and taken his garments, he sat down, and said to them, Do you know what I have done to you ? (13) You call me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for I am. (14) If therefore I have washed your feet, being your Lord and Teacher, you ought also to wash each other's feet. (15) For I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, you should do likewise.

At the same time that Jesus asserted, under the veil of the letter, his position and powers in reference to your planet and its humanity, he gave men a lesson and example of humility and self-abnegation, which, if practised by all who would walk in his steps, would be the means of progress and purity for all earnest men.

(16) Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his master, nor the ambassador greater than him who sent him. (17) If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

"The servant is not greater than his master." All spirits are equal before the Lord ; and the hierarchy is established on virtue alone ; for social conditions have no existence in his eyes.

"The ambassador is not greater than he who sent him." This alludes to the notions which would grow up respecting the divinity of Jesus. Men have been bent upon exalting him, and would have been inclined to place him above God,

JESUS FORETELLS THE TREASON OF JUDAS. 197

and make him the sovereign of the heavens ; and the figure of Jesus would then have effaced that of God ! Nay, has it not effaced it in general, and removed it from the thoughts of men ? Are not the principal prayers and honours which are addressed to the Trinity addressed specially and nominally to Jesus ? And do you not, in your own days, behold the reverence, worship, and adoration directed to Mary, casting into the shade both Christ and Him who is from all eternity the One, Sole, Indivisible God ?

Jesus, who is never called God, and who, on the contrary, always expressly proclaimed that the Father was the only true God, has here condemned in advance that human exaggeration which would have placed him above God.

“ If you know these things, blessed are ye if you do them.” If you understand the equality which exists between right-thinking men, and the position which you ought to assign to the Master, you will be blessed ; for you will practise fraternity and universal love in sincerity. These words, which Jesus addressed to his disciples, are applicable to all ages.

VERSES 18-30.

Jesus foretells the Treason of Judas.

(18) I speak not of you all ; I know whom I have chosen, but that the writing may be fulfilled : He who eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me. (19) I tell you now before it happens, that when it has happened, you may believe that I am he. (20) Verily, verily, I say unto you, He who receiveth anyone whom I shall send, receiveth me, and he who receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me. (21) While Jesus was saying these things, he was troubled in spirit, and bore witness, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you that one of you shall betray me. (22) Then the disciples looked at one another, doubting of whom he spoke. (23) And there was one of the disciples whom Jesus loved, resting on the bosom of Jesus. (24) Then Simon Peter nodded to him to ask who it was of whom he spoke. (25) He then, who was reclining on Jesus' breast, saith to him, Lord, who is it ? (26) Jesus answered, It is he to whom I shall give the sop after I have dipped it. And having dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. (27) And after the sop, then Satan entered into him. Then Jesus said to him, What thou doest, do quickly. (28) But no one of those reclining knew why he said this to him. (29) For some thought that because Judas had the bag, Jesus said to him, Buy what we require for the feast, or that he should give something to the poor. (30) Then he, taking the sop, went out immediately, and it was night.

§ 45. We have already explained the character of the treachery of Judas in the Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels, and the narrative of John explains and completes the others.

The words, "I know whom I have chosen," relate to the eleven faithful Apostles, who were capable of undertaking and carrying out to the end the mission which they had requested. They had been chosen, in the sense that their guides had encouraged them to demand it, and they had obtained it, and had thus been accepted by Jesus. Jesus foretold the treason of Judas, in order to strike the attention of the Apostles, that when the event itself should come to pass, they might be convinced by this extra-human faculty of the prescience of the future, that Jesus was really the messenger of God.

Immediately afterwards, he prepared them to understand, when their active mission commenced, after his final departure from the earth, that, as being his messengers, they were also the messengers of the Lord, and that whoever received their teachings received the teachings of the Master, just as he who receives the teachings of the Master receives the teachings of the Lord. But verse 20 likewise applies to all ages, and to all the spirits whom Jesus should send on a mission among men, to give an impetus to progress, or to develop it. They apply especially to the Apostles of the New Revelation of the Spirit of Truth, which he predicted and promised, who come to explain the Master's words and actions, and the principles and consequences of his mission, in order to prepare and complete the work of human regeneration.

The figurative words respecting Judas, "Satan entered into him," mean that the idea of treason already springing up in his mind, became a fixed resolve ready to assert itself in action. The disciples did not understand why Jesus said to Judas, "What thou doest, do quickly." They consequently busied themselves with conjectures. They could not think that Jesus regarded Judas as a traitor; and although they thought that such an act might be possible

on the part of Judas, they did not suspect him at that moment.

It was needful for the events to be fulfilled, and Judas obeyed the influences which ruled his thoughts. The words of Jesus meant, "Carry out your design."

VERSES 31-38.

Love one another.

- § 46. (31) Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in him. (32) If God is glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and he will immediately glorify him.

These words relate to the approaching "death" of Jesus, and to the results which it was to produce both in the present and the future, for the progress and regeneration of your humanity. The elevation of the creature to eternal glory is the only means of giving glory to God, and to his celestial messenger.

(33) Little children, yet a little time I am with you. You shall seek me, and as I said to the Jews, Where I go, you cannot come; so I tell you now.

Jesus alluded here to his disappearance from the tomb, his return to his own spiritual nature at the period of the Ascension, and to the mission which his disciples were to accomplish on the earth, after the completion of his own.

(34) I give you a new commandment, that you also love one another.
(35) In this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love towards one another.

These words were addressed specially to his disciples; but they likewise apply to all ages; for the Master's mission began at the time of the formation of your planet; it was manifested by his appearance among men, and it still continues, and will only terminate when he has led you to perfection; to the rank of pure spirits, and thus to the feet of the Father.

Whoever practises the pure morality preached by Jesus is his disciple, for he practises universal fraternity and love. Men, love one another; it is by the love that you bear to each other that all will recognize you as the disciples of

Jesus. Apostles of the New Revelation, set your brethren the example of the practice of the law of love by loving each other yourselves.

(36) Simon Peter says to him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Where I go, you cannot follow me now, but thou shalt follow me afterwards.

The Apostles in the incarnate state were still little children, but nevertheless they were advanced spirits.

In saying to Peter, "You cannot follow me *now*," Jesus gives a proof of the inferiority of your planet, but he allowed the hope of progress to shine through his words. In adding "thou shalt follow me hereafter," he alluded to the elevation of the spirit of Peter, as well as of those of the other Apostles to whom he spoke, which would enable them, after their mission was completed, to rise into the superior regions to follow Jesus; or, in other words, to continue to advance in the path of progress under his guidance.

(37) Peter saith to him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thee. (38) Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for me? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, A cock shall not crow until thou hast denied me thrice.

Peter did not understand the answer of Jesus, and thought only of the danger which menaced his Master. Then Jesus foretold to Peter that he would deny him.

CHAPTER XIV.

VERSES 1-12.

The Many Mansions.

§ 47. (1) Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God; believe also in me.

Jesus reassures Peter and the other Apostles, reminds them of their faith in God, and exhorts them to have faith in his mission, and therefore in what he is about to say.

(2) In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; I go to prepare a place for you.

These words of Jesus contain a positive assertion of the habitability of the worlds scattered through space, by the spirits who live on your planet, and of their ascending hierarchy.

The Father's house is the Universe ; space ; infinity.

The "many mansions" refer to all worlds indiscriminately. They are dwellings suited to their inhabitants, for the ascending hierarchy of worlds corresponds with that of the spirits who inhabit them.

We have already given you a sketch of the innumerable mansions in the Father's house, in speaking of the origin of the spirit, and of the spiritual genealogy of Jesus. The spirit changes his dwelling in proportion to his progress, by going to inhabit another appropriate to the degree of elevation which he has acquired, and to the faculties, necessities, and conditions of his advancement.

It is as impossible to give you an exact and complete account of all the worlds as to detail and describe the Infinite to you. What you are capable of knowing and understanding, and what it is possible and allowable for us to explain to you, is as follows:—In order that the spiritual essence may arrive at the period preparatory to the spiritual condition of independent, free and responsible intelligence, it must, at its origin, pass through the successive and progressive stages of materialization in the mineral and vegetable kingdoms, and of incarnation in the animal kingdom. After spirits have passed through the preparatory period, they are placed in possession of free will, and thus pass into the state of formed spirit, but into a state of simplicity, ignorance, and innocence, whence they must be led through infancy by the instruction of their guides, to be placed in a condition to make use of their free will. Then, each spirit chooses his course in independence, liberty, and responsibility. If he remains pure in the path of progress, obeys his guides, and constantly follows the straight and simple path which is pointed out to him, he arrives at perfection, having progressed to the fluidic state, and become a pure spirit, unfallen, and of perfect and immaculate purity, like Jesus, the protector and ruler of your planet.

But if, on the contrary, he departs from the straight and simple course which is pointed out to him, he fails ; and many fail, either at the outset, or after having acquired a

greater or less degree of development and progress. He is then subjected to human incarnation under conditions suited to his degree of guilt, and to his faculties and need of development. He also finally arrives at perfection, and after having been completely purified, he becomes a pure spirit, like his brethren. After having started originally from the same point, he has arrived at the same goal, although by different paths; for it is rendered to each according to his works.

In order that all may thus proceed from the infinitely little to the infinitely great, there are primitive worlds just emerged from the incandescent fluids, where the spiritual essences which have been deposited there are elaborated. Then, when the globe has entered upon the material period, the spiritual essences develop and progress by materialization in a progressive and ascending scale in the mineral and vegetable kingdoms, and then, by incarnation, in the animal kingdom. At the time of the appearance of man on the planet, by the incarnation of spirits who have fallen to the point which renders primitive incarnation necessary for them, these worlds become worlds of trials and expiations to the fallen spirits, but pursue their progressive and ascending course in a manner proportionate and corresponding to that of the spirits who inhabit them.

There are special worlds where the spiritual essence, after having passed through the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms, are prepared for the spiritual condition of formed spirit, gifted with independent, free and responsible intelligence.

The fluidic worlds are destined to be inhabited by spirits who have not fallen since their state of infancy and instruction, and who remain pure in the path of progress, until they attain to the fluidic state. Thus, there are different worlds, also following their progressive and hierarchically-ascending course, at every stage, and appropriate to the state of development and progress of the spirits who inhabit them, from the state of infancy and instruction, to the state of pure spirits, when these worlds have likewise progressively

arrived at a purely fluidic condition corresponding to the state of their inhabitants.

The various worlds intended for the fallen spirits who are subjected to human incarnation, are also appropriated to the state of development and progress of the spirits who inhabit them. The material worlds are more or less inferior or superior to each other ; and there are worlds more or less material, and more or less fluidic, which all serve, in the progressive and ascending scale, for the incarnation of fallen spirits, and thus for their development and progress ; and all worlds are destined in the course of ages and eternities to take their place among the celestial or divine worlds, which can only be inhabited by pure spirits.

The worlds of trials and expiations are thus of intermediate degrees, superior or inferior to each other, from the appearance of man by primitive human incarnation to the period of regeneration ; and beyond this period, until the regeneration is completed by the purification of the planet and its humanity, by the separation of the darnel from the good corn.

The regenerative worlds are designed to prepare the fallen spirits who have still somewhat to expiate, to rise progressively from the material period. These are transitional worlds, where justice reigns, and where the spirits pursue and complete the purification which renders them capable only of good and incapable of evil. These worlds have also intermediate degrees among themselves, inferior or superior to one another.

The happy worlds are those where the regenerated spirit, cleansed from every evil desire, has only to progress in goodness, without having to struggle against evil. In this stage, the spirits, like the worlds, have entered on the semi-fluidic period, which is the commencement of the dematerialization of the body.

In the various regenerative worlds, which are preparatory and intermediate between these and the happy worlds, the body disengages itself from a part of its corruptible matter. It frees itself, little by little, but is not yet wholly freed from the decomposition of matter.

The more the body develops itself by reason of the advancement of the spirit, the more the substances which comprise it volatilize at death, and free themselves from animal decomposition; but this belongs to physiological questions beyond your scope.

The happy worlds have also intermediate degrees among themselves, and are inferior or superior to each other in the progressive and ascending scale, which is to lead them through a more and more fluidic condition, corresponding with that of the spirits who inhabit them, to the state of celestial or divine worlds.

The celestial or divine worlds are those which have arrived at the purely fluidic state, and which can only be inhabited by pure spirits.

(3) And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and will take you to myself, that where I am, you may be also.

The faithful disciples of Jesus had not yet finished their mission on earth. They had no further expiatory trials to suffer, but only missions to fulfil. We say expiatory trials, for when the spirit has not yet taken his place among the pure spirits by perfection, he is tried by the missions which are entrusted to him.

When the spirit is freed from the letter, the Master's words signify, "After I have finally quitted your earth, and you shall also have finished your mission, you must accomplish your spiritual mission under my direction. When you shall have fulfilled the new mission which is destined for you among men, and after I shall have thus prepared a place for you, I will return, as I have promised you. You will then be prepared by the perfection which you will have deserved, and by the perfect purity which you shall have acquired by your works, to take your place among the pure spirits, and I will receive you to myself, that where I am, you may be with me also." At the time of the second coming of Christ, the spirits who will then be incarnated, or more properly, incorporated on your planet, will be ready to attain to perfection, and the disciples, who have entered on the path of progress before you, and will always continue to advance, will then be prepared to become pure spirits.

In speaking of his second coming, Jesus alluded to the period when faith shall be freed from every error, and shall have cleansed men from every fault. You are on the threshold of this period, which is the era of the coming of the Spirit, but you are still far from having advanced one step in it.

(4) And where I go, ye know, and the way ye know. (5) Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not where thou goest, and how can we know the way? (6) Jesus saith unto him, I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life; no one cometh to the Father but by me.

Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, for he is the emblem of the law of love.

He is the Way, by the morality which he preached and personified by his teachings and examples; for he has taught men to live and die with a view to the progress of the spirit. Whoever practises his morality, progresses and purifies himself.

He is the Truth, for he is the direct messenger of God appointed by him to transmit it to men, in proportion as they are able to bear it.

Truth is relative to the period and to the necessities of the age. Truth is one, but it is veiled, and only unfolded to the sight, to the extent and proportion that man is able to receive and understand it. The higher the spirit, the more the veils of the truth are torn from his eyes. The Truth is the knowledge of every principle in the physical, moral, and intellectual order, leading man to perfection, to fraternity, universal love, and disengagement from matter, by his sincere aspirations towards Spiritism, or, if you prefer it, to Spirituality. It is the same idea; but to your human comprehension, Spiritualism has led to Spiritism, and Spiritism should lead to Spirituality.

The Truth which is thus personified in Jesus, constitutes the task which he commenced before the appearance of man on your planet, and which he has constantly continued for your development and progress, firstly by missionary spirits, and then by Moses and the prophets among the Hebrews, and by missionary spirits among other nations, who prepared for his appearance on the earth. He himself

came to accomplish this task by his earthly mission, in the centre which had been prepared for him. He has continued the task by missionary spirits, until your own days, which witness the opening of the new era of the Christianity of Christ, and he will still continue it during this new era by his Messiahs or Messengers (missionary spirits, the organs of the Spirit of Truth) until the day of his second coming, this time clothed with all his spiritual glory, to your purified planet, to unfold the unveiled truth to its equally purified creatures.

He is the Life, for the spirit who progresses and purifies himself by practising his morality, is saved from spiritual death by the darkening of the intelligence, after the separation of the spirit from the body. He is also freed from expiation, and from that material incarnation which suspends all memory.

“No one cometh to the Father, but by me.” Jesus, your protector and ruler, is alone entrusted with your development and progress, and with leading you to perfection; and no one can come to the Father except by perfection.

(7) If you had known me, you would have known my Father also; and from henceforth you know him, and have seen him.

These words are figurative. The disciples had not seen the Father materially, but spiritually, by beholding in Jesus the perfection which would lead them to him.

“If you had known the perfection which leads to the Father, and which I personify, you would also have known my Father spiritually, and you will soon know him thus; and you have already seen him spiritually by seeing in me the perfection which leads to him.”

(8) Philip says to him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.

(9) Jesus says to him, Am I so long with you, and hast thou not known me, Philip? He who has seen me has seen the Father, and how sayest thou, Show us the Father.

Jesus repeats the same idea. It always relates to perfection, and was an illustration intelligible to the undeveloped minds of the Apostles in their incarnate state. The letter was sufficient for them and for future generations, until the revelation of the Spirit of Truth, for they were unable to

receive more than it was their mission to deliver to men, who were incapable of understanding according to the Spirit ; and the letter was designed to prepare for the advent of the Spirit. It is the object of the present revelation, which you may call the revelation of the Revelation, to free the spirit from the letter.

(10) Dost thou not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in me? The sayings which I speak to you, I speak not of myself, but the Father who dwelleth in me doeth the works. (11) Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me ; but if not, believe me through the works themselves.

As the purity of Jesus enabled him to be in constant communion with God, the divine inspiration is always in him, and his acts constantly correspond to it.

“Do you not believe that I am always in direct communion with my Father, and receive inspiration from him, and that my Father is in direct communion with me, and inspires me? What I say to you, I say not of myself, for I speak by the Divine inspiration ; but my Father, who is always in direct communion with me, himself performs the works which I do, by the inspiration which he gives me. Let the works which I perform bear me witness, and believe it on their account.”

(12) Verily, verily, I say unto you, He who believeth in me shall do the same works which I do, and shall do greater than these, because I go to my Father.

He who has faith, acts in accordance with his faith, and his actions are always on an ascending scale. He who firmly believes in Jesus (that is, he who zealously pursues the path which he has traced out in love and truth) will become pure like him, and will perform actions similar to his, especially as, when Jesus has returned to his own sphere, he will have more liberty of action to inspire and guide his true and sincere imitators ; and however far you may be from Jesus, do you not hope to arrive at the same goal? Jesus only worked among men by actions which they were able to comprehend, and which were in proportion to their intelligence. When we say “actions which they were able to comprehend,” you must not understand

that they were able to grasp their causes, but only that they could perceive the results, and interpret them from their own points of view. The same thing applies to the actions which you will succeed in accomplishing when you have attained to a sufficient degree of perfection. As human intelligence will then have advanced, it will be necessary for your works to be of a higher order to impress it strongly. Ask for no explanations on this point, for you are at present incapable of understanding them. The question would be premature ; and you should avoid trenching on the future.

VERSES 13-31.

Promise of the Comforter.

§ 48. (13) And whatsoever you shall ask in my name, I will do this, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. (14) If you shall ask anything in my name, I will do it.

We have already explained the ideas in these verses in our remarks on Matt. vii. 7, xxi. 22 ; Mark xi. 24. Jesus here bears witness to the power of Faith. He does not tell men when their requests will be fulfilled, for his thought is not limited by time, and the conditions are always subordinate to the efforts of the incarnate spirit to receive and to second the impulse which is given to him, as well as to his faculties, and to the necessities for his advancement. That which glorifies the Father is the progress which men accomplish, and which Jesus watches over, as the protector and ruler of your planet. It is thus that the Father is glorified in the Son.

The words of Jesus are applicable to all ages, and to all men who walk in the path which he has traced out, and follow the morality which he preached, and who are, therefore, his disciples. Thus we say, with Jesus and for Jesus, to the Apostles of the new era, and to all men : Everything which you shall ask of the Father in the name of Jesus (everything which is pure and holy, and necessary for your personal progress, or for the progress of humanity) Jesus will accomplish, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. And if you ask anything of Jesus in his name, and in this manner, he will do it.

(15) If you love me, keep my commandments. (16) And I will ask the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, which shall remain with you in the age. (17) The Spirit of Truth, which the world cannot receive, because it seeth it not, nor knoweth it; but you know it, because it remains with you, and shall be in you.

These words are figurative. The Spirit of Truth which Jesus gives to men is the Truth, which is always relative to the intelligence of those who receive it; and the knowledge of it is revealed to them by errant or incarnate missionary spirits, who receive the divine inspiration from the superior spirits who assist and guide them. From this point of view, God has always given the Spirit of Truth to men, for revelation is permanent and progressive, and Truth has always been revealed in proportion to what men were capable of understanding. It is so in your own days, which witness the beginning of the new era, and it will be so still, until the time when the Master shall return to show you the unveiled Truth.

In the case of the Apostles in their incarnate state, the Spirit of Truth which God was about to send them was the knowledge of the truth, relative to the requirements of the mission that they were about to accomplish, and according to the conditions necessary for its accomplishment; that is, the knowledge of the mission of Jesus, and of his authority. They were to receive this knowledge under the divine inspiration which was to remain in them, and be in them, through the assistance and inspiration of the Spirits of the Lord, who were entrusted with their guidance. This knowledge they were to transmit to the men of the period, and it was to be transmitted to future generations by the Gospel narratives.

The Spirit of Truth would remain with them for ever, for they were devoted and advanced spirits, and after the completion of their mission on earth, they were to advance further and further in the knowledge of the truth for ever, with the assistance and inspiration of spirits superior to themselves; for you are aware that even in the case of spirits who are equal in purity, there is always a hierarchy respecting superiority in universal knowledge; for the created spirit can never equal God.

The world could not receive and know the Spirit of Truth which God was about to give to the Apostles, for impure, material, and backward spirits were incapable and unworthy of receiving the knowledge of the truth under divine inspiration, and thus of receiving the assistance and inspiration of the superior spirits who were to aid and guide the disciples whom Jesus had appointed to spread the good news.

(18) I will not leave you orphans; I am coming to you. (19) Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me; because I live, ye shall live also. (20) In that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and you in me, and I in you.

These words are still wholly figurative and spiritual. Jesus first announced to the disciples that the spiritual inspiration would not leave them in want of anything, and that he would come spiritually to them by sending them the superior spirits who were commissioned to help and guide them. He then alludes to the period of his return into space, which was near; after which he would not be materially visible to the eyes of the body, but would be spiritually visible to the eyes of the spirit in thought and by faith. Thus he alludes to the spiritual life, and to the spiritual relations which it established between men and spirits. It is thus that the world will see him no more (meaning the impure, material, and backward men who see only the bodily life, and see only materially with their bodily eyes), but the disciples would see him spiritually, for in thought and faith they would see the perfection which he personified on earth, because he will thus live spiritually for them, and they will also live the spiritual life which will thus give them the sight of the Master. They will then know that Jesus is in communion with the Father and inspired by him, and that they themselves are in communion with Jesus, and inspired and guided by him, by the mediation of the superior spirits. Even when they did not feel it, they had confidence in it, and their confidence was confirmed by the spirit-manifestation of the "tongues of fire;" the superior spirits who were to inspire and guide them.

(21) He who has my commandments and keeps them, he is it who loveth me. And he who loveth me is beloved of my Father, and I will

love him, and will manifest myself to him. (22) Judas (not Iscariot) saith to him, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself to us, and not to the world? (23) Jesus answered and said to him, If any one shall love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make an abode with him. (24) He who loveth me not, doth not keep my words, and the saying which you hear is not mine, but my Father's who sent me.

What Jesus says here has a much wider meaning than men give to it, and is not confined to the minority who call themselves "Christians," but to all who practise the morality of Christ, and thus attract his protection, and therefore that of God. God and Jesus love all men, for God has universal and infinite love in himself, and Jesus, who participates with God in this love, is, as regards your planet, the personification and emblem of the law of love which he taught and practised to its fullest extent during his earthly mission. But all men do not love God and Jesus, for the only way in which they can love them and prove their love to them here below, is to follow the commandments of God, which are all included in the pure morality preached by his messenger, Christ, who has extended and applied his commands to all humanity.

Although God and Jesus love all men, in the sense that they include them all in their love, and desire their progress, and are always ready to aid it, they only love them in the sense of granting them their protection, so far as they attract them by endeavouring to follow this morality. God and Jesus come to those who observe this morality, and practise these commandments, "and take up their abode with them," in the sense that they send good spirits to transmit the inspiration of Jesus, who is himself inspired by the Lord; and this inspiration remains with them when they persevere, suggesting the desire of whatsoever is true, just, and good, and thus conducive to their progress, and to their moral and intellectual advancement. It is by the inspiration that he thus sends them, that Jesus remains with earnest men.

Man possesses his free will and the liberty as well as the responsibility of his thoughts and actions. He who does not keep the commandments that Christ has given him,

enters into the paths of pride, selfishness, vices or passions, which mislead or degrade your humanity. These vices attract to themselves evil inspirations and influences, and thus drive away the divine inspiration, and then God and Jesus do not come to those who are ruled by them.

(25) I have spoken these things to you while abiding with you. (26) But the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, which my Father will send in my name, this shall teach you all things, and remind you of all things that I have said to you.

Jesus informed his disciples of the support that would be given them by the spirits of the Lord, who were appointed to aid them in their earthly mission. His promise here relates to their being taught everything necessary for the requirements of the age; but not universal knowledge. Whoever understands the words of Jesus differently would rightly reject them, for the future did not correspond with the promise, in this sense, and the Apostles were very far from knowing everything in the absolute and general sense of these expressions, whether as regards science, or the truth respecting the order of the revelations. The Spirit was veiled from them, and they walked, as was intended, like the generation to whom they spoke, amid the darkness of the letter, and under the influence of mystery and miracle.

When the idea contained in these words is rationally understood, according to the Spirit of Truth, they mean: "But the good and superior spirits whom God will send in my name to inspire and guide you, will teach you by inspiration everything necessary for the requirements of the age and for the fulfilment of your mission, and will cause you to remember, also by inspiration, everything which I have told you."

All the words of Jesus are applicable to the present, and include promises of the future. During the centuries which have passed since the accomplishment of their mission, the Apostles have learned much; and in the ages to come they will learn more. You have also learned much, and will long continue to learn, in proportion to your requirements,

until you shall be fitted to know all things, in the physical, moral and intellectual order; more especially intellectual, throughout eternity.

(27) Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. (28) You have heard that I said to you, I go away, and come to you. If you loved me, you would rejoice, because I said, I go to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.

Jesus, in giving his peace to his disciples, gave them the conscience of duty done, the power of faith, and the blessedness of hope. In the eyes of his disciples, and of all other men, Jesus was liable to death, like themselves. Therefore, when he said, "If you loved me you would rejoice that I go to the Father, for the Father is greater than I," he taught them to feel that true love should not lead to selfishness, and that man, instead of mourning over the loss of a dear friend, ought to rejoice, and thank God for his deliverance; for death delivers the spirit from its earthly prison, but is not a barrier which separates it from the friends whom it has left on earth. It is the conclusion of its trials, and thus the beginning of progress, and true love is not in the union of the body which it destroys, but in the union of souls, which it cannot injure, and which remains intact and immortal.

Observe how on every important occasion Jesus insists on his relative inferiority to the Creator. His words, "My Father is greater than I," were designed to strike the attention of those who have made him participate, it must be confessed, materially in God. If he had been a "distinct Person" (we speak from the "Christian" point of view, derived from human interpretations, which make Jesus a portion of the substance of the Father, and equal to him in power), he would have been equal to the Father, and would not have said, "My Father is greater than I."

(29) And now I have told you before it comes to pass, that when it happens, you may believe. (30) Henceforward I will not speak many things with you, for the ruler of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. (31) But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father has commanded me, so I do. Arise, let us go hence.

In verse 28 Jesus reminded his disciples of the allusions he had made to his apparent death and resurrection, his reappearance among them, and to his return into space at the period of the Ascension. He fixed their attention on his having predicted these events before they came to pass, that when these events had happened, and the prophecies should be fulfilled, they should possess a firm, unalterable faith in his mission, and should fulfil their own.

(V. 30.)—These words are figurative, and denote the anguish and uncertainty which overcome men at the approach of death, and which, in any other nature than his own, would overcome man at the moment of a sudden and violent death. He was inaccessible to these sufferings and uncertainties; but he was to appear to suffer them, in the eyes of men who believed him to be liable to human death like themselves, that the world should know that “he loves the Father, and obeys his commandments,” and should understand that he has confidence in God, and obeys him with love and reverence; that he fulfils the mission which has been entrusted to him; and lastly, that his mission should thus be accomplished, and yield its fruits in the present and in the future; at first according to the letter, and then according to the Spirit, at the time, then future, of the Spirit of Truth.

CHAPTER XV.

VERSES I—II.

Parable of the Vine and its shoots.

(1) I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. (2) Every shoot in me which beareth not fruit, he removes, and every one which bears fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. (3) You are pure already, through the word which I have spoken to you. (4) Abide in me, and I in you. As the shoot cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abide in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in me. (5) I am the vine; you are the shoots. He who abides in me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without me, you can do nothing. (6) If anyone does not abide in me, he is cast out like the shoot, and is withered, and they gather it and cast it into the fire, and it is burned. (7) If you remain in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you desire, and it shall be done for you. (8) In this shall my Father be glorified that you bear

much fruit; and you shall be my disciples. (9) As the Father hath loved me, I also have loved you; abide in my love. (10) If you keep my commandments, remain in my love, as I have kept the commandments of my Father, and abide in his love. (11) I have said these things to you that my joy may abide in you, and your joy might be made full.

§ 50. In this figurative language, which was appropriate to the intelligence of the men of that period by the letter, and was intended to be explained and understood afterwards according to the Spirit, Jesus proclaims the superior and directing influence of the Creator over your humanity, by his mediation as the protecting and ruling spirit of your planet. He explains the methods of this development and progress, the conditions on which alone it can be secured; and the expiation which awaits those who wander from the paths which he has laid down. He also shows his disciples the bond of love which unites them to him, and the means of faithfully accomplishing their mission, which lies in the observance of the commandments which he has given them.

(V. 1.)—The words, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman," is another testimony to the inferior position of Jesus as compared with the Father.

(V. 2.)—Those who break the double command of God which Jesus has declared to include all the law and the Prophets, and which implies the observance of the Decalogue, and the obligation of all men acting towards others as they would have others act towards themselves, wander from the path traced out by Jesus, and are contented with evil. They are left in it in the inviolability of their free-will, but with the responsibility attaching to it; and in the fire of expiation, their evil deeds only produce ashes like burnt straw; and they are relegated to inferior conditions. But the Lord looks favourably on those who follow the paths traced out by the Master, and whose works are good. He enables them to improve themselves still more by trials and missions, that they may bear more and more fruit.

(V. 3.)—The disciples were already purified by the words which Jesus had spoken, and were prepared to accomplish their mission faithfully. They were advanced spirits, though in different degrees, whose intelligence and faculties were

paralyzed by their material envelope. The teaching of Jesus had assisted in developing their faculties, and their ardent desire to obey, and their boundless love for their Master urged them on still further in the path of progress ; and they were to be assisted, directed and guided in the task which lay before them by the inspiration of the Spirits of the Lord.

(V. 4.)—These figurative words apply to all ages, and to all men. No one can bear good fruit (*viz.*, good works) if he is detached from the vine, personified in Jesus, which is love and truth.

(V. 5, 6.)—Jesus is the vine, and all men like the disciples, are its shoots. He protects and rules them all, and he who perseveringly follows the morality which he preached, without turning aside, progresses and purifies himself, and advances rapidly, both morally and intellectually ; and aided by the divine inspiration that Jesus transmits to him hierarchically by the superior and good spirits, bears much fruit, by his trials and missions.

If anyone does not remain in Jesus, he will be cast out like a withered shoot, and they gather them and cast them into the fire to be burned. If anyone does not follow the morality preached by Jesus, and departs from it in his practice, he falls into evil ways, and fails in his trials. He remains stationary, like every guilty spirit ; and when the time has come for expiation, he will be burned in the fire of remorse, which will awaken in him the desire of reparation and progress, by means of new trials under the inferior conditions to which he will have been relegated.

(V. 7-11.)—The words, exhortations and promises addressed by Jesus to his disciples in these verses, equally apply to all who should become his disciples in future by walking in the path of love and truth which he has pointed out. These words require no comment, and may be summed up to include strength and power of faith ; continual progress by the constant practice of the law of love ; joy springing from peace of mind, purity and serenity of conscience ; the satisfaction of duty performed, and personal and collective progress gained by trials and missions.

It is plain that those who abide in Jesus by remaining in the path which he has traced out, can only ask what is just and good, to be granted at the time and under the conditions which are fixed and determined by God alone. It is equally plain that Jesus, here as elsewhere, says nothing about the period at which the request will be granted.

VERSES 12-17.

Love one Another.

(12) This is my commandment that you love one another as I have loved you. (13) No man hath greater love than he who should lay down life for his friends. (14) You are my friends, if you do whatsoever I have commanded you. (15) I call you no longer servants, for the servant does not know what his master doeth, but I call you friends, because I have made known to you all things which I have heard from my Father. (16) You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and appointed you that you may go and bear fruit, and your fruit should remain, that whatsoever you should ask of the Father in my name he should give it you. (17) These things I command you, that you love one another.

§ 51. These words, as usual, have a general application to all earnest men, both in the present and future ; for all that the Master has said is a lesson for your humanity.

(V. 12, 13.)—Jesus commands his disciples to love one another as he has loved them ; and thus to practise the law of love amongst themselves and towards all men, as he himself practised it, to its fullest extent. By this commandment he appeals to universal fraternity by reciprocity and general good feeling in love. Jesus gives men the greatest lesson contained in the Gospels, in teaching universal love on your earth. Is not pure and devoted love the actual source of all virtues, the foundation of duty, and the object of all aspirations? He who loves God can only strive with indefatigable zeal to obey the commandments which he has received from him. He ought to love his brethren with as much self-abnegation, devotion, and incessant charity, as he has been loved by him who “became man” to teach men love. His love should extend to all the beings of the Creation, for all are the work of the Father ; all unite in his glory, and all are a living hymn in his honour.

(V. 14, 15.)—Whoever, like the disciples, follows the morality preached by the Master, and walks in the path which he has traced out in the fulfilment of his trials and missions, is his friend, for he thus responds to the efforts which Jesus makes for his development and progress, and proves his love for him. Thus sympathy becomes established between them; a fluidic attraction which purifies him, leads him to progress, and draws him nearer and nearer to his beloved Master.

The servant may be regarded as the disciple subject to the material law, who submits to it, without intelligence or pleasure, like a yoke which must be borne, because he cannot get rid of it. Those whom Jesus calls friends are those who, like the disciples, employ their reason to develop their heart, and feel their love and reason expand in proportion to their improved comprehension of the intentions and paternal goodness of the Sovereign whose law they delight to follow.

Jesus says, "I have called you my friends because I have taught you whatever I have heard from my Father." As regards the Apostles, Jesus taught them everything which it was his mission to teach them at that time. The Apostles were able to appreciate to a certain extent the providential views of the Father, and to understand the object of human life, and the law which governs it. Jesus taught them, under the veil of the letter, what he was commissioned to teach them, according to the conditions necessary for them to fulfil the task entrusted to them, that it should yield its fruits.

As regards the future: Besides the instructions which Jesus thus gave to the Apostles under the veil of the letter, he laid the foundations of those which were to follow, according to the Spirit. He made the roots sprout in the earth which should shoot up a solid trunk, on which branches loaded with fruit might be engrafted. In other words, he laid the foundations of the knowledge which you are developing at this moment, and which will always increase, and give you more and more claim to the title

of the Elect, by enabling you more and more to understand the cause of all things, and the object and secrets of the Divine will.

(V. 16.)—Certainly it was not the Apostles who chose Jesus, and conferred his earthly mission upon him. Certainly it was not spirits banished to an insignificant planet who chose him who in his devoted love, accepted its guidance. He whose purity made him the Son of the Living God, undertook to draw the elements of your planet from chaos or fluidic space, gave them direction, and in a sense, life, and provided for the progress of intelligence and of matter. He undertook his earthly mission, and selected his disciples for their personal progress and the collective progress of your humanity, to fulfil their mission, the fruits of which will remain imperishably as the starting point of fresh progress, which the innumerable phalanx of missionary spirits, also appointed by the Master, continue to prepare and to accomplish, both in the present and future.

It was he who chose the disciples, as he chooses all earnest men, that the Father may give them whatever experiences and missions they shall ask in the Master's name. Everything that man asks from the Father by invoking the sublime idea of the Son, will be granted him ; for the man who understands the power of such a request, cannot ask anything contrary to the general good. He has no selfish views, and no personal aspirations, but desires the happiness of his fellow-men, the progress of all creatures, and the development of the love of God, and of charity ; these are the thoughts which inspire his prayers, and it is such prayers which the Lord always fulfils ; not like a father who gives a child a toy which he will break directly, because he does not know how brittle it is, but like the wise father who says to his son, " What you ask is right and fitting, and what you desire shall be done when the fitting moment arrives ;" and since man knows that he has eternity before him, and knows that it is not merely necessary for him to progress, but that all around him, from the invisible monad to the incarnate genius, progress and raise them-

selves, he waits with confidence, knowing that whatever he asks will be given him, because all he asks is good and just.

(V. 17.)—Jesus repeats the commandment which he had just given to his disciples, to love one another. The practice of love was the source and means of all progress and elevation for the disciples, as well as for all other men ; the only path of success in trials and missions, and the only means by which your humanity can effect its ascending march towards the superior worlds.

VERSES 18—27.

Jesus warns his Disciples of Persecution.

§ 52. (18) If the world hate you, you know that it hated me before you.

You can understand that the inferior incarnate spirits who did not follow the law of love natural to the heart of man, would hate him who is all love. But this expression is not to be understood literally, in the sense that it would bear in your language. It is not a feeling of personal hatred which is meant ; but Jesus uses the word to express want of attraction to himself, and consequent disinclination to submit to the inspirations which he and the good spirits have never ceased to communicate to men, according to their condition and development.

(19) If you were of the world, the world would love its own, because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

The Apostles and most of the first disciples were spirits who were already advanced, and who had accepted this incarnation for the purpose of forwarding the Master's work, and working at their own progress by promoting that of their brethren. They would, therefore, naturally excite the same feelings of animosity which existed towards the Master ; and that, as in his case, would bring upon them violence, physical persecutions, and even in most cases a violent death, not for any personal reason, but on account of the doctrine which they were commissioned to teach.

You thus see that there was no predestination in these words of Jesus. In reflecting on expressions which appear to imply its existence, you should always remember that every advanced or superior spirit on a mission, who is incarnated in corruptible flesh, becomes fallible again, that being thus chosen out of the world, he may, in consequence of his fallibility, be to a certain extent, of the world, and the world may love him as its own. He becomes fallible again, not like an inferior spirit, but relatively to his nature. Never forget that the flesh is an intractable instrument which must be perseveringly watched over. You must not suppose that a superior spirit who accepts a mission on your earth, and does not accomplish it entirely without weakness, can retrograde ; but the progress which he might have acquired by this act of devotion is proportioned to the greater or less efforts which he has made to struggle against the defects inherent in your earthly humanity.

(20) Remember the saying which I spoke to you, The servant is not greater than his master. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my word, they will keep yours also. (21) But they will do all these things to you on account of my name; because they know not him that sent me.

We have already explained the words repeated by Jesus, (§ 44, pp. 196, 197). As applied to the disciples, the words literally mean that as they were not greater than the Master, they could not escape persecution, since he had been persecuted. They have no further meaning from a material point of view, but, in a spiritual sense, have a very wide application.

From the Catholic and Christian point of view, whatever the difference between them, the soul created for the servant may be equal in the sight of God to the soul created for the master, but there is no reason for their different destinies. The servant may fail in the fulfilment of his task ; the master may abuse his authority and power, and if both should fulfil their destinies, that of the master has always been more favoured than that of the servant, which implies a preference and inequality. Let not the Church say that the servant will receive a greater reward after death than his master. This cannot be, for if the master has done all the good in

his power, he has accomplished his task ; and if the servant has fulfilled all his duties with zeal, devotion and resignation, he has also fulfilled his task ; and does he deserve a greater reward ? By what right should he receive more than his master ? Did he choose his inferior position himself ? Why should his master be inferior to him ? Did he ask to command him ? Let the Church answer.

Whichever way you turn the question, if you overlook reincarnation, the recompense of the past, and the agent of progress for the future, you will inevitably convert God, who is Eternal Justice, into a capricious sovereign, governing according to his own good pleasure.

From the spiritual point of view, he who is the servant to-day has been the master yesterday, and will be to-morrow. It is the same with his master ; he who is the master to-day was the servant yesterday, and will be to-morrow. Thus there is a complete equality between them, according to the law of reincarnation. There is neither favour nor chance, but only justice, which leads to inequality between men.

Let this thought penetrate the human heart thoroughly, and the master will be the friend and support of the servant, and the servant will be the consolation and the devoted brother of his master ; and without overturning social order, or shedding human blood to attain the sweet promises of liberty, fraternity, and equality, men will behold unity, unbounded liberty, unrestricted fraternity, and universal love extend themselves over the earth.

As regards persecutions, you know that the name of Jesus represents and personifies the law which he preached. Consequently, those who had already attained to some degree of progress possessed either a previous knowledge or an intuition of the law of love which the words of Jesus newly awakened in their minds and hearts. Those who were still too backward, and delighted in pride and evil, would not accept this law, and rejected everything which seemed to them to come from the person of Jesus, not understanding the primal source whence all good is derived : God.

Is it not the same among you? Are there not many in your orthodox churches and sects who are exclusive and intolerant, "children of Abraham," who look upon the Father only as an avenging God, jealous and exclusive in his love, and who regard themselves as sole heirs of the kingdom of God? Men still know little of him who sent his Messiah to regenerate your humanity. The consequence is that among those who call themselves Christians, Jesus has absorbed and personified, in the eyes of the majority, the God who is the Master and Creator of the universe, in infinity and eternity. Hence the special worship which is addressed to him, the divinity in which he has been made to participate, and a complicated method of reconciling the Hebrew ideas with those of the Gentiles.

(22) If I had not come and spoken to them, they had had no sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin.

If these words are imperfectly understood, they convey an idea of a determinate destiny for man ; for the omniscient God must know when he sent his Messiah among men, what a vast number would not receive him, and would thus condemn their souls, according to the Catholic doctrine, to the tortures of an eternal hell. O human folly !

The spirits who were incarnated at that period, like all those who assume a material envelope, would have to labour for their advancement, and the means of success were promised to them. It was, therefore, their duty to recognize and avail themselves of them when they had an opportunity. It was thus that all were required to listen to the voice which promised them peace if they would learn to work the works of peace ; but they forgot their spiritual resolutions, or gave way to their evil propensities, and closed their ears and their heart.

If Christ had not descended among them as it had been foretold, their judgment would not have been the same, because the incarnate spirits would not have had the same opportunities of advancing ; but when the voice from on high made itself heard, those who voluntarily closed their ears against it, made themselves guilty of rejecting "the

olive-branch" which was held out to them, and thus condemned themselves to swim still longer in the whirlpool of vice ; and what we say applies not only to the few who gathered round Jesus at the time of his mission, but to all who refuse to see and hear what is shown them for the purpose of their moral improvement. Our words do not apply simply to those who reject the law of Jesus (by which you are to understand the law of love) on your continent ; but to all who have received opportunities of improving themselves, and have rejected them. These call down judgment upon themselves by refusing mercy. One further explanation, for it is needful to be clear and definite to human ears. By mercy we do not mean a favour granted by the Father to one of his children rather than to another ; but the means given to man to progress ; the light sent to him under any form, or in any name, and which he is at liberty to accept or reject by using his personal will.

(23) He who hates me, hates my Father also. (24) If I had not done among them the works which no other man did, they had not had sin, but now they have seen and hated both me and my Father. (25) But so it is that the saying might be fulfilled which is written in their law, They hated me without a cause.

To hate God and his messenger is to refuse to follow the law of God, which is the law of love which Jesus preached, and consequently to remove oneself indefinitely from the Father, by refusing to receive his envoy ; for love is the only feeling which can lead us there. Is it not hating the Father if you only refuse to rise to him ? Is not love the lever which lifts man to unite himself to the Giver of all blessings, in an emotion of gratitude and joy ?

The spirit who has an opportunity of progressing, and refuses to do so, chains himself down to his inferiority, for the character of his own fluids holds him down in the spheres which correspond to his state as long as his desire to progress has not purified him ; for his free will and intelligence permit him either to remain stationary or to advance. He himself, and his desires and instincts, establish corresponding conditions, according to the nature of the spiritual attraction to which they give rise. Thus he either subjects

himself to the laws of stagnation, suffering and expiation, or to those of progress, under the empire of the Divine Providence, the modes of whose action have already been revealed to you, to a certain extent, from your human point of view, by the spiritual revelation.

(V. 25.)—It is true that nothing takes place by what you call accident. There always exists a cause for everything ; and it is only your ignorance of the cause which leads you to attribute anything to chance. The condition and circumstances of the progress of the Hebrew nation, when this saying was spoken by the prophet, under unconscious divine inspiration, gave the measure of what the people would be at the time of the appearance of the Messiah ; for you know that the past, present, and future, as it exists to you inferior creatures, is nothing to God, but everything is constantly and instantaneously enrolled before him in eternity.

“They hated me without a cause.” Could man have any reason for holding himself aloof from the Lord ? Had the men who lived during the earthly mission of Jesus any cause for holding aloof from him ?

(26) But when the Comforter shall come, whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth, which proceeds from the Father, he shall bear witness of me. (27) And you also shall bear witness, because you are with me from the beginning.

In these words Jesus included the present, with regard to the development of the Apostles and of their mission ; and the future, with regard to the new era opening before you, and the period towards which you are advancing. The Spirit of Truth proceeding from the Father is light, knowledge, and truth, which is brought to men by the messengers of God, whether errant or incarnate spirits. The errant spirits deliver it to men by inspiration or medianimic action, and the incarnate spirits by their word. As regards the Apostles, the Spirit of Truth which Jesus was about to send them was the Spirits of the Lord, who were to aid, inspire, and guide them ; to develop their personal faculties, and to supply whatever was wanting by their medianimic action, both spiritual and fluidic. This assistance was given to

enable them to bear witness to Jesus ; or, in other words, to his doctrine, the words which he pronounced, and the actions which he performed during his earthly mission, and the events which then took place.

Jesus said, " You also shall bear witness of me, because you have been with me from the beginning." As the Apostles had been incarnated with a view to his mission, they had been with him from its commencement.

As regards the future. By the Spirit of Truth, whose coming Jesus announced, you must understand the Spirits of the Lord, whether errant or incarnate, his new messengers, who would be sent to you at the time of the new era, and at the period towards which you are advancing, to finish the diffusion of the Truth throughout the world.

And new incarnate messengers will come to bear witness of him by their word, by preaching charity and love by example, and by progressively diffusing the light, knowledge, and truth which proceed from the Omnipotent Lord, and which Jesus personifies to your planet, and which he will himself complete and sanctify by showing you the unveiled truth, when the purity of your hearts and the development of your intelligence shall have made you capable and worthy to receive and understand it.

The spirit messengers of the Lord, both errant and incarnate, bring man the knowledge of the Truth relative to his intelligence ; and his conscience receives it, or closes itself against it. The man who receives the Spirit of Truth is he whose conscience is enlightened by these messengers of the Lord, and understands things which were previously hidden from him.

CHAPTER XVI.

VERSES 1-15.

Predictions of Jesus.

§ 53. (1) I have told you these things, that you should not be offended.

Having been forewarned of the fate which awaits every missionary in the midst of backward spirits, you will accept it as an inevitable consequence. These words also contain a warning to all who should undertake a mission of truth amid refractory and backward surroundings. They apply in your own days, and in future times, to the Apostles of the New Revelation, who must accept the fate which awaits them, according to the circumstances under which they fulfil their task, and the state and progress of civilization of the backward spirits whom they address.

(2) They shall cast you out of the synagogues, but the time will come when whosoever killeth you shall think that he offers a service to God. (3) And they shall do these things to you because they have not known the Father, nor me. (4) But I have told you these things, that when the time shall come, you should remember that I have told you of these things.

The thought of Jesus included all who preach the truth by contending against abuses and vices. Those who have practised intolerance, fanaticism, and persecution towards the disciples, and have put them to death, believing that they were acting agreeably to God, acted thus because they knew neither the Father, who is the God of universal and infinite love ; nor Jesus, who is the messenger of the Lord and the emblem of the law of love ; nor did they know the grandeur and the object of his mission, which was the regeneration of humanity by justice, love, and charity, and thus by fraternity among all men. Those who have acted thus from the time of the Apostles until your own days, and shed human blood to please the Lord, have done so because they also knew not the Father and Jesus, but have misunderstood and insulted them by treading under foot the law of love, which itself implies the liberty of the Lord ; that is, the liberty of reason, free inquiry, conscience, and therefore of tolerance and charity. Men, do not reject the light and truth offered you by the New Revelation, which leads you to know the Father and Jesus. When you know them you will no longer practise either moral or physical persecution, and will shed no more human blood, but will walk under the influence of the Spirit of Truth, in the path of

progress, with that liberty which the Lord has conferred upon man as the privilege of his free will. This consists of reason, free inquiry, and conscience, and you will then be able to use it by practising tolerance and charity.

(4) And I told you not these things at the beginning, because I was with you. (5) And now I go to him that sent me, and none of you asks me, Whither goest thou? (6) But because I have said these things to you, sorrow hath filled your heart. (7) But I tell you the truth. It is expedient for you that I go away ; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come to you ; but if I go away, I will send him to you.

While Jesus was on earth, the Apostles and the other disciples remained in uncertainty respecting his mission and its consequences, and it was only after the consummation of the sacrifice that the revelation was to be made to them. The Comforter, whom Jesus was to send to his disciples, denotes the spirit messengers of the Lord, who were to aid them in the fulfilment of their mission. The Comforter was at the time a personification of the Spirit of Truth, and the Apostles were also to be a personification of the Spirit of Truth to the period, for they were also the messengers of the Lord, missionaries incarnated to teach men light, knowledge and truth, in proportion to the intelligence and requirements of the age. But the personification and mission of the Comforter, who is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, were not limited to the times of the Apostles. It was needful for him to complete the task which he had begun, through the errant or incarnate Spirits of the Lord ; his new messengers, sent as missionaries to aid your humanity in its efforts to advance in the path of truth.

(8) And when he comes, he will convince the world of sin and righteousness and judgment. (9) Of sin, because they believe not in me. (10) And of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye see me no more. (11) And of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

The incarnate spirits in that part of the world where Jesus accomplished his mission, were required, as a trial, to accept or to reject the light which was offered them. Those who rejected it forfeited their engagements, and plunged themselves deeper into evil. It is the same at every epoch

of your planet. The spirits who were incarnated before and after the mission of Jesus, were also required, as a trial, to accept or reject the light which was offered them; and those who rejected it forfeited their engagements. It is the same with the spirits incarnated in your own days, who reject what is offered them, and with those who will reject what will hereafter be offered them. But you must not forget that much is expected from him to whom much is given, and that the responsibility of the spirit is always in proportion to the means placed at his disposal for improvement.

(V. 9).—This refers to those who transgress the divine law because they do not believe in the mission of Jesus, and have therefore not accepted and practised the morality which he preached. Consequently they have broken their engagements, and plunged themselves deeper into evil. Men are required to understand what many have already acknowledged, and what all will finally acknowledge; that whoever does not follow the morality preached by Jesus, transgresses the divine law, and by refusing to practise it, is guilty, and liable to the judgment. This is the mission of the Spirit of Truth, the Comforter, which began by the mission of the Apostles, and will still continue that the world may be convinced.

(V. 10).—Those who are convinced concerning justice, are those who are struck with the shining proofs of the mission, yield to the evidence, and believe; submitting to the law of universal love which Jesus preached.

The words, "because I go to my Father, and you see me no more," relate to the death of Jesus, and the subsequent events until his return into space at the time of the Ascension. These proofs enlightened most of the sceptics of the age; and the present revelation brings them prominently forward, by explaining them in spirit and in truth, and thus supporting the Gospels by all the power of reason, revelation, and spiritual science.

The Spirit of Truth will convince the world of justice relative to faith in the divine mission of Jesus, and in the

universal love which he preached, because he suffered death, rose again, and reappeared to the women and the disciples, and then disappeared from the sight of men when he rose into space at the period of the Ascension. Men have been required to recognize the divine mission of Jesus, and to submit to the law of universal love which he preached. Many have acknowledged his mission, and all will acknowledge it; many have submitted to this law, and all will submit to it; and this also is the mission of the Spirit of Truth, which began by the mission of the Apostles, and will still continue until the world shall be convinced.

(V. 11.)—The judgment is retribution, according to works. Man himself provokes it by his thoughts and desires, and receives it by his words and actions, in accordance with the immutable and eternal laws of justice which his conscience applies after death. His vicious propensities and guilty actions expose him to the inevitable laws of suffering, expiation, and reincarnation—the only means of reparation, purification, and progress, and the only road to perfection. “The prince of this world is judged,” is a figurative expression denoting the evil propensities, contrary to the divine law, and the evil actions which have been judged in the past. Have not evil deeds met with their due from the beginning; that is, ever since the appearance of man upon your planet; and have not the evil thoughts which spring up and develop in your hearts, also suffered judgment from the beginning? Thus it is that “the ruler of this world is already judged;” and the words of Jesus apply to all ages, since they apply to fallible nature, and to evil under all its forms. Has not the judgment already taken place in the case of each of you, from the first human incarnation until your own times? Will it not take place at the period of the purification of your planet, as regards the guilty, rebellious, and wilfully blind spirits who will then be removed from your earth, and cast down to the inferior planets?

The Spirit of Truth will convince the world of judgment and retribution according to works; the retribution which is deserved by, and is executed upon, evil propensities and

actions contrary to the divine law, which always meet with their just retribution and judgment.

Men have been required to acknowledge this retribution and judgment. Many have done so already, and all will ultimately recognize it. This is also the mission of the Spirit of Truth, which will continue, that the world may be convinced. And the world will be convinced, for the Spirit of Truth brings men the knowledge of what the judgment really is, by revelation and spiritual science, and by the present revelation, which frees the spirit from the letter.

(12) I have still many things to tell you, but you cannot bear them now.

Progress is the law of nature, and everything must progress ; matter as well as intelligence. The dress intended for a man would embarrass a little child, and would cause him to stumble at every step.

Although the Apostles were more developed spiritually than their contemporaries, their human incarnation rendered it needful for them to be helped to walk, and to advance by short steps ; but not to be pushed on at a fast pace which they would have been unable to keep up. The knowledge which was given them was in proportion to the necessities of the age. The Holy Spirit manifested itself to their eyes on the day of Pentecost, and gave them the knowledge which they required. But times have changed ; intellectual development has advanced, at first slowly, and then, quickening its pace, has begun to advance rapidly. The Spirit of Truth has revealed himself from time to time, to display the light which should guide mankind in its researches ; and the time is not far distant when he will place it within the comprehension of all, open the eyes of the most blind, and cause his voice to be heard by the deafest consciences.

(13) And when the Spirit of Truth shall come, he will guide you to all truth ; for he will not speak from himself, but whatsoever he has heard he will speak, and will announce to you things to come.

“ He will guide you to all truth.” The spirits of the Lord have at all times taught men light, knowledge, and truth, relative to the intelligence and necessities of every age.

But here Jesus alludes to the new era upon which you are entering, and to the period when man, guided by the superior spirits, will receive the teachings of the Lord to their fullest extent, including the source and object of this special favour ; but man has still much to learn, and to advance and purify himself before arriving at this point.

“The Spirit of Truth will teach you all truth,” for his task is to hold up the light which should guide man in his researches, and aid him to advance further and further, with renewed energy, on the path of moral, physical, and intellectual progress.

“He will not speak from himself, but whatsoever he has heard he will speak.” The divine messengers in the errant state speak what proceeds from the Lord, and what has been hierarchically communicated to them, and which they are charged to transmit to men. The divine messengers in the incarnate state will not speak of themselves, but under divine inspiration, and will speak what they have received, either by clairaudience or inspiration, and thus, what they have heard.

“He will announce things to come ;” at present, when you are beginning to enter upon the new era, the meaning is nearly the same, and is more extended as regards the future. He announces things to come, not like fortune-tellers, but by shedding light upon portions of the Messianic revelation which have remained obscure beneath the veil of the letter. He instructs men concerning their future destiny, and in the knowledge of the obligations necessary to be fulfilled to secure the accomplishment of the progress of matter as well as intelligence, by purity and perfection.

The mission of the Spirit of Truth has begun, for the things which were announced as about to take place have already commenced. The spirits of the Lord have already begun to descend among you, and his errant and incarnate missionaries have begun to shed light on what has hitherto remained obscure in the Messianic Revelation. They have begun to give you truth in proportion to what you are able to understand, to guide humanity in its researches, and to aid it to advance.

This mission of the Spirit of Truth will continue, for your generation will not pass away until it has seen its first Messianic years; and you must be led onwards to that period when man will be guided by the superior spirits, and will receive the teachings of the Lord in their fullest extent. These will be delivered by his great messengers, the precursors of the advent of Jesus.

(14) He shall glorify me, for he shall receive from me, and shall announce it to you. (15) All things whatsoever the Father hath are mine, therefore I said that he taketh from me, and announces it to you.

Jesus expresses himself thus relative to your planet and to your humanity. Being your protector and ruler, he confers on the spirits who labour at this work under his direction, the missions which they are to fulfil, either in the errant or in the incarnate state, and arranges the nature and period of every mission, under the inspiration of the omnipotent Lord, with whom he is constantly in direct communion.

The Spirit of Truth glorifies Jesus, and will glorify him more and more. Is not the mission of these spirit-messengers to lead you to understand the law of God, and the methods of fulfilling it? Is not the glory of Jesus your progress and development, by practising the morality which he preached to you, and which the Spirit of Truth comes to urge you to follow, by explaining it to you in spirit and in truth? Is it not in your more and more rapid advance in the path of charity and love, light, knowledge, and truth, aided by the Spirit of Truth?

VERSES 16-22.

Jesus promises his Disciples Joy after Sorrow.

(16) A little while, and you shall not see me; and again a little while, and you shall see me, because I go to the Father. (17) Then some of his disciples said to the others, What is this which he says? A little while, and you shall not see me; and again a little while, and you shall see me; and because I go to the Father? (18) Then they said, What is this little time that he speaks of? We do not understand what he says. (19) Then Jesus knew that they wished to ask him, and said to them, Do you debate with one another about this, because I said, A little while and you shall not see me, and again a little while, and you shall see me? (20) Verily, verily, I say unto you that you shall weep

and lament, and the world shall rejoice; and you shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned unto joy. (21) When the woman is in labour, she hath sorrow because her hour is come; but when she has brought forth the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, through the joy that a man is born into the world. (22) Therefore, you also have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and no one taketh your joy from you.

§ 53. V. 16. alludes to the apparent death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus. The words he used in answer to the question of his disciples are not explicit. He wished to leave them to be understood after the sacrifice, and also desired that the recollection of his words should make an impression on the minds of his disciples, when the events to which they related should be accomplished.

VERSES 23-33.

Predictions of Jesus.

(23) And in that day you shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, that whatsoever you shall ask the Father in my name, he will give you. (24) Until now you have asked nothing in my name; ask and you shall receive, that your joy may be completed. (25) I have spoken these things to you in parables, but the hour cometh when I shall no longer speak to you in parables, but will tell you openly of the Father. (26) In that day you shall ask in my name, and I tell you not that I will beseech the Father for you. (27) For the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me, and have believed that I came from God. (28) I proceeded from the Father, and have come into the world; again, I leave the world, and go to the Father. (29) The disciples say to him, Behold, now speakest thou openly, and speakest no parable. (30) Now we know that thou knowest all things, and needed not that anyone should ask thee; by this we believe that thou camest forth from God. (31) Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe? (32) Behold the hour cometh, and is now come, that each of you shall be scattered to his own affairs, and shall leave me alone; and yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me. (33) I have spoken these things to you that you might have peace in me. You shall have affliction in the world; but be of good cheer; I have conquered the world.

§ 54. The explanations which you have already received should enable you to understand these verses according to the Spirit.

(V. 23, 24).—Jesus again repeats his words, to assure the Apostles of the power which their faith would give them.

(V. 25, 26).—Jesus here alludes to the period when the Apostles would be freed from the flesh, and to the progress

which awaited them after disincarnation, when they would no longer receive veiled teachings, like those which he had hitherto given them, but lessons proportioned to their degree of advancement. Then they would profit by the progress that they had acquired by the mission which they had successfully accomplished. When they had returned to their own spiritual nature, they would receive the divine inspiration, according to the hierarchical and progressive order, under the impulse and direction of the Master.

When these words are thus explained, they apply to every spirit who has worthily fulfilled his terrestrial obligations, like the Apostles, and who is able, when he returns into space, to profit by the progress which he has made, and to approach nearer and nearer to the Master, to receive his instructions more directly.

(V. 27, 28.)—The disciples had the protection of the Lord, because they had listened to the word of Jesus, and had retained it to scatter through the world by teaching and example, and because they had believed in his Divine mission and celestial origin, though without fully comprehending it.

In verse 28, Jesus bears witness, under the veil of the letter, to his spiritual elevation and extra-human nature and origin. In bearing witness to his mission, he announces its close, and his return to the regions whence he descended, and therefore his return to his own spiritual nature, which places him in constant communion with the Father.

(V. 29-31.)—These words, like all those in which Jesus alludes to his origin, nature, and position, include the letter on one side, and the spirit on the other. The letter was appropriate to the intelligence and faculties of the incarnate Apostles, and to the necessities of that and future ages, until your own days, when the new revelation has become necessary, and is given you according to the will of the Lord. It was the letter which confirmed the faith of the Apostles. They could not form a clear idea of the Master's origin. They believed him to be sprung from God, though

they had no fixed idea of the divinity which was afterwards attributed to him. It was only after the subsequent events that their ideas became concentrated upon this view, which seemed to them, in their ignorance of the true meaning of the words of Jesus, to be the best fitted to explain his power and virtue.

(V. 31-33.)—Jesus predicts to his disciples their dispersion after his arrest, and at the time of his condemnation and execution. He also foretells the persecutions, and physical and moral sufferings, which await them in the fulfilment of their mission. "But be of good cheer," he says, "I have conquered the world." Jesus conquered the world by his earthly mission, for he laid the foundations of the human regeneration which he promised and predicted, by the Spirit of Truth; and he will complete it by his own return to your planet, when it shall be purified, to lead its equally purified creatures to perfection.

CHAPTER XVII.

VERSES 1-26.

Prayer of Jesus.

(1) Jesus spoke these things, and raised his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy son, that thy son may also glorify thee. (2) As thou hast given him authority over all flesh, that he should give age-lasting life to all whom thou hast given him. (3) And this is age-lasting life, that they should know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. (4) I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou hast given me to do. (5) And now, Father, glorify me with thyself, by the glory which I had with thee before the world was. (6) I have manifested thy name to the men whom thou hast given me out of the world, and thou hast given me them, and they have kept thy word. (7) Now they know that all things whatsoever which thou hast given me are from thee. (8) Because I have given them the words which thou hast given me; and they have received them, and know truly that I came forth from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. (9) I pray for them; I pray not for the world, but for those whom thou hast given me, for they are thine. (10) And all mine are thine, and thine mine, and I am glorified in them. (11) And I am no longer in the world; but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep these in thy name whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, like us. (12) When I was with them

in the world, I kept them in thy name. I protected those whom thou hast given me, and none of them is lost, except the son of perdition, that the Scripture may be fulfilled. (13) And now I come to thee, and I speak all things in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in them. (14) I have given them thy word, and the world hated them because they are not of the world, as I am not of the world. (15) I ask not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil. (16) They are not of the world, as I am not of the world. (17) Sanctify them in the truth; thy word is truth. (18) As thou hast sent me into the world, I have also sent them into the world. (19) And I sanctify myself for them, that they also may be sanctified in truth. (20) And I pray not for these alone, but also for those who believe in me through their word. (21) That they may all be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us. That the world may believe that thou hast sent me. (22) And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one, as we are one. (23) I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in me, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and may love them, as thou hast loved me. (24) Father, I desire that those whom thou hast given me may be with me where I am, that they may see my glory which thou hast given me, for thou hast loved me before the foundation of the world. (25) O righteous Father, the world also knew thee not, but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. (26) And I have made known to them thy name, and will make it known, that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

§ 55. Jesus pronounced these words in a loud voice, to impress the imagination of those who heard them, that they might be fixed in their memory, and might be useful to the Apostles and their imitators, in the present and future, and be transmitted to future generations, from age to age, to be a lesson to men. They are of the greatest importance in reference to the new revelation, which will explain them in spirit and in truth.

(V. 1-3.)—Jesus declares that the hour has come for the sacrifice which was to be accomplished for the progress of men, whose guidance he had accepted from the origin of the world, that he might lead them to eternal life, which is the life of the pure spirits. He asks God to permit him to accomplish this sacrifice, which was one of the phases of the earthly mission by which he undertook to lead men to repentance and universal progress. He again bears testimony to the indivisible Unity of the Father by the words, "Thou art the only true God"—thus rejecting beforehand the divinity which men afterwards attributed to him. He

again bears witness to his mission relative to your planet and its humanity, by saying that his Father has given him power over all men, that he may give eternal life to those whom the Father has given him ; that is, to those who are earnest in the choice and fulfilment of their trials and missions.

Eternal life consists in knowing the Father, and comprehending the essence of God, by the ultimate acquisition of the perfect purity which alone permits spirits to approach him, and to be in direct union with him, and thus to become more and more initiated into the secrets of the Divine will, to progress eternally in universal knowledge, in the incessant activity of works and missions, during the eternal life of the pure spirits.

But, in order thus to acquire the eternal life which consists in knowing the Father, it is also necessary first to know Jesus Christ, whom the Father has sent ; that is, to understand the essence, origin, and nature of Jesus ; his mission relative to your planet and its humanity ; and his earthly mission, and the results which it ought to yield, both by itself and by the accomplishment of the promises and predictions which it contains. To know Jesus also, means to acquire the purity and perfection which can alone enable a spirit to approach him, and to be led by him to the life of the pure spirits.

(V. 4, 5).—Jesus declares that his public mission of teaching among men has reached its end. He has glorified God on earth by pointing out to humanity the paths of progress, purification, and regeneration, which should lead them to the Father.

In verse 5 Jesus alludes to his approaching death. Do not overlook the words spoken before, which we have already explained (x. 17, 18, pp. 156, 157).

(V. 6-8).—Jesus affirms that he has given his disciples the knowledge of God, as far as required by the necessities of the age. They had accepted the advice of their guides in the selection of their trials and missions, and were sufficiently purified to accomplish them well. They had heard

and obeyed the morality which he preached, and the lessons which God had commanded him to convey to men, and had acknowledged him as the messenger of the Father.

(V. 9-11.)—The disciples had still to undergo severe trials (we do not now speak of expiations); and it was in order to strengthen them that Jesus pronounced these words, the sense of which you can understand, according to the Spirit, by the explanations which you have already received upon similar passages.

The word prayer may be understood from different points of view. It appears to men like the promise of a divine support. From a spiritual point of view, prayer is an emanation of the purest fluids, bringing strength and support to its objects, even against their will. It is moral magnetism, working at a distance, in a manner which it is difficult to explain, but which may perhaps be intelligible to those who have studied the action of the magnetic fluids. What is the action of the magnetizer, whose fluids encompass a subject by his will alone, and give him strength, or render him immovable; open vaster horizons to him, or envelope him in darkness, and allay his sufferings, or cause him to endure fictitious ones?

Prayer acts on the same principle, but in a purer manner. The power of the will and love of the spirit disengages subtle fluids, which enwrap those for whom prayer is made, and these fluids have the power of strengthening, enlightening, and instructing the suffering souls. But this action has more power over the free soul than over the incarnate, who is too much oppressed by matter to feel its beneficent effects, which are, nevertheless, not lost; and when the spirit is once disincarnated, it always profits by the help which was insufficient for it during incarnation.

When Jesus said, "That they may also be one like us," he taught his disciples that there should be communion of thought between them, as between Jesus and the Father, that they might be one in thought, as Jesus and the Father are one in thought.

(V. 12.)—Remember what we have told you respecting

Judas. It was known that Judas had not strength to resist the trial which he had asked. He had been forewarned by his guides, but his pride led him to persist; and he was permitted to undertake it; and thus he became the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

(V. 13.)—Jesus again referred to the prediction which he had already uttered respecting the treason of Judas, that the disciples might remember what he had said to them, and that his words might be one more guarantee of his mission, and a support in the difficulties which lay before them.

(V. 14-16.)—The Apostles were "not of the world," for they were more elevated than the spirits who were then incarnated; and who, being more backward than themselves, "hated them;" not personally, but on account of the Word of God which they had received from the Master, who also, much more than the Apostles, was not of the world; for he was a spirit of perfect and immaculate purity, accomplishing a superior mission, which, as regards its results, was addressed rather to future generations, and especially to the new era now opening before you, than to the men of that period.

By the words, "I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil," Jesus taught his disciples that they must mingle with men to accomplish their mission, but must accomplish it faithfully by guarding against their vices and passions.

(V. 17.)—Jesus asks God to sanctify his disciples; that is, to cause them to progress in truth, by the knowledge of the virtues which they were to diffuse. "Thy word is truth," said Jesus. 'The Word of God, which is transmitted to men by his errant or incarnate messengers, always gives them the truth which man ought to know, relatively to the age, until the Master shall return to your planet to show you the unveiled truth.

(V. 18, 19.)—As Jesus had received a mission on earth, he had also permitted faithful spirits to come there on a mission likewise, always relative to their degree of advancement, and their progress or sanctification was always in

proportion to their mission, and the manner in which it was accomplished. Even in the case of pure spirits, whatever superiority they may have acquired in universal knowledge, progress is the recompense of their labours and missions for the advancement of their errant and incarnate brethren of all degrees.

(V. 20.)—Jesus thus made known to the world that what he said respecting the Apostles, likewise applied to all who should listen to their words and teachings, and should believe in his mission, and accept and practise the morality which he preached, and should thus become their imitators, and consequently his disciples ; as well as to all others who should in future preach good by example as well as by precept.

Jesus promises all men, like the Apostles, relatively to the age in which they live, the truth which they ought to know, and progress and purification by trials and missions faithfully accomplished.

(V. 21.)—Jesus prays that all may be united in love and devotion, and may be one only in thought, as God is one with Jesus in thought ; and that they may also be one in God and in Jesus, by the purification which draws the creature nearer and nearer to the Creator, and by the divine inspiration which Jesus receives immediately from the Father, and transmits hierarchically to them, that the world may believe that Christ was the messenger of God, and may thus believe in his mission.

(V. 22.)—Jesus alludes to the knowledge which he has given his disciples of his origin and mission, and of the unity of thought between the Father and himself. He also alludes to the influence which this knowledge should exercise on the relations of the disciples among themselves.

(V. 23.)—In these words Jesus expresses the idea that he, who is himself inspired and guided by the Omnipotent, inspires and guides his disciples, and all earnest men, in the accomplishment of their trials and missions ; that communion of thought may unite them in love and devotion among themselves and towards their brethren. Thus, they

will arrive at the same degree of purification (for the unity of spirits is equality of purification); and the world will then perceive that he was the messenger of the Father; and will understand his mission more and more, and that the divine grace which is extended over the Master is also extended over his disciples—that is, the Lord has aided them in the fulfilment of their task, and has given them means of progress proportioned to their degree of purification; and thus God has loved them as he has loved Jesus.

The word *love*, in speaking of the Creator, relates to the purification of the spirit, and is relative to the degree of purity which it has attained. The divine favour extends equally to every spirit who has arrived at the same point of disengagement from matter and its influences.

(V. 24.)—Jesus prayed aloud; and the desire he thus expresses signifies that he wishes to sustain his disciples, and all his faithful followers who seek for light, knowledge, and truth, to lead men to repentance and universal progress; in order that, when their task is accomplished, they may rise from progress to progress, to him, by their trials and missions. When the spirits have attained to the regions where Jesus watches over the progress of your planet and its humanity, they will behold his glory, and will strive more and more to unite themselves with his love and devotion.

In the second part of verse 24 Jesus alludes to the mission which God has confided to him as the protector of your planet, as well as to the phases of his mission, and to the results to which it should lead, as regards the progress of both matter and intelligence, from the moment of its formation until the days of its purification, complete transformation, and ascent to the purely fluidic regions. Such is the glory which God gave Jesus by entrusting him with this mission, because he had confidence in him already, before creating the materials and elements of the planet. God knew that his acquired knowledge, and the progress which he had made in universal science, would enable him to accomplish it faithfully. And this mission was a reward and encouragement to him, as to every spirit who is appointed the protector of a planet.

Lastly, we must call your attention to the first part of verse 24. Jesus does not pray that his disciples may be with him where he is going, but where he is, and thus again asserts his extra-human nature, by virtue of which he was always a spirit under his tangible fluidic envelope, and free to inhabit the ethereal regions, which are the throne of his glory as the protector of your planet; and not as an inhabitant of the earth, like man, who is bound down to it by material human incarnation.

(V. 25.)—Jesus asserts that men have neither comprehended God in his essence, nor the secret designs of his providence, in the mission which he has entrusted to himself. But he also asserts that he has known God, and comprehended the object and designs of the divine will, because he is in direct communion with him; while his disciples have perceived that he was the messenger of God, and have recognized his mission.

(V. 26.)—Jesus here declares that the knowledge of God, which he has given to his disciples and to men, was incomplete, for he promises to make them know him further. Jesus certainly gave men a knowledge of God, through his disciples, but an imperfect knowledge. He is still developing it more and more, in proportion to their purification and progress, that they may progressively attain to the perfection which Jesus has deserved by his works; and he himself will be in direct communion with them, when they are sufficiently purified to ascend to him.

CHAPTER XVIII.

VERSES 1-27.

Arrest of Jesus.

(1) When Jesus had said these things, he went out with his disciples across the brook Kedron, where there was a garden, into which he and his disciples entered. (2) And Judas also, who betrayed him, knew the place, for Jesus often went there with his disciples. (3) Then Judas, taking the guard and officers from the Chief Priest and Pharisees, comes there with lamps and torches and weapons. (4) Then Jesus, knowing all things which were coming upon him, advanced and said to them, Whom seek ye? (5) They answered him, Jesus the Nazarene. Jesus says to them, I am he. And Judas also, who betrayed him, stood with

them. (6) Then, as he said to them, I am he, they went back, and fell to the ground. (7) Then he asked them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus the Nazarene. (8) Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he; therefore, if you seek me, let these go their way, (9) That the word might be fulfilled which said, I have lost none of those whom thou hast given me. (10) Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it, and struck the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. And the servant's name was Malchus. (11) Then said Jesus to Peter, Put thy sword into the sheath. The cup which the Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? (12) And the band and the captain and the officers of the Jews took Jesus with them. (13) And they bound him, and took him first to Annas, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. (14) And Caiaphas was he who had advised the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the nation. (15) And Simon Peter and the other disciple followed Jesus. And that disciple was known to the high priest, and entered with Jesus into the palace of the high priest. (16) And Peter stood at the door without. Then the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out, and spoke to the door-keeper, and brought in Peter. (17) Then the maid who kept the door said to Peter, Are you not also one of this man's disciples? And he said, I am not. (18) And the servants and officers made a fire of charcoal, for it was cold, and they warmed themselves, and Peter stood and warmed himself with the others. (19) Then the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples, and about his doctrine. (20) Jesus answered him, I spoke openly to the world; I always taught in the synagogue and in the Temple, where the Jews were always assembled, and I have spoken nothing in secret; wherefore do you ask me? (21) Ask those who heard me, what I taught them; lo, these know what I have said! (22) And while he was saying this, one of the officers who stood by, struck Jesus a blow, saying, Dost thou answer the high priest thus? (23) Jesus answered him, If I have spoken ill, bear witness of the evil, but if I have spoken well, why do you strike me? (24) Annas sent him away bound to Caiaphas, the high priest. (25) And Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. Then they said to him, Are you not also one of his disciples? He denied, and said, I am not. (26) One of the servants of the high priest, who was a relative of him whose ear Peter had cut off, says, Did I not see you in the garden with him? (27) Peter denied again, and immediately a cock crew.

§ 56. The narrative of John is explained and completed by that of the three first Evangelists, and the variation in details is of no importance. We have already given you explanations relative to these events, and have only to call your attention to the answer of Jesus to the officer who struck him. His calm and dignified reply is a lesson to men, which they should always remember, like others which the Master has given them concerning the pardon of insults, injuries, and the most violent outrages. All the relations of men among themselves should be governed by reason,

wisdom, and reflection, which will lead to their practising justice and charity towards each other.

VERSES 28-40.

Jesus before Pilate.

(28) Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Prætorium; and it was early, and they did not go into the Prætorium, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover. (29) Then Pilate came out to them, and said, What charge do you bring against this man? (30) They answered and said to him, If he had not been an evil-doer, we would not have handed him over to you. (31) Then Pilate said to them, Take him yourselves, and judge him according to your law. Then the Jews said to him, It is unlawful for us to put anyone to death. (32) That the word of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spoke, signifying by what death he was about to die. (33) Then Pilate entered the Prætorium again, and spoke to Jesus, and said to him, Art thou the King of the Jews? (34) Jesus answered him, Do you say this of yourself, or have others spoken to you about me? (35) Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Your nation and the chief priests have given you up to me; what have you done? (36) Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight that I should not be given over to the Jews, and my kingdom is not now from hence. (37) Then Pilate said to him, Art thou not a king, then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest, because I am a king. I was born for this, and I came into the world for this, that I might bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is from the truth hears my voice. (38) Pilate says to him, What is Truth? And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, I find no fault in him. (39) And it is a custom of yours that I should release some one to you at the Passover; do you wish me to release to you the King of the Jews? (40) Then they all cried out, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. And Barabbas was a robber.

§ 57. Here, as elsewhere, John's narrative ought not to be isolated from those of the other Evangelists. The basis of the events is the same; and you know that each narrator wrote within the limits traced out for him by inspirational medianimity, though preserving the independence of his nature. We have only to give you some special explanations, in addition to those already given.

In saying, "My kingdom is not of this world," Jesus asserts his spiritual mission, which is wholly apart from material instincts and aspirations. In saying, "My kingdom is not now from hence," he affirms that his kingdom will one day be of this world; but not until men are regenerated by truth, and abandon the devious paths which lead

them astray, to advance firmly in the path of progress, enlightened by Faith holding the torch of Truth.

In v. 37, Jesus bears witness to his royalty, and asserts the authority which he had already said he had received from the Father before the world was created; and he thus alludes to his spiritual position.

It is, in fact, because he is the king of your planet that he appeared on earth, to bear witness to the truth, both by testifying to the authority which he had received from the Father by sanctioning the truth of the past, and by giving men the truth relative to the time, and the necessities of the age, which was to be revealed in proportion as they were able to understand it.

"Whoever is from the Truth," said Jesus, "hears my voice; and Pilate said to him, 'What is Truth?'"

Refer to the explanations which we have already given as to the words, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life" (pp. 205, 206); and in those (§ 48, pp. 208-214), relating to the mission of the Spirit of Truth in the past, the present, and the future. You will there find the answer to Pilate's question, which Jesus passed over in silence, because men were not then able to receive and understand it.

He who is from the Truth knows that Truth is relative to the times, and to the necessities of the age; he knows that it is one; but more or less hidden, and it is only disclosed to the eyes of men so far as they are able to receive and understand it. He who is from the Truth knows that Truth is the knowledge of every principle in the physical, moral, and intellectual order, which leads humanity to perfection, to universal love and fraternity, and to its deliverance from matter, and to the developing of its sincere aspirations towards Spiritism and Spirituality. He who is of the Truth is he who devotes his faculties and efforts to the acquisition and diffusion of what he knows to be the Truth.

He who is thus of the Truth listens to the voice of Jesus, for Jesus is the Truth. His voice always makes itself heard among men, at all periods, by the Spirits of the Lord,

who are his messengers, and by missionary spirits, always superior to the masses, to whom they impart the Truth relative to the time, and the necessities of each period. At the time of his earthly mission, when he himself came to bear witness to the Truth, and subsequently, he made it known by his Apostles and his disciples, and afterwards by missionary spirits, whom you call men distinguished for their intelligence and virtue ; the benevolent geni of humanity, either in the physical, moral, or intellectual order. The voice of Jesus is making itself heard again by the "Spirit of Truth," who comes to teach you all truth in proportion as you are able to understand it. And Jesus himself will come to show you the Truth without veil, at the time predicted, when the Messiahs or messengers have prepared the way for him, and when you shall have become capable and worthy of receiving his revelations.

CHAPTER XIX.

VERSES 1-7.

The Jews Demand the Crucifixion of Jesus.

(1) Then therefore Pilate took Jesus, and scourged him. (2) And the soldiers plaited a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and put on him a purple robe. (3) And said, Hail, King of the Jews, and struck him blows. (4) Then Pilate came out again, and said to them, Behold I bring him out to you, that you may know that I find no fault in him. (5) Then Jesus came out, wearing the thorny crown and the purple robe. And he saith to them, Behold the man. (6) When, therefore, the chief priests and officers saw him, and cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him, Pilate said to them, Take ye him and crucify him, for I find no fault in him. (7) The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself Son of God.

§ 58. These verses require no comment; and we have only to point to you that, according to the Jewish law, the blasphemer was liable to death by stoning; and the Jews accused Jesus of blasphemy, because they understood his words, "the Son of God," literally. We have often explained the real meaning of these words, which were not to be understood until the New Revelation should reveal the

origin and nature of the Master, and his spiritual position relative to God and to your planet.

VERSES 8-15.

Jesus questioned by Pilate.

(8) Then, when Pilate heard this saying, he was the more afraid, (9) And went into the Prætorium again, and said to Jesus, Whence art thou? And Jesus gave him no answer. (10) Then Pilate said to him, Do you not speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to crucify you, and power to let you go? (11) Jesus answered, You would have no authority over me at all, unless it were given you from above; therefore, he who delivered me to you has greater sin. (12) From this time Pilate tried to release him. But the Jews cried out, saying, If you release this man you are not a friend of Cæsar; everyone who makes himself a king speaks against Cæsar. (13) Therefore Pilate hearing this saying, brought out Jesus, and sat down on the judgment seat on a place called the Pavement, and in Hebrew, Gabbatha. (14) And it was the preparation of the Passover; and it was about the sixth hour, and he says to the Jews, Behold your King. (15) And they cried out, Away with him, away with him! Pilate says to them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Cæsar.

§ 59. In this place it is only necessary to call your attention to the answer Jesus made to Pilate (verse 11). He alluded to the difference between the position of Pilate and that of Judas. Judas had desired to fulfil a mission, and had failed, while Pilate was incarnated in ignorance of the events which were to take place, and without having entered into any engagements. He had asked, before being incarnated, to occupy an important position; and the incarnation was chosen for him with that object. It is clear that Pilate would have had no power over Jesus unless it had been part of the conditions necessary for the accomplishment of the mission of Jesus. His power had been given him from above; for, if he occupied this important position, it had been assigned to him by the Lord; and the Master was in his power because the hour of the sacrifice had come. With a view to this sacrifice, the Master went of his own accord to the garden, where he permitted himself to be arrested, having previously testified that this arrest was one of the phases of his earthly mission, by exerting his power to throw down the guards.

VERSES 16-22.

The Crucifixion.

(16) Then he gave him over to them to be crucified. (17) And they took Jesus, and led him away. And he, bearing his cross, went out to a place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha, (18) Where they crucified him, and with him two others, one on one side, and one on the other, and Jesus in the middle. (19) And Pilate also wrote an inscription, and set it over the cross, and it was written, Jesus the Nazarene, the King of the Jews. (20) Therefore many of the Jews read this inscription, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and it was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. (21) Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, Do not write the King of the Jews, but that he said, I am King of the Jews. (22) Pilate answered, What I have written, I have written.

§ 60. We need only say here that Pilate's refusal to alter what he had written proceeded from his pride, which did not allow him to reconsider what he had decided upon, under the influence of unconscious inspiration.

VERSES 23-27.

The Garments of Jesus—His Charge to John.

(23) Then the soldiers who had crucified Jesus took his garments, and divided them into four parts, a part to each soldier, and the coat was left over. And the coat was seamless, woven from the top throughout. (24) Then they said to each other, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be; that the Scripture might be fulfilled which says, They parted my garments among them, and cast lots for my clothing. (25) Therefore the soldiers did this. And the mother of Jesus, and the sister of his mother, Mary, the wife of Klopas, and Mary Magdalene, were standing near the cross. (26) Then Jesus, seeing his mother, and the disciple whom he loved, standing by, said to his mother, Woman, behold thy son. (27) Then he said to the disciple, Behold thy mother. And from that hour the disciple took her to his own house.

§ 61. The coat of Jesus was of human workmanship; but the peculiarity which attracted the notice of the soldiers proceeded from a magnetic-spiritual influence, which prevented them from seeing the seams of the material.

The act of Jesus in commending John to Mary and Mary to John is a last palpable assurance of his care for incarnate spirits, and a testimony to the feelings which should animate children towards their parents, and also draw the members of the great human family nearer by adoption.

VERSES 28-37.

Apparent Death of Jesus.

(28) After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, I thirst. (29) Then a vessel was set full of vinegar, and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and placed it on hyssop, and put it to his mouth. (30) Then, when Jesus had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished, and bowed his head, and yielded up his spirit. (31) Then the Jews, that the bodies might not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (since it was the preparation; for that Sabbath was a great day) asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they should be removed. (32) Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of both those who were crucified with him. (33) But when they came to Jesus, and found that he was dead already, they did not break his legs. (34) But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water. (35) And he who saw it bare testimony, and his testimony is true, and he knows that he speaks truth, that you should believe. (36) For these things happened that the Scripture might be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. (37) And again, another Scripture says, They shall look on him whom they have pierced.

§ 62. The Scripture is a link which always binds together the past, the present, and the future, in the progressive and gradual teaching of the Truth relative to the necessities of each age. It was necessary that the words and actions of Jesus should permit men to believe in the humanity which was attributed to him, for this was the means of the acceptance and success of his earthly mission, and of the results which were to flow from it both at the time and in the future. Men were not able to bear or understand more, until the present period of the New Revelation.

The last words spoken by Jesus on the cross are explained in vol. ii. pp. 404-408.

The soldier who was ordered to break the legs of the criminals, was a secret admirer and believer in Jesus, and was unwilling to perform an outrage which the Romans and other ancient nations regarded as infamous. If it had been necessary, he would have been prevented from executing the order by a magnetic-spiritual influence, which would have inspired him with the desire to avoid a useless insult to a body which he supposed to be a corpse.

You are told that one of the soldiers pierced the side of Jesus with his lance, and there came out blood and water.

There is nothing surprising in this, if you remember his nature and origin. When Jesus appeared to men to die, he left his tangible fluidic body on the cross presenting every appearance of real death. The blood and water which flowed from it was a fluidic effect, corresponding to the material effect on a human body.

The words of Scripture, "They shall look on him whom they have pierced," have a general meaning. The idea is wholly spiritual. Men were to look upon the willing victim in thought. After the Resurrection his disciples were to see Jesus, and derive from his various appearances, and the traces of the sacrifice, the confirmation of their faith, and the power to spread it in spite of persecutions, and even in the face of death itself.

These words of Scripture were also words of the future, respecting the soldiers who had executed the sacrifice, and all others, who had been present, or had caused it to be executed. All these will behold the second advent of Jesus, at the time which he foretold ; but so many incarnations will then have passed over them that the remembrance of the events, which would otherwise be so painful to them, will have been blotted out by reparation.

Do not suppose that those who crucified Jesus should be considered more guilty than those who condemned Socrates to drink the hemlock, or those who stoned the first martyrs. Crime is in proportion to the intelligence of the criminals ; and although there were many among the Pharisees, the elders and the priests, who knowingly condemned the Just One to serve their base human interests, there were also many backward spirits, who merely swam with the current through ignorance.

Some of those who still discuss the death of Jesus under the veil of the letter, and are unable to explain his Resurrection, assert that the flow of blood and water proves that he did not really die on the cross.

All this is beside the mark, in view of the New Revelation concerning the nature and origin of Jesus ; and the explanation which we have just given you is the only one on which men should fix their attention. If you are asked

this question, you may reply, from the human standpoint, that Jesus had just expired when the lance was driven into that part of his body which would retain most heat and vitality, owing to the position of the body and the kind of death. It is not surprising that blood, even had it been human blood, should still be sufficiently liquid to appear at the edges of the wound, separated from the aqueous portion by coagulation.

What would this supposition lead to, looked at from the point of view of those who urge it? Will they say that the body was alive when it was laid in the tomb, and that men might easily have removed the stone from the entrance? But from what motive could this fraud have been carried out, in which we must necessarily suppose Jesus himself to have been an accomplice? How could these unknown accomplices displace the stone, remove the body, and recall it to life, and escape the secret and active watchfulness of the chief priests, elders and Pharisees, who knew that the Resurrection had been foretold to take place on the third day; and they regarded it as an impossibility, which could only be the result of an imposture carried out by the removal of the body by human hands. How could these accomplices escape the open and secret vigilance which was to be exerted until the Sabbath was over, when the priests had sealed the stone, and stationed the Roman soldiers to guard the body, which was placed in the tomb under the seals?

Will those who, although they destroy the aureole around Jesus, yet regard him as a man superior in intelligence, and especially in the purity of his ideas, concede that he could, being a man, abandon the propaganda which he had undertaken, or else that he could have made himself the accomplice of a fraud?

And certainly a man like yourselves, a man of the people, uneducated, and subject to the weaknesses of humanity and the prejudices of his age, would have required not only great judgment and a very extended knowledge of men, but the knowledge or prescience of the future, to foresee the influence which his disappearance would exert on the cre-

dulity of the men of the period, and upon the morality of future generations.

After the stone had been removed, and the body of Jesus restored to life, how could those who carried it away preserve Jesus from the pursuit of his enemies? It would have required a very great confidence in those who had been his accomplices in the deception, to suppose that there would not have been a second Judas among them, who would have been able to obtain a very large reward from the chief priests, elders and Pharisees, if he could have asserted and proved that the body had been carried away by human hands; for we cannot suppose that pure and virtuous men would have been guilty of such a deception; any more than Jesus himself, the divine model of virtue in purity and example, who would then have crowned his superior mission, and his pure and spotless life, by a fraud.

But we have already shown you (vol. ii. §§ 303, 304, pp. 414-416, 425-434) that the body was in the tomb when the chief priests and Pharisees came to seal the stone, with the Roman soldiers who were appointed to guard it. We have shown you that the disappearance of the body from the tomb is impossible, and inexplicable as a "Resurrection," in the real sense of the word, but is according to the laws of nature, as revealed by the revelation now sent you from God, though many reject the Gospel narrative and events, spiritual light and science, and the new revelation. Say to those who seek to destroy what they cannot replace, "poor blind creatures, you had an imperfect light, which prepared you for the brightness of day, but you seek to extinguish it, and plunge yourselves into darkness." Poor blind creatures who stumble over the stones which you detach from the edifice which has been shaken by time, and has become insufficient (for the letter now kills, and the hour has come for the advent of the Spirit which giveth life), you do not perceive that, by neglecting to give them their proper place in the erection of the new building, you are building a tomb for yourselves, where you will be enveloped in darkness. Abandon you folly, and open your eyes. You, who believe

yourselves to be dupes of the past, deny the future, and break what you now possess ; and what will you do then ?

VERSES 38-42.

Burial of Jesus.

(38) And after these things, Joseph of Arimathæa, who was a disciple of Jesus, asked Pilate (but secretly, for fear of the Jews) that he might take away the body of Jesus ; and Pilate consented. Then he went and took the body of Jesus. (39) And Nicodemus also, who at first came to Jesus by night, came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes of about a hundred pounds weight. (40) Then they took the body of Jesus, and wrapped it in linen clothes with the spices, as it is the custom of the Jews to bury. (41) And there was a garden at the place where he was crucified, and a new tomb in the garden, in which no man had been yet laid. (42) Therefore they placed Jesus there, because it was the Jews' preparation day ; for the tomb was near at hand.

§ 63. These circumstances require no commentary, and the narratives of John, and of the three first Evangelists, explain and complete each other.

CHAPTER XX.

VERSES 1-18.

Mary Magdalene at the Tomb.

(1) And on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene comes early, while it was still dark, to the tomb, and sees the stone taken away from the tomb. (2) Then she runs, and comes to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and says to them, They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we know not where they have laid him. (3) Then Peter and the other disciple went out, and came to the tomb. (4) And the two ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter, and came first to the tomb. (5) And stooping down, he sees the linen clothes lying, yet he did not go in. (6) Then comes Simon Peter, following him, and went into the tomb, and sees the linen clothes lying. (7) And the napkin which was about his head was not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped up in a place separately. (8) Then the other disciple, who came first to the tomb, went in also, and saw and believed. (9) For they did not yet know the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead. (10) Then the disciples returned home again. (11) But Mary stood outside the tomb, weeping. Then, as she wept, she stooped down into the tomb, (12) And sees two angels in white, sitting, one at the head, and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. (13) And they say to her, Woman, why weepest thou ? She says to them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. (14) And as she was saying these things, she

turned round, and sees Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. (15) Jesus says to her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, thinking that it was the gardener, says to him, Sir, if you have taken him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away. (16) Jesus says to her, Mary. She, turning round, says to him, Rabboni, which is to say, Teacher. (17) Jesus says to her, Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father, but go to my brethren, and say to them, I ascend to my Father and to your Father, and to my God and your God. (18) Mary Magdalene comes to announce to the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and he had said these things to her.

§ 64. We have already given you all the explanations necessary concerning these verses, by co-ordinating John's narrative with that of the other Evangelists (vol. ii. § 304, pp. 417-425).

VERSES 19-23.

Appearance of Jesus to the Apostles.

(19) Then, when it was evening on that day, which was the first day of the week, and the doors were closed where the disciples were assembled, through fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and says to them, Peace be with you. (20) And saying this, he showed them his hands and his side. Therefore the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. (21) Then Jesus said to them again, Peace be with you. As the Father hath sent me, I also send you. (22) And saying this, he breathed on them, and said, Receive the Holy Spirit. (23) Whosoever sins you remit, they shall be remitted to them; and if you retain the sins of any, they shall be retained.

§ 65. Several of these circumstances have already been explained to you (vol. ii. § 306, pp. 427-439).

(V.21.)—Jesus expresses the following idea in these words: “My Father has entrusted me with a mission, which I have accomplished; and I have given you a mission, which you are about to accomplish.”

“Having said this, he breathed on them, and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’” Humanly speaking, he gave them a visible sign of his influence, and in reality he communicated inspiration to them by giving them the invisible support of the superior spirits, who were to assist them in their mission. After this he promised (as explained in the commentary on the three first Gospels) “to send them the gift of the Father;” that is, the manifestation of the superior spirits, under the visible form of tongues of fire.

Verse 23 (the meaning of which, in spirit and in truth, is given at vol. i. pp. 316-318; vol. ii. pp. 111-123, 127, 128, &c.) was addressed specially and personally to the disciples, who, being animated by an enlightened zeal, and aided and inspired by the spirits of the Lord, possessed the power to bind and to loose, and to remit or retain sins, in the sense that they were able to judge of the purity or culpability of those who sought their advice, and consequently their judgment was just. But none of them ever claimed the right to judge without appeal, and to absolve and condemn.

VERSES 24-31.

Jesus and Thomas.

(24) But Thomas, one of the twelve, who was called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. (25) Then the other disciples said to him, We have seen the Lord. And he said to them, Unless I see in his hands the place of the nails, and thrust my finger into the place of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. (26) And after eight days his disciples were again indoors, and Thomas with them. Jesus comes, while the doors were closed, and stood in the middle, and said, Peace be with you. (27) Then he says to Thomas, Put your finger here, and see my hands, and put out your hand, and thrust it into my side, and be not incredulous, but believing. (28) And Thomas answered, and said to him, My Lord and my God. (29) Jesus said to him, Thomas, you have believed because you have seen me; blessed are those who have not seen me, and have believed. (30) Then Jesus also wrought many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. (31) But these things were written, that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that you might believe, and have life in his name.

§ 66. Thomas, like the other disciples, knew nothing of the causes and effects of tangibility. He was convinced, when he saw the Master appear in the midst of the disciples while the door was closed, to give him the proofs he had demanded before he would believe that his fellow-Apostles had seen Jesus, and that the Resurrection had really taken place.

There is a redundancy in the exclamation of Thomas, "My Lord and my God." The two expressions have the same signification, and express the reverence and admiration which he felt at beholding his Master "risen again;" and his thoughts reverted to God, who could alone have

wrought such a miracle. From this moment the idea of the Divinity of Jesus arose in the minds of all the disciples, as well as of Thomas and the other Apostles. Men could not explain the extraordinary, and apparently miraculous, events which took place before their eyes, by any known agency; and afterwards ascribed power to Jesus which could only be ascribed to God, and therefore attributed divinity to him.

You should refer to what we have said already (vol. iii. § 1) concerning the divinity which was ascribed to the Master, and the spiritual and extra-human nature and origin of Jesus, and his relations to God and to your planet. This knowledge, which you derive from the present revelation, will explain all the phenomena which are called miracles.

The words of Jesus to Thomas (v. 29) applied to the men of that age, who, without needing the proofs which the incredulity of Thomas led him to demand, or without having seen the appearance of the Master, like the Apostles, believed in the Resurrection simply on the strength of the words pronounced by the Master, and the acts which he performed among men, added to the testimony of those who had beheld him "risen again." They were designed to make men understand the faith which ought to be placed in the testimony of the Apostles who asserted the truth of the Resurrection. This faith was to be blind until the eyes of men were capable of opening to the light radiating from the New Revelation.

These words are peculiarly applicable to the new era, in which faith and science, enlightened by reason, must support each other. Enlightened Faith is not to be obtained solely by what the eyes of the body can perceive materially, but by what the eyes of the spirit can perceive by the profound study and examination, both theoretical and experimental, of Spiritism, which consists, as one of the laws of Nature, in the communication between the spiritual and corporeal worlds. In the providential and divine order of the world, it is the mode by which God transmits spiritual

science, the secrets of the Hereafter, and light and truth to men, by means of successive and progressive revelations in the present and the future, as well as in the past. This study and examination should be conducted with reverence and love towards the Creator, without bias or preconceived ideas, but with that humility, disinterestedness, morality, and experience which man should acquire ; and with no other motive but love for humanity, and the ardent desire of personal and collective progress by light, knowledge, and truth.

We have just said that Faith and Science ought to support one another. Science is inseparable from Faith, and is not limited to your human science, which is exerted solely on matter and fluids from a material point of view ; but it extends to the pursuit of truth in the physical, moral, and intellectual order, from the point of view of spiritual progress. Thus, it extends to the comprehension, in spirit and in truth, of the words and actions of the Master, and of his promises in the Messianic revelation, which the Apostles and the Evangelists were commissioned to diffuse among men, and to transmit to future generations. This includes the principle and source of all human purification and progress. Here are the means by which men can raise themselves, and through which they may see the veils which still envelop the Truth rent away little by little. Science extends to the study and knowledge of the laws of Nature which govern both the visible and invisible worlds, and the relations between them ; and to the knowledge which men ought to acquire of their future destinies, and what they should hope for. It extends to the study of the physical and moral laws of the world and its creatures ; their origin, their phases, the goal which is set before them, and the conditions necessary to be fulfilled to attain the end. It extends to the study and knowledge of magnetic and spiritual science, which are designed to lead men to advance in the paths of progress and truth ; for they will now be enlightened by the Spirit of Truth, holding the torch of Truth in his hands, and guiding them in their researches by messengers of the Lord incarnated on missions, to develop

belief, quicken progress, or communicate new discoveries in the spiritual, material, and fluidic order.

In conclusion, we will point out to you that John states that he has not related everything in his narrative (thus alluding to the other three Gospels); but that what he wrote was designed to establish the faith of men in the mission of Jesus as the Christ, the predicted and promised Messiah, and as the Son of God, by his purity and power; in order that men might walk in the path which he traced out by his morality, teachings, and examples, in order to attain to the permanent life of the spirit, which perfection alone can give them, by freeing them from matter and its influences.

CHAPTER XXI.

VERSES 1-25.

Jesus at the Lake of Tiberias.

(1) After these things, Jesus showed himself again to the disciples at the Lake of Tiberias, and he showed himself thus. (2) Simon Peter and Thomas, who is called Didymus, and Nathanael, from Cana of Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples, were together. (3) Simon Peter says to them, I am going to fish. They say to him, We are coming with you, too. They went out, and went into the boat immediately, and on that night they caught nothing. (4) But when morning was already come, Jesus stood on the shore; however, the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. (5) Then Jesus says to them, Little children, have you not caught anything? They answered him, No. (6) And he said to them, Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you shall find. Then they cast it, and were not strong enough to draw it up again for the multitude of fishes. (7) Then that disciple whom Jesus loved, said to Peter, It is the Lord. Then Simon Peter, hearing that it was the Lord, girt on his overcoat, for he was naked, and cast himself into the lake. (8) And the other disciples came in the boat, for they were not far from the land, but about two hundred cubits, dragging the net of fishes. (9) Then, when they landed on the shore, they see a charcoal fire made, and fish laid upon it, and bread. (10) Jesus says to them, Fetch some of the fish which you have just caught. (11) Simon Peter went and drew the net upon shore, full of large fishes, a hundred and fifty-three, and although there were so many, the net was not broken. (12) Jesus says to them, Come and breakfast. And none of the disciples dared to ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord. (13) Then Jesus comes and takes the bread and gives it to them, and the fish likewise. (14) This is already the third time that Jesus showed himself to his disciples, after he was risen from the dead. (15) Then, when they had breakfasted, Jesus says to Simon Peter, Simon Jona, lovest thou me more than these? He says to him, Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He says,

to him, Feed my lambs. (16) Again, a second time he says to him, Simon Jona, dost thou love me? He says to him, Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He says to him, Feed my sheep. (17) He says to him the third time, Simon Jona, dost thou love me? Peter was grieved that he said to him the third time, Lovest thou me? and said to him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus says to him, Feed my sheep. (18) Verily, verily, I say to thee, When thou wert young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst where thou wouldst, but when thou art old, thou shalt stretch out thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee where thou dost not desire. (19) And he said this, signifying by what kind of death he should glorify God. And after saying this, he says to him, Follow me. (20) And Peter, turning round, sees the disciple following whom Jesus loved, and who leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, who is it who betrayeth thee? (21) Peter, seeing him, says to Jesus, Lord, what about this man? (22) Jesus says to him, If I wish him to abide till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me. (23) Then the report got abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die; yet Jesus did not say to him that he should not die, but, If I wish him to remain till I come, what is that to thee? (24) This is that disciple who testifies to these things, and writes these things, and we know that his testimony is true. (25) And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which, if they were written in detail, I think that even the world itself would not contain the books which would be written. Amen.

§ 67. The facts related in this chapter were derived from the Apostle John, like everything included in his Gospel. Verse 24 should read: "It is the same disciple who bears witness to these things, and who has *dictated** this, and we know that his testimony is true." The events recorded in this chapter were related by the Apostle John to his disciples, when his age rendered him unable to write himself, and one of them wrote according to his dictation; and therefore this chapter is properly placed at the end of his Gospel, as forming part of it.

The presence of Jesus after his Resurrection made a deep impression upon the disciples; and his various appearances to them and to the women, were designed, in their totality, to be useful in the present and future, until your own days; and to prepare for the future revelation of the Spirit of Truth.

Therefore, Jesus again manifested himself to the disciples under a human appearance, which did not permit them to recognize him at once.

* The context renders this interpretation highly probable; and although the original will not bear the meaning "dictate," it may be translated "record."—TRANS.

After the net was cast, according to his directions, and they could not draw it up again for the weight, John, who could not attribute this "miraculous" event to any one but Jesus, said to Peter, "It is the Lord;" and the thought which John expressed prevailed in the minds of all the disciples.

It was at the moment that Jesus took the bread and fish, and handed it to them, that he presented the figure of the Master, and they recognized him; and after they had breakfasted, they heard his well-known voice speaking to Peter.

You can perceive that such a manifestation excludes the idea of a resurrection with a material body like yours. The explanations which you have already received respecting his appearance to the disciples on the road to Emmaus are likewise applicable here; and spiritual science enables you to understand all these phenomena.

The "miraculous" draught of fishes was a natural phenomenon, like the previous event, which we have already explained (vol. i. pp. 178-181).

Jesus, in speaking to Peter (verses 15-17), assigned him his share in the labours of the first days of Christianity; but he spoke to Peter personally, and not to those who erected his mission into a successive government. (Here you may refer to the explanation of Christ's former words to Peter (vol. ii. pp. 112-117).)

Jesus foretold to Peter his martyrdom, and the kind of death which awaited him, by the veiled words, "Follow me." Peter was to follow Jesus, for he was to be crucified. The answer to Peter's question (verses 20-23) was taken literally and materially, and gave rise to the idea that John was not to die until the return of the Master, at the predicted time of the "end of the world." The words of Jesus were designedly veiled and evasive, but were intended to intimate that every one has enough to do to keep guard over his own actions, and to prepare himself for his own end as much as he can, without seeking to read the future destiny of any other man. The future fate of each of the Apostles was to remain hidden from them. Hence, the evasive character of the answer of Jesus to Peter, which was designed, under the

veil of the letter, to predict to Peter the fate which awaited him, and also to convey a general lesson to men, as well as to Peter himself.

The last verse (v. 25) was only an exaggerated expression which John employed in the presence of his disciples, to express the greatness of the works of Jesus.

END OF PART II.

PART III.

COMMENTARY ON THE DECALOGUE.

You know that God does not communicate with men directly. The Jews supposed that it was God himself who talked with Moses, as it was needful that they should. Moses was an elevated spirit, relatively to the Hebrews whom he led ; and he was a seeing, hearing, inspirational, or physical medium, according to the circumstances and necessities of his mission. In order to give force and authority to the commandments which were imposed on the Hebrews, and to fix in their memories and hearts the laws and ordinances which were indispensable to them at that period, he was forced to surround his laws with all needful pomp and mystery, and to employ formulas capable of overawing the men who listened to him.

Under the guidance of spirits superior to himself, he foresaw certain coming events, and possessed capacities unknown to the multitude. That is, he understood the spiritual power of man, and the manner in which it must be developed. A medium can only act under certain fluidic conditions ; and Moses was aware of these conditions, and foresaw the effect which they would have in the eyes of the Hebrews, firstly, as regards himself, and then as regards others. But if he had said to the Hebrews, "Moses tells you ; Moses commands you ; Moses teaches you ;" he would only have been laughed at.

It was, therefore, to make a strong and durable impression on men, who could only be led for a long time to come by terror, and to compel them to respect the law which was

given them, that the powerful manifestation took place on Mount Sinai, which accompanied the promulgation of the Decalogue. You can comprehend this manifestation by what you know of the effects produced in all ages, and even among yourselves.

Everything which is related of it, like all other physical manifestations recorded in the Old Testament, whether material or intelligent, was the work of spirits appointed to produce these effects. The sounds were produced by the collision of inflammable fluids, which presented the appearance of a blazing fire exhaling a fiery vapour. Thus were produced the physical effects of thunder and lightning, and the thick cloud which covered the mountain, which sent up a smoke like that of a furnace (Ex. xix. 16-19; xx. 18). The spirits also, by the use of sonorous fluids, produced the physical effect of the trumpet which sounded long, and waxed louder and louder.

The Hebrews were forbidden to pass the barrier on account of the danger which might arise from the bursting of the column of fluids which were piled upon the mountain, and which would have led to accidents similar to those caused by lightning. The people said to Moses, "Speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die." They alluded to the sound of thunder, which the assembled multitude regarded as the voice of God himself.

The spirits produced the thick darkness by the combination of opaque fluids; and in this (to use the Biblical expression (Ex. xx. 22) "God was." This was where the superior spirit, his messenger, was; and where Moses, after the promulgation of the Decalogue, was to receive the special laws and ordinances which were necessary for the Hebrews at that time.

The first tables of the Law, which God foresaw would be broken, were written by the medianimity of Moses, under mechanical and clairaudient spiritual influence. Thus, they were the work of God, by the intermediate agency of the superior spirit, who was his messenger, and who, being himself invisible to Moses, caused him to hear the words of

the commandments, and, at the same time, made him write them down mechanically, as emanating (so it appeared to Moses) from God himself.

The second tables were mechanically written by Moses, under the inspiration of the superior spirit, but under unconscious inspiration, so that it appeared to him that he had written them from memory; and he delivered them to the Hebrews engraved, as he had remembered them. But if he had told the people, "I have remembered the words written on the first tables and have transcribed them," they would have thrown doubt on their source, and despised the Law. He was therefore inspired by the superior spirits who aided him in his mission, to present the second tables, like the first, as actually (to use the Biblical expression) "written by the finger of God,"—for Moses believed himself to be in direct communication with the Lord—upon Mount Sinai.

Read attentively what is related to you in Oriental language, appropriate to the time and people relative to the promulgation of the Decalogue (Ex. xix.—xxxi). Read what took place when Moses, having received the two tables of the Law, descended from Mount Sinai, after the superior spirit had informed him of the idolatrous proceedings which were being carried on at the camp (Ex. xxxii.), and what took place from the time when Moses broke the first tables at the foot of the mountain, until he again descended from Sinai bringing the new tables of the Law (xxxiii., xxxiv.) If you compare the narrative with what you are told of the events which attended the promulgation of the Decalogue, and those preparatory to the commencement of the public mission of Moses (Ex. ii.—xix.), as well as with the events which followed (Ex. xxxv.—xl.), you will understand the necessity for leading this backward and intractable nation by terror, and subjecting them to the direction of God's messenger. They were deeply imbued with prejudices and tendencies to idolatry; and it was necessary to lead them to Monotheism, and thus to prepare for the advent of the Messiah. You will understand the necessity of apparently placing the

Hebrews, by the mediation of their chief, in direct contact with their God, who described himself, by his own hand, as the only God ; the Lord of all the gods ; strong and jealous, executing vengeance on those who disobeyed his law, and visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generations of them that hate him, and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love him, and keep his commandments. (We will explain the true sense of the last words presently.)

There is one event which we must not pass over in silence, and which those who cannot understand its necessity and object regard as a crime. This is the massacre which Moses ordered in the camp, and which, *at* a later period, and under the rule of the pure and gentle law of love and charity, which Christ came to *give* to men, was turned into a weapon and an *example* by ignorance, fanaticism, and ambition. It is *related*, as follows :—(Ex. xxxii. 25–28.)

And when Moses saw that the people were naked (for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their enemies) ; then Moses stood in the gate of the camp and said, Who is on the Lord's side, let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him. And he said unto them, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour. And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses, and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men. For Moses had said, Consecrate yourselves to-day to the Lord ; even every man upon his son and upon his brother, that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day.

At the time of the incarnation of that generation, the spirits who had assumed bodies were perhaps even more mingled than at your own day. Most of them had undertaken a mission to uphold on earth, and to popularize the idea of the unity of God ; but many who felt that they might be too weak to persevere, desired to be arrested in the course of their earthly existence, in case they might fail in their engagements.

You are aware that every spirit, and especially every inferior spirit, retains, for a longer or shorter period, in the

errant state, the prejudices and tendencies of his preceding incarnation ; and when he is ready for new trials, he has always to dread their return during his new earthly existence, when he has to struggle against them. Thus, you often behold young people, and even infants, among yourselves, exhibiting evil or vicious passions, even among pure surroundings. Sometimes these spirits have asked to be arrested in the course of their earthly existence, in case they should fail in their engagements, and they are then stayed in their course that they may acquire the degree of strength which is still wanting to them, by reflection and study in the errant state. This class of spirits is less guilty, for they sin by weakness rather than by their own will ; and under these circumstances, the premature death which they have desired aids in their development and advancement.

At the time of that incarnation, there were also a class of spirits who had to expiate murders (and how many were committed in that rude age !), and who had asked to suffer this expiation, and thus to find purification, reparation, and progress in the law of retaliation.

Those who fell under the blows of of the Levites suffered a fate which they had foreseen and demanded ; for **some** belonged to the class of spirits who had undertaken a mission to maintain and popularize on earth the idea of the unity of God, and had asked to be checked in the course of their earthly existence in case they should fail in their engagements ; and others belonged to the class of spirits who had committed murders, and had asked to suffer this expiation.

This was the case, and no stroke was misdirected ; for under such circumstances the protecting spirits who watched over the trials and expiations of each, guided the culprit, or directed the sword which should strike him, just as the bullet which is to strike such and such a man follows its course, when the probability sometimes is that it would be wasted. The spirits acted by spiritual magnetism on the culprit, or by inspiration and fluidic action on the swordsmen ; and you may thus truly say, " Man proposes and God disposes."

Nothing takes place without its appropriate end and object ; for what man often regards as an arbitrary dispensation, is never anything but the consequences of the past, or the preparation for the future. The motive and object of the massacre which Moses commanded in the name of the Lord, was not to cause victims to be slaughtered at random (for those who perished suffered a fate which they had foreseen and demanded), but to arrest their earthly existence, according to the conditions of their trials or expiations. On the other hand, it was designed to impose absolute submission to the divine will and its commandments and precepts, by the agency of terror, on these backward and intractable men, always inclined to idolatry and rebellion, and always ready to forget and disobey their God. It was designed to subject them to the authority of his messenger, to teach them the necessity of submission, and to lead them to walk in the paths which their chief had marked out for them, and thus to fulfil the task which was providentially assigned to them in the course of human progress.

Thus, Moses was a human instrument, who acted under the inspirations of the spirits of the Lord, to cut short the trials of those who had failed, to accomplish the expiations of others, and also to prepare for the future ; for every age has its own manners and necessities.

Do not judge from your own point of view, nor according to your own age ; but look upon the events relatively to the Hebrews, with regard to the age, the men, their prejudices and opinions, and the conditions which were indispensable for the work which was to be accomplished at that time and in the future. Have you not, since these barbarous ages, and at periods when civilization and intelligence were much more developed in the human order, decimated men, when a revolt has arisen, to maintain discipline in an army, and to enforce submission to its leaders ? And in the religious order, have not massacres taken place often, far too often, in the name of God ? Remember the frequent instances recorded in the history of your humanity ; remember the religious wars, the autos-da-fé, and the mas-

sacre of St. Bartholomew. Have not the priests of religion always urged men, during religious wars, under the influence of ignorance, fanaticism, and the abuse of power and ambition, to kill one another to consecrate themselves to the Lord, and draw down his blessings upon them ; and have they not sacrificed men in the autos-da-fé for the honour of their God, and to acquire his favour? And who were the instigators of the massacre of St. Bartholomew? The priests, the servants of God! What was the ruling motive of the religious wars? Ambition! Ambition, not to be great in the eyes of God, but the ambition of maintaining power.

In these phases of the history of the past, we make no exception with respect to religious massacres and wars in favour of the Protestant priests, who have excited their flocks against the Catholics, and who also slew their enemies. Some, like the Levites of Moses, slew to prove that they were the children of God. Others, to acquire the power, which the Catholics feared would be taken from them. And there was no longer then, as in the time of the Hebrews, a messenger of God, like Moses, at the foot of Mount Sinai, speaking in the name of the Lord. No ; the necessity which directed the act of Moses existed no longer, and the massacres, the religious wars, the autos-da-fé, and St. Bartholomew, were the human work of ignorance, fanaticism, and the abuse of power and authority, making a weapon and example of the massacre accomplished by the order of Moses. And why did these religious wars and massacres take place? Because the Churchman would not understand that his mission is not to stop those who are entrusted to his care, and to make them turn back, but rather to urge them forward on the path of progress.

But although the guilty instigators of these atrocities would have to suffer a long and painful expiation, yet those who perished, were not lost victims, any more than those who fell under the blows of the Levites in the camp of the Israelites. Those who perished, suffered a fate which they had foreseen and demanded ; for even with respect to the

instant of the death of his creatures, God leaves nothing to what you call chance, in your ignorance of both causes and effects.*

We are now about to give you the explanation of the Decalogue in spirit and in truth. This explanation is not relative, or restricted to the Hebrews or Christians, but is general, and applicable to all ages and nations. We will begin, as follows :

God spake all these words, saying, I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

God, the Creator of everything which exists, has caused the spirit to emerge from *nothingness* (we will immediately explain the sense in which you should understand this word, which is derived from your human language); to give it being, thought and personality. It is by his Almighty Will that man has risen from the depths of matter to attempt his first steps on the spiritual path. Again, it is the Lord who has shown him the road which leads him from the bondage of sin and matter, by enlightening his path with the torch of Truth. Nations of the earth ! raise your eyes to the "pillar of fire," which is to guide your path from slavery to the land of liberty. It goes before you, and the "Spirit of Truth" has raised the beacon on which you should fix your eyes. Advance, without faltering or hesitation, for you must succeed in reaching the "promised land, flowing with milk and honey ;" the word of peace and the love of God.

MOSES, ELIJAH, JOHN,† MATTHEW, MARK,
LUKE, JOHN.

With the sanction of the Apostles.

* Consult what is said respecting the moment of death in the explanation of the Fifth Commandment.

† It has been revealed in the commentary on the three first Gospels, that it was one and the same spirit who assumed three earthly individualities, and accomplished three separate missions, as Moses, Elijah, and John the Baptist.

In speaking of the spirit, we have said that God has derived it from nothingness, to give it being, thought, and personality. But nothingness, in the human acceptation which you attach to the word, is nonsense, from the point of view which correlates God and the creation. Nothingness, to the spirit, is spiritually the ignorance of its existence. Thus, the spiritual principle contained in minerals and vegetables is nothingness, with regard to its being. The annihilation of matter, properly speaking, is the volatilization of the material principles which must combine to produce either planets or your bodies. It is, therefore, said that God created the world out of nothing, or of chaos, because he formed it from a mass of molecules scattered through space.

FIRST COMMANDMENT.


Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

Jehovah is the one only God, the Uncreated Creator ; He who Is ; of whom, by whom, and in whom everything exists. Therefore, let not man turn his thoughts from the Creator to the creature, and render it a worship and an honour which belong only to the Lord ; not because he is a jealous God, but because man is a feeble spirit, easily turned aside from the right path, and entering it with difficulty.

SECOND COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them, for I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

The unity of God is the fundamental principle of Faith, and should have been preserved by theologians. We speak of it from the origin of religion, for all those who were at the head of religion held this doctrine firmly, although they spread another belief among the people. The idea of the unity of God has been perpetuated in all ages, and among all nations, although it did not remain general, but became



the heritage of spirits who were intellectually more advanced, though often less virtuous than the nations whom they governed, either as priests or as philosophers.

The prohibition to make any resemblance to created beings implies no obligation to abstain from such reproductions, but only forbids men to bow down to them and worship them, in order always to preserve the unity of the creative principle. But material men needed material representations to nourish their faith. Hence, the adoration offered to what were originally only unimportant representations—that is, images placed in the temples as ornaments. Remember the Temple of Solomon, in which angels were placed at the four corners of the altar, with their wings extended, some turned towards the East, and some towards the West. Symbolical and artistic representations were not forbidden, but only the worship of such representations.

On this occasion Moses represents God to the Hebrews as a powerful and jealous God, permitting none to share in his rights, and able to make them respected; but not by striking the innocent, to punish the guilty, unto the third and fourth generation; nor by shewing mercy to thousands of the guilty out of favour to one just man who had compounded for his posterity. How feeble is human intelligence!

Both the punishment and the mercy are monstrous, if taken literally; but, according to the Spirit, they contain a sublime expression of the infinite justice and mercy of God. You will find their justification and explanation from both points of view, in the principle of reincarnation, which shews you punishment hanging over the guilty spirit from one generation to another, and the mercy which is extended from one generation to generation over the spirit who purifies himself, and progresses in well-doing.

Spirits generally assemble in similar classes, and it is intelligible that guilty parents should attract little-advanced spirits who are disposed to follow the same courses, just as those who observe the laws of the Lord, and whose posterity should be more and more virtuous, attract more and more advanced spirits from generation to generation.

To explain little-advanced spirits seeking vicious parents, you know that there are spirits who have little desire of progress, and seek the sympathetic bonds, whether good or evil, which they have already borne. Others, though incited by the desire of progress, select surroundings the evil influences of which they are unable to overcome ; but in such a case the spirit is warned beforehand of the risk he runs in incarnating himself, and the almost inevitable fall which will be the result ; and if he persists, it is of his own free will.

You can understand the progress of judgment and mercy upon these principles. The punishment extends to the third and fourth generations, because the spirits gradually purify themselves, either by incarnating themselves under similar conditions, or by the guilty recommencing their trials. As soon as the spirit improves, and enters on the path of progress, he attracts to himself companions who are also more advanced, and thus, for thousands of generations and more the improvement makes itself felt, to culminate in final perfection.

THIRD COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain ; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who taketh his name in vain.

This commandment has generally been misunderstood. It is connected with the two first, and follows naturally from them.

As man should never lose sight of the unity of God, or bow down to worship any image, he ought not to give the title of God, or attribute his power, to any creature or representation. Furthermore, man ought not to abuse the name of the Lord, if he regards it with any serious thought ; and the injunction of Jesus not to swear at all, neither by heaven, for it is God's throne, nor by the earth, for it is his footstool, applies still more forcibly to the Creator of all things. Strive, therefore, to banish from your language oaths made "before God" and "in the face of heaven," and all other exaggerated formulæ which often hide, even from him

who uses them, how little confidence he has in himself. Always strive to raise your thoughts towards the Lord when you invoke his name; for to do so on trifling or guilty occasions is to abuse it. When the name of God is invoked in heartfelt sincerity, it attracts, not the presence of God towards you, for your planet is still too far from the point which it must attain for that; but the support of the superior and good spirits whom the Father has appointed governors of his children, and who communicate his wishes to them, until purification and progress have so far developed their intelligence that they no longer need intermediaries.

FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work. But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou nor thy son nor thy daughter, thy manservant nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates.

This commandment, which was invested with religious authority, is an exclusively civil law of humanitarian necessity, which required to be enforced upon the Hebrews to overcome their tendency to the abuse of power. Work is a necessary law of humanity, for it is by work that man progresses, acquires, or repairs, but rest is not less indispensable for the body and the spirit. Would it have sufficed to say to the primitive men, "Leave your body time to recover its strength, and leave your spirit leisure to free itself from material cares, that it may rise towards its Creator, and turn away from the earth, where it is held captive, to rise by hope and meditation towards the exalted spheres which await it." Alas, would it be sufficient even now!

There was a profound feeling of philanthropy in this commandment, which men have failed to appreciate. All the ancient nations abused their power, and had slaves who were forced to undertake the severest labours. Was it not necessary to assure them a needful respite by making it incumbent on their masters? Animals were despised as possessing neither soul nor thought, and were looked upon

as things with scarcely the sensation of pain ; and without this command, they would have been overwhelmed with fatigue. The stock would have become exhausted, and degeneration would finally have exterminated those most useful to men.

Even the stranger, who ought to be respected as a guest, would have been liable, if not included in the command, to be loaded with all the labours on the Sabbath Day, from which the faithful were required to abstain ; and the holy law of hospitality, which was generally respected among the ancients, would have been violated. Remember that under all religions, rest is the preservative of health.

At the present day, we tell you, work with zeal and courage, but never overpass the limits of your strength. Respect the Sabbath, and cause it to be respected, not in a trifling but in a reasonable manner. Whether you require rest on one day or another, take it whenever you feel real need of it ; and above all, never overwork one of your inferiors, and also respect the repose of the beast. The Hebrews carried their observance of the Sabbath so far that even the earth rested, not on the seventh day, but on the seventh year. This custom, which appears childish to modern agriculturists, was not without sufficient reason. Men were less numerous, and their requirements were also less. While enjoying the luxury of repose, they permitted the earth to recover its natural fertility without resorting to artificial means, the abuse of which leads to various diseases which afflict you, without your being aware of the real causes. The flocks were pastured on the fallow lands, and their presence was sufficient to restore those salts to the earth which are needed for the reproduction of plants. But this is beside the questions before you.

We repeat with Jesus, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." Never forget these words of the Master, and endeavour to practise them in spirit and in truth, as they have been explained to you in the Commentary on the Gospels (vol. ii. pp. 1-8).

The fourth commandment concludes, "For in six days

the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it." These words are a comment added by Moses to the law to give it more authority and importance in the eyes of men. They are explanations given to make the people understand the necessity of repose, since God required it himself. The people were little advanced, and Moses addressed them in language which they could understand; and although he was versed in the Egyptian sciences and mysteries, he was ignorant of many things, in his incarnate state, which the study of ages has since unfolded.

Can we reconcile what Moses says of God and the creation with what is now known both by human science and by spiritual revelation and science?

It is useless to attempt it. When Moses thus interpreted the commandment, and gave it such high authority, he had no other intention than to engrave a deeper respect for it in the hearts of the Hebrews. He divided the Creation into six epochs, and not days; not as the result of scientific researches, but with a similar object. The command was appropriate to the necessities of humanity; it protected the weak, by ensuring them a rest on the seventh day; and Moses compelled the strong to submit to it.

Is every explanation impossible, which might reconcile the six periods with the actual results of human science, in order to satisfy both scientific men and priests?

It is practically impossible, for Science herself has not spoken the last word. Science cannot yet estimate the cataclysms which have effected the transformations of your planet, especially as they have been partial, and have often carried the elements of production from one point to another. You have not yet witnessed the last, for several, at first partial, and then general, must still overturn the existing order of things, to destroy the material principle, and bring your planet, not merely to the fluidic point, but to the state of fluids purified from all material molecules.


FIFTH COMMANDMENT.

Honour thy father and thy mother.

Let him who desires to obey the commandments of the Lord comprehend them in all their grandeur. Honour thy father and thy mother ! They are the chiefs whom the Lord hath given thee, and the (incarnate) guides whom he has appointed to guard thee ; but are not those entrusted with thy education, who develop thy intelligence and watch over thy youth, are they not also thy father and mother *spiritually* ? And do they not sometimes do more than the father and mother according to the flesh, who sometimes forget their sacred duties, and abandon the child whom the Lord has entrusted to their care, to its evil propensities, and often even lead it to follow their own, by setting it the example of pride, selfishness, luxury, and the vices and evil passions which degrade your humanity, and lead the spirit to perdition by causing it to fail in its trials ? Is not the head of the State—the judge who governs wisely, equitably, and extends his solicitude to the meanest of his wards—a father whom you ought to honour, for he governs the great family ? And in speaking thus, we include every superior, whatever his condition, who faithfully fulfils his obligations towards his subordinates. The law of love and reverence should extend throughout all ranks and conditions of life. It is the link which binds together all the members of the universal family.

That thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

These words are an extension given by Moses to the Fifth Commandment. Its object was again to compel men, in whom selfishness was the only ruling instinct, to respect and obey the law. To live comfortably, and to live long, was their first and only anxiety ; and it was necessary to influence them through this weak point, as Moses well knew. But if you take the word “land” in a symbolical sense, you may understand how your life may be prolonged in the dwelling which is reserved for you, in the sense that



you can attain it sooner by fulfilling your duties better. You know that the abodes reserved for men who deserve them are the superior spheres to which they attain as soon and in proportion as they raise themselves, and which they will reach sooner by making more efforts to perfect themselves. Man, honour thy father and thy mother, and thy days will be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, but be assured that this land is not the soil beneath thy feet.

The difficulties which have arisen in the interpretation of the commandments are due to men having been unable or unwilling to separate the law itself from additions. The law proceeds from God, and the additions proceed from man, under the Divine inspiration, transmitted by the superior spirits for a transitory purpose. That which proceeds from God is immutable law, but what proceeds from Moses, under this Divine inspiration, was a means of serving the present by the letter, and of preparing for the future by the Spirit, to aid in human progress according to the necessities of the age. Your days cannot be prolonged on earth when you occupy it by incarnation.

In the Spirits' Book we read, relative to death, " 'There is nothing inevitable in the true meaning of the word, but the time of death. When that time has come, no matter under what form death presents itself, you cannot escape it.' "

"If so, whatever danger may seem to threaten us, we shall not die if our hour has not come?"

" 'No, you will not be allowed to die, and of this you have thousands of examples; but when your time has come, nothing can save you.' " *

Having regard to these passages, and to what you have just dictated, how are we to understand that the instant of death is fated? Must we understand that it is absolutely thus, and that man can do nothing to shorten his existence by the abuse of his free will; by his actions, or by the use which he makes of his existence, by breaking the conditions which are necessary to make his body last till the end of his trials?

The Spirits' Book is the basis of the revelation, but not all the revelation. If all details had been discussed at the time of its appearance, the storms which it has raised would have been more terrible, its adversaries more numerous, and the struggle more painful. It was needful

* "Spirits' Book," English translation, p. 326, § 853.

first to pave the way, and to show the light shining through the dense shades. Presently it spread over the horizon, and will still increase.

From some points of view death is fated ; but can you suppose, feeble and limited creatures, that He who dwells in the Infinite, and who takes in at a single glance the innumerable galaxies of stars, measures time as you compute it ? Everything is fixed in its course, and determinate in its duration, with respect to Him who is Infinity itself ; but yet to you the barrier is not fixed in the sense in which you understand it.

The length of life is determined by the principle that binds the spirit to the body, This fluidic cord, of which you have heard, is the spring which regulates the movements of the body. This spring has a determinate duration, within large limits, as you may understand ; but it is not timed to the exact minute of your pendulum, and a less or greater latitude is allowed to you, according to the use which you make of it, just as a bit of caoutchouc may be stretched up to a certain point, in proportion as you exert more or less force or skill.

The duration of the life of man has a natural limit, which is determined in the regular course of his existence by the operation of the immutable laws of Nature, according to circumstances and climates, because the fluids which serve for the formation and support of your beings are related to the climates in which they operate, and matter is in adequate relation to them ; for, according to the law of universal harmony, everything is determinate ; and within this natural limit lies the irrevocable hour of the end of human life, beyond which the free will of man is absolutely powerless to extend the duration of his body.

This is the inevitable moment, in the true sense ; and it is in this sense that the life of man cannot be prolonged beyond its natural limit ; but the free will of man is able, either by the resolutions which he formed before incarnation in the spiritual state, or by the use which he makes of his existence in the incarnate state, to arrest the

course of his life at a fixed time between his birth and the natural limit of human life.

The free will of the spirit enables him before incarnation, to choose the approximate duration of the body which he is about to assume, provided he fulfils the necessary conditions to cause it to last till the end of his trials ; and he should therefore use all his efforts to enable him to continue them to the end.

In this case, the spirit has determined the length of his trials, and the duration of his earthly existence ; and his spiritual resolution prevents him from attaining the natural limit, and the body is thus appropriated, under the supervision of the spirits who are appointed to watch over the fulfilment of his trials, in such a manner as to last the appointed time ; but it is the duty of the incarnate spirit himself to fulfil every condition necessary to cause his body to last to the end of his trials.

When all these obligations are fulfilled, the instant of death is irrevocable, but not fated, in the strict sense of the term, as it is the result of the free will of the spirit, previous to incarnation. But the incarnate spirit himself can, by the abuse of his free will, and the use which he makes of his existence, arrest the course of his life between his birth and the time fixed by the resolutions which he formed previous to incarnation. This is why the sick man employs his free will in the care of his body to enable him to finish his trials, or can hasten the instant of his death, either by carelessness and indifference, which resemble suicide, or by abuse or excess, when such errors involve an infraction of the conditions necessary to enable his body to last to the end of his trials.

Thus, the time is not fixed from your point of view, although it is so in relation to the Infinite, and to the laws which govern the universe ; and cannot overstep certain limits. But the instant of death is not fated, in reference to the duration of your restricted existence, because the natural limit, in the regular course of earthly existence, is rarely attained, and because your spirit-resolutions, or your

actions, which are the consequence of your free will, prevent you from attaining to this natural limit.

When the hour has come for man to depart, nothing can prevent him, whether he has attained the natural limit or whether he fails to reach it, either on account of his spirit-resolutions or on account of the use which he has made of his existence, or from neglect of the conditions which it was necessary for him to fulfil to enable his body to last to the end of his trials.

Within the limit which is thus left to you, you are free to move, and to exert your free will, which would otherwise be an unmeaning term, and would inevitably lead every thinking man to the idea of fatalism, predestination, and moral slavery. But there is a distinction between whether your existence is shortened, in regard to the natural limit by your spirit-resolutions, or by your having, in the exercise of your free will, infringed the conditions which it was needful for you to fulfil. When man has fulfilled all the conditions necessary to enable his body to last till the end of his trials, and has decided on a restricted duration of existence by his spirit-resolutions, the instant of his death remains irrevocably fixed; and in such a case, whatever danger may threaten him, he will not die, if his hour has not come. The means required to save him, whatever may be his danger, will be prepared by the spirits who watch over the fulfilment of his trials and expiations. But if his hour has come, he will perish; and you have thousands of instances where some perish and others are saved under precisely similar circumstances. You have already received explanations on this subject, to which you may refer, relative to shipwreck, fire, earthquakes and falls (vol. i. pp. 273-281).

In the case of assassination, the assassin is not the blind instrument of Providence, when he terminates the trial of one who has been marked out for expiation at a definite period. The assassination is the consequence of the free will of the one, and of the trials and expiations of the other, who, having applied the law of retaliation to himself, has

either chosen to die a violent death, without fixing the time or the kind of death, or has definitely resolved to die by the hand of an assassin.

In the first case, if the assassin uses his free will to conquer his passions, and spares his intended victim, some other circumstance will arise which will put an end to his trials, according to the determination which he had formed before incarnation. In the second case, if the assassin should use his free will to conquer his passions, and spare his intended victim, the events of life will lead the incarnate spirit, who is to suffer this expiation in the way of another incarnate, whose evil propensities are predominant, that what is decreed may be accomplished.

The incarnate assassin and his victim no longer remember the choice which they had made. One has chosen a trial from whence he is to emerge as the conqueror or the conquered, which constitutes a struggle against a tendency which he should overcome. The other has chosen an expiation which he must suffer as the means of reparation and purification. The victim does not lead himself to the sacrifice, but sometimes unconsciously prepares the path which leads him to it, or else is guided there by the spirits appointed to watch over the accomplishment of his trials and expiations. You should understand our last words. The guides do not direct the acts of the assassin, but they direct the spirit of him who is to suffer the expiation, and the events which lead him in the way either of the expiation or the trial. But do not imagine that the protecting spirit enables the victim to remember the resolution which he has formed, to place himself in the track of events which would lead to the accomplishment of the expiation. Not so, for this would be a moral torture inflicted on the incarnate spirit, and Providence is merciful towards its children; but as we have already explained, the incarnate spirit retains a vague impression in waking, which directs his will and actions.

But if man has not fulfilled the conditions necessary to cause his body to last till the end of his trials, and has thus

broken his spirit-resolutions, he hastens the moment of his death, by inducing causes which precipitate it, according to the working of the immutable laws of Nature, by the action of fluids which he has thus attracted, and which complete the destruction of his body ; while at the same time he repels the fluids which serve to sustain it.

The man who is inclined to suicide uses his free will, either to put an end to his life in some particular manner, or to turn aside the weapon which he had directed against himself, or else renounces his project. If the period of death fixed by his spirit-resolutions remains irrevocable, because he has fulfilled all the obligations necessary to cause his body to last to the end of his trials, the guardian spirits will provide means to rescue him, the attempted suicide will be prevented, and he will be saved. But do not suppose that a man may attempt suicide with impunity ; for, in the first place, suicide is a crime before God ; and, in the second, he does not know whether the time has come for him to depart or not. The length of life is fixed ; but man's free will may cause him to yield to the evil thought of abridging his existence himself, or else may lead him to conquer the guilty thought.

The man who dies a suicide (like the man who is assassinated, or dies in any other way) would certainly die, but he should have died by a natural death when his time came to depart, either because he has reached the natural limits of human life in the regular course of his existence or in accordance with his spirit-resolutions ; or, again, because he has infringed the conditions necessary to enable his body to last to the end of his trials. He has yielded to the temptation against which he should have struggled ; and thus he has chosen the kind of death ; but the time was come for him to depart. If he had overcome the instincts which led him to destroy himself, he would have emerged victorious from the trial, instead of having to begin again under the same conditions. The feeling which leads man to suicide is not born in him instantaneously. It is a germ, which is developed from a tendency which constitutes a

trial, and which must be overcome. If, instead of struggling against this tendency, he yields to it, he dies, and is guilty, because he has failed. But if, instead of yielding to it, he conquers the thought of himself destroying the existence which the Lord has lent him, the hour of deliverance will find him cleansed from an evil action, and the evil thoughts which would have led to it.

The suicide might have struggled against the tendencies which led him to destroy himself, or avoided the series of events which led to this desperate action, and thus have avoided the crime. Man can avoid it, for he can repulse temptations to evil by the power of his will ; and he who has chosen, as a trial, to resist the temptation to suicide, may emerge victorious from the struggle, for the goodness of God opens the way for him. It is his duty to overcome it ; for, in trials where man is required to conquer his evil tendencies, and to purify his spirit in the furnace of re-incarnation, God leaves him at liberty to choose between the good and the evil. This leads to a struggle, in which there is always the chance of victory or defeat.

Whether man yields to the temptation of suicide or triumphs over it, he always dies when the hour has come for his departure, according to the various contingencies which we have just mentioned. But the infinite wisdom and the foresight of the Lord perceives all things, and knows if man will conquer, or if he will yield ; and if he is to be victorious, the Lord, through the guardian spirits who watch over the trials, prepares the events which are to lead him to a natural death ; but if the man will succumb to the trial, he leaves his inviolable free will liberty to complete the criminal work by the death which he has prepared for himself, which is thus the guilty act of his will.

This is all that we have to tell you concerning the moment of death, which, when falsely asserted to be fated, in an absolute manner, and under all circumstances, affects the free will of man, and inevitably leads to the idea of fatalism.


SIXTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not kill.

Let not him who can create nothing destroy the existence of the creatures of the Lord. Let not the instinct of destruction develop itself in the heart of man, for he knows not the responsibility which it brings upon his head. This command is very vague in its terms, and has a much larger range than you suppose, which far surpasses the limits of your existence. Every passing phase of humanity has interpreted it according to its necessities ; and every future phase will interpret it by enlarging its meaning and application. In primitive times, "Thou shalt not kill" meant to the Hebrews, "Thou shalt not shed the blood of thy brother without a motive ;" but capital punishment was enforced for the slightest offence ; the blood of victims offered in sacrifice flowed constantly on the altar ; and the slaves were as little regarded as the beasts. At a later period the punishment of death becomes more rare ; it is only inflicted for definite crimes ; the slaves have acquired civil rights, and even the animals have been spared to some extent, at least as regards the ceremonies of religion ; but revenge, war, and cruelty have shed, and still continue to shed, blood on all sides.

At the present day, those who have listened to our voices, and even those who have not understood them and believe them to be false, are rising up against capital punishment for crime, and look forward to the moment when men will no longer be ranged in order to discharge deadly missiles against each other. Some who listen to us spare the lives of all the feeble creatures which the Lord has placed in their power, to develop their charity and make them understand the universal solidarity ; but blood still flows in the slaughter-houses, and the victims needed for human food constantly fall under the butcher's knife.

At a later period no more blood will be shed on the earth, and man will kill nothing. He will love and protect the weak, whether it be a man like himself or an animal.



placed under his care. He will understand the law of love, and be able to raise himself above the needs of the flesh. It is still necessary to satisfy these needs, for they belong to the present construction of the machine; but they will gradually diminish in proportion as the spirit increases in wisdom and knowledge; and you will then behold the organism also gradually modified; physical progress advancing and developing itself at the same time, and in a manner corresponding to moral and intellectual progress.*

At the present time, capital punishment is abolished in some parts of Europe, and more or less in others.

These are general efforts and preliminary trials, but the moment to abolish capital punishment has not yet come. It is necessary for the morals of the inferior classes to be purified—not the inferior classes as regards social conditions, but as regards the moral and social advancement of spirits, before the good time which you look for will come. But it is for men, and especially for spiritists, to hasten the coming of this possible and desirable result by your teaching and example.

SEVENTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

The material nature of man leads him into lust. Nothing can restrain his desires when he abandons himself to the animal instincts; and these were especially predominant in the earlier ages. Do you not still see them lead your brethren into shameful errors? The bonds which unite man and woman have a pure and noble origin, which the materiality of incarnation has turned aside, but to which it must return.

The command to abstain from adultery was intended to check excess; but in this case also it has been interpreted according to the necessities of the age. The man or married woman were punished—the woman with death and the man with disgrace. The command extends,

* Compare the "Spirits' Book," book iii. chap. vi., On the Law of Destruction (English edition, pp. 285-296).

according to the spirit, to every departure from pure union. It condemns all the carnal propensities which lower the human species to the instincts of the brute.

We do not tell you, "God created one man and one woman that they should have one existence only." There is the moral object, which Moses proposed from the Hebrew point of view under the letter, and which remained there for future generations. You know what has already been explained respecting the emblematic figure of Creation, and the Creation itself.* But we tell you this. Spirits group themselves by sympathetic attractions. Every spirit chooses his or her companion with whom to pass the period of their trial. The only exception is in the case of the trial of celibacy.

Incarnate spirits are generally born into conditions which allow the sympathetic spirits who are designed for union to meet; but the material dispositions of one or other in the incarnate state may accidentally break the harmony and retard their union, either within the limits of the present incarnation or until another incarnation. Thus it is that you behold a sympathetic spirit repulsed, despised, or abandoned by one whom it attracts, or to whom it is attracted, and permitting itself to be led astray, either by outward attractions or by pride, ambition, or avarice.

When two sympathetic spirits are united according to their mutual choice, made previous to incarnation, nothing can again separate them in a union thus realized, having the same tendencies to good; and to such the commandments has no need to say, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." But if the spirits are once incarnate, and are too little regardful of the engagements taken in the spiritual state, which they have forgotten, but of which the secret instinct remains in their hearts, and allow themselves to be led astray by the influence of matter, the male and female spirits seek for nothing but a momentary material satisfaction in the conjugal union, or a mathematical or social combi-

* Compare what has been said on the origin of the spirit, the soul, and man and woman on the earth, and on the primitive worlds.

nation, or some purpose of interest or pride. Then the sympathetic bonds are broken by earthly engagements ; the heart is not filled with pure affection, and the spirit seeks distraction in variety and misconduct. To such the commandment says, "Thou shalt not commit adultery;" for if you have imposed on yourself a chain which is heavy to bear, you must suffer the consequences, and must, by the respect which you shew for your inconsiderate engagements, lessen the fault which you have committed in contracting it. You must overcome your sensual instincts ; you must conquer the flesh, and awaken that sympathy which ought to exist between your spirit and the companion whom you have inconsiderately chosen ; and the day of liberty will come by the return of both to the spiritual life.

Sometimes the union is forced upon the incarnate spirit by the influence and authority of the parents from motives of interest or pride. In such a case, it is a trial which the spirit has chosen, which is either temporary or destined to last during its whole earthly existence ; and it only retards the sympathetic union with the object of its choice, or perhaps postpones it to another incarnation. And the commandment speaks in the same language to those who are thus united by the deviation of their trials, as to those who have entered into an unreflecting engagement.

Sometimes also, spirits who are anxious to overcome the antipathy which they feel towards each other, though this feeling is not always reciprocal, choose to unite themselves humanly, as a trial. To these also the commandment says, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," and the gentle voice of Jesus adds, "What God has joined, let not man put asunder."

In conclusion, we say again that spirits are destined to union. They decide before incarnation to pass their time of trial together, and aid each other mutually, excepting in cases where one or the other deviates from the accomplishment of their spirit-resolutions. But whether this deviation takes place or not, and whether the choice is in agreement with their spirit-resolutions, or the contrary, it is not the

result of what you call chance, but results from the direction given to the trials, in consequence of which (whether freely and voluntarily, or by compulsion, and whether the spirit is turned from its course, or not) the choice is made. But if, after this choice, one or both spirits stray from their course, they may meet at some future time during the present incarnation, or be separated until another incarnation ; which will renew the same sympathies or the same intentions, in the case of trial, and by repeated choice enable them to accomplish it.

Celibacy is also a trial to some and a deviation to others. Those who are destined to celibacy as a trial have not chosen their companion in life ; or (not to leave room for false interpretations) have not decided that the union should take place. It would lead us into too much detail to explain all the cases of celibacy by deviation. Let it suffice to say that celibacy may arise from selfishness, from irregular habits, from indifference, from avarice, or from quietism, which, by a false spirituality, makes Christian perfection consist in inaction of the soul, and the neglect of outward works. This may arise from an engagement taken as a condition of the Catholic priesthood, by men and women entering the monastic or religious orders. This engagement results, as we have explained (vol. ii. pp. 235-239), from a mis-interpretation of the words of Christ (Matt. xix. 22). The Church could not understand these words ; and what took place during the Christian era, under the veil of the letter, had its use, apart from errors and abuses, but will cease during the new era of the Christianity of Christ, under the dominion of the Spirit.

EIGHTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not steal.

Pride and envy are the secret enemies which man bears within himself. It is these possessions which lead him to possess himself of everything which he desires, whether morally or physically, and which impel him to use force or fraud for success. To impose respect for the property of

others, whatever it may be, upon man, is to compel him to conquer these roots of all evil by leading him to practise the laws of labour, justice, love, and charity, which banish selfishness and envy from his heart, and exclude from his thoughts and actions the errors and excesses of the spirit and the flesh ; and thus exclude the instinct and necessity of stealing, in any way whatsoever. Such is the object of this commandment.

NINTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

Jesus tells you, "It is not that which enters into the mouth of a man which defiles him, but that which comes out of the mouth, and proceeds from the heart."

Truth in all its simplicity should inspire the words of him who fears God, and seeks to walk in his ways. This commandment was appropriate to the age when a man might in some cases be put to death on the testimony of another man ; but by enlarging its principle, it extends to and enlightens all succeeding ages. Even in your own times, a man may be put to death on the evidence of another, but such cases are less common, for the justice of man has progressed, like everything else. But in the time of the Hebrews, when the command was given, it was enough for a man to accuse another of blasphemy or some other offence, to cause him to be stoned ; and the Hebrew customs and traditions left traces in your human laws for long ages, and under various aspects, both civil, political, and religious, during the Christian era.

Not to bear false witness is to pay homage to the truth at all times, in all places, and in all cases. It is to unfurl your flag without shame or defection ; it is not to fear to raise aloft the light of truth ; it is to break the bushel which covers it to cause it to shine forth to the eyes of all. Not to bear false witness is always to walk in perfect accord with your conscience.

TENTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything which is thy neighbour's.

This commandment is a further extension of that which says "Thou shalt not steal." It teaches man that it is not enough to abstain from an evil action, but that he ought also to guard against evil thoughts; for in the sight of God the thought is in many cases the same as the act. In fact, if a man cherishes an evil design, but is unable to execute it either through fear of the laws or through a course of events which prevent it, is he not as guilty as the man who commits it? He has had no opportunity; that is all.

Cleanse the sepulchres of your hearts; purify your thoughts; and let there not be one which could cause you to blush before your brethren; for what you would not dare to acknowledge to men who are fallible like yourselves, is exposed to the eyes of your supreme Judge, who searches the most secret recesses of your hearts. Covet nothing, nor premeditate anything evil, nor allow yourselves to indulge in any evil thoughts, for he who searches the hearts and the reins judges of feelings as well as of actions.

May the Lord pour his blessings upon you.

MOSES.

LOVE OF GOD AND OF THE NEIGHBOUR.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might (Deut. vi. 5). Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself (Lev. xix. 18; Matt. xxii. 37-40; Mark xii. 28-31; Luke x. 25-37).

And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes, and thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates. . . . Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it, that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey (Deut. vi. v. 6-9, 3).

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets (Matt. xxii. 40).

To love God is to render homage to the principle of love, the cause of life.

What can an insignificant creature like man, and the spirit which animates so gross a form, do to evince his gratitude to the Omnipotent Creator for all the treasures that he has put into his hands, that he may draw from them continually? He can love, for love inspires submission, reverence, and gratitude. Love is the only link which binds the creature to the Creator; and this love should be manifested under all forms, for it represents the entire creation.

To love God, man must cleanse his heart, mind, and body from all the impurities which defile them; for love leads to nearness, and nothing impure can approach God. Man should therefore cleanse his body, for it is the instrument which his spirit employs for the accomplishment of his trials and of his ascending course by incarnation in the path of moral, physical, and intellectual progress. He should cleanse his heart, spirit, and body, in order to obtain purification of heart and spirit, and by their purification to obtain physical progress, and thus the increasing purification of the bodily envelope, by means of disengagement from the impurities of matter, in the course of successive and progressive lives, and of the ascending hierarchy of worlds.

To love God, man must work constantly to enlarge his intelligence, to develop his knowledge, and extend his science; for ignorance cannot approach omniscience, and all love tends to union.

To love God is to lose oneself in humanity and to be absorbed in fraternal love; for every man, like all the creatures of the Lord, proceeds from the same principle, tends towards the goal, and is a portion of Being divided to infinity, and destined to rise from the infinitely little to the infinitely great, in individuality and immortality. Do not misunderstand these expressions, which might then give rise to false impressions, leading to false and erroneous pantheistic ideas. You can understand them by referring to what we have already explained concerning God, the origin of


the spiritual essence, and the soul and spirit, its phases, ends, and destinies, and on the origin of the worlds of all orders of creation, spiritual, fluidic, and material (vol. i. §§ 56-61, pp. 108-146).

We have already explained to you that God, the Uncreated Creator, is personal and distinct from the creation and from the creature, as the cause is personal and distinct from the effect which it produces ; as the Infinite, the Uncreated, is personal and distinct from the finite and the created ; and as eternity is personal and distinct from time. God, the Uncreated Creator, is thus personal and distinct from the creation and from the creatures which are of him, by him, and in him, but which are not him.

God is Thought, Intelligence, and Fluid, dwelling (to use the words of the Apostle Paul) in inaccessible light, and who alone possesses immortality. And the universal fluid proceeding from him is the instrument of the creation of all worlds and of all beings, in all the kingdoms of Nature, and of everything which lives and moves and has its being.

We have also shown you the spirit at its origin and formation as a spiritual essence rising from the universal Whole by the will of the Omnipotent Lord God, who animates the essence of the fluids to give it being, and to form the spiritual essences by means of a subtle combination existing only in the Divine rays. These spiritual essences are the primitive principles of the spirit in its germ, and in this sense they are a portion of being divided from the Infinite, for the purpose of ascending from the infinitely little to the infinitely great in individuality and immortality.

We have also shown you the great law of magnetic attraction, by the magnetic fluids which envelope us like a single being to enable us to ascend to God by uniting our efforts ; binding all the worlds in the infinite universe together, and uniting all spirits, whether incarnate or not ; and thus uniting all the creations and all the creatures with God, who is Uncreated, Immutable, Eternal, and Infinite. Infinite, too, is the Universal Whole of which we



form part, and over which he rules ; and each and all derive their being from him, by him, and in him, and all are linked together in the bonds of union and solidarity.

Consequently the whole of humanity ought to regard itself as one individuality ; an immense body in which each individual member forms part of the Whole ; and everything therefore ought to tend towards human harmony, and wait till it can raise itself to the celestial harmony.

Thus, to love one's neighbour as oneself is the consequence of the love of God, and it is in this sense and from the point of view of human and universal unity and solidarity in God, that Jesus, according to the Spirit of Truth, after quoting the commandment to love God, and saying, " This is the first and greatest commandment," quoted the command to love the neighbour as oneself, adding, " The second is like unto it."

The two commands, according to the letter, and for the Hebrews, were addressed to their nationality ; but, according to the Spirit hidden beneath the letter, Israel was symbolically the personification of the whole of humanity ; and when Jesus said, " These two commandments include all the law and the prophets," he proclaimed to all men, both Jews and Gentiles, that they contain the only means of salvation (that is, of purification and progress), and form the only path towards perfection and towards eternal life, the life of the pure spirits, where all is rapture, light, happiness, activity, and perseverance in study, to advance continually further and further in universal science, in infinity and eternity, where all is love and devotion, and activity and perseverance in love and devotion, for universal progress in universal life and harmony.

Therefore, men, practise these two commandments with sincerity and zeal, without rest, and incessantly ; and never do to others, by word or deed, what you would not have others do to you ; but on the contrary do everything to others which you would have others do to you, according to whatsoever is just, good, and true in the material, moral, and intellectual order ; for Jesus added, " This is ah

the law and the prophets," and as he has also proclaimed, it must and will be rendered to each according to his works, and everyone will be judged by his works at the tribunal of his conscience, where sits the Tribunal of God.

Thus prepare yourselves by practising justice, love, and charity with sincerity, humility, and disinterestedness, for the advent of human fraternity, which can alone establish liberty and equality, and cause them to reign on your earth. And at length liberty and equality for all and between all, before God and man, will rule over your earth under the empire of the law of reciprocity and solidarity. And when each and all understand and practise right and duty, both in social, family, and private life, they will thus prepare for the advent of the kingdom of God on your earth, under the empire and operation of the law of love and charity.

MOSES, MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE, JOHN,
With the Concurrence of the Apostles.

END OF PART III.



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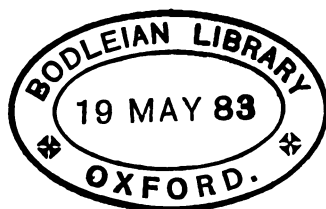
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PREFACE.

THOSE who have followed this volume in its course of monthly issue, will be aware of its intent and purpose. It directs to the STORY of the DIVINE BOOK, *as contained in itself*, marks the inspired men who tell it, and shews how the separate books of the Old Testament are, as it were, built into one another, each one successively needful to the understanding of those which come after it.

These FRESH LEAVES have been issued in large print for those who do not read very easily, but who wish to be presented, when they sit down to read the Bible, with some thoughts and facts about each of its books, which shall help them to read it *intelligently*, not merely as a duty, and to perceive the bearing of its various parts upon each other. We have had some testimony already from "Bible-women," "City Missionaries," and "Working-men," that it is the kind of book *they* wanted "on a Sunday afternoon." But now it appears as a volume, it is by no means limited to their circle, and it is hoped it may be found useful in Sunday-schools and Bible classes, and to young people in general.

These Leaves are intended to convey information in a clear and simple way which in these days every Bible reader should possess, and to lead to further search of the Holy Scriptures for spiritual profit.

It is hoped that each careful reader will have a Bible at hand, to turn to the passage mentioned, and will lift up a prayer, in the name of Christ, for

the Holy Ghost—whom “the Father will send,”—
 “who shall teach us all things,” “bring all things
 to remembrance,” and “guide us into all truth.”

The volume has XVII Nos. or Chapters:—

- No. I. “THE WORLD BEFORE THE FLOOD,”
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- VII. “FROM EGYPT TO SINAI,”
- VIII. “THE GIVING OF THE LAW ON MOUNT SINAI,”
- IX. “THE GRAVES IN THE WILDERNESS,”
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- XV. “FROM ELISHA TO ISAIAH,”
- XVI. “THE FALL OF JUDAH,”
- XVII. “JEREMIAH AND THE NATIONS,”
- XVIII. “THE PROPHETS OF THE CAPTIVITY AND THE RETURN
 OF THE REMNANT.”

Hence the world’s history, by an unerring hand,
 is seen to be given in that of *one* particular nation
 still everywhere scattered and known of all. The
 whole of the Old Testament concerns them, and
 God teaches *all* nations by their fall from His favor.
 It is written—“They are enemies for your sakes,
 but they are beloved for the fathers’ sakes;” and
 it is written also—“There shall come out of Sion the
 Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from
 Jacob.” (Rom. xi. 28, 26.)

L. N. R.

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MOUNT ARARAT, IN ARMENIA.

THE TIMES BEFORE OUR BIBLE.

No. I.

WE do not wish our BIBLEWOMEN to be *learned* teachers, they never can become so, but we wish them to be wise, to win souls. All true wisdom is found in the Scriptures, and they should know something of the wonderful story of the Book they circulate.

And the men and women who buy the Bible, or already possess it, though perhaps it lies dusty on their shelves, should learn a few things about it which would shew them what a treasure it is, and how it *proves itself* to be the most truthful book in the world.

The Bible is one great narrative or Inspired Story, which falls into distinct parts. It was once called by the name of "THE BOOKS," "THE DIVINE LIBRARY," but now by common consent, and for the last 700 years, it is called THE BOOK, or THE Bible. In the first part of the Bible we find *the five books of Moses*. They were afterwards called by Grecian Jews, the Pentateuch.

GENESIS, EXODUS, LEVITICUS, NUMBERS, DEUTERONOMY, are the names of the books. These, and probably the book of JOB also, were all written before the Israelites entered Canaan, the Land of Promise; the five books of Moses formed their early) the Book of the Law or *Toráh*, which was
laid up in the side of the ark for a witness to the people.

We can learn the state of the world before the Pentateuch was written, from Moses only, who tells the story of the earth from the beginning, though he was not born till 777 years after the Flood; and we may well believe that God inspired him to convey all that it was chiefly important to us to know about the drowned world. There is a meaning in the *silence* of Holy Scripture, and infinite wisdom has decided what it should reveal.

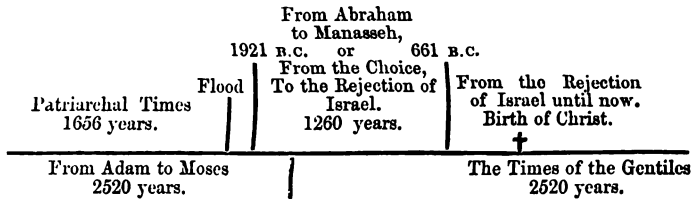
At the beginning of his second book—EXODUS, Moses gives us his own history and parentage. He was a grandson of Levi, who was the third son of Jacob, and Abraham's great-grandson. Moses was himself the great-great-grandson of Isaac, "the chosen seed of Abraham." Isaac stood twenty-first from Adam, and Moses only twenty-fifth; Enoch being the seventh, and Eber the fourteenth in descent.

Jochebed, the mother of Moses, was Levi's daughter, and her great-grandfather Isaac had lived on to the thirty-fourth year of his grandson Levi. It is quite possible that Isaac may have seen and known SHEM, who had lived a hundred years with Methuselah, whose life had crossed Adam's by 243 years.

Jochebed, the mother of Moses and Aaron, would surely receive from her father's own lips what he had heard from Isaac, and Isaac from Shem, of the world before the Flood.

How few the links, and how clearly to be traced! Adam, Methuselah, Shem, Isaac, Levi, Jochebed, Moses. These seven united lives extended over 2520 years, (not inclusive of the last thirty-three years of Moses with the people in the wilderness) during which time many parts of the first five books of the Bible are concluded to have been written.

The whole of human history is represented by the following line, according to the Scripture chronology, or time-table, and if this is once understood it will be easy to remember the place of any narratives in the Bible.



Now we wish in our first three tracts to consider the space, on the left hand, of 2520 years, which is made up as follows—

1656 Before the Flood.

777 After it to the birth of Moses.

87 Years of the life of Moses, including the first ——— seven of the wanderings of Israel in the wilderness, during which the laws of Jehovah were given and recorded. They were to be read to the people every seven years after their entrance to the Promised Land.

And how do we know that this was the length of the Patriarchal Age?

By the testimony of the book of Genesis itself; look at the 5th chapter. Do you wonder why we are so particularly told there how long each patriarch lived, and how old he was when his first son was born? perhaps you think—

“We will not read that chapter, the people were born and they died, that seems all.”

But *it is not all*. From that chapter and the 10th chapter you can make for yourselves two tables of the age of the world before the Law was given on

Mount Sinai. In case you have not time, we have prepared them for you, that you may have them to refer to if you hear people quote the *longer* genealogies of the *heathen* nations of Egypt and China, and India, etc. There is no revelation from God to prove *them*, but He has chosen to give us a Chronology or Table of Time in His own Book, and why should we not receive it along with the History?

TABLE OF AGE OF THE PATRIARCHS
BEFORE THE FLOOD.

BORN.			DIED.		
	Before the Flood.	Year of the World.	Before the Flood.	Year of the World.	Total Age.
Adam . . .	1656	1	726	930	930
Seth . . .	1526	130	614	1042	912
Enos . . .	1421	235	516	1140	905
Cainan . .	1331	325	421	1235	910
Mahalaleel .	1261	395	366	1290	895
Jared . . .	1196	460	234	1422	962
Enoch . . .	1034	622	669	987	365
Methuselah .	969	687		1656	969
Lamech . .	782	874	5	1651	777
Noah . . .	600	1056			600
Shem . . .	98	1553			98

TABLE OF AGE OF THE PATRIARCHS
AFTER THE FLOOD.

		BORN.		DIED.		
		After the Flood.	Before Christ.	After the Flood.	Before Christ.	Total Age.
Gen. x., xi., xii.	Noah . .	..	..	350	1998	950
	Shem. . .	..	..	500	1848	598
	Arphaxad	2	2346	440	1908	438
	Salah. . .	37	2311	470	1878	433
	Eber . . .	67	2281	531	1817	464
	Peleg. . .	101	2247	340	2008	239
	Reu . . .	131	2217	370	1978	239
	Serug . .	163	2185	393	1955	230
	Nahor . .	193	2155	341	2007	148
	Terah . .	222	2126	427	1921	205
	Abraham	352	1996	527	1821	175
xvi., xxv.	Ishmael .	438	1910	575	1773	137
xxi., xxxv.	Isaac . .	452	1896	632	1716	180
xxv., xlvii.	{ Jacob . .	512	1836	659	1689	147
	{ Esau . .	512	1836			
xxxvii., xli., l.	Joseph . .	603	1745	713	1635	110
xxxvi. 38.	Job . . .	597	1751	837	1511	240
Exod. vi.	{ Levi . . .	598	1750	735	1613	137
	{ Kohath . .	623	1725	756	1592	133
	{ Amram . .	702	1646	839	1509	137
	{ Moses . .	777	1571	897	1451	120

It is very singular that with Moses this table of the length of the patriarchal lives ceases, and can no further be traced through Levi; it continues beyond Jacob only in the case of that *one* of his twelve sons, Levi; for the ages of all the others, except Joseph's, are left untold, and cannot be discovered. At this point the record seems to have accomplished its purpose.

It is very probable, though we have no proof of it, that the art of writing was known before the Flood. There may have been certain documents preserved in the tents of the patriarchs, which, as we have seen, *seven* of these long-lived and holy men were sufficient to hand down, and they doubtless too talked over their contents one to another. The history contained in Genesis could not have been narrated by Moses, *as an eye-witness*; but whether he received it by immediate suggestion from God, or was directed by His Holy Spirit to the use of earlier documents, does not affect the inspiration of the book at all.

Moses takes but the first seven chapters of Genesis to describe the state of the world before the Flood. It was an evil day; and two men could have told all its story—Adam and Methuselah, whose lives stretched across the whole period, which yet was less only by 200 years than our own era since the birth of Christ. There seemed a freshness *then* in the relations between God and man which we scarcely meet with afterwards in all the Divine records. We hear of no written law; but of voices direct from heaven: "God spake to one patriarch after another." The Lord God *said* to Adam or to Noah, and He speaks in judgment to Cain.

To Adam and Eve, after the cruel death of Abel, a third son was given—SETH, meaning appointed;

he was the appointed one, through whose line the Redeemer of the lost world would come; for there was a Gospel, or "good tidings" of restoration from the curse even before the Flood: a revelation, or the rolling back of a veil from the purposes of God, see (Gen. iii. 15). Seth has a son, whom he names Enos, and "then began men to call upon" (or to call themselves by) "the name of the Lord."

Adam was but 235 years old when his grandson Enos was born, and he may have lived with his grandfather 700 years. It seems that thus early there arose those who were known as the "sons of God" in the midst of an evil generation who were of the sons of men—always "striving with their maker," and to whom Job alludes in the 22nd chapter of his ancient book (16, 17 verses) as "wicked men"—

"Which were cut down out of time, whose foundation was overflown with a flood: which said unto God, Depart from us: and what can the Almighty do for them?"

Or as the Rev. C. P. Carey has it in his translation —

"Were questioning what the Almighty had done for them, when yet He filled their houses with good."

Yet these "sons of men" were strong and mighty, able and inventive; and their daughters were so fair that their beauty beguiled the sons of God, and drew them from their separateness from the sinful world. Ere Adam died, Tubal Cain, Cain's descendant, had been working for centuries in brass and iron, and instructing other artificers to fashion tools, and doubtless weapons; the song of Lamech, Gen. iv. 23, is supposed to be a chant of triumph over the possession of a sword; and Jubal of the same race and era had sought out the witcheries of music, and he was already the father of all who "handled the harp and the organ."

Cain had gone out with his family from the presence of the Lord (possibly the cherubic presence at the gate of Eden).

“At the east of the garden of Eden were cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.” (Gen. iii. 24.)

All the hearts and lives of Cain’s posterity were given, we may suppose, to the advance of arts and manufactures, and of their *own* glory. There were giants in those days, and with their long life and vast strength it is fearful to think of their rate of progress away from God. Cain himself had built the first “fenced city,” and Lamech, Cain’s great, great, great grandson, was the first man who took two wives.

Have we ever thought men did not know or do much in those early days? Why, if they learn to do so much *now* in seventy or eighty years, what must they have done in seven hundred? A man makes a discovery or an improvement *now*, and he dies before he can perceive its full results. All he can do to hand it down, is to write about it; but in those days a man could build thought upon thought, experiment upon experiment, for hundreds of years, and he could shew hundreds of other people who had taste for the same things all that he had performed. Many people dispute this length of patriarchal life, which, judging by man’s present constitution, they say, would be in itself a continual miracle, and they add, “perhaps years mean *months*.”

How can that be?

“Seth lived 105 years, and begat Enos”; and if it was read 105 *months*, then he was a father before he was nine years old! No; we must consider that the great age of the first patriarchs was in their

time appointed of God. The past in this case cannot be measured by the *present*. There is no earthly historian but Moses of the ages before the Flood; and he was inspired of God. God says to Joshua "As I was with Moses; so I will be with thee," (Josh i. 5); and David witnesses, "The Lord made known his ways unto Moses." No other human writing has remained from that age to distract our faith. God asked for faith in HIMSELF from Enoch, from Noah, and from Abraham; and He asks it from *us* now: "Without faith it is impossible to please God."

Alas! our Lord Jesus Himself said, "When the Son of man cometh shall he find faith on the earth?" and this coming must have been His coming *again*, for it relates to the avenging of His own elect. (Luke xviii. 8.) So that when we see infidelity and superstition growing up like rank weeds higher and higher around us, as they are doing at present, it is more than ever important for us to examine what we do believe about the Book of God, and to notice how very early in its pages we are led to think of the judgments coming in our latter days on ungodly sinners for all their "hard speeches" concerning the God they do not know.

Faith in God often involves not seeing how a thing can be, and yet believing that it *was*, because God says it.

Belief in HIMSELF was evidently the first "righteousness" that God demanded from man, for it would be the root of all obedience. If he did not believe God he would not obey Him; and we may well suppose that Adam's simple confidence in his Creator was *entire* as that of the little child in its father and its mother to this day, before its sinful nature or sad experience makes it disbelieve them.

beginning, or ever the earth was. When he prepared the heavens, I was there.....when he established the clouds above.....when he appointed the foundations of the earth: then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men."

Here is Divine history, given independently of Moses, concerning the days of Adam and his *holy* descendants; Moses verifies it in the 90th Psalm, which is ascribed to him:—

"Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God."

Adam had been made, we must remember, in the image of God. What a glorious likeness! We are told in Col. i. 15, that the image of the invisible God is His dear Son, "the firstborn of every creature, who is before all things." Adam, fallen from the perfect likeness of Jehovah, must yet have retained much of the God-like in his human character; he was not left without God and without hope in the world; and though the image was defaced, he must surely have been a preacher of righteousness like Noah—of the righteousness of believing in God.

Adam is not mentioned in Genesis, and Noah is not mentioned, after the fall of each under the dominion of sin; but Adam must have had a law given him; and a race sprang from him after his wicked Cain and his murdered Abel, who sought to live by the law. Noah is spoken of as a just man. To be just is to live by a law; and the violence and corruption which speedily overspread the earth was the constant breaking of that law: man set up his own will against God's will.

The Destroyer had entered Paradise, and taught

men to question the truth and justice of God, as they do to this day.

Yet Adam had some children who walked with God, while others walked with the devil. Enoch followed Abel ere long into the unveiled presence of Jehovah through faith in the blood, being the first example of "one taken and another left."

The Divine Word had given these two, though born in sin, "power to become the sons of God." Adam had eaten of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and how he must have mourned when he saw that the words and deeds of most of his children were only evil, and that continually,—and mark how the short, sad tale goes on.

"God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and it grieved him at his heart that he had made man, and the Lord said, I will destroy both man and beast, for it repenteth me that I have made them."

Before this resolve was executed, God must have called to Himself every soul that served and loved Him. The rest, as our Saviour while upon earth told His disciples, (Matt. xvii. 25), went on eating and drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage; and it was not holy marriage like that in Eden. "They took them wives of all which they chose," till the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the Flood came and destroyed them all.

If Methuselah, Enoch's son in Seth's holy line, loved the Lord as he surely did, he was the last who loved and trusted God besides Noah and his family. He doubtless died a natural death, having lived longer than any man before him, and then the prophecy uttered in his name, "Methuselah," was fulfilled. "He dies, and it is sent." Noah alone, with his sons and their wives for his sake, "found grace in the eyes of the Lord." By express Divine



ARMENIA, MESOPOTAMIA, PALESTINE, AND ARABIA.

command He prepared an ark for the saving of his house. St. Paul fills up his history for us. (Heb. xi. 7.)

“By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.”

Dear friends, we can give you in this first number of our “LEAVES,” no picture of the mountains, or the cities, or the temples of that old world; nothing but Mount Ararat—the bridge between the old world and the new,*—and a MAP of its position.

Let us look back at its picture, and think how long that peak must have battled with the stormy surges, and seen the last sun of the old world sink beneath those billows mountain-high; till at last itself also was blotted from the landscape. That loftiest peak, too, must have first emerged from the waters as they went down. If you could attain its summit, you might now look forth on *four* broad seas—the BLACK SEA, the CASPIAN SEA, the MEDITERRANEAN SEA, and the PERSIAN GULF. Moses makes no mention of these in his narrative, but he does of the Rivers TIGRIS and EUPHRATES, which you will find also marked here. *They* are said to have had their source in EDEN, therefore the place of the Garden of Paradise cannot have been far distant.

Our picture represents a plain, the plain of the Araxes, which is itself 3000 feet above the level of the sea. From this plain the summits of the ARMENIAN highlands rise 7000 feet higher, bearing on their mighty shoulders the greater and lesser Ararat, the greater cone being 7000 feet higher still.

* “And the ark rested upon the mountains of Ararat.”—Gen. viii. 4.

If you stood in the outskirts of the city of Nakhchevan (meaning *place of descent*), of which some buildings are seen in the picture, you could look across that wide low valley of the Araxes and see Mount Ararat from base to summit at the distance of 100 miles. If you beheld it at early dawn, rising 14,000 feet from the plain, the ice-clad cone would be silvered with the light of day, while the purple of night yet enfolded it below. The sun's first rays begin to crown it with gold, and then spread downwards towards its foundations.

We are not told that the ark of Noah rested on the steepest summit of Ararat, and to ascend this was believed by the Armenians who dwell around it to be supernaturally forbidden till, in 1829, Professor Parrot, a German, under Russian auspices, after two failures, at last gained a footing on the brow of eternal ice, unbroken by rock or stone; he found it a slightly convex surface, about 200 paces in circuit, declining steeply on all sides. The ark could not certainly have rested there.

The Professor looked down upon the lesser Ararat 4000 feet lower, whose head, as viewed from this higher point, did not appear like a cone, but like the top of a square pyramid with larger and smaller forms rising up at the edges and in the middle, so that it looked somewhat like a Druidical circle with its central object; and this is a curious fact when compared with the notion which many entertain, that the ark did in fact rest on the lesser Ararat; as it is not easy to see how its inmates, including heavy cattle, could possibly have descended from the highest cone.

Nothing is said about the shape of the ark in Scripture, but its size is given, "300 cubits in length, 50 in breadth, and 30 in height." The

cubit is supposed to be the measure from a man's elbow to the tip of his forefinger; or about 21 inches. If so, Noah's ark would be 525 feet long, 87 feet broad, and 52 feet high. This is *very much* larger than the largest British man-of-war. SOLOMON'S TEMPLE in 1 Kings vi. 2, was the same height as the ARK, but only one fifth of the length, and less than one half the width.

This huge structure was only intended *to float* on the water, and had neither mast, sail, nor rudder. It was an enormous floating house, "kept safe by the power of God"; built so that it should ride steadily, and afford ample room for stowage. It was divided into a number of "nests," or small compartments, arranged in three tiers, one above another, "lower, second, and third stories"; and had, it has been supposed, a line of narrow skylights running its whole length at the top, for which some transparent substance must have been used to prevent the entrance of the rain. The "window" Noah opened, may have been a small compartment of the large one.

The long-suffering of God had waited 120 years while the ark was preparing, (1 Peter iii. 20), and then Noah and his family, with all the animals who were to be saved, in their various allotted numbers, entered by the door, which was placed in the side of the ark—a process which occupied seven days—and "God shut them in," and the rest of the human race were left to perish in their unbelief; they "knew not till the flood came and took them all away."

Our Saviour, when upon earth, declares this; and the Apostles Paul and Peter witness to it. The Lord God doeth as He will among the armies of heaven and the inhabitants of the earth." The

architects of that old world, its builders of cities, its shepherds and owners of vast flocks and herds, its mighty masters of music and song, and its artificers in metals, its kings and princes and its working people—men, women, and children—all sank in the waters. Their death-struggles, and their cries of despair, are not described; nor the frantic partings, not even NOAH'S grief at the judgment which he and his alone escaped. The 7th chapter of Genesis closes only with the announcement of the entire extinction of all animal life, in the world before the Flood.

“And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered. Fifteen cubits upwards did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered. And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: all in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died. And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark. And the waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days.”

Thus ends the story of the *first seven chapters of our Bible*.

And there stand out in this story several events which are different to those to which we are accustomed in the “latter days” in which *we* live.

There is the creation of Adam and Eve as full and perfect beings who knew no infancy.

There is the translation of Enoch from earth to heaven, who knew no death.

There is the long life of the patriarchal races and the years of the world's age to be counted by their means: and the fact that *seven* lives of people who

may have seen and talked with each other, extended from Adam to Moses, 2520 years.

There is a positive and actual intercourse carried on between heaven and earth. "God spake," and man replied, and yet men in general did not believe in God; the gifts of their long life and gigantic strength had only been used by them for purposes of violence and corruption; there was a vast *one-ness* amongst them in that day, like the union we desire so much in modern days, but it was a *one-ness against God*. They bade Him depart from them, and He said, "My spirit shall no longer strive with man." After ages of mercy and forbearance He swept them to destruction—and swept away too the Garden of Eden, so utterly, that its particular site should not be remembered. *At its gate had stood the unearthly Cherubim*, and those signs of His Presence, when the earth rose again from the waters appear to have been *withdrawn*. Noah must have *heard* all particulars of what he had not *seen* from his grandfather, Methuselah, with whom he lived 600 years, and Shem, the great-grandson of the family, would have listened to the narrations which Methuselah could have had direct from Adam, and would have laid them up in *his* memory for the information of those who should live 500 years after the Flood.

And what does the Apostle Peter tell us in reference to these Times before the Flood, which some think such an old world tale that it can be of no consequence for us to hear it?

He mentions it 2400 years after it happened, and after the death of Jesus on the Cross and His ascension to heaven, leaving a promise to His disciples

that He would come again. He mentions it to arrest the attention of scoffers, who said—

“Where is the promise of His coming?”

So Peter answers them by reference to Noah’s flood, “whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished.”

What does he say, so long afterwards?

“But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.”

And what is the Apostle’s inference?

“Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?” and “Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.” (2 Peter iii. 11, 14.)


To be blameless we must be clothed in the robe of Christ’s righteousness, and not our own.

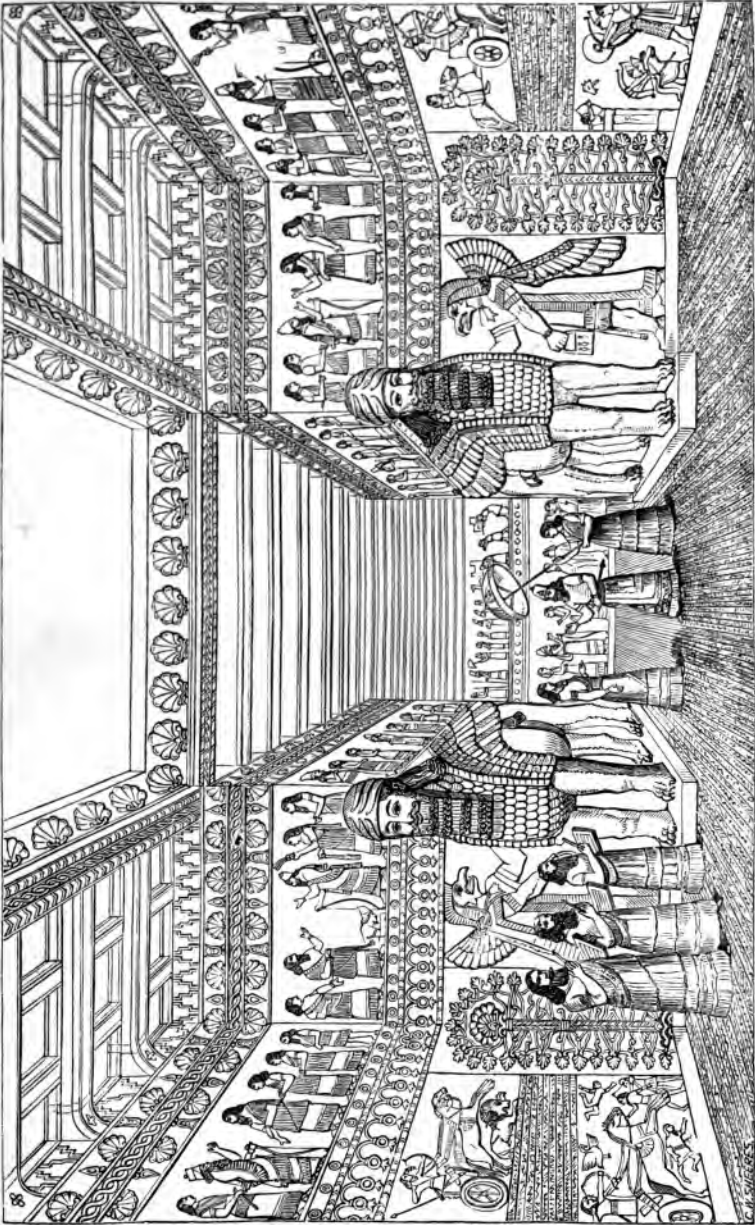
We should notice St. Peter’s last injunction to the Christians of his day—

“Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know *these things* before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness. But grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him *be* glory both now and for ever. Amen.” (2 Peter iii. 17, 18.)

N.B.—Our *Second* Number of the LEAVES FROM THE BOOK AND ITS STORY, will tell you of the *Second* Age before the Bible—The Space between the Flood and Abraham.

Our *Third* Number—Of the Space between Abraham and Moses.





THE TOMB OF ANKHESNEPHEW, 18TH DYNASTY, THEBES.

THE TIMES BEFORE OUR BIBLE WAS WRITTEN.

No. II.

THE story of the Times between the Flood and Abram's call by God, to be "the Father of a great Nation," begins with the 8th chapter of Genesis, and ends at the 5th verse of the 12th chapter.

Our time-table in LEAVES No. I. will shew you that Abram was born 352 years after the Deluge, and he was called of God out of Haran when he was seventy-five years old. 352 and seventy-five make 427 years—a space of time almost equal to the 430 years which followed—from Abram's call to the deliverance of his children from their bondage in Egypt, by the hand of Moses. Paul tells us of *that* 430 years in his Epistle to the Galatians, iii. 17.

"The law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot make the promise (to Abraham and his seed) of none effect."

We shall always give you in these LEAVES the passages from the Gospels and Epistles in the New Testament, which are the surest explanation of Old Testament history, for they are not the words of Matthew, or Luke, Peter, Paul, or John, merely; they are the utterance of the Holy Ghost Himself, through those inspired men, on the subjects which we wish to understand.

Now we will enquire what were the chief events of the first-named 427 years.

The Covenant of God with Noah.

The rapid re-peopling of the earth. .

The founding of the Tower of Babel, and the Confusion of tongues.

The rise of the Chaldean and Egyptian empires.

The beginning of Idolatry.

The coming forth of Terah, Abram's father, from "Ur of the Chaldees," to go into the land of Canaan.

The new chapter of human history opens with the remarkable words "And God remembered NOAH," and bade him go forth from the ark; and ere its close we find that NOAH remembered God, and builded an altar (the first that is mentioned in Scripture) and offered burnt offerings upon it, from which it is said the Lord "smelled a sweet savour, or a savour of rest"—perhaps of rest from His "strange work" of judgment—and declared that He would not again smite anymore everything living as He had done.

The smelling of a sweet savour in Noah's sacrifice—had also respect to his faith in Christ. Nothing else could have pleased God—who condescends at this period to make a fresh Covenant with men, of free and eternal promise; and says—

"I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth." (Gen. ix. 13.)

The bright and beautiful rainbow is a sign in heaven which surely still binds *us* and the men of Noah's age together, reminding us what God *can do* to destroy His enemies, and what He *will not* again do by His own promise. May not the judgment of the Deluge itself have arisen from the longing of Jehovah to redeem the world from its rule of iniquity, and restore to it a race to whom He might *anew* reveal Himself in love and mercy? "The history of the Christ of God does not begin with His birth in Bethlehem," says a Christian Jew.

“His goings forth are from of old; and the Gospel histories of Him are like a high table-land, to which we cannot be spared the *ascent*, from Genesis to Malachi;” for was He not “the LORD GOD of Shem,” of whom Noah spoke after he came forth from the ark; who repeated the blessing of Adam and Eve to Noah and his household, “Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth?” and who gave a-fresh to man, dominion over the animal creation, fish, flesh, and fowl; and now ordained *meat* for his own sustenance as well as every herb and fruit permitted to him in the former world?

Again it is declared that God made man in His own image, and that therefore His blood must not be shed except by the hand of justice, which marks the first institution of something like the magistrate’s office. Thus a law was given with emphasis against murder, and against eating blood for food; the latter injunction being observed by the posterity of children of Israel at the present day.

As the waters had gradually receded, how those preserved in the ark must have gazed downwards from their mountain height to retrace, if possible, any features of the former seats of habitation. The Garden of Eden had been situated in the neighbourhood of four rivers, and two of these are recognized by their old names after the Flood,—the Euphrates and the Tigris. You will find them on the map in Tract No. I. The highlands of Armenia, which encircle Mount Ararat, were well adapted to be the central spot whence the new race of men should pour forth on all sides of the world. Around the Four Seas they made their earliest settlements, and these became the high roads of trade and travel; but we do not hear anything of Noah’s own migration.

but to this nursery of the primeval kingdoms, the land of Shinar, it is certain that there came also Nimrod, the grandson of Ham.

“He began to be a mighty one in the earth. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.”

Nimrod is remembered to this day, in that very place, as among the foremost men of the old world, “a mighty hunter”; in him God’s promise seems fulfilled:—

“And the fear of you, and the dread of you, shall be upon every beast of the earth.”

He is probably the Ninus of whom we read in profane history as the founder of Nineveh. “A mighty hunter” was needed, as the destruction of lions in this reedy and marshy district would seem to have been important, before its occupation by man. Chaldea was a country entirely destitute of stone, and even its wood was scarce and of bad quality, being only that of palm trees, which fringed the rivers; but its early colonists contrived with their *excellent clay*, to raise vast structures which must have provoked comparison with the pyramids of Egypt. “They said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar.”

The children of Ham, from Cush, his noblest son, who peopled Abyssinia, to Canaan his most degraded descendant, who gave his name to that country, afterwards called Palestine, had all surely heard of the *curse* of Noah, that servitude should be the lot of the Hamites; and also of the corresponding blessing on Shem and Japheth. To all the sons was foretold a vast and speedy increase of their race, so that the earth might be replenished with population. They seem to have had a fear of being

scattered abroad on the face of the earth ; and as the name of Nimrod signifies, "we will rebel," it appears they resolved to resist *both* prophecies, to which end, perhaps, in the time of Peleg, the son of Eber, "in whose days the earth was divided," those who settled in Chaldea designed the tower of Babel, "whose top, they said, may reach unto heaven ; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth."

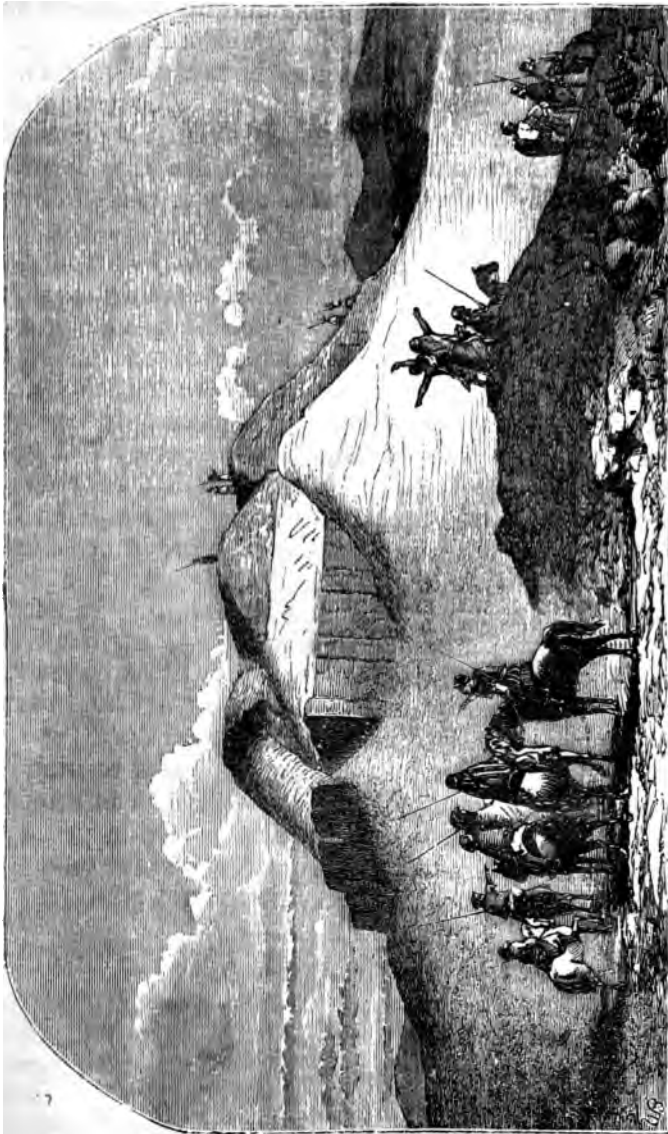
The Hebrew or Shemite name of "Babel" means "confusion," but in the Hamite language Babel meant "gate of God." The Chaldeans, early and late, have always been famous for their study of the heavenly bodies, shining so brightly over their vast plains in the clear still sky. And one purpose they had in building this tower may have been to observe the stars, but its chief end was, *their own glory*, and the resistance of the curse, and nevertheless "it is written"

"The LORD did there confound the language of all the earth, and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad, upon the face of all the earth,"

by an interference from heaven, as marked in its measure as the FLOOD had been a hundred years or more before.

The Scripture says, that the people built a city *and* a tower, and the Birs Nimrud, at Borsip-pa, is most often thought to represent the place of the Tower, which was by no means necessarily *within* the city of Babylon.

The Tower is believed to have been rebuilt by Nebuchadnezzar in seven stages, more than 1600 years afterwards. He called it "The Temple of the Seven Spheres." It was a sort of pyramid, whose main top is yet 150 feet high, and whose base, still buried in sand and rubbish, measures a circle of 2000 feet.



THE TEMPLE OF MUGGER OR UR.

But one thing is certain, that ancient remains of buildings in those lands exactly verify the descriptions of the Bible. Their temples were erected on solid masses of brickwork, ascended by steps faced with marble, and consisted of a house or chamber highly ornamented, containing an image or shrine.

The inner mass of bricks was often composed of the sun-dried squares of clay which they use in Persia even to this day (adding a new chamber to their houses within a week, as the arrival of a guest may require it). This sun-dried mass was faced with kiln dried bricks of small size "burned thoroughly" and laid in bitumen. The name "Mugeyer" means "mother of bitumen." The remains of the temple of Mugeyer we present to you on the opposite page, whose *foundations* are considered to have been laid in Chaldea even before the time of Abraham, in the district inhabited by his father, Terah, "UR of the CHALDEES." See Gen. xi. 31.

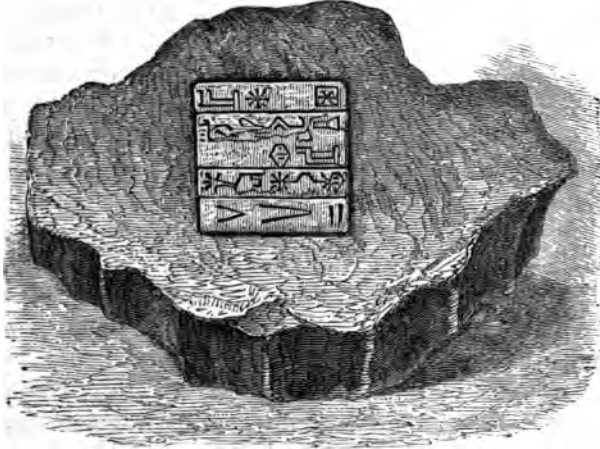
In 1854, while excavating this most ancient temple, four cylinders were found inserted at each corner of the upper story—in a niche formed by the omission of a brick. The writing on them tells that this was the Great Temple of the Moon, at Hur, repaired by Nabonidus, the father of Belshazzar, (in an age not far distant from that in which Nebuchadnezzar repaired the Birs Nimrud).



CYLINDER OF NABONIDUS, B.C. 555.

The square bricks of the ancient *foundation*, however, are stamped with certain characters, which Sir Henry Rawlinson reads as URUKH, the first known monarch after Nimrod, and the first of whom any relics have been obtained. His bricks are of coarse and rude make, and often ill-fitted together. His substitute for lime mortar is moist mud or bitumen.

The edges of the specimen brick here given have been broken.



ONE OF URUKH'S BRICKS.

The language of this brick is Hamitic, and it is deciphered as follows:—

“THE SIGNET OF ORCHAMUS OR URUKH, THE PIOUS CHIEF, KING OF UR.”

It is as a builder of gigantic works that URUKH is known to us. The basements of his temples are of an enormous size. It is calculated that thirty millions of square bricks have been used in one of them, and it is evident, from the size and number of this king's works, that he had the command of a large amount of human labour. His buildings are carefully placed with their corners pointing North, South, East, and West, and are dedicated to the Sun or Moon, or to Nimrod. Men had begun by that time to worship the heavenly bodies. The learned who believe they read the Hamitic characters place the reign of Uruk at about 2093 before Christ, or 255 years after the flood. This would be in the time of Terah, Abraham's father.

The great hunter Nimrod, and the great builder Uruk, perhaps the Arioeh of the Bible, and the great conqueror Chedorlaomer (see Gen. xiv. 1) are the great men you must remember of the first Hamite kingdom. In Uruk's bricks, he also calls himself "king of Accad." (See Genesis x. 10.) The simple statement of the Bible that Nimrod, the grandson of Ham, had the beginning of his kingdom in Babel, is now confirmed by these clay proofs long reserved in the library of the earth for the people of this century to read, who have such peculiar need to hold fast their faith in the inspiration and *accuracy* of the Hebrew Scriptures.

If you ask what is the use of writing about old temples and bricks to Bible-women and Working men, we answer, such relics concern them quite as much as the learned, for this reason, they can go and see these old bricks and remains in the British Museum, and they will fix their attention on a time which we want them to realize in Bible history, the time of the beginning of the first recorded idolatries.

Terah is mentioned as an idolator, in the Book of Joshua (xxiv. 2), where Joshua reminds Israel.—

"Thus saith the Lord God, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood (the Euphrates) in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and they served other gods."

Let us examine what other gods they served. They must have been the gods of Chaldea. The old stamped bricks of Uruk, and the foundation of his temples lately traced, tell of the solid grandeur of Hamitic intentions. The early history of the chief Hamite nations, shews great power to organize wide kingdoms, to acquire worldly greatness, and to check the inroads of wandering tribes. Among the sons of Ham are found the earliest idolators after the Flood; and whether in Egypt or in Chaldea we

find similar ideas. Idolatry was the departure of man from God, and its sources were threefold.

I. Men forgot that their Creator was greater than the works of His hands, so they worshipped first the Heavenly Bodies; from which sin of his early time, Job says, *he had been kept*. See Job xxxi. 26—28:—

“If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness;

“And my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand. . . . I should have denied the God that is above.”

II. They made gods of their fathers, grandfathers, and early kings; and, in Egypt, the children of Ham made offerings to the sun, and named their kings after him: Pharoah from Phra, the sun.

The worship of Noah was, both in EGYPT and in CHALDEA, strangely united with the worship of the sun. Osiris, the Egyptian sun-god, was a deification of Noah, and he entered into the ark which was symbolized by the crescent moon. Noah was



HOA, OR NOAH.

worshipped at “populous No,” or Thebes, named from Theba, the ark; in Chaldea he was worshipped at “Erech,” or “the place of the ark,” as “Anu,” or “Ana,” or “Oannes,” or “Hoa.” His most important titles are those which make him “the intelligent fish,” the teacher of mankind, one of his emblems is the wedge, or *arrowhead*. Another is a *serpent*, a symbol of superhuman knowledge. The name of Hoa appears on a very ancient stone tablet brought from Mugeyer or Ur. He is represented as a god coming up out of the sea; and as one of the first of the gods, who brought the knowledge of

astronomy and letters to the settlers on the Euphrates and the Tigris.

The men of the first empire of Chaldea, which lasted till the time of Israel's exodus from Egypt, seem to have known how to engrave on stone. A famous traveller, Sir R. Ker Porter, has an engraving in his book of a signet cylinder, of king Uruk's; he once had the signet itself, but lost it. It had four figures clearly cut upon it; a patriarchal father seated on a chair, with the crescent moon over his head; a bridegroom apparently presents to him his bride and her attendant. The figures are as well cut as those of a much later date, and are dressed in flounced and fringed garments delicately striped, and indicating an advanced state of the arts of dress. Think of this as between two and three hundred years after the Deluge! Do you know of the "goodly Babylonish garment" which found its way into Palestine, and made Achan covet its rare beauty (see Josh. vii. 21)? it cost him his life to possess this and other forbidden treasures.

Now, let us look back at the picture of an Assyrian temple palace, which forms our frontispiece. There you see people in striped and flounced dresses—a king with a royal parasol held over him, which is the sign of sovereignty in the East; on the wall is sculptured a king in his war-chariot, like Nimrod hunting the lion; kings also with their great bow in the hand, receiving the homage of captives;—but what else do you see besides these figures of human beings?

Some creatures that are *not* human, with a man's face, and vast stony wings, and a lion's body and feet; also some figures with eagles' faces, and vast wings, and a man's body; and an object which is something like a Tree, and also like a gate.

What can we suppose these to be but memories carried away from Ararat, of the *Cherubim* at the gate of Eden, guarding the "Tree of Life."

III. Here was a third source of idolatry, besides the worship of the heavenly bodies, and the worship of ancestors, fathers, and grandfathers; the making graven images of the supposed forms of the cherubim mentioned in the 3rd chapter of Genesis.

But we now find our attention transferred from CHALDEA to NINEVEH, and must look back to Genesis x. 11.—

"Out of that land (of Shinar) went forth Asshur, and builded Nineveh."

We find no Asshur among Ham's posterity, and yet this interruption occurs in the line of his descendants. It may have been Asshur, the uncle of Nimrod; for the sons of Shem were all his uncles; or, it may be as the Margin reads: "Out of that land he (Nimrod) went forth into Asshur (Assyria) and builded Nineveh." Assyria is the *upper* portion of the Mesopotamian valley, and Chaldea the *lower*, which had Babel for its capital. Both countries compose the tract between the Tigris and Euphrates, or Mesopotamia, which means "the between river country." The Assyrians are always believed to be a Semitic race, not the chosen seed, but still Shem's seed. The men of Assyria grew into great warriors. Sometimes the Chaldeans prevailed, sometimes the Assyrians. At that early time they shared in the same religious ideas, and these old stones from Assyria now bring us proof that the sons of Shem, and Ham also, confided to their children the relics of patriarchal truth, by whose sinful hearts and hands it was soon corrupted and obscured.

There will be much more to say about these images when we arrive at a certain point in the

history of the nation of Israel; but in the presence of these heathen symbols of a most ancient idolatry, it is impossible for a thoughtful observer to avoid asking one question, WHY HAVE THESE BEEN BURIED OUT OF SIGHT IN THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD FOR TWICE TWELVE HUNDRED YEARS, AND WHY ARE THEY RESTORED AT THE END OF SUCH A PERIOD? for it is scarcely thirty years ago since Austen Layard, an English traveller, discovered them in the mounds of Nineveh, and sent them home to take a place in the halls of the British Museum.*

Is it not plain, that their importance consists in their being *heathen likenesses* of the Cherubic forms, which God had chosen as attendants on His own appearances to man, and which He willed *forgotten*.

We should have had no clue to the meaning of these mysterious stony forms, but for the allusions and descriptions of the Jewish prophets. Ezekiel, in the first and the tenth chapters of his prophecy, describes living creatures "uniting the form of a man, a lion, and an eagle." He saw them in a vision, "and the glory of the God of Israel was over them above"; and he says, "I knew that they were the cherubim." (Ezek. x. 20.)

We cannot doubt that tradition, long after the Fall, described the Eden cherubim, by which the god of this world reaped a harvest in a variety of idols; as all ancient heathen worship proves.

There was one idea that Jehovah always impressed on the minds of the men that loved and feared Him; that of His own PRESENCE with them. They were to act as in the sight of God. They were to ask counsel of Him; and He answered them; His presence was always with them. It was afterwards

* The Museum is open *free* to all, on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, from 10 o'clock till dusk.

rite of sprinkling the blood of the Passover Lamb on the lintel of the doorway in Egypt. But was not the idea derived from sacrifices, still older than the time of Moses, the sacrifices of Noah and of Abel ? In Assyria the winged priests or Genii, and the winged cherubic beasts, are all the varied multiplication of the same idea. They had all to do with "the Presence," which could not be entered without the offering of blood.

Thus of God's truth men made "a lie." Babel has been *from the beginning* what the Holy Ghost calls her by St. John, in the 17th chapter of the Revelation : "MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."

The story of these ancient times is *repeated* in the solemn words of the Holy Ghost by the mouth of Paul in the 1st chapter of his Epistle to the Romans :—

"Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful ; but became vain in their imaginations and their foolish heart was darkened. . .

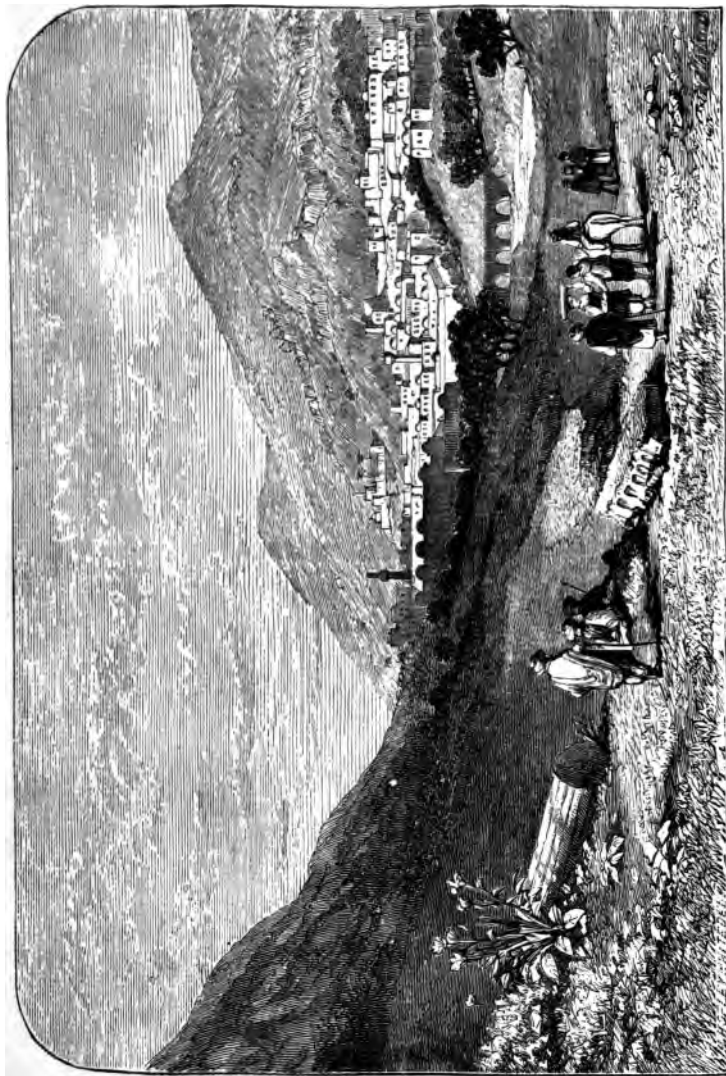
"And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.

"Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness.

"Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen."

These curious STONE pictures have been surely given of God to England for no less a purpose than to draw the attention of those now living to the truth of past histories in HIS WRITTEN WORD. They are God's galleries of illustration to the first chapters of the world's history. The times of which Moses tells us *before the Bible was written*.

Bible-women and Sunday-school teachers should bring working men and women to behold how God fulfils and confirms His Word.



VALE OF NABLUS, OR SCHECHEM.

THE TIMES BEFORE OUR BIBLE WAS WRITTEN.

THE LIFE OF ABRAHAM.

No. III.

THE life of Abraham, "the friend of God," is embraced in thirteen chapters of the book of Genesis, from the 12th to the 24th, inclusive of the 7 last verses of the 11th chapter, and the first 10 verses of the 25th.

Abraham was at first called "Abram," and the name of "Abram" means, "exalted father." As he is mentioned first in Terah's family, one would think that Abram was the eldest son—but that is *not* the case. Shem had been named before Japheth, and Abram is named before his brothers, on account of dignity. Terah died at the age of 205, when Abram was 75 years old; *therefore*, Abram must have been born when Terah was 130, because 130 and 75 make 205. Yet as Terah had a son when he was 70 (Gen. xi. 26), this son was most probably Haran—who died before his father left Ur of the Chaldees, and whose daughter, Milcah, became the wife of her later born uncle, Nahor. Abram's wife, Sarai, is by some supposed to be Iscah, but from Gen. xx. 12, she would appear to be the daughter of Terah by another wife, and therefore Abram's half-sister.

Abram was born 60 years after Haran, and perhaps Nahor between the two. The marriages

of near relatives appear at that period to have been permitted by God—though afterwards strictly regulated; while marriages with the sons or daughters of idolators seemed especially to have caused “grief of mind” in the patriarchal families, (Gen. xxvi. 35), who must have remembered the evil result of such alliance between the “sons of God,” and the “daughters of men” in a former day.

Haran was probably a beloved son, and his name dear to his family, for it is given to the place where Terah first settled after leaving Ur.

In New Testament times,—a man, “full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, called Stephen, gifted with miraculous powers, and speaking with irresistible wisdom (Acts vi. 10), and whose face was “like the face of an angel,” tells his countrymen that “the God of glory” (the glory that the sons of God may have seen between the Eden cherubim), appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, *before* he dwelt in Harran. This place Harran, therefore, is *not* in Mesopotamia. Mesopotamia means “the between river country, between the rivers Tigris and Euphrates;” and there *is* a village named Harran, in the north of Mesopotamia, situated east of the Euphrates; but we have, we think, Bible proof that this is not the Haran to which Terah’s household gave their family name.

The Lord *had said* to Abram, “*Get thee out of thy country, and from thy father’s house, and come unto a land that I will shew thee;*” which land is not there named. It is Stephen who tells us that this call came to him *in Mesopotamia*. Another passage or two helps us to ascertain whither he first went. It is of importance to fix on the *right* Haran, because one branch

of the family, Nahor and his descendants, remained there when Abram had gone forth again, and there is a district which *may*, it is thought, have derived its name from Nahor; it is first mentioned in the Hebrew Bible as "Aram-Nahar-aim" (Gen. xxiv. 10), which word ought not to have been translated by the Greek word, Mesopotamia, because this has alike confused the history, not only of Abraham, but that of Isaac and Jacob. Aram-Nahar-aim means "*high land between rivers*;" and these rivers, Dr. Beke, who has recently explored the district, considers for many reasons likely to have been the Scriptural Abana and Pharpar (or the Barada and Awaj), "rivers of Damascus."

We perceive that Abram *must* have lived *long* in Haran, and probably near Damascus, Josephus, the great historian of the Jews, repeats the tradition that he was *king* of Damascus. When he and Lot departed thence into Canaan, it was with "all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran (Gen. xii. 5), and when Lot two or three years after is taken prisoner by Chaldean and Persian kings, Abram arms his 318 trained servants "born in his house," and pursues the plunderers to Dan. After that, when in Gen. xv. God says to Abram, "I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward," the patriarch answers, "Lord God, to me thou hast given no seed, and lo, one born in mine house is mine heir." The previous verse explains that this is "the steward of his house, Eliezer of Damascus," who must have been from twenty to twenty-five years old, to have been placed in such a post of trust, and born at Damascus, which seems to verify the report of Josephus, and also implies that Terah left Chaldea a long while before his death.

tion of Abram and Lot, and their large households, from Haran to Sichem, and then to Bethel, on the other side of Jordan. "Unto Canaan they came, passing through the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh." The city of Sichem, perhaps, was not then in existence, but the oaks of Moreh were there, if the town as yet was not. In modern times Sichem is called Nablus, and has been visited by our Prince of Wales.

The word Moreh means "appearance of Jehovah;" and here, it is written, "the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said to him, To thy seed will I give this land;" and this although the Canaanite was yet in the land. (See Gen. xii. 6, 7.)

Abram builds an altar (of course for sacrifice), in remembrance of this Divine Appearance; and he also builds one at his next resting-place, Bethel, "calling upon the name of the Lord." To this altar he returns, after a journey into Egypt, and again he is enjoined to explore the country; next time he pitches his tents on the plains of Mamre or in Hebron; and once more he builds an altar. We are now made acquainted with Abram as indeed "an exalted father," lifted up into fellowship with Jehovah, whom it pleases in this man to elect a RACE, that shall witness for His name in the world. Abraham was to become "THE FRIEND OF GOD." The Arabs still know him by that name, "El-khalil-Allah;" the apostle James so calls him (James ii. 23). We find it written in Isaiah xli. 8; "But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend"; and Jehoshaphat appeals to God (2 Chron. xx. 7), "Thou gavest this land to the seed of Abraham, thy friend for ever."

- It is not for us to look to any quality in the

human creature that called forth this divine love; but what God had designed to be, in the manifestation of Himself to Adam in his innocent estate, it is evident He now of His own free grace, makes Himself to Abraham.

Tempted to doubt by the serpent,—Eve, and then Adam, had *not* believed God's Word to them, and had ventured to disobey His one Divine warning; but it is written (Gen. xv. 6), "Abram believed in the Lord, and He counted it unto him for righteousness." He had the simple faith of a little child in what God had said and done, and declared He meant to do. He distinguished "the God of glory" from all the inventions and devices of Chaldean imagination. He worshipped neither Noah nor Nimrod, and amid all the seductions and growing luxuries of his Hamitic neighbours, he gave his heart to "the most High God." He "reposed as a child in the strength of God (such is considered to be the force of the original Hebrew); and thus he became (Rom. iv. 11) "the father of all them that believe."

It is not told us how long before his 75th year Abram had actually obeyed God's command to come up out of Mesopotamia. He was to leave his kindred and his father's house—and he did leave his brother Nahor, and probably other relatives. But the migration is described as the father's, according to patriarchal custom; and no further revealing of God's will comes to the son till after the father's death. Then Abram sees a further separation commanded. "He departed as the Lord had spoken to him" from the Syrians, as before from the Assyrians; and sets forward with Lot for Canaan itself, the land beyond the Jordan,

and south of Syria, bordering on the Mediterranean Sea.

The promises of God to Abram, which *were seven times repeated*, extend over a period of certainly 50, and perhaps 75 years of his life, reckoning from the departure into Haran to the offering of Isaac. If, as Josephus says, the age of Isaac was about 25 at the time of the sacrifice, then Abram must have been 125. If also, as we have supposed, Eliezer of Damascus, Abram's steward, and born in his house, was scarcely less than 25 when Abram speaks of him as probably his only heir—the coming up from Mesopotamia must have preceded Eliezer's birth, and the first call of God must have come to Abram in Mesopotamia, when his own age was about 50.

We should endeavour to obtain a clear idea of the seven forms of the promise made to Abram.

If seven persons are studying the history together, they should be read, one after another, from the following chapters of Genesis.

The first being made in Mesopotamia—

Gen. chap. xii., vers. 1—3; Acts vii. 3.

The second at Sichem—

chap. xii., ver. 7.

The third at Bethel—

chap. xiii., vers. 14—17.

The fourth at Mamre, if not on Gerizim—
in the whole of chap. xv.

The fifth at Mamre—the same as Hebron—
chap. xvii., vers. 1—22.

The sixth at Mamre—

chap. xviii., vers. 17, 18, 19.

The seventh either on Mount Moriah or Mount
Gerizim—

chap. xxii., vers. 15—18.

The first is a personal blessing on Abram himself; but it includes the promise,—

“In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.”

The second is short and specific,—

“To thy seed will I give this land.”

The third makes the seed numberless, like the dust of the earth, and the gift of the land “FOR EVER.”

The fourth reveals the personal heir, and compares the seed in number to the stars. At this time also is foretold their bondage of 400 years, and their future return to their land. And this fourth promise (in chap. xv.) defines the extent of the land—even from the Nile to the Euphrates.

At the time of the fifth promise (in chap. xvii.) Abram is called Abraham—not only “exalted father,” but “father of many nations;” and *the Covenant is established*, concerning both the seed and the land, for ever; circumcision being its seal. Sarai becomes Sarah, or Princess, and is to be a “mother of kings.” The promised heir is to be named Isaac; and the prayer for Ishmael is also heard.

(There are three promises that *he* shall be a great nation, unnumbered for multitude, and shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren. The *three* promises concerning Ishmael are found in Genesis xvi. 10, 12; xvii. 20; xxi. 13—21.)

The sixth promise concerning Abraham is in chap. xviii. 17—19; and here the blessing on *all nations* for his sake is repeated; while God declares His knowledge of Abraham, that He will command his household after him.

The seventh sums up all the previous promises once more, and confirms them with an oath; and God swears by Himself, that as Abraham has not

withheld his only son at the Divine command, but “obeyed the voice of God,” as the stars of heaven, and as the sand on the sea-shore, shall his seed be, possessing the gate of their enemies; and in them all nations shall be blessed. The promise of blessing to all nations is repeated *three* times.

At Sichem Abram receives his title deed to the Land of Canaan. It is a spot that the shifting scenes of many ages have made memorable. Probably as Jacob did afterwards, Abram descended to it from the heights of Gilead with his flocks, through the deep rent of the valley of the Jabbok, and advanced, after fording the Jordan, towards that wide and beautiful plain which has since been described as presenting one sea of golden grain, unbroken by hedge or bound.

The patriarch’s face is set westward, and he leads his flocks and herds to enjoy the abundant rills and watercourses, and rest amid the grateful shade of Moreh’s oaks and olives which lie between the ridges of Gerizim and Ebal.

All travellers naturally press towards the highest point in a landscape; and it is quite as probable that Abram built his altar on the mountain as in the plain. The heathen always “served their gods on the mountains and the hills (Deut. xii. 1—3); and where their altars were destroyed by God’s command, the altars of the Lord of heaven and earth would be erected in their stead.

There were then but two abodes of settled life in Canaan—its oldest city, Arba (Hebron), the “city of the four giants;” the other, the circle of the five cities in the vale of the Jordan—Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboim, and Zoar. The warlike Amorite chiefs, Mamre and his two brothers, were

camped along the mountain tops, and also the giant Rephaim.

The height of Gerizim above the neighbouring hills is so great as to deserve the supremacy which Josephus gives it, "The highest of all the mountains of Samaria." From the smooth sheet of rock on its summit, with the cave beside it, still existent, Abram would embrace a view of the Mediterranean Sea on the west—he might even see the white sails—the snowy heights of Hermon on the north, and on the east the far-off wall of mountains beyond the Jordan, while the lovely expanse of the plain lay stretched as a carpet of many colours beneath his feet.

It is worthy of remark that Gerizim, or its immediate neighbourhood, has been the seat of primitive worship from that hour to this. It has been "a holy place" to Israel, or one so called, for nearly 4000 years.

There are many reasons for supposing that three or four wondrous scenes in Abram's life took place on this mountain. There is no notice in Genesis of the "appearance" of God to man before His appearance to Abram. We have heard already of "the presence of the Lord," "the voice of the Lord," and of many Divine acts and deeds, but not of an "appearance of the Lord," before the appearance at Sichem. The altar and the sacrifice, as we have seen, belonged, in those days, to the "presence," and now it belongs to the "appearance" of God, whether in the assumed form of man or angel. We observe that Abram builds an altar wherever he goes, for the Presence of God goes with him; but we no longer hear of it as marked by the attendance of cherubim, for Jehovah reveals Himself in a less awful form.

There is something very surprising and mysterious in the first meeting of Melchisedek with the favored patriarch, and in the after references to him in the vi. & vii. ch. Hebrews. A "priest of the most high God," and yet apparently a dweller in Canaan, he crosses, for a moment, Abram's path, and is recognised, without question, as a person of higher spiritual rank than him whom he comes forth to bless. He bears titles which the children of Abram in after ages would associate only with their own Messiah—"King of righteousness and Prince of peace" (these St. Paul points out to us); and he brings forth bread and wine, which recall to the mind of Christians the elements now used in the Lord's Supper.

We hear no more of Melchisedek in the Scriptures till after 800 years. David speaks of him in a Psalm (cx. 4) as a prophetic type of his coming Lord—and 1200 years after that, the Hebrew Christians are taught to look to Melchisedek (Heb. vi. vii.) as a proof that it was the consistent purpose of God to abolish the Levitical priesthood.

It cannot be certainly settled who Melchisedek was; for the Apostle does not inform us. The Jewish traditions pronounce that he was the patriarch Shem, who survived the Deluge 500 years; and this meeting might have happened seventy years before his death. He was the natural lord of Canaan, in which Ham's children were only intruders, and was best entitled, by the dignity of age, to convey his right to Abram.

Shem lived on, beyond the marriage of Isaac, and to within twenty-seven years of Abram's death. He must have seen Arphaxad, Salah, Peleg, Reu, Serug, Nahor, and Terah, with their generations, die out; and must have seemed to them indeed to have neither "beginning of days" (in their dispensation)

“nor end of life.” At the same time, the words in Hebrews vii. 3, “without father, without mother, without pedigree,” cannot apply to Shem; therefore the question must be left undecided.

There are good authorities for the modern opinion that the meeting with the “King of Salem” (Gen. xiv. 18) occurred on Gerizim, and that to Melchisedek, as the royal guardian and master of the most ancient and conspicuous sanctuary of Palestine, Abraham paid the tenth of his lately acquired spoils. There is a village called Salem, very near to Gerizim, expressly mentioned in the history of Jacob (Gen. xxxiii. 18), and which re-appears in the New Testament, in the history of the Baptist. (John iii. 23.)

The great Jeru-salem only became a place of importance in Jewish history in the time of David; and there is no hint in Scripture that marks any sacredness attached to that place (which in early times was called Jebus) until the vision of David. (1 Chron. xxi. 16.)

Shechem, on the other hand, was for 400 years selected as the metropolis of the country; and Moses definitely directs that on Gerizim and Ebal, the law shall be read to the people (Deut. xi. 29, 30); which brings us to the *third* scene in Abram’s life, most probably occurring on Mount Gerizim; because it was said to him of his seed, “In the fourth generation they shall come hither again;” and hither by the order of Moses they came.

It seems to be immediately after the slaughter of the kings, and Abram’s noble refusal to be enriched by the transaction, that God in vision says to him,—

“Fear not Abram, I am thy shield and thine exceeding great reward.” Gen. iv.

On this occasion special sacrifice is enjoined and

alludes, when He says, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, he saw it and was glad."

It must have been the spiritual sight of the Jehovah of the Old Testament, who is the Christ of the New, that was given to Abram with the covenant on Gerizim, which must have rendered possible to his faith, the after sacrifice of Isaac.

Between the vision and the "coming again of the people to Gerizim, intervened, as we know, the birth of Ishmael and of Isaac, and the offering up of Isaac himself for sacrifice, probably about forty years after the time of the vision. It is on the tradition and authority of Josephus, rather than on any statement of the Scriptures, that the scene of Isaac's offering has been transferred, in popular belief, to Mount Moriah, one of the hills of Jerusalem. Yet when the destroying angel stayed his hand at the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite (2 Sam. xxiv. 16) there is no allusion made to any previous act of the Lord's mercy shown in that locality; and neither at the building or at the dedication of Solomon's Temple on the same spot, when the glory of the Lord filled the house, are we ever reminded that He had already sanctified it by any previous appearance to Abraham or salvation to Isaac; the narrative merely goes back to the lesser event of staying the plague at the threshing-floor of Araunah.

The reference in Amos vii. 9, confirms the idea that these hills of Samaria were the "*high places of Isaac*," which were to become "desolate;" the sanctuary of Israel which was to be "laid waste;" the house of Jeroboam which was to be "given to the sword."

"Our fathers worshipped in this mountain," said the woman of Samaria to our Saviour, when He came to Sychar, in the days of His flesh; and although

He answered her in an era when the prophecy of Amos had been long fulfilled,—“Ye worship ye know not what, the hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father,”—the reply recognized the *two* high places of the chosen people, of which Gerizim stood *first* in venerated antiquity and in order of time. “When Isaac was to be offered, Abraham was in the land of the Philistines. From Beersheba, or Gaza, the southern point of Palestine, he would move along the plain, and on the morning of the third day would arrive in Sharon, where the massive height of Gerizim is visible ‘afar off;’ see Gen. xxii.; and from thence half a day would bring him to its summit, whereas Mount Moriah, at Jerusalem, is not visible till the traveller is close upon it.”

There were other after scenes at Shechem.

The locality thus sacred in the lives of Abraham and Isaac, was not less so to Jacob. He, too, pitched his tent, and built his altar in Shechem, and when he left it in sorrow for the violence of his sons, and put away from his household their strange gods, and went up to Bethel, he hid their idols and their ear-rings under “the Oak of Shechem.”

It was at Shechem the cruel brethren sold their father’s favourite, Joseph, to the Ishmaelites going down to Egypt with balm and spicery (the first caravan we hear of in Scripture), and so led their own way into the land of bondage. It was to Shechem and Gerizim that they came again in the fourth generation, according to the vision of their great forefather, bringing Joseph’s bones, which they had carried with them, by his desire, through all their forty years of desert wandering (Gen. l. 25); and they buried them in Shechem, in the in-

heritance of the children of Joseph (Josh. xxiv. 32). "At the mouth of the Valley of Shechem two slight breaks are visible, in the midst of the vast plain of corn—one a white Mussulman chapel, the other a few fragments of stone; the first covers the alleged tomb of Joseph, Ishmael's mark of present triumph over Isaac's exiled race; the other, **THE WELL**, choked up by ruins, but still the well of 'our father Jacob.' "

But we have limited ourselves to the history of Abraham in this period, and must return with him to **BETHEL**, where he pitched his tent after his first visit to Sichem; and whence, pressed by famine, he departed for Egypt; where there dwelt already a Pharaoh and his princes, known apparently to Abram as despotic lords, and likely to kill him, that they might seize on his beautiful wife.

His faith in God is not here in exercise, and he thinks to save himself by entreating her to say she is his sister, telling only a part of the truth. This was sadly short-sighted, as all cowardly shifts and evasions are, and proves, alas! that his life seemed dearer to him than his wife; but the Lord observes the strait he is in, and interferes to restore Sarah to him unharmed.

Lot had gone with him into Egypt, and they both return as rich men "of great substance, so that they could not dwell together." Abram pays a second visit to Bethel, to the place of his second altar, and calls on the name of the Lord.

He then most unselfishly offers Lot, who had no claim to it, his choice of hill and plain—to the right or left—resolving to be content with whatever remained. The choice of Lot was not unselfish, and he passed over in his judgment the exceeding wickedness of the cities of the plain. He saw

in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. viii. 11); and in Isa. xxix. 22, "Thus saith the Lord who *redeemed* Abraham." Remembered through all time as "faithful Abraham," he is held up for ever to all living as "*the friend of God*," "who against hope believed in hope." A contrast to the children of doubt, and alas! to our first parents, who listened to Satan's first temptation—"Hath God said?"

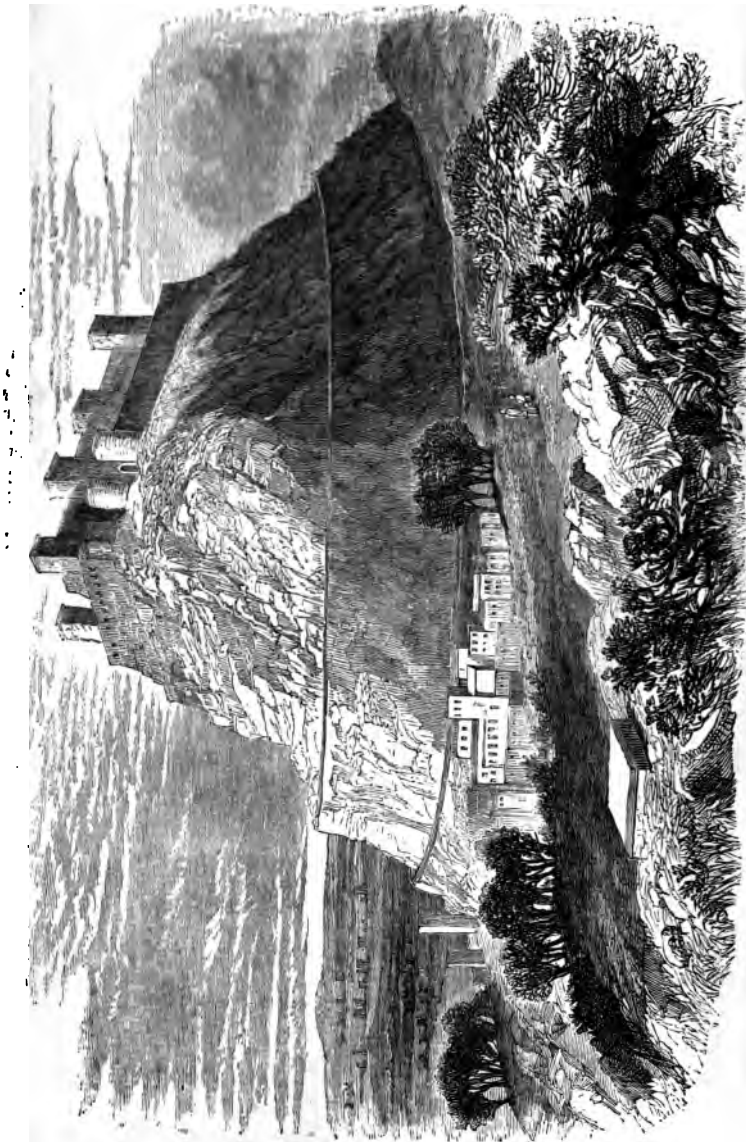
How beautiful is the character sketched in these thirteen chapters! Yet we cannot say how faultless! for, like Job's patience, even Abraham's faith could sometimes fail; but his sins are covered. With Sarah, he "died in faith, not having received the promises; but having seen them afar off, they were persuaded of them and embraced them."

The promise was very early fulfilled that he should be a father of *many* nations (Gen. xvii. 5). His *unchosen* sons, Ishmael, and those borne to him in the last thirty years of his life by his second wife Keturah, multiplied much more rapidly than the posterity of Isaac; and their descendants and Lot's still hold the land of Eastern Palestine. He sent them away from Isaac while he yet lived, "eastward unto the east country," which means the desert east of the land of Bashan and Gilead, extending to the river Euphrates.

For the conquest of the Hagarites by the Reubenites, see 1 Chron. v., in which it is said that "the war was of God." Abraham's descendants are—

- I. The Israelites, through Isaac and Jacob.
- II. The Arabs—through Ishmael.
- III. "The Children of the East"—of whom the Midianites and the Hagarites were chief.

It is very striking that Abraham's own first, and only actual possession in the Land of Promise, was a Tomb. The Cave of Machpelah lies now beneath the Mosque of Hebron.



THE CASTLE OF NAUMACH.

THE TIMES BEFORE THE PENTATEUCH WAS WRITTEN.

ARABIA AND THE PATRIARCH JOB.

No. IV.

“The mingled people that dwell in the desert.”

It cannot be certainly proved whether the times of the patriarch Job were before or after Abraham, but we may surely conclude that he lived within the limit defined by St. Paul in Romans v. as “from Adam to Moses,” and that his country was either Syria or Northern Arabia.

The Arabians are called in Scripture “the mingled people that dwell in the desert” (Jer. xxv. 24). Our readers should now refer to the map of Arabia, given p. 14, to form some idea of that great country, almost a continent in itself, whose western length along the Red Sea is 1400 miles; along the Indian Ocean to the south it is 1200 miles; while the great isthmus joining it to Asia, from Syria to Chaldea, is 900 miles across.

Arabia belongs to Asia, but it has often been called “Africa in little.” It has a small repetition of its mighty self at its north-west corner, which is called Arabia Petrea, or the *stony* Arabia; and in that portion of it the children of Israel wandered forty years before their entrance to their promised land of Palestine on the north.

If you now look again at the enlarged map of the northern portion of Arabia given in p. 44, you will find the second division of Arabia—called *Deserta*—on the south of Eastern Palestine. The tract of Chaldaea does not really come within that map at all, but is inserted to shew the relative direction from which Abram came. Arabia Deserta is a high plain, stretching far and wide, under a burning cloudless sky, where no showers temper the heat, and where none could live but for the cool winds and dews of night. You will find such a country described in the short 35th chapter of Isaiah, as “the wilderness and the solitary place,” the “parched ground” where pools and streams and springs would truly call forth songs of praise; and these are promised, “when the ransomed of the Lord return and come to Zion,” with everlasting joy upon their heads, and when their “sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”

But those days are not yet arrived. By day the winds still raise intolerable clouds of fine dust. There is not a single navigable river in all Arabia, and very few streams as yet find their way to the sea. The country is watered, if at all, by *wadis*—i.e., channels of land depressed a few feet below the surrounding level, down which, in the rainy season, run rills or brooks, which are so picturesquely used by Job as an image of the pity he expected from his friends (Job. vi. 15—18) and *found not*.

“My brethren have dealt deceitfully as a brook, and as the stream of brooks they pass away. . . . What time they wax warm they vanish: when it is hot they are consumed out of their place. . . . They go to nothing and perish.”

From Arabia *the Stony*, however, and Arabia *the Desert*, you can pass southwards to the great tract of Arabia Felix, or *the Happy*, where arid deserts alter-

nate with grander green oases, or wide spots of verdure and fertility, far wider than we had been used to conceive before the modern traveller, Mr. Palgrave, had in 1862 penetrated to Arabia's inner heart.

His way through the desert he describes as "level, monotonous, desolate," absolutely dry, where you chew dry dates and cinder-cake as you plod along through the wilds which defy all attempts of man to reclaim or change them, threading the great desert ring which encircles central Arabia and renders communication so difficult between it and the outside lands of Syria and Persia.

The inner portion of Arabia is a vast and mountainous table land, called by the name of the Upper and the Lower Nejd. Long has that name been written on the maps, while nothing more was known of this centre of ancient civilization. The outer edge of the sandy ring is girt by a line of mountains, low and sterile in general, but on the south, in Yemen and Oman, expanding into high, and broad, and fertile regions, beyond which lies a narrow rim of coast land, bordered by the sea.

The Arabs call their deserts "Nafod"—"the swellings of Nafod;" and when the traveller is among those enormous ridges of red, loose sand, each ridge two or three hundred feet in height, all furrowed by the capricious gales in the depths between, he feels as if hemmed in by burning walls; when each slope is ascended, he overlooks what seems a vast sea of fire, ruffled into little red-hot waves; the sun strikes blazing down, till clothes, baggage, housings, all take the smell of burning, and scarce permit the touch.

Such is the land of the "mingled people." None could live in it, but for its oases. At the edge of

The situation of Mesha has never been made out, but Sephar is believed to be Zafari, the sea port of the country of Yemen, on the south-west of Arabia. Yemen extends two or three hundred miles along the shore of the Indian Ocean, and is the country of spice and frankincense. The sons of Joktan may have reached it by going down the Red Sea, and then pressing towards the east.

There are still, at this distance of time, relics of their names in the south of Arabia. Hadramaut, for Hazar-Maveth; Azal, for Uzal; Seba, for Sheba; and the *genuine* Arabs, as they are called, all trace their descent to Joktan, whom they call Kahtan. The Arabian writers speak of the children of Ishmael as the "*adopted*" Arabs; but these it will be seen could only have colonized Arabia 400 years or more *after* the *genuine* Joktanites. Mesha may possibly mean Es-Sham, the ancient name for Damascus, and from Mesha to Sephar in Arabia, may have been a similar expression to that of "from Dan to Beersheba" in Palestine, meaning from north to south; for this was doubtless at first the range of the dwellings of the Joktanites; and as no trace of Jobab, the youngest son, has been discovered among the Arab names of places or tribes in *South Arabia*, this youngest son may have dwelt in the *northern* region of Aram Naharaim, the high land between the rivers near Damascus. The patriarch Job dwelt in the land of Uz; and Dr. Beke says that that district was called the land of Ghuth, or Uz.

It was to the land of Midian that Moses fled from Pharaoh, and there he dwelt with Jethro, although he led his father-in-law's flocks to the backside of the desert to Horeb. In Midian, from its neighbourhood to the land of Ghuth, or Uz, Moses may have heard of Job's history recorded by himself, and added

to it by inspiration, its introduction and its close. Moses was born 777 years after the Flood, and died at the age of 120—897 years after it. The era of Job may possibly have been 200 years before Abraham. His knowledge of God seems to place him of necessity very near to the age of the early patriarchs. Eliphaz mentions as alive at that era, *men much older than Job's father*; and the inspired Elihu is said to be of the kindred of Ram, or Aram.

The first person named "Uz" in the Bible is the son of Aram, and grandson of Shem; the second is the son of Nahor by Milcah, Isaac's cousin (Gen. xxii. 21); the third is a grandson of Seir the Horite. (Gen. xxxvi. 28.)

The Horites seem to have early inhabited Mount Seir, a hilly range which lies south of the Dead Sea, and these were probably children of Ham, and allied to the Emims and Rephaim, with whom they are named, as conquered in Abraham's day by the Chaldean kings (Gen. xiv. 6); they were vanquished again a second time by the children of Esau (Deut. ii. 12—22); so that it might be said alike of Edom and of Canaan :—

"For they of Ham had dwelt there of old." (1 Chron. iv. 40.)

The name Horite is derived from cave, or hole, and means a cave-dweller. The Horites, as well as the Zuzims, may have been giants "great and tall, like the Anakims" (Deut. ii. 21). To them are attributed the excavation of the vast rock-dwellings which are still found in hundreds among the mountains of Edom and rocks of Petra. Now, this *third* land of Uz must have been that to which Jeremiah refers when he says, "Rejoice, O daughter of Edom, that dwellest in the land of Uz;" but for the first land of Uz we must seek, as we have said, north-

ward to Syria and Padan Aram in the days *before* Abraham.

We wish to give you the opportunity in reading the wonderful old Book of Job to compare for yourselves the reasons for believing Job to have lived *before* Abraham, *or just after* him; for the advocates of each opinion have much to say on either side; and in examining their various claims we shall be led into the heart and meaning of the book itself.

Let us take *first*, the reasons for believing that Job lived *before* Abraham, and in the time of the early Joktanites; his enemies were the Sabeans and the Chaldeans, those nations being first spoken of after the Flood. The Sabeans, named from Saba, in South Arabia, and the Chaldeans from the plain of Shinar; likewise a people with the habits of the Horites, whom Job says (chap. xxx.) he would have disdained to have set with the dogs of his flock.

“Who cut up mallows by the bushes, and juniper roots for their meat.

“They were driven forth from among men, (they cried after them as after a thief;)

“To dwell in the cliffs of the valleys, in caves of the earth, and in the rocks.

“Among the bushes they brayed; under the nettles they were gathered together.

“They were children of fools, yea, children of base men: they were viler than the earth.”

But Job is also visited by his chosen friends, *wise* persons from Teman, from Shuah, from Naamah—all districts that border alike on Syria and Arabia.

Elihu is the son of a Buzite. There may have been a Buz as well as an Uz in near relation to Aram, Shem's grandson, before the Uz and Buz who were sons of Nahor, in the Arphaxad line.

Job mentions the gold of Ophir and the topaz of

Ethiopia, and he is thought to allude to the Pyramids of Egypt when he speaks of the "kings and counsellors of the earth, which built desolate places for themselves." (Chap. iii. 14.)

And now let us mark the events and peoples of which Job does *not* speak. There is no mention in this ancient book of God's dealings with Abraham or his children, neither of the patriarch's call, nor of the Exodus of Israel from Egypt, nor of any of the miracles that marked their going forth, which must have been heard of far and wide. Neither is there any allusion to the previous destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, which must have terrified all the dwellers east and west of the Jordan; although each history would so greatly have magnified the mighty power of God, and the converse of Job and his friends seems to be such a summing up of all that was known of Jehovah.

By the testimony of God Himself, there was not in all the earth such a perfect and upright man as Job; and very much more of his wisdom and knowledge is placed on record than of any other of the patriarchs. He seems to have been famous both in heaven and earth. We have in Genesis the narrative of noble facts and deeds, and short and vivid sketches of character; yet where shall we find such an introduction as in Job to the majestic current of thoughts and memories handed down through the families of Shem?

How these spiritual giants of earth's first 2,500 years towered above their fellows, when God kept them, by His grace, from worship of the heavenly bodies, forgetting the Creator in the works of His hands!

"If I beheld the sun when it shined (says Job), or the moon walking in brightness;

Having now placed before you the reasons for supposing that Job lived *before* Abraham, we must return to the subject of the peopling of Arabia; and having recognised the modern descendants of the Joktanites in the south, we must observe the rise of the race of ISHMAEL, whose history we have found interwoven in the twelve chapters that relate to his father Abraham.

You can follow out Ishmael's story in the 25th chapter of Genesis, after he had assisted Isaac to bury Abraham in the cave of Macphelah. In the 12th verse of that chapter begins the calendar of Ishmael's own sons, "twelve princes according to their nations." In the first generation after their father they are spoken of as possessing towns and castles; therefore they must have found their way to the green oases of the burning land. And, as it is recorded that Ishmael dwelt in the presence of all his brethren, so it is particularly mentioned that he died in their presence (Gen. xxv. 18) at the age of 137 years, half a century after his father.

The wilderness of Shur is in Stony Arabia, where the Israelites wandered; and Havilah is mentioned in connection with Eden. The Ishmaelites dwelt from Havilah to Shur. They settled all over the Peninsula, and chiefly in its central oases; where their race is still to be found distinct from the Joktanites. It was in the lower Nejd that Mr. Palgrave declares he saw the beginning of the mixture of the Ishmael and Kahtan races, which yet in general dwell apart, and are very different.

The Ishmaelites are otherwise named Hagarenes. Hagar, when cast forth by Abraham, dwelt with her son in the wilderness of Paran, north of Arabia. The promise of temporal prosperity to *his* seed (Gen. xvii. 20) was faithfully fulfilled. *His* fruit-

ful twelve tribes extended along the frontier of Arabia, from the northern extremity of the Red Sea towards the mouth of the Euphrates.

They had towers and towns, but many of them also followed a wandering life in moveable camps, as they do to this day ; they also conveyed merchandize, and became wealthy and powerful. We hear of them in Joseph's time, about seventy years after their father's death, as on the way from Gilead to Egypt with camels, bearing spicery and balm, and myrrh (Gen. xxxvii. 25). They are also here called Midianites, and so associated with those who sprung from Abraham's son Midian, by his second wife Keturah.

You can look at Gilead and Midian on the map of Eastern Palestine (p. 44), and then turn to our picture of the castle of Salcah, or Salkadh, with its very old history, situate on the southern border of the land of Bashan.

Mr. Cyril Graham, a recent traveller, made various journeys from this castle occupying so commanding a position on the very edge of the desert, whence any foe could be seen almost a day's journey off. From its height he beheld the black towns and cities, the "giant cities of Bashan," all now unpeopled save by the birds of the air, the wolf, the hyæna, and the jackal. A stone door of one of these cities is found in the British Museum ; but of this we shall have more to say when the children of Israel conquer the land after their wilderness journey.

We have brought you to Salcah to look forth on the wide plains of Ishmael's habitation beyond it. Moses says to Israel, when he is giving them the sum total of their conquests (Deut. iii. 8)—

"We took at that time from the kings of the Amorites the

land on this side Jordan from the river of Arnon unto Mount Hermon, and all Gilead, and all Bashan unto Salcah, and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan ;”

and we are again told in Joshua xii. 5, that

“Og reigned in Hermon and in Salcah, and in all Bashan.”

From “Hermon to Salcah” is also as from Dan to Beersheba.

The fifth chapter of the 1st Book of Chronicles (9, 10 to 26) shows that Salcah must have stood on the eastern border of the children of Gad, whence Reuben was enabled to extend *his* border still eastward to “the entering in of the wilderness from the river Euphrates, because their cattle were multiplied in the land of Gilead. And in the days of Saul, they (the Reubenites) made war with the Hagarites, who fell by their hand ; and they dwelt in their tents, upon all the face of the land east of Gilead.”

The Hagarites were delivered into the hand of the Reubenites, and “there fell down many slain, because the war was of God ;—and they took of their camels fifty thousand, and of sheep two hundred and fifty thousand, and of men an hundred thousand.” And they dwelt in their steads until the captivity, *i.e.*, for 300 years, till “God stirred up the spirit of Pul, king of Assyria, to carry captive the Reubenites themselves into the land from which Abram came out.

Of the sons of Ishmael, Nebaioth, the first-born, was the father of the Nabatheans, who long afterwards governed northern Arabia. The second son, Kedar, was so famous among his Arab descendants that the name came to be applied to Bedouins in general. The Moabites and Ammonites who shared the land with the Ishmaelites, were, as we know, the children of Lot’s daughters.

And now, to connect ESAU's history with the rest of "the mingled people," we must, for the present, pass over that of Isaac and Jacob, and read only what relates to Rebekah's favourite and elder twin son in the 25th, 26th, 27th, and 28th chapters of Genesis, till we come to his marriage with Ishmael's daughter, Bashemath, the sister of Nebaioth (Gen. xxviii. 8, 9), and find him settled in the land of Seir, the country of Edom, south of the Dead Sea (Gen. xxxii. 3); to which he returns after his friendly meeting with his long-exiled brother, Jacob, with whom he afterwards unites, as Ishmael had done with Isaac, in burying their father.

"Isaac gave up the ghost, and died, and was gathered to his people, being old and full of days (an hundred and four-score years): and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him." (Gen. xxxv. 28, 29.)

And then chapter xxxvi. is given up wholly to the generations of Esau, "who is Edom," and his three wives—the Hittite, the Hivite, and the Ishmaelite; the last was his cousin Bashemath, and their son Reuel had again a son Zerah. Zerah is reckoned among the dukes of Edom, and kings succeeded dukes.

"And these are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom, before there reigned any king over the children of Israel.

"And Bela the son of Beor reigned in Edom; and the name of his city was Dinhabah.

"And Bela died, and Jobab the son of Zerah of Bozrah reigned in his stead.

"And Jobab died, and Husham of the land of Temani reigned in his stead."

Now those who do *not* believe that JOB lived *before* Abram, consider that Moses *here* gives his ancestry, and declare that the Job of our Bible is most probably the great grandson of Esau, who stands sixth in descent from Abraham through

Ishmael, while Moses himself on his mother's side was also the sixth, though on his father's the seventh descendant, from the same great ancestor through Isaac.

"Oh, that Ishmael may live before Thee!" said his father Abraham; and in answer to this prayer the sons of Ishmael seem to have had their own possession and their own "blessing" in the land of the sons of Joktan. It is said of Ishmael himself, that he was "gathered to his people," whence some have hoped that he passed away in the patriarchal faith to the patriarchal blessing; but, at least, if the somewhat *luter* view of Job's era be the true one, it appears that to a royal descendant of Ishmael and Esau, the blessing of the children of Shem was not denied. "Bless me, even me also, oh my father." "Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me? Hast thou but one blessing?" said poor Esau, in his bitterness. And did not the "reserved blessing" fall on Job? How far nobler are the annals of this second king of Edom (even with all his faults recorded), as regards the civilization they intimate, than any of the hard-won relics from Chaldea's clay inscriptions, or indeed from Egypt's idols of granite and marble.

Throughout the Septuagint version of the Scriptures, Job and his three friends are styled kings. This version makes the full age of Job 240 years, and if we accept its authority, we may take his biography as filling up the space between Joseph and Moses, during which era there is no personal narrative beside, of any of God's servants on the earth.

The civilization described in the Book of Job is very wonderful. A city and streets are alluded to in the land of Uz, as well as tents and tabernacles ;

wines and dainty meats at feasts; the couch and looking-glasses of polished metal, tell of care for furniture; the harp, the organ, the tabret, and the timbrel accompanied the dance; gold ear-rings, the robe and diadem, precious stones and jewels, are all named; the mining and refining of metals was understood, and the use of money. There was writing, engraving, and weaving; fishing and riding, and shooting with steel bows; Job had 500 yoke of oxen, and the Chaldeans carry off his 3000 camels, a valuable booty, as these animals were always highly prized for the conveyance of commerce.

After all, this civilization in the land of Edom is only equal with that of ancient Egypt and of early Chaldea at the same era, and we must remember that these were the neighbouring countries. A king of Edom would not be unacquainted with the luxuries and possessions of surrounding nations. The grand references to the animal creation in the final address of Jehovah to his servant assure us that Job must have been familiar with the war-horses of the Assyrians, which, as we may now observe from their sculptures, were of noble blood (perhaps Arabian), and are drawn from the finest models.

“From afar he snuffeth the battle,
The thunder of the captains and the shouting.”
(Job xxxix. 25.)

We hope, dear friends, you may now take a fresh delight in the Book of Job, the true “Book of the Chronicles” of this early time, which gathers together all the knowledge of God inherited by the men of the Arabian desert. What light does that book throw on the records of Genesis?

There is such a wonderful dramatic character about it; it is so truly a “living oracle,” that many of its students have been disposed to look upon it

in the light of a beautiful romance ; but this is to ignore Divine witness to the fact of Job's individuality in the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, and also apostolic reference:—

“Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it [the land], they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord God.” (Ezek. xiv. 14).

“Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord.” (James v. 11).

To Moses is commonly accorded the renown of being either the writer or compiler of the thrilling history. It may have been a problem in his mind, worked out during his meditations in the desert, how to reconcile the apparently unmerited sufferings of his own people with the love and justice of Jehovah. The beginning of God's inspiration to his human soul may have been the lifting of the curtain from heaven's side of the history of Job. In all the Bible, till we come to the Book of Revelation, there is scarce such another window into the invisible world.

Down below all is darkness. Up above, Moses sees the Lord of love and pity only proving His child in the fire, delighting in his patience, and causing him to hold fast his integrity, and confuting by this means the Accuser of the brethren.

Down below lies poor Job, casting back in his memory for what shall have brought his woes upon him, driven by the harshness of those who came at first to comfort him, to show himself righteous in his own eyes. Up above is the Lord listening, remembering the submission of his dear child, when the first strokes of the rod fell upon him.

“The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away ; blessed be the name of the Lord.” (Job i. 21).

The Refiner is watching the furnace, though He heats it seven-fold, and He is waiting for the tried

"Ye are an intermediate nation, O Arabians," said their lawgiver to them; "witnesses against the rest of mankind! Wherever ye be turn your faces towards the holy temple of Mecca."



THE MOHAMMEDAN HOUR OF PRAYER.

Still, therefore, on the sands his followers spread their prayer-carpet—truly witnesses against any of the disciples of a better Master who neglect to commune with Him, the Ever Present.

The "mingled people" have since spread so widely over the earth that when Henry Martyn, the good missionary, spoke of undertaking a version of the New Testament in Arabic, he said, "We shall then begin to preach in Arabia, Syria, Persia, Tartary, part of India and China, half of Africa, and to all the sea coasts of the Mediterranean, and Turkey—and *one tongue shall suffice for them all.*"

Thus is fulfilled the prophecy about Ishmael:—"He shall be a great nation, and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren."



THE RUINS OF KARNAK.



A SPHINX.

lands, where the harvest scarcely ever failed, it *must* have had an embanker of the sea. At this day all Egypt is called Misr, which just means "the land of the embanker." The Pharaoh of Egypt afterwards declares : Ezek. xxix. 3.

"My river is my own, and I have made it for myself."

It is said of Menes, that having diverted the course of the river, he obliged it to run in the centre of the valley, between two parallel ridges of mountains, and that he built the city of Memphis in the bed of the ancient channel ; he built a dyke above the site of the city, whose lofty mounds and strong embankments effectually confined the river Nile to its new bed. This dyke was kept always in repair by succeeding kings. We must remember this Menes or Metz-rim, Noah's grandson, "the embanker of the sea."

Much time has been lost by the learned in fancying Egypt to have an older history than our Hebrew Time-table of the Bible allows ; but they have been obliged to come back to the fact that nothing *undoubted* on the monuments left to us either of Egypt, Babylon, or China, is now found after all to contradict the Bible chronology.

The Egyptians were a people very fond of writing and sculpture. They wrote on paper made from rushes, and these documents are called papyri ; and they painted upon tablets the figures of their ancestors in long gigantic rows, whom the latest Pharaoh is represented as adoring. They called their kings Pharaoh from "Phra," the sun, and worshipped them when dead.

Two such tablets have been discovered at Abydos, in Upper Egypt—the last in the year 1864 ; and on this we have 76 Pharaohs, beginning with Menes, and coming down to the father of Rameses. The space

within the heart of the enormous mass consisted but of a few small chambers, and the royal body, if ever deposited, has since been removed in search for treasure. The name of the builder of the great pyramid of Ghizeh is inscribed upon it—*Shufu*; he is also called Cheops. The builder of the second is called Chephren; and in the third pyramid of Ghizeh has been found the stone coffin of the king for whom it was built, the coffin of King Mykerinus. On the floor of its sepulchral chamber was discovered a mummy-case, or rather its broken lid (for the pyramid had been rifled hundreds of years before by the Saracens), which proved to be, from the picture-writing upon it, the mummy-case and coffin of the builder.

That ancient lid, perhaps 4,000 years old, is now in the British Museum; you can go and see it there; and the far-off time to which it belongs, and the certainty of the occupant, throw an awful interest round this relic of the first Pharaohs.

These ancient and extraordinary Egyptians, whose thoughts seem always to have been occupied with their temples and their tombs, believed that the spirit, when it left the body, wandered on, never resting, giving life to some beast of the field, some fowl of the air, some fish of the sea,—waiting for the redemption of the original body; therefore they took great pains to preserve their bodies after death, in time-proof mansions. They had no Mosaic revelation to which to refer, to set them right when they were wrong; and after the death of the patriarchs, they derived their knowledge from tradition, or that which one told another.

Some recent discoveries in the Great Pyramid prove also, it is said, “that its first designer intended to make it, as well as a royal tomb, a stan-



WINGED FIGURES RESEMBLING CHERUBIM IN EGYPT.

Museum, on the side of a sarcophagus, or vast stone coffin.

Very early, as we learn from the picture-writing, or hieroglyphics on the walls of ancient temples, true and noble notions of God, and of the past, and of the future, were mixed up with base idolatries, not only of sun, moon, stars, and men, but of brutes, reptiles, plants, and even insects. They bowed down to bulls, crocodiles, lily-flowers, onions, and beetles. Long galleries have lately been discovered hewn in the rocks near Memphis, opening every fifty yards into high arched vaults, under each of which reposes the most magnificent black marble sarcophagus, a chamber rather than a coffin, grander than those of the Theban kings; each the last resting-place of the successive corpses of the bull Apis; for the children of Ham, who once "knew God," had changed His "incorruptible glory into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things." Here they are! the Pharaohs, the Ibises, the Bulls, and the Beetles,

and their thrones (not the pedestals) are cut out of one stone; they sit where they were first erected, and the Nile waters have washed their feet for three and thirty centuries with every year's inundation. At other seasons they rise from the green



STATUES OF AMENOPHIS III.

plain, and the African sky glows red behind them. They are sixty feet high; their faces are fearfully mutilated. They are the STONES OF EGYPT—symbols of her desolation.

Thebes, or Theba, means *the ark*, and the chief temple there seems to have been built in commemoration of the Deluge;—a boat-like shrine was the most sacred object in the ancient Egyptian temples.

Thebes is a city that was thought worthy of mention in Scripture: it is there called “No-Ammon,” “populous No,” perhaps from No-ah.

It stood upon a vast plain describing a circuit of thirty miles, and was called “the City of the Hundred Gates,” and the whole extent is *still* strewn with broken columns, avenues of sphinxes,

which Israel may have seen in Egypt ere they were cast down—but now, behold the “high arm of the wicked!” “it is broken,” as Job said (xxxviii. 15). The giant arm and hand in red granite is a mute comment on the following words:—

“The word of the Lord came unto me saying—. . . . I have broken the arm of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and lo, it shall not be bound up to be healed. . . . And I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and disperse them through the countries, . . . and they shall know that I am the Lord.” (Ezek. xxx. 21, 23, 26.)

As Abraham went into Egypt about 430 years after the Flood, or more than 1900 B.C. (see Gen. xii. 10), he must have seen the *earliest* of its pyramids at Memphis. Despotie Pharaohs were then in existence, for he feared they would seize upon his fair Sarah, “kill him,” and “save her alive;” but his fears were ungrounded; he was entreated well for her sake, and received addition to his shepherd wealth, and even Sarah was undeservedly restored unharmed through the interference of his Almighty Friend.

Meantime the Egyptian empire grows for another 400 years. The Temple of Karnak arises in Thebes—the “City of the Hundred Gates.” ISAAC never goes down into Egypt; and we must return to his history in Palestine, and then see how Jacob’s story blended with his son Joseph’s in the land of Ham. Joseph’s age was 39 when his father came down to him, and he was 56 at the death of Jacob. Of his 110 years, 88 were spent in Egypt.

JACOB AND JOSEPH IN EGYPT.

THE history of Isaac, the promised seed, begins in chapter xxi. of Genesis, as intertwined with that of his father, Abraham, and continues to the 10th verse of chapter xxviii., when it merges into

that of his son JACOB, who was born to him with Esau when he had reached the age of sixty, and while he dwelt by the well Lahai-roi, "The well of Him that liveth and seeth," where the angel first met Hagar.

Jacob's history may be found from Genesis xxvii. to xxxvii.; and is continued in connection with JOSEPH's, from chapter xlii. to the close of the first book of the Pentateuch. Joseph's history begins in chapter xxxvii.

Esau had married Judith, a daughter of the children of Heth, when he was forty, and his father Isaac a hundred years old; and although Isaac had unwittingly transferred to Jacob the patriarchal blessing of the eldest son, he must have perceived that this transfer was by the will of God, for he confirms it to Jacob, ere he sends him away to the *Syrian* kindred of his mother Rebekah, to seek a wife of the chosen race of Shem, at Haran, near Damascus.

Jacob departs from "Beersheba, or the well of the oath," to which the family must have previously removed. It is said that Isaac reopened the wells which his father Abraham had dug, and which the Philistines had filled up again with earth. The existence of a city at Beersheba is mentioned in Gen. xxvi. 33. And many years afterwards Jacob revisited the spot for solemn worship, before starting for Egypt with his family. (Gen. xli. 1—5.)

Those very wells of Beersheba are still visited by travellers of our own age; they are lined with masonry, and the deep grooves cut in the curb-stones by the friction of ropes, make their edges appear to be fluted or fluted.* All around lie the

* The Arabs always bring their own ropes to these wilderness wells, which explains the saying of the woman of Samaria: "Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep."

stone camel-troughs of ancient days. Seven wells have been described by different travellers, which is worthy of notice, because "Sheba" in Hebrew signifies *seven*, as well as an oath.

Two of these wells are five feet across, but a third is much wider, twelve feet and-a-half across, which is probably the well whereof the Lord spoke unto Moses in Numbers xxi. 16. "Gather the people together, and I will give them water. Then Israel sang this song,

Spring up, O well; sing ye unto it:
The princes digged the well, the nobles of the people digged it,
By direction of the lawgiver, with their staves."

Hagar saw the first well of Beersheba (Gen. xxi. 19), which revived the fainting Ishmael.

By the wells they dug Abraham and Isaac have sat with Abimelech, made sacred oaths of peace, and planted groves. The wandering Arab strikes his tent, and leaves but the ashes of his extinguished fires. The patriarchs left wells and groves.

From Beersheba Abraham journeyed with Isaac to offer him in sacrifice; and, restored to his father by the word of the Lord, here Isaac himself dwelt long and peacefully.

From this spot Jacob fled, having filched birth-right and blessing from his brother Esau; *here* the Israelites entered the land they were to possess, even unto Dan. Here Samuel made his sons judges, and hence Elijah wandered out into the southern desert from the wrath of Jezebel, when God was about to feed him with that meat in whose strength he went forty days to Horeb, the Mount of God.

It was in Gerar, west of Beer-Sheba, among the Philistines, that Isaac dwelt, when the Lord said unto him, "Go not down into Egypt; so-journ in this land," and here he received *his* first

blessing (xxvi. 3), for himself and his seed, and all nations. In Gerar Isaac sowed, and received in the same year an hundredfold. Abram had been called by the children of Heth "a mighty prince," and Isaac "went forward," and was "very great" in possession of flocks, herds, and servants. The Philistines envied him, and even the friendly Abimelech said to him, as the Egyptians afterwards said to the people of Israel, "Go from us; for thou art much mightier than we." He dug more wells in Gerar, but he was obliged to name them Esek, "*contention*," and Sibnah, "*hatred*," before he obtained the blessing of Rehoboth, "*room*."

It was specially at Beersheba that the *second* blessing reached Isaac (xxvi. 24), and it is given for "Abraham's sake." Jacob, it is evident, did not go up to Padan-aram till he was seventy-seven years old, when Isaac must have been 137. Before this Isaac is spoken of as old and dim-sighted, and expecting the day of his death, which appears, however, not to have occurred for forty-three years, when Jacob and Esau bury him at the age of a hundred and fourscore in the cave of Machpelah. Jacob is away from him for twenty years with Laban, during which the much coveted blessing is confirmed to this favoured son, a *third*, *fourth*, and *fifth* time, by God Himself, at Bethel, at Peniel, and at Bethel yet again (see Gen. xxviii. 19; xxxii. 30; xxxv. 11, 15); his father Isaac had blessed him *twice*, so that there are *seven* prophetic blessings upon *Isaac and Jacob*, confirming the *seven* bestowed upon Abraham.

FOURTEEN are the precious TITLE DEEDS received from their fathers by the nation chosen by God as witnesses for Himself in a fallen world. No *faultless* witnesses however, for in Jacob's last words

to his twelve sons, those addressed to Reuben, to Simeon, and to Levi, almost disguise the father's blessing under his emphatic blame. The Bible is so really fitted to be the guide of our daily life, because it is so truthful and impartial in its narratives. Zebulun, Issachar, Dan, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, and even Benjamin, the prophetic spirit does not so much *bless* as it tells them "that which shall befall them in the last days;" but for Judah and to Joseph (or Ephraim), the blessing brims over. They are the two *heads* of the tribes.

"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.

"Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes.

"His eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk."

And Joseph,

"Is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall:

"The archers have sorely grieved him and shot at him, and hated him;

"But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel)."

Every blessing of the heaven above and of the deep that lieth under—all are his, to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills.

It is very interesting to turn from the 49th of Genesis to the 33rd of Deuteronomy, and compare the blessing of Moses to the tribes of Israel, 238 years afterwards, when the seventy souls had been multiplied into a great nation, the children and successors of the 600,000 fighting men who had fallen in the wilderness in the last forty years of that interval (Num. i. 46). In the list of Moses

every tribe has its share of blessing; but the pre-eminence of JUDAH is for the time surpassed by that of LEVI, the priestly tribe.

"They shall teach Jacob thy judgments, and Israel thy law. Smite through the loins of them that rise against him, and of them that hate him, that they rise not again."

Reuben "shall live," and not die; Benjamin "is the beloved of the Lord;" Zebulun may "rejoice in going out," and Issachar "in his tents;" Gad "is blessed and enlarged;" Dan shall "leap from Bashan;" Naphtali is "satisfied with favour;" Asher "dips his foot in oil" at the end of the wilderness journey; but on Joseph and his sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, there is not only *repeated all the wealth of Jacob's former blessing*, but there is added the "goodwill of Him that dwelt in the bush;" and the sign of the unicorn is given him, for "with his horns (of power) he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth." *He* therefore is not restricted to the land of promise, but at some time of his children's history has much to do with the blessing *on all nations*. Have you ever noticed that the arms of Great Britain are the lion and the unicorn? It has not been observed that the unicorn is used in the arms of any *other* nation.

The blessing of Joseph begins to be fulfilled even in Egypt. His own prophetic dream of his father and his brethren bowing down to him, for which Jacob rebuked him, here comes to pass. The beautiful conduct of Joseph throughout his exaltation is an exquisite story for all times and ages, that touches every heart.

We do not profess to tell it; these chapters of the Story of the Book are only intended to be laid beside an open Bible, and to point to the pictures drawn by the finger of God, bringing together a few

general things about them which ought to be known by those who have few books and little time to search for themselves.

With regard to Israel as a family of shepherds, the sheep-walks of Goshen were ceded to them where they might dwell apart, because, as Joseph informed them, every shepherd was an abomination to the Egyptians (Gen. xlii. i.) We find figures of shepherds on the soles of Egyptian sandals to indicate that they wished to tread them under their feet. It is remarkable that Pharaoh bids Jacob's sons dwell in the land of Goshen, "because it is the best of the land"; and it is for other reasons concluded that he was himself one of the shepherd kings who had conquered Egypt, and who was again expelled by Amosis the Liberator—the king who "knew not Joseph." In the Book of Exodus xii. 40, it is said that "the sojourning of the children of Israel who dwelt in Egypt was 430 years." That this 430 years comprises the whole period from the call of Abraham to the Exodus, we learn from St. Paul's comment, in his Epistle to the Galatians (iii. 16, 17), who shows that this date extends from the covenant of promise to the giving of the Law.

It is natural to ask if there is any satisfactory evidence *from the monuments of Egypt* of the existence of the Israelites at the period when Scripture chronology suppose them to have been there, between B.C. 1706 and B.C. 1491.

We need not expect to find the word ISRAEL in the Egyptian papyri—that would probably be a name used by the people in speaking of themselves, as God's name for them; but they were long known to foreigners only as THE HEBREWS. Joseph is spoken of as a Hebrew (Gen. xxxix.); the nation as Hebrews, in Pharaoh's order (Exod. i.) They were

not known as Jehudim (Jews) until after the separation of the ten tribes under Jeroboam.

Two documents exist in the Museum of Leyden



APERI-U.

which speak of a stranger race in Egypt occupied in building works, and these records date from the reign of Rameses II. This hieroglyph reads, APERI-U, or HEBER-IM, the Hebrews. Egyptian pictures for words are called hieroglyphs.

A Prussian consul has lately deciphered papyri which have reference to the building of Pithom and Raamses, by the Apuras, Hebrews; and there is a rock inscription in the Valley of Ham Surat which mentions the labours of 800 Hebrews in the stone quarries. The figures accompanying the inscription are of Jewish type, and distinguished by a long beard from their Egyptian overseer. The bondage of the children of Israel is represented also on the tomb of Rekshare, the chief architect of the temples at Thebes. The faces of the Jews it is impossible to mistake; their bodies are covered with splashes of clay; the Egyptian taskmaster is seated with his heavy baton, whose blows would certainly visit some weary slave, resting a moment from his toilsome task of making bricks. Some of these very bricks, *mixed with straw*, are seen in the British Museum.

The inscription at the top of the picture to the right reads, "Captives brought by his majesty to build the temples of the Great God."

Rameses was a family name, like Pharaoh, borne by many kings, and it is not easy to fix their several dates. While these are, as it were, "blotted out,"—the names of *two women are recorded* for ever in the Bible, SHIPHRAH and PUAH, who feared God, and risked their own safety in the days of persecu-

tion, saving alive the infants of the Hebrews whom they were called to destroy. The last king of the nineteenth dynasty, Si Ptah Menephtha, "the light of the sun," was not buried in his own tomb, and *he* may have been the Pharaoh who perished in the Red Sea.

The prophet Isaiah, writing 800 years after the Exodus of Israel, puts this song into the mouth of Judah:—

"O Lord our God, lords beside Thee have had dominion over us [and this must have especially included Egypt].

"Dead they shall not live; deceased they shall not rise: therefore hast Thou visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish." (Isa. xxvi. 13, 14.)

There are two or three closing particulars yet to notice concerning Egypt. Let us look at the 19th of Isaiah, written more than 900 years after the death of Joseph: it refers to the "princes of Zoan," and wise counsellors of Egypt; and the "perverse spirit that became mingled in the midst of them," so that the country was caused to err in all its works (ver. 11 to 14), and the counsel being destroyed the people were to seek to idols, and charmers, and wizards, and familiar spirits (ver. 3), and the *very name of Egypt* was to be held for a *symbol of idolatry and worldliness*, "a place where the Lord was crucified," set side by side with Sodom, in the Book of the Revelation xi. 8:

"The great city which *spiritually* is called Sodom and Egypt;" and where there was *no* crucifying of the flesh with its affections and lusts.

Yet in Egypt, as in this present world, the Lord would train Israel and educate Moses. The Lord Jesus Himself, as an infant, was carried there, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, "Out of Egypt have I called my son." (*Hosea xi. 1.*)



THE TIMES WHEN THE PENTATEUCH BEGAN TO BE WRITTEN.

MOSES, "THE SERVANT OF GOD."

No. VI.

IN the first five tracts of this series we have only led our readers to the study of the *first* book in the Bible, GENESIS, or, "the book of the beginning." But it is a book comprising the story of *two thousand three hundred and sixty-nine years*, ending with the death of Joseph. In its fifty chapters is included the whole history of the world before the Flood 1656 years.

The space between the Flood and

Abram 352 ,,

And that between Abram's birth

and Joseph's death 361 ,,

2369

There is no other inspired book which represents such a space of time.

The book of Exodus, or the book of "the going out" from Egypt, comprises but 144 years—and 63 of these up to the birth of Moses are signalized by one event recorded in the first chapter; that vast multiplication of the people of Israel, which was so grievous to the new king of Egypt, who "knew not Joseph," and which led to his murderous edict to destroy all their new born sons.

Among these babes devoted to destruction, one, strange to say, is saved by Pharaoh's own daughter.

There is an obelisk at Thebes, which is still standing, while the colossus of Rameses lies low. On this obelisk are inscribed such titles as "Lady of both Countries;" "Great Royal Sister;" "PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER!" There is but one queen regent in the royal lists, and this is therefore doubtless the "Pharaoh's daughter" of Exodus, the princess Termuthis, who had power to influence a jealous priesthood to initiate Moses, her supposed heir, in all the wisdom of Egypt. From her Moses receives his Egyptian name, which signifies, "drawn out of the water."

He was a "goodly child," "exceedingly fair," having a body and mind prepared of God for the especial inhabitation of His Divine Spirit (Isa. lxiii. 11), and perhaps his greatest qualification for this matchless privilege, also given him of God, is outlined by another hand in the transcription of his book of Numbers. In chapter xii., verse 3, it is remarked, within parentheses, as it could not have been by himself:—

"(Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men who were upon the face of the earth.)"

The scribe who closes the book of Deuteronomy, declares,

"There arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face."

The author of all evil had said to the first pair when tempting them to eat of the forbidden fruit, "Ye shall be as gods," but he had no power to keep such delusive promise to his victims.

What does the Lord say to Moses?

"Thou shalt be to thy brother Aaron instead of God." (Ex. iv. 16.)

"And see, I have made thee as a God to Pharaoh" (Ex. vii. 1); and behold it was so. Moses was made the first

worker of miracles in the world's history. The Lord had chosen "a people," and He had now prepared them a leader, for whom He ordained during the first forty years of his life the education of a court, and a training in whatever wisdom was left in idolatrous Egypt; an advantage which was likely to have been counterbalanced by the "pleasures of sin," had not Jehovah given him a heart to renounce them, and possibly to forego the heirship of the Egyptian crown.

"By faith.....choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God.....and esteeming the reproach of CHRIST greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.....by faith too forsaking Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king." (Heb. xi. 25—27.)

The day of Christ which Abraham saw, in vision of the future, must also therefore have been revealed to Moses.

From the tuition of the palace, however, Moses was withdrawn by the hand of his Mightiest Teacher, when forty years of age, and sent, as we learn from Acts vii. 30, for just as long a space of time, to be a stranger in the wilderness of Arabia—in the simplicity of desert and shepherd life, to forget much probably, and learn more; here his mind was enriched by meditation, and his soul fed in obscurity and solitude. It may have been here that the Spirit of the living God instructed and prepared him to write the Book of Genesis, from whose first page a child may learn more in an hour than all Egypt's wise men knew without it by the study of their lives. Perhaps Moses possessed earlier documents, handed down through his grandfather Levi; but whether he did or not, the "Lord was with him" in his task, and has preserved the fruit of his inspired labour to this day. He wrote the only ancient history we can trust, the one by which all others *must stand or fall*.

In that long calm oasis of his shepherd life, how the pictures of Egypt must have passed before his memory! The land of Midian lay around the eastern gulf of the Red Sea, and was supposed to have been settled by the posterity of Midian, fourth son of Abraham and Keturah. You will find it marked in two places in the maps of Arabia and Eastern Palestine, pp. 14 and 44. The Midianites were a wandering race, like the Ishmaelites, and were scattered along the district north of Arabia, and east of the Jordan. They had a patriarchal priest or prince named Jethro, his seven daughters watered their flock by a well, like Rachel of old; and when Moses, like Jacob, assisted them in their task, they supposed him an Egyptian.

One of those seven daughters, Zipporah, became his wife, and the name of the firstborn son proclaimed the father's feeling, Gershom, "a stranger here," for as he kept the flock of his father-in-law, his heart must often have ached at the stray tidings of the oppression of Israel. His people were in a "furnace of iron" (Deut. iv. 20), and their "sigh" and "cry," came up into the ear of God, while he, their brother, was breathing the free air of the wilderness, till the second course of his education among those sands and mountains had tamed down the fire of his early indignation, and till he became the meekest man upon earth. Surely *then* and *there* he must have studied the patience and impatience of Job; and what human history could better have prepared him for the mission of his forty years to come.

He would also, it is probable, in the desert have been refreshed by the patriarchal piety of Jethro, his father-in-law, for we are much disposed to believe with Dr. Bonar, that Jethro was one of those

patriarchal priests in Arabia, who, like Melchisedek in Canaan, and Job in the land of Uz, preserved in different lands the knowledge of the true God before there was any written Revelation, at least any that has come down to us.

We cannot but remark the reverence which Moses afterwards paid to his father-in-law, who is called by various names in Scripture—Jether, or the excellent; while Hobab (Judges iv. 11) may mean “beloved”; in Exod. ii. 18 he is called Reuel; and, again, Raguel, or “friend of God,” in Num. x. 29, where we are told that he had a son named Hobab.

Moses did obeisance to him (Exod. xviii. 7) as he restored his wife Zipporah and her sons, when the whole body of the Israelites came and encamped at the Mount of God, in the old district so well known to Moses in his forty years of solitude; and then Jethro rejoiced with his son for all the goodness that the Lord had shown to Israel, and declares his patriarchal knowledge that the Lord is greater than all gods.

Jethro further takes a burnt-offering and sacrifices for God, provides a feast, and calls to it Aaron and the elders of Israel; and with his blessing to Moses we may connect St. Paul’s comment, that “the less is blessed of the better.” Jethro mingles his counsel with such words of paternal authority and wisdom as would imply a far greater age than Moses, who, it will be remembered, was then himself eighty years old. With much sagacity and experience, and with affectionate solicitude, he says, on observing the constant consultations of the people with their leader: “The thing that thou doest is not good; thou wilt surely wear away”; and suggests a mode of effectual help from others; and his ad-

vice was so admirable and well timed, that Moses hearkened to the voice of his father-in-law, and "did all that he said."

We introduce this after-passage in the life of Jethro because of his being an example of what was known and believed in PATRIARCHAL TIMES, which, we must remember, comprehended an immense period of the history of the world. They were AS LONG as the TIMES OF THE GENTILES, if we count our own period *back*—beyond the coming of the Lord—to about 660 B.C., when the chosen nation was pronounced rejected, because of the sin of Manasseh. And if we would study the Bible aright we must endeavour to realize this.

"I will cause them to be removed into all kingdoms of the earth, because of Manasseh the son of Hezekiah king of Judah, for that which he did in Jerusalem." (Jer. xv. 4.)

But it was from communion far higher than with Jethro or Job that Moses came forth from the desert prepared to be a leader of his people. Man is never truly great but as brought into conjunction with God Himself. And let us now observe the place and time of the Divine revelation to this *representative* man—the mediator of the Old Mosaic Covenant, as we call it (Gal. iii. 19)—who foreshadowed the Lord Jesus, the Mediator of the New. A "people" were being nurtured in their hard nursery by the Nile, who were to be God's witnesses in the old world to the heathen around them, and whose pilgrimage and settlement would prefigure the experience of *all* God's spiritual sons and daughters to the end of time.

Some readers reject the idea of types, or *prophecy in action*, as altogether visionary and unprofitable; but even these ought to admit that we are always safe in learning from types *when Apostles teach us* ;

and in the wonderful depths of God's ancient Word there are closed doors into which no hasty reader enters—into which none could have dared to enter unless the key of inspiration had unlocked their Divine mysteries.

Was not Paul surely taught of the Spirit concerning the history of His people when he went for three years into Arabia, as he tells the Galatians? (i. 17.) This wide word "Arabia" must have included the rocks of Edom and Petra, whence Arabians came to the festivals at Jerusalem (Acts ii. 11). Perhaps also his steps were turned to those mountain heights by the Red Sea, once familiar to the foot-steps of Moses and Elijah, and hallowed by the presence of God. His allusions to Agar and Sinai are almost surely those of one who had looked upon its peaks.

Let us think of Moses and Paul, the *lawgiver* and the *expounder of the law*, meeting in spirit on the same mountain, and holding fellowship across a space of more than 1,500 years; the intermediate link being Elijah, the great *reviver* of the law in the prophetic period.

It is Paul who, living over again the wilderness pilgrimage of Israel, teaches us that all its incidents happened unto us for ensamples, and also that these typical histories "are written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the world are come" (1 Cor. x. 11). He points to the people as commencing their journey by a baptism unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea. He calls their manna "spiritual meat," their water from the rock "spiritual drink"; and he adds in plain exposition, "That rock was Christ."

But it is more especially the beloved John, who dilates on Jesus as the "Lamb of God (John i. 29),

slain on the altar of Abel, in the sacrifices of Noah and Abraham, and on the Passover night—all shadows of the sacrifice on Calvary, and marking the shed blood of a sinless victim, as the only porch of entrance to the privileges of the chosen people.

The Passover lamb, the heavenly manna, the “living water,” the “spiritual rock,” were all figures to convey Divine truth to the senses of a race who could only be taught by their senses, who were in their mental childhood: signs from which *they* were to look *forward*, as *we* may learn from them by looking *backward*. They were all introductory to a written law on TABLES OF STONE, which was visibly to form the character of God’s child Israel in the desert, but which had been inferentially taught also to the patriarchal world, even through the antediluvian age.

Our Lord reproaches the Sadducees with not knowing those Scriptures which they had received, because they had not deduced the doctrine of a future life from the statement, “*I am* the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.” The doctrine of the Resurrection was *there* if they had sought it out.

Let us realize the ground on which Moses and Paul thus meet in spirit. Moses led his flock from the north-eastern gulf of the Red Sea “to the back side” (or the south) of the desert of El Tih, in stony Arabia, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb, or, literally, Horeb-ward (Exod. iii. 1). We are told that Horeb is the name for the *whole* region; and you perceive there is a “mount of God” mentioned before the giving of the law. And now THE ANGEL OF THE LORD, in a flame of fire, out of the midst of a bush, called unto

Moses, twice repeating his mortal name ; and when Moses said, " Here am I," the Divine voice warned him,—

" Draw not nigh hither : put off thy shoes from off thy feet for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.

" Moreover He said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God."

The next utterance of the Divine voice was full of precious sympathy to the ear of Moses:—

" I have surely seen the affliction of my people ; I have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters ; for I KNOW THEIR SORROWS ; and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians."

The burning bush has been identified with the wild acacia, the shaggy thorn-bush—the outgrowth of these wastes—now found only on Mount Serbal. Stewart says he saw not one in the valleys about Gebel Mousa, the monkish Sinai. Here it often tangles by its desert growth into a thicket, as it spreads out its grey foliage and yellow blossoms over the sands. A slightly different species of the tree is the "shittah," or shittim wood, of which the pillars of the tabernacle were made. This tree, though the chief growth of the desert, is very rare in Palestine. The gum which exudes from it is said to be the old Arabian frankincense.

Not in any colossal form, such as the priests of Egypt figured, did God reveal His PRESENCE to Moses ; but in accordance with the scene around, from the thicket blazing with unearthly fire amid the rocky ledges of the hill-side. And of how much did the Divine voice speak to its one reverent hearer out of the bush in that single interview ! He was told to what land his people should go—whom they should conquer—and how they

should be brought forth out of Egypt. Again a window is opened in heaven, as in Job i., and Moses is permitted to perceive the intentions of God, and utters the deep whisper of his humble self-distrust—the “*Who am I?*” following the former “*Here am I,*” which marked the instrument “made meet for the Master’s service.”

Then followed a promise and a token :—

“And He said, Certainly I will be with thee ; and this shall be a token unto thee : When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God UPON THIS MOUNTAIN.”

The whole prophetic history of the Plagues of Egypt is compressed into the revelation from the burning bush. But those forty quiet years of God’s teaching had so prepared the mind of Moses against elation at being singled out as a listener to this wondrous “talk from heaven,” that his faith had not yet risen to the circumstances, and he still would shrink from the mighty call. But the “*Who am I?*” is not to hinder the “*Here am I*” ; and at last he goes to tell Jethro, his father-in-law, that he must return into Egypt ; and Jethro said to Moses, “Go in peace.”

We must not leave in haste this wondrous bush, “burning with fire, yet not consumed,” for in this symbol we have a complete picture of Israel’s history, as it is told throughout the Word of God. Here was their first experience of affliction and succour from on high, the foreshadow of how many deliverances afterwards. Here, too, was the fulfilling of what God had said to their father Abram, in his vision, amid “an horror of great darkness,” of the affliction that should befall his seed in a strange land. The cry of the commencement of the 80th Psalm, written by Ethan, the grandson of Judah, may have been that of Israel in Egypt :

"O Lord God of hosts, how long wilt thou be angry against the prayer of thy people ?

"Thou feedest them with the bread of tears, and givest them tears to drink in great measure."

And of the going forth, it is said in the 81st Psalm,

"I removed his shoulder from the burden : his hands were delivered from the pots.

"Thou calledst in trouble, and I delivered thee ; I answered thee in the secret place of thunder : I proved thee at the waters of Meribah. Selah."

Alas ! it is written in the 11th verse,

"But my people would not hearken to my voice ; and Israel would none of me.

"So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust : and they walked in their own counsels.

"Oh that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways !"

Israel in Scripture is variously represented under the symbols of this bramble-bush, and of a vine, a fig-tree, and a cedar ; shewing their rise from worldliness to a glory yet to come. Until the Lord took possession of the bramble-bush, how could it bring forth fruit ? Jesus Himself makes this reference (Luke vi. 44) :

"For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble-bush gather they grapes."

During the interval God had often called Israel His "vine," and His "fig-tree," but when He came to dwell with them and die for them on earth, He found them as from the beginning, a "bramble-bush," which deserved to have been consumed, but yet was not, and was miraculously preserved by His presence in the midst of it, by the "goodwill of Him who dwelt in the bush" (Deut. xxxiii. 16). This "goodwill" was sung in the hallelujahs of the heavenly host to shepherds watching their flocks by night on the plains of Bethlehem. (Luke ii. 14.)

Directly He did take possession of the thorn-bush it was called a vine. See the 80th Psalm :

“Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it.”

It was of His own pure “goodwill” that God elected the nation of the Hebrews to be His “first-born” among the nations—that He took of the thorn-tree, the shittah, or “shittim wood,” to make the framework of the tabernacle; and now He would remember His covenant with the fathers, Abram and Isaac, and Jacob, by keeping His promise “to the selfsame day,” at the end of the 430 years—that day, and that night, says Moses, is “to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations.” (Ex. xii. 41—42.) They had been afflicted from the time that Laban oppressed Jacob, and served in a land that was not theirs, even before the bondage in Egypt, and now they were brought forth “with a high hand and a stretched out arm.”

After the revelation of the burning bush, the first dealing of God was with Moses himself. He convinced him that He could be made at once a worker of miracles, and that he had nothing to do but to be taught and led like a little child in God’s hand, with his brother Aaron. He was to become, though he knew it not, a mediator between God and this great and sinful people; he is so called in Scripture. He prayed for them before the Lord. Aaron, his brother, was often appointed to speak for him to the people, and even to work miracles; but Aaron, as it were, dies away with his age and people. Moses is remembered through all time. All great works of leadership must be chiefly accomplished by prayer; then God supplies the able hands to execute what is devised under His direction. Moses was also a prophet, a recorder, a scribe; his education in

Pharaoh's court may have given him this faculty. He had to narrate what God's Spirit taught him. And what mighty facts formed his material—how many divine words and acts!

He was now to go and say to Pharaoh, in God's name,

"Israel is my son, even my firstborn : and I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me : and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn." (Ex. iv. 23.)

Immediately after this we read the startling announcement that at this time "the Lord met Moses in the inn and sought to kill him. His wife, Zipporah, it seems, knew why ; and she had probably resisted the wish of Moses to circumcise his son Gershom. Now in haste and fear she does it herself, and is for a time exiled from her husband, that he may be left free to his solemn mission.

The Lord cannot claim of the people an observance of which their leader does not set the example. It is now set and followed, for it is observed, Josh. v. 5,

"Now all the people that came out (of Egypt) were circumcised."

Without which the passover could not have been eaten.

"For no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof." (Ex. xii. 48.)

The companion provided of God for Moses, now appears in the story.

"And the Lord said to Aaron, Go into the wilderness to meet Moses. And he went, and met him in the mount of God, and kissed him." (Ex. iv. 27.)

During the journey of the brothers into Egypt, the Revelation of the bush was repeated by Moses to Aaron, who thus received the Divine commission ; and then began the splendid series of miracles

which announced to the great idolatrous nation that the era of the servitude of the Lord's people was over, and that Pharaoh must "let Israel go."

These miracles appear to have been not more necessary to overawe the tyrant than to instruct and impress the bondmen themselves, amongst whom the knowledge and worship of Jehovah seems to have been gradually decreasing. They were in "anguish of spirit and cruel bondage."

Think what miracles they were! it was no common river that was turned into blood, but their sacred, their fertilizing Nile! Think of their thirst when they loathed the water, in all their ponds and pools and cisterns, besides the Nile, for seven days. Think of the "vermin multiplying out of the dust of the desert sands, or the frogs putrefying in heaps by every house, and in every field, to the utter disgust of the cleanliest of ancient nations, clothed in white linen."

And then their gods were smitten—their bull Apis died, their calves, their sacred goats, their crocodiles. The garden of the East, as they thought their verdant strip of country, threading the desert with its meadows and palm-groves,—it was all laid waste, and yet Pharaoh would not let the people go.

But it came at last, that night of the Lord, remembered now so clearly, though it is 3,358 years ago, when one loud frantic funeral wail broke forth, from that of Pharaoh on his throne to that of the captive in the dungeon, for "there was not a house in which there was not one dead"; and at last, seeing, as had been foretold, the firstborn of every family cut down by the God of the Hebrews, Pharaoh hastily gave the midnight word that the Israelites should depart; "Yea, with a strong hand did he drive them out of the land;" for the stretched-out arm of Jehovah

had "smitten Egypt with all His wonders," and "THE PEOPLE" forsook "the house of bondage," in number 600,000 fighting men, besides children and a mixed multitude, who followed in their train.



The firstborn of Israel had been passed over, when the firstborn of every house in Egypt was smitten, "the chief of their strength in the tabernacles of Ham" (Ps. lxxviii. 51); and the "Lamb of God," for whose sake they had been spared, was to be slain and fed upon by every household of

Jacob for itself; *when this had been done, they could no longer remain in Egypt*. Each was to take of the blood of the lamb, and strike it on the two side-posts* and on the upper door-post of the houses wherein they should eat it, and so escape "the destroyer's" finger of death. Thus between evening and evening Moses and his people "kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest He that destroyed the firstborn should touch them" (Heb. xi. 28); and the Master, prefigured alike by the slain lamb and the "Angel of the way," more than 1,500 years afterwards, on the *same* 14th night of the month *Nisan*, directed the passover to be prepared for himself and His disciples. In the course of that night, HIMSELF, the Archetype, was arrested, tried in the morning, and in the next afternoon crucified and laid in the tomb.

The last day of the sojourn in Egypt was over, the predicted 430 years from the call of Abraham complete, and in the 14th night of the month *Nisan*, our April, then made the first month of the Jewish year, the Lord ordained a new reckoning of time for this His peculiar people.

"This month shall be *unto you* the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year *to you*." (Ex. xii. 2.)

And now, elected by most wonderful love to be a "peculiar treasure" above all people, a "kingdom of priests" and a holy nation, they began their journey as on "eagles' wings." (Ex. xix. 4.)

"Oh, Jacob, saith the Lord, I am the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee." (Isa. xliii. 3.)

They were to set forth on wilderness travel where the Lord would "furnish their table," where pure

* The accompanying sketch was made by Miss Whateley from life studies in Egypt.

crystal water would burst from the rock for them, and make streams in the desert; the "doors of heaven would be opened," and the "corn of heaven" rained down on THEM, even "angels' food;" or as the margin reads, "the bread of the mighty" (Ps. lxxviii. 25). It was like coriander seed, white, "a small round thing, as small as the hoar-frost on the ground; in taste like wafers made with honey." If they had been content with this ethereal yet substantial aliment, this corn of heaven, they would have known no disease. It was promised—

"The Lord shall bless thy bread and thy water, and I will take away sickness from the midst of thee." (Ex. xxiii. 25.)

They were to be exempt from "the diseases of Egypt;" and as they began this miracle journey, the Lord pointed their eyes to their Leader.

"Behold I send an ANGEL before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared.

"Beware of Him, and obey His voice, provoke Him not; for He will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in Him." (Ex. xxiii. 20, 21.)

God had spoken of His "NAME" to Moses from the burning bush in answer to the question:

"They shall say unto me, What is his name? What shall I say unto them?

"And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.

"And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations." (Ex. iii. 13—15.)

Surely into this "NAME" then, into its meaning, all generations should look—that vast I AM, conveyed the idea of the DIVINE PRESENCE, in all things *past*, and all things *future*. The invisible

Presence of which the heathen had made their vain symbols, in Egypt and Assyria, was the "Eternal Presence" with that people Israel—type of his spiritual people for ever. Our translators render this name **JEHOVAH**, but the Jews call it, "The unutterable word." Their historian, Josephus, says that the name was so sacred that it was forbidden to be used, except once in the year before the mercy seat. He adds, that the true mode of pronouncing it was lost, and the Hebrew now in use among the Jews is considerably altered from the time when Moses wrote; the modern Jews never use the word Jehovah, but speak of "Adonai" Lord, in its stead. They had a *superstitious* reverence for it, and have still; they thought it capable of working miracles, and desired to keep it hidden from the heathen. Deep students of Old Testament Scripture say it ought to be written "YAHVEH," or "He who will be," (the name of promise to the chosen nation—of the Christ who would come to fulfil all Old Testament prophecies. Paul declares this to be the *end* or *sum* of the conversation and teaching of the Apostles: "JESUS CHRIST, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." And our Redeemer Himself conveys to us *His own* rendering of His unutterable name, in the benignant message of Rev. i. 4, through the beloved disciple John:—

"Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come."

And now the Lord placed the sea between "the people" and their enemies. "Their persecutors thou threwest into the deeps, as a stone into the mighty waters" (Neh. ix. 11). This was the miracle that crowned all the other ten. The firstborn of Egypt had perished, but the burial alive of her peers and her princes must here attest the power of Jehovah,

and humble the pride of the kingdom whose Pharaoh had defied "the Holy One of Israel."

How is the crossing described in the song of Moses?

"With the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered together.

The floods stood upright as an heap ;

The depths were congealed in the heart of the sea.

The enemy said : I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil.

I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them.

Thou didst blow with thy wind ; the sea covered them ;

They sank as lead in the mighty waters."

(Ex. xv. 8—10.)

And thus they set forth on their way to Sinai—to the mountains of Horeb where Moses had fed his flocks, and where the Lord had met him, and told him his people should serve God "on that mountain." We give you a picture, not of the monkish Sinai on which the Roman emperor Justinian built a convent 600 years after Christ, but of the five-peaked Serbal, which has, as many believe, greater claims to be considered the mountain of the Law-giving. This is not a point on which all are agreed, and the exact position of the sacred spots of earth are almost all contested, in order, perhaps, that no place should be the object of a vain and idolatrous worship.

Henceforth this wonderful people, going forth into the desert through those crystal walls of water, had no sooner experienced hunger, than bread was rained from heaven for them, and the bitter spring of the wilderness was sweetened for their sake. This spring is still existing, and is called *Ain Howara*, the bitter well. They crossed over in one night from Africa to Asia, left the desolate and despoiled land of Egypt, and came out into the free desert,

to serve the Lord their God among mountain ranges of wild and awful grandeur. Eye-witnesses have thus described them.

"I stand," says one traveller, "upon one of the peaks of Sinai, where Moses stood when he talked with the Almighty. Can this naked rock have been indeed the witness of that great interview between man and his Creator, on the morning that was ushered in with terrible thunders and lightnings, with the thick clouds resting on the mountain's brow? Yes! This is the holy mountain; and no fitter place on all the earth could have been chosen, for the manifestation of Divine power. I have stood on the summit of the giant Etna, and looked over the clouds floating beneath it,—upon the bold scenery of Sicily. I have climbed Vesuvius, and looked down upon the waves of lava, and the ruined and half-recovered cities at its foot: but these are nothing compared to the terrific solitude and bleak majesty of Sinai. It is a perfect sea of desolation. Not a tree, or shrub, or blade of grass is to be seen upon the bare and rugged sides of innumerable mountains, heaving their naked summits to the skies; while the crumbling masses of granite around, and the distant view of the Syrian desert, with its boundless waste of sands, form the wildest and most dreary, the most terrific and desolate picture the imagination can conceive."

Other travellers describe the view from the summit of Serbal as the grandest, though the most desolate, to be found upon the earth's surface. The easternmost and highest peak is ascended by a mighty flight of rock stairs which wind round its shoulder.



WADY FRIRAN IN ARABIA.

THE TIMES WHEN THE PENTATEUCH BEGAN TO BE WRITTEN.

FROM EGYPT TO SINAI.

No. VII.

It is well for us who can look back upon the life of Moses from the heights of the New Testament days. The last time he is named in Scripture is more than 1500 years after his death, in the Revelation of Jesus Christ unto the Apostle John. The song of Moses, "the servant of God," is sung on the "sea of glass," to "harps of gold," with a yet greater song, "the song of the Lamb," "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." The song is thus summed up in the book of Revelation (xv. 3, 4):—

"Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest."

This is also the spirit of the song in Exodus xv., when God's judgments were made manifest on Egypt, and when "all nations" were Moab and Edom, and Canaan and Assyria. Those who sing the song of Moses must be the children of Israel. (See Rev. xiv. 3; and vii. 4.)

Let us now go back to his first song. We have seen how the Israelites entered the Red Sea as a nation of slaves, and emerged from it as free men,

for their oppressors lay all "dead on the sea shore," and we must now follow them in their pilgrimage, after their song of triumph in the 15th chapter of Exodus.

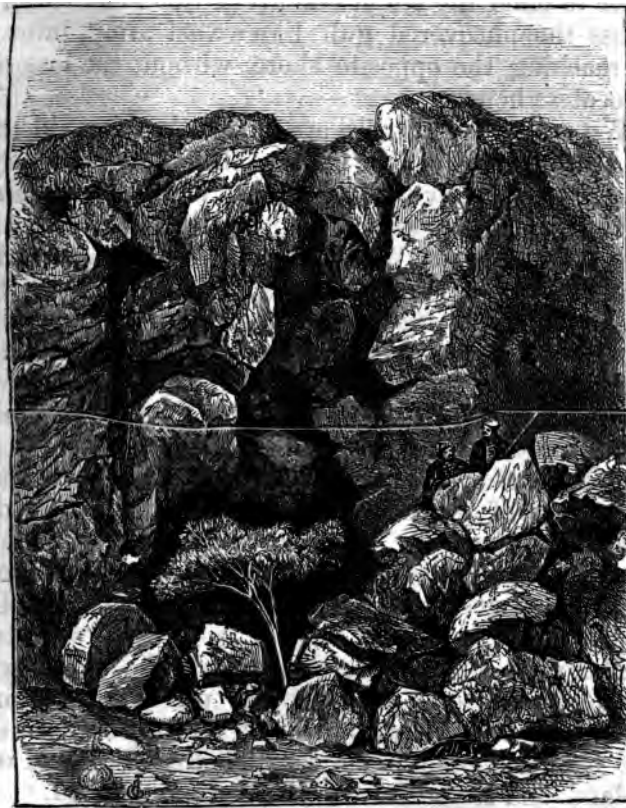
We hear but of *three* songs in the wilderness: the song after crossing the Red Sea, the song of the well at Beer-sheba, and the song before the ascent of Nebo. There are thirty-nine years between the first and the last song of praise. We complain, as "the people" did, oftener than we give thanks, during the process of *our* training in the wilderness, and while the Egyptian in our characters is dying out under God's discipline; but when the lesson is taught us to say in all things, "Not our will, but thine be done," we are near to the Promised Land. We have ~~to learn~~ to draw water from the wells of salvation, ~~and the~~ way to do this is to betake ourselves ~~diligently~~ to the study of God's holy Word. We must ~~dig~~ into that well, from whence all the streams of truth flow. It is not enough to know from the Scriptures merely the way of life. They must be *searched for* those truths that lie deeper beneath their surface.

Have we not observed that Christians whose minds are occupied by the study of God's Word, and who are patiently digging into it, are the happiest and most fruitful Christians? Their "hearts are enlarged," they will seldom be offended or perplexed about their own frames and feelings; they are drinking of the living water that ~~springs~~ up as they dig. Most of the evils within us and around us, arise from our PARTIAL knowledge of the Word of God.

We must realize "the people" as a whole nation encamped on the Egyptian side of the Red Sea, in Wady Tarawik, or "The Valley of the Nocturnal Travellers." Here is commemorated by its Arabic

name "the night" of Exod. xii. 42 ; that night of the Lord to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations.

Captain Moresby has laid down Wady Tarawik in his chart as Wady Mousa, corresponding with "Ayun Mousa," the wells on the opposite coast.



AYUN MOUSA, THE WELLS OF MOSES.

Here is a sketch of Ayun Mousa, or the Wells of Moses, by Miss Whateley, during her stay in Cairo.

"When I asked our sheikh," says Dr. Wilson, "if this name was correct, he said, 'This is indeed the path of our Lord Moses.'" The Wady Tarawik, or Mousa, is eighteen miles in length—the only level and open space in which two millions of people with their tents and flocks could encamp, in order to enter the sea at one given time, and march across the uncovered gulf like a vast army, intent on reaching the opposite shore, without the loss of a needless hour.

We are told that there are on the Arabian side of the sea, six "wadys," or landing places, facing Wady Tarawik:—1. Ayun Mousa. 2. Wady Reiyaneh, derived from *ar rani*, "the people," THE VALLEY OF THE PEOPLE. 3. Wady Kurdhiyeh, from *Kardah*, THE VALLEY OF THE CONGREGATION. 4. Wady el Ahtha, from *ati atiu*, "a pilgrim," THE VALLEY OF THE PILGRIMS. 5. Wady Sudr, from *sadar*, OUT OF THE WATER, "a road leading men up from the water." 6. Wady Wardan, from *wardan*, THE VALLEY OF DESCENT INTO THE WATER.

"Can these local names," it is asked, "facing the very scene of the Scripture miracle, have come together by chance? Can the Scripture terms, the 'People,' the 'Pilgrims,' occur on the very scene of the Exode, yet have no reference to God's people Israel?"

The map of the desert in which the Israelites wandered for forty years, is now presented to you, it includes a region of but about 160 miles long and 130 broad, a space much smaller than Scotland or Ireland, and if you turn to the map on page 14, you will see this same region represented only as a tiny corner of the wide country of Arabia.



"Ayun Mousa," says Miss Whateley, "is supposed by many to be the first well at which they drank after thus crossing the sea. Marah was three days' journey from the coast, and they could not have gone three days without drinking; and it is not unlikely, as this well is only a very short distance from the place where they must have crossed, that they stopped and filled their water-skins and pitchers, and with that aid reached 'Marah;' for it is only on arriving *there* that we hear that they murmured.

"From Ayun Mousa we pass to Wady Shudh, probably the same as the wilderness of Shur."

"Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur."—Ex. xv. 22.

And now then began the "great and terrible wilderness," with its towering mounds of rough sand, its stupendous precipices of half-baked rocks, and in the distance wild brown spectral mountains. These were the "ragged rocks" (Isa. ii. 21), with their summits of spikes or tall spires, and their vast sides furrowed by enormous quarries, dug side by side in succession for miles—"a land of deserts and of PITS" (Jer. ii. 6). The limestone ranges of the Tih, so near the Valley of the Nile, furnished the stones that built the pyramids.

In this wilderness Israel soon began to hunger and thirst; and even after the healing of the bitter waters of Marah, and the refreshment of the twelve wells of water, and the seventy palm trees of Elim, at the expiration of the first fortnight they murmured a second time, saying,

"Would God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt! When we sat by the fleshpots, and when we did eat bread to the full." (Ex. xvi. 3.)

They forgot it had been the bread of suffering and slavery, and oh ! how undeservedly did God reply to this "murmuring" with the mercy of the "manna," and thereby teach them afresh the law of His Sabbath which had been first instituted in Eden. They were to gather up a double portion of this sustenance on the sixth day for the seventh. The prophet Ezekiel, in referring to the early portion of their history, records the words of Jehovah, "I gave them My Sabbaths to be a sign between Me and them" (Ezek. xx. 12), and in the same chapter it is *four* times mentioned.

"My Sabbaths they greatly polluted....for their eyes were after their fathers' idols."

But they were on their way to the mountain of the Law-giving, and having murmured and received the manna in the wilderness of Sin, it is said they pitched next in REPHIDIM, and that there was no water for the people to drink ; and again they chide with Moses, saying,

"Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?" (Exod. xvii. 3.)

We have scarcely an idea in the cool countries of the West what thirst like theirs could be.

"It is impossible to conceive the weariness" (says Bartlett in his "Forty Days in the Desert") "that is felt by the solitary wanderer in this great and terrible wilderness. Ravine succeeds to ravine, with its bed of sand or gravel, overhung with mountains, whose bold, awful, abrupt forms, with their colouring of brown, black, red, and yellow, glare under the fiery sun like a portion of some early world untenanted by man. The silent footfall of the camel passes noiselessly from morn to night among the voiceless crags. It is then we remem-

ber and realize the incidents of Israel's toilsome march, and understand their horror at being transported from verdant Egypt into the heart of solitudes so deep.

'So lonely 'tis that God Himself
Scarce seemeth there to be.'

"How blissful is the sudden change to WADY FEIRAN ! 'Most like a poet's dream' it burst upon us. The cliffs around still towering indeed bare and perpendicular, but instead of a gravelly valley there arose as by enchantment tufted groves of palm and fruit trees. Presently a stream of running water led us on to the shade and the verdure of the Valley of Feiran.

"There in the heart of the wilderness of rock and sand, when weary of the stunted bush and nauseous scanty pool, I pitched my tent beneath a group of palms which bent to shelter it ; the spring came down the valley, and, rippling among green sedges, formed a small transparent basin at the foot of a fragment of limestone rock fallen from the mountain wall above, and was decorated like a natural altar with freshest foliage. The camels were scattered about the bowery thickets, cropping the thick blossom with avidity, and the Arabs revelled around.

"My oasis of palms was not a solitary group. On stepping out from my tent I was in an almost tropical wilderness. In the palm groves of Egypt the stumps are trimmed and straight, but here this most graceful of trees is all untended ; its boughs spring direct from the earth, and form tufts and avenues and over-arching bowers, through which sunlight falls tremblingly on the shaded turf. Among them some few branches shooting upright,

lift high above the rest their lovely coronal of rustling fans and glowing branches of dates. Some droop to the ground like wavy plumes, others form mossy alleys resounding with the songs of birds. The wind plays over the rustling foliage with the gentlest murmurs; fig, pomegranate, and acacia mingle their foliage with the palm, and here in its season is seen the waving corn. Where else did Israel grow the corn that was ordered, in Lev. ii. 14, to be offered with their meat-offerings to the Lord?

"Now for the ownership and sole possession of such a stream, was it not probable that the sons of the desert would speedily strive?

"‘Then came Amalek,’ says Moses, ‘and fought with Israel in Rephidim,’ Exod. xvii. 8.”

There *was* an ancient Amalek race for whom we may look back as early as Abram’s time (Gen. xiv. 7), and it is said they were descended from HAM, but a second race so called were descended from Esau, Jacob’s brother; and there would have been quite time for the multiplication of this race into a warlike host in 150 years ere they fought Israel in Rephidim, as we find that in the same period the tribe of Ephraim could muster 40,500 fighting men (Num. i. 33). Amalek is spoken of in Judges as in connection with Moab and Midian; and “all the children of the east, lying in the valley like grasshoppers for multitude, and their camels as the sand of the sea.” They seem to have followed Israel out of the wilderness of Sin, and fallen upon their rear while the foremost were pressing towards the newborn flood. “He met thee by the way,” says Moses afterwards to Israel (Deut. xxv. 18), “and smote the hindmost of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee. When thou wast faint and

weary, and he feared not God. . . . Therefore thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven."

In the prophecy of Obadiah it is said of Edom, or Esau (the grandfather of Amalek),

"For thy violence against thy brother Jacob shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever...."

In the first battle of Israel with their enemies success appears to have depended entirely on Moses, who watched the strife from a neighbouring hill, with the rod of God in his hand (Exod. xvii. 8, 13). On the appeal to Divine power, symbolized by the lifting of that rod, everything rested.

There exists a remarkable lonely hill, called Jebel Muthbah, overlooking the valley of Feiran, (which is supposed to be the scriptural Rephidim) at the point where Wady Natet and Wady Feiran join, and which would answer exactly to the hill where Moses sat, while Aaron and Hur held up his weary hands. The broad plain below, is said by Dr. Stewart, who has seen it, to be just fitted for a battle field; and on its borders he saw cairns or heaps of stones thrown together, which, according to the Arabs, are very ancient—and they were accustomed to call them, in their language, "The graves of the Jews," though Stewart thinks them quite as likely to have been the graves of Amalek, here defeated by the prayer of Moses and the early prowess of Joshua.

Dr. Stewart journeyed on through the countless windings of the valley, thinking of that hill of prayer, and how the stream from the smitten rock must have run down this valley towards the thirsty, murmuring crowds; and that along it old Jethro brought his daughter and his grandsons to

restore them to the leader of the Lord's hosts. He pressed onward to the site of the old city of Feiran, which was a place of great importance about 500 years after Christ, and for many centuries afterwards; being the seat of a bishop and the abode of a Christian population long ere the patronage of a Roman emperor bade Ghebel Mousa to be considered the true Sinai, and when SERBAL was reckoned the "Mount of God."

There is no mention of the name of Feiran in Scripture, but there *is* of "Paran," which is considered, by the best geographers to be the old form of the same.

"Wady Feiran (or Paran) cannot be Rephidim," say some, "for there must always have been water here," and

"In Rephidim there was no water for the people to drink."

Yet was it not surely once the waterless waste which the 17th chapter of Exodus describes it? and are we not told of the time when the streams which have nursed the palm groves of this noble oasis *first sprang into being*? We can look for the evidence in the Book of Psalms.

See Ps. cv. 41:—

"He opened the rock: and the waters gushed out: they ran in the dry places like a river."

In Ps. lxxviii. 15, 16:—

"He clave the rocks in the wilderness, and gave them drink: as out of the great depths.

"He brought streams also out of the rock, and caused waters to run down like rivers."

The latter part of Psalm cvii. relates exclusively to Israel in the wilderness, and its record is as follows:—

“He maketh the wilderness a standing water,
 And water springs of a dry ground ;
 And there He setteth the hungry,
 That they may build them a city to dwell in :
 That they may sow their land and plant vineyards,
 To yield them fruits of increase.”

“Now Wady Feiran is attested to be the only spot in the Sinai desert where water-springs run like rivers ; where an ancient city exists, or ever did exist ; or where corn did, or ever could grow.”

Do we not read the history of its miraculous source in Exod. xvii. in the hour when God said, “*I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb.* Take with thee the elders of Israel, and thy rod wherewith thou smotest the river ; take it in thine hand and go.” Was not this the converse miracle to that of the Red Sea ? The Lord bound the sea by the rod of Moses, and made a dry path through its billows, and again He burst rocky bars, and let flow “the fountain of Israel,” which Paul tells us followed them in them in their wanderings, a type of Christ ; they doubtless returned to its refreshing borders and also to the neighbouring Wady Hebron for many parts of the thirty-eight years during which they did *not* journey to the Promised Land—and in this time each of them who was older than twenty when he came out of Egypt, except Joshua and Caleb, found a grave in the scorching sands.

It is certain, from Deut. ix. 21, that “a running brook descended out of Mount Horeb” after Moses had smitten it, and that this brook became a broad stream in the valley beneath, upon whose waters Moses cast the dust of the golden calf, and which gave space for all the children of Israel to drink of the waters thus sprinkled. The stream of Wady Feiran runs now for six miles through the valley.

And upon that fertile valley (the Arab paradise of palms) the five rugged spires of SERBAL still

frown down in their magnificence. The Israelites appear to have left the borders of the stream and gone on to the desert of Sinai (Ex. xix. 2), and then Israel camped before the mount. The "wilderness of Sinai" would mean the desert plain around the mountain, whichever mountain the true Sinai might be.

"From Wady Feiran," says Dr. Stewart, "we turned to the right into Wady Aleyat, which leads directly up to the base of Serbal. I should reckon the length of this valley to be about four miles, and there is ample space to have contained the tents of all the tribes of Israel. It is one vast chaos of ruins, of rocks precipitated from the face of the mountain above by some great convulsion of nature. The face of the perpendicular summit towers 2000 feet in height above this mountain valley. From every part of the Wady Aleyat, SERBAL can be seen; there are no projecting spurs to hide his summits; the precipitous sides rise clear from the rough ground, and the propriety of the inspired description is fully realized, 'the mount that might be touched.'"

These "avalanches" of rock and stone have now so covered Wady Aleyat as to suggest the idea that the clouds must have some time rained down boulders instead of hailstones. Yet it is not deficient in verdure, and scattered over its surface also are the Saut or *Shittah* trees of Scripture, "not one of which trees," says Dr. Stewart, "are found in the plain of El Rahah, or in the Wadys round Gebel Mousa."

There are those who see in these appearances "the standing result and evidence of the shock which the mountain experienced at the GIVING OF THE LAW," when Scripture tells us it was shaken to its foundations—"And the whole mount quaked greatly" (Exod. xix. 18). This must have resembled an earthquake, yet there are no signs of volcanic agency throughout the region. "The

earth trembled and shook" (Ps. lxxvii. 18), says the Psalmist long afterwards, in reference to the events of the Exodus; and the witness of Paul follows (Heb. xii. 26), "Whose voice then shook the earth." "The shivered rocks are thrown down by Him," says the prophet Nahum (i. 6). If a certainty of the locality of the Law-giving is still recoverable by actual record in Scripture signs, MOUNT SERBAL IS THE TRUE MOUNT SINAI.

Now let us see what Scripture says about Paran. It mentions Mount Paran and the wilderness of Paran as distinct from the wilderness of Sin on the Edom side, and the wilderness of Shur on the Egypt side of the desert. It was therefore probably more central, and concluded to be the wilderness of El Tih, fronting the ranges of the Horeb mountains—that arid table land of limestone, "that great and terrible wilderness" of Deut. i. 19.

But what does Scripture say of *Mount Paran*? Different travellers, who have only been able to undertake the fatigue and expense of going up one or other of the mountains claiming to be *the true Sinai*, are likely each to suppose it the one they ascended. But God speaks of "Mount Paran"; and if Wady Feiran be Wady Paran, the Mount Paran of Scripture probably looks down upon it, as Serbal does upon Feiran. Moses himself thus far supplies information (Deut. xxxiii. 2):—

"And he said, The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; He shined forth from Mount Paran, and He came with ten thousands of saints: from His right hand went a fiery law for them. Yea, He loved the people; all His saints are in thy hand: and they sat down at thy feet; every one shall receive of thy words."

The prophet Habakkuk says (chap. iii. 3—6):

"God came from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth

was full of His praise. And His brightness was as the light; He had horns coming out of His hand: and there was the hiding of His power. Before Him went the pestilence, and burning coals went forth at His feet. He stood, and measured the earth: He beheld, and drove asunder the nations; and the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow: His ways are everlasting."

There is yet one remarkable feature of this region to notice, which in a very singular manner illustrates the first recorded journey of the Israelites in the wilderness.

All along the line of march you see marked on the map—and *only in that line*, as far as we know at present—there are certain mysterious writings on the rocks, which have excited the attention of travellers from the time of Cosmas, who noticed them about 500 years after Christ. Their *age* and *meaning* are still supposed to be a great problem, but their existence is unquestioned. Cosmas called them Hebrew inscriptions, and considered they had been preserved "for the sake of unbelievers" in Moses. They remained unnoticed till the present century, when Professor Beer of Germany rejected the idea of Cosmas, and supposed them to belong to a little before or after the time of Christ, and to have been made by Nabatheans (Esau's descendants), early Christians or Pagans—by any hands but those of Israel.

The general sense, as rendered by Professor Beer, is as follows:

"Omai, son of Wál, desires that he may be remembered."

Or,

"Let be remembered for good Aus(u), the son of Hers(u)."

Or,

"Peace be to—so and so."

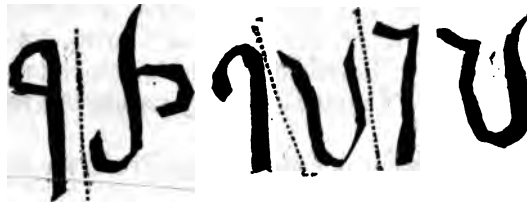
You may see a specimen of these characters on a

fragment of red sandstone on the shelves of the Egyptian Gallery of the British Museum.



SINAITIC INSCRIPTION IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

And here is one on a larger scale—a specimen of 470 similar inscriptions which the French Government caused to be moulded in plaster by M. Lottin de Laval, from the rocks themselves, in the year 1856, and which therefore must be accurate.



SINAITIC INSCRIPTION.

Let us notice where these writings are found. Commencing near Suez, the Wadys Wardan, Maghara, Mokatteb, Feiran, and Aleyat, are all full of them—Mokatteb especially, which means “*The Written Valley*”; so is “Wady Aleyat,” which leads up to the five-peaked SERBAL, whose two easternmost summits are covered with them also. They are found on the second peak from the west, on the top of the third or central peak, and innumerable inscriptions clothe the northern side of the mountain.

They are written upon hundreds of the fallen stones in Wady Aleyat, so that it seems as if every second stone was inscribed. They are on blocks of trapstone, black on the surface, but lemon-coloured inside; and the black surface throws out the lemon-coloured characters.

It is very remarkable that no inscriptions are found either on Gebel Mousa or on Mount St. Catherine.

What do they mean? The Rev. Charles Forster, a clergyman of the Church of England, has spent years in attempting to decipher them; and by means of old Arabic, Ethiopic, and Hebrew alphabets, he thinks he reads them, and has written three books upon them; one book he dedicates to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

The two first characters on the right hand of each of the specimens we have given you on p. 136 he considers to mean “THE PEOPLE.” They are very often repeated everywhere.

On the smaller stone Mr. Forster reads—

“The People kicketh like an Ass;
The People drives to the water JEHOVAH.”

And on the larger—

“Causes to descend into the deep valley, MOSES, the Tribes

"Leader of the way—he causes to descend into the deep the young ostrich, the sea foaming

"Divides it asunder, power given him by God."

A great number of the inscriptions are attended by a rough drawing of the event or circumstance to which they allude. "The People," "the Tribes," are most often depicted as a restive camel, a wild ass, a wild goat, headstrong and kicking; and are described as reviling, murmuring, or greedy. Unlike the vainglorious Egyptians, from whom they came out, who never recorded their own defects, the whole scope of this rock-witness (if read aright by Mr. Forster) is one extensive epitaph on the generation who fell in the wilderness—the fathers of the race who, better trained and desert-bred, attained the Promised Land. The following is the tenor of the translation given to many of the inscriptions:—

"The people, the Hebrews, lusting after Egypt, fall into commotion."

"The people, a yearling wild ass—headstrong, mindless, and mad."

"The people railleth, reviling, cursing aloud, a braying ass, vociferous."

"The people, a lean, emaciated she-camel, goes forth into the desert a roarer—a she-camel with a murmuring mouth."

"The people devour greedily and enormously."

"Roars the huge unbroken she-camel, angering JEHOVAH. Rebellious in the burning desert."

"Subdued by thirst, the high-humped she-camel speeds with long steps."

A very large number of the inscriptions also bear testimony to the grand miracles of the EXODUS:—

PASSING THROUGH THE RED SEA.

"The sea enters by night the people; the sea, and the waves roaring."

"Divideth asunder the leader the sea, its waves roaring. Enter and pass through the midst of the waters, the people."

"The people pass quickly over through terror, like a horse; the soft wet mud at the bottom of the sea."

"Weep for their dead, the enemies; the virgins wailing. The sea pouring down, overwhelmed them; let loose to reflow the waters."

"Fleeth the people; descend into the deep the tribes. Enter the waters, the people."

"The people enter, and penetrate through the midst."

"The people are filled with stupor and mental perturbation, JEHOVAH although their keeper and companion."

WATER FROM THE ROCK.

Numbers of the writings are said to refer to the gift of water from the rock:—

"The people the hard stone satiates with water, thirsting."

"The hard rock water—a great miracle."

"The people wending on their way drink, drinking with prone mouth, gives them to drink again and again, JEHOVAH."

"The people in the waterless desert, swill drinking again and again, the people a roarer, the water flowing in the desert, drink like the camel in one long draught."

Mr. Forster's translations, however, though very interesting, are not universally believed in. That the inscriptions *exist* is certain, and on the route of the journey of Israel as described in the Book of Exodus; and therefore we have told you of them.

A learned Jew of the present day makes the following remarks on these inscriptions as alluded to in Scripture:—

"There is a remarkable and interesting episode in the sacred narrative of Num. xi. 25—30. When the Spirit of the Lord had been poured out upon the seventy elders, they went up to the tabernacle to prophesy, two out of their number remaining behind—Eldad and Medad—though the Spirit it is said, rested upon them also, 'and *they were of them that were written.*' This phrase is confessedly obscure.

It has been understood to refer to certain tickets or tablets inscribed by Moses with the word 'elder,' and given to each of the seventy as their passport to office."

This learned Jew, to whom of course Hebrew is a native tongue, discovers in the phrase in question a reference to the Sinaitic inscriptions. For the rendering, "They were of them that were written," he would substitute the following, which he says is the *literal* translation of the words: "They were among the ethoobeem, or inscriptions."

"On examining what different travellers have written about the locality of those inscriptions," says Dr. Margoliouth, "I am convinced that Eldad and Medad were then, in that famous region, at the awfully memorable place Kibroth-hataavah, one of the spots where the inscriptions are found."

These curious writings make one think of Job (chap. xix., vers. 23, 24), when we read:

"Oh that my words were now written!...that they were *graven* with an *iron pen* and lead in the rock for ever!"

And Jeremiah xvii. 1, which says:

"The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron and with the point of a diamond" (or nails, as the margin reads).

If the age of Job is admitted—and he alludes to such writings—why may not these inscriptions be as old as the hieroglyphs of idolatrous Egypt?

Their numbers are computed by thousands, their extent by miles, and they are often placed fathoms, not feet, above the valley floors. How can they have been the pastime of chance pilgrims or travellers? And if they are the work of the Nabatheans, it is very strange that the great mass of them is found on the *Egyptian* side of the peninsula, in the very route of the Israelitish wanderings as recorded by Moses.





SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH.

THE TIMES WHEN THE PENTATEUCH BEGAN TO BE WRITTEN.

THE GIVING OF THE LAW ON MOUNT SINAI.

No. VIII.

NEVER yet in the history of the world has such another scene been recorded as we find in the 19th chapter of Exodus, when all Israel were assembled in the desert plain before the Mount Sinai, alone with God—with God, who had proved to them that He was the only God, and that *they* were His chosen people.

He had divided the very sea to let them pass into that secret shrine of His presence, and by the natural grandeur of such a miracle had prepared their minds to listen to His mighty words from heaven. The writings of an ancient people remain upon the rocks that witnessed that solemn interview between Jehovah and the trembling sons of men—if Aleyat is the wilderness, and Serbal the Sinai; but we are not yet infallibly assured *who* were the writers, and the *certainty* of the reading is also lost.

On the other hand, there were two Tables of Stone, which were actually “graven” by the finger of God; and though these remain *not*, or have been

hidden for ages from mortal sight,* yet the LAW they embodied is certain and true, and is set before the eyes of all nations, in every language into which the books of Moses have been rendered.

Our Lord Jesus, when in the fulness of time He appeared upon the earth, the Jehovah of the wilderness, "taking upon Him the form of a servant," referred to those two tables of the Law, and revealed to a later age the whole spirit and meaning of His *Ten Commandments*, when He simplified them for His disciples into *two*.

"Jesus said unto him" (the lawyer who asked which was the greatest commandment) "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

"This is the first and great commandment.

"And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

"On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

Now all the words of men may perish, but "the word of the Lord endureth for ever."

* The Book of Maccabees is one of the Apocryphal, or non-inspired books, which are not included in our common English Bible, but which contain, however, very valuable portions of Jewish history during the 400 years that lie between the closing of the last inspired book of the Old Testament by the prophet Malachi and the Gospel narrative of St. Matthew in the New Testament. In the 2nd chapter of the 2nd book of Maccabees, it is written that the prophet Jeremiah, "being warned of God, came forth from Jerusalem to the mountain where Moses went up and saw the inheritance of God" (viz., Nebo, or Pisgah). "And when Jeremiah came thither he found a hollow cave; and he carried in thither the tabernacle and the ark, and the altar of incense, and stopped the door. Then some of them that followed him came up to mark the place, but they could not find it. And Jeremiah blamed them, saying, The place shall be unknown till God gather together the Congregation of the People and receive them to mercy: and then the Lord will shew these things." (See p. 158 of this Tract.)

Those two Tables were an all-comprehending code of duty to God and duty to man ; and on this Law, given by God to Moses, *all* law (worth the name), in *all* countries, has more or less been founded.

The first table, containing the *first four* and longest commandments were meant to separate God's people Israel from the heathen corrupters of the truth which Noah taught at Shinar :—

“THOU SHALT HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME.”

This had been taught in the ten plagues where-with the Lord had overcome Pharaoh ; and the first commandment is introduced by the reminder—

“I am the Lord thy God, that brought thee out of the house of bondage.”

The second commandment of God relates also to Himself, and declares His jealousy of His people bowing down to any graven image or likeness of a god, which it was the habit of the heathen nations to make and to worship.

The third commandment forbade the irreverent use of His own Holy Name. The people were to fear (as Moses again tells them—Deut. xxviii. 18) that glorious and fearful name, “THE LORD THY GOD,” and forbear to utter it lightly, or “to take that name in vain.”

Having thus fenced off His NAME, the fourth commandment of God concerns His DAY—one day in seven. All nations count their time by periods of seven days, which is a most trusty voucher for the truth of Moses. The seventh day had been set apart in Eden, and was doubtless observed in the household of every holy patriarch.

It is afresh and especially mentioned in Exodus as a gift from the Lord to His people, and mentioned by Himself :—

“See, for that the Lord hath given you the Sabbath, therefore He giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days.” (Exod. xvi. 29.)

Having thus declared to Israel *first* their duty to HIMSELF, the second table—of the short commandments—begins with their consequent duty to their fellow-men. As if it had been said, “Let the man who has no god before ME—who makes no graven image, even of ME—who reverences my NAME, and thankfully observes my DAY,—let him also manifest the piety of the patriarchal age. Let him honour his father and his mother; and as regards all his fellow-men, let him tread the round of all the moral virtues, and avoid the sins of violence, of impurity, of dishonesty, of untruth, and of secret avarice and selfishness.

“Let him do no murder.

“Let him not commit adultery.

“Let him not steal.

“Let him not bear false witness.

“Let him not covet aught that is his neighbour’s.”

The law contained in these two tables *spans all ages*. Every child of God to this day aims to keep it, though he does not expect to be saved by doing so. “The law,”—says St. Paul—“the law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ.” And Christ said, “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, but to fulfil.”

The law of Moses chiefly met the corruption of man’s heart, and sought to restrain it by a series of “*shall not*s.” The first mention of “law” in the Old Testament is when Joseph made a law over the land of Egypt, that Pharaoh should have a fifth part of the harvest (Gen. xlvii. 27), but the Holy Ghost speaks, in Paul’s Epistle to the Romans, of

Gentiles who having not the law did by nature some things contained in the law, showing the work of the law written in their hearts.

This is a reference surely to relics of the lost image of God in man's soul, and may apply to Noah's generation as well as that of Paul.

It is very interesting to think on what must have been the memories of the world's new fathers coming down from Ararat. They had many memories of *evil*; let us trace from the facts recorded, *how much* of God's law as given by Moses, must have been written upon their hearts and consciences.

The law of the Sabbath, the seventh day of rest, had been revealed to Adam by example, and the law of holy marriage. Shem and Japheth evidently respected the law of reverence to parents, when Ham would have had them despise Noah. Noah had been in the sight of God a "just" and an "upright" man, and, as far as he could, had commanded his household after him; therefore as knowing good from evil, he and his would have respected the laws of *truth* and the rights of *property*. They would have thought it wrong to steal, to take a neighbour's wife, to bear false witness, or to covet what was not theirs. In their hearts were written the germs of most of the commandments afterwards uttered by angels from Mount Sinai.

At the time of the new covenant with Noah a law was given with emphasis against murder, and against eating blood for food; the latter injunction being observed by the posterity of Shem at the present day.

The Apostles tell us that

"Sin is the transgression of the law." (1 John iii. 4.)

That

"Death entered into the world by sin." (Rom. iv. 12.)

And that

“Death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the likeness of Adam’s transgression.”

In Adam all die, and if *death* reigned, we know that *sin* reigned, not only for the sake of Adam’s sin, but from the transgression by corruption and violence, of a law of purity and mercy originally written in their hearts, when they were created in the image of God. We are sure that these principles were well understood and witnessed unto, by the sons of God, and especially by the line of Seth. Though not preserved *to us* in any written code, the patriarchs, the father-rulers, must have announced them to their households, and sin was the transgression of that law.

We will now try and imagine from inspired description, the scene of the Law-giving from heaven to the people of Israel, one of the most awfully sublime in the annals of the world. King David refers to it 500 years afterwards, in his Psalm lxxviii. 17 :

“The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angel: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place.”

Moses alludes, as we have seen, to the presence of “ten thousand of saints” (Deut. xxxiii.), who must have been the redeemed of the patriarchal age. He had brought the people forth out of the camp to meet with God (xix. 17). They had departed from Rephidim, or Wady Feiran, and were “camped before the mount in the desert of Sinai (xix. 2), which was probably,” (says Dr. Stewart,) “all the desert to the south of Wady Feiran.”

He adds, “The two things required to fix this locality are a mountain sufficiently lofty and isolated

to be seen from the region lying round its base; and secondly, a valley or valleys among the mountains large enough to contain the tents of Israel, and visible through all their extent from the mountain top. Serbal alone is such a mountain; and Wady Aleyat and Wady Rimm run up to its very base." Wady Aleyat being four miles in length, and Serbal towering 2000 feet above it, with no projecting spurs to hide his summits, is preeminently "the mount that might be touched," as St. Paul calls it (Heb. xii. 18), and that required "bounds to be set all roundabout": for the Lord said,—

"Whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death. There shall not an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether it be beast or man, it shall not live" (Ex. xix. 13).

The people "stood therefore at the nether part of the mount" (ver. 17), and it is not now the "bush," but the mountain itself that burns with the presence of the Lord. "The Lord descended upon it in fire" (ver. 18), with thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount; and the voice of a trumpet sounding long, and waxing louder and louder . . . and the smoke of Mount Sinai ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly, as the chaos of ruins in Wady Aleyat still testify.

Dr. Stewart declares that words are too feeble to portray a thunderstorm which he experienced in that region; the "thunderbolts whose echoes were bandied from craig to craig as they rushed along the Wady, while they swept like a whirlwind among the mighty peaks above, and burst again with undiminished violence through some yawning cleft till the ground trembled with the concussion. It seemed as if all the mountains of the peninsula

were answering one another. Ever and anon a flash of lightning dispelled the pitchy darkness; then again, the crashing thunder-peals scattered their echoes to the four quarters of the heavens, and overpowered the loud howlings of the wind." This was the very scene of the "blackness and darkness and tempest," which was so terrible that it made Moses say, "I exceedingly fear and quake" (Heb. xii. 21).

And now to the sound of the trumpet was added "the voice of words," of which Moses said,—

"Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and lived?" (Deut iv. 33.)

"The Lord talketh with you face to face in the mount out of the midst of the fire.

"And I stood between the Lord and you at that time, to shew you the word of the Lord: for ye were afraid by reason of the fire." (Deut. v. 4.)

The utterance of this word was by angels, according to St. Paul in Hebrews ii. 2, and in Acts vii. 53, Stephen tells his persecutors that "their fathers received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it."

The law was ordained by angels, in the hand of a Mediator, and so awful was each myriad-spoken tone (Gal. iii. 19), that the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God was (Ex. xx. 21).

The name of Moses is linked for ever with the giving of the Law. We hear in Scripture of the "law of Moses," though the children of Israel are never called the children of Moses, but the children of Abraham.

Moses is the man who was led into a closer communication with the invisible and spirit world, than was vouchsafed to any other man in the Old Testa-

ment dispensation. He was—what was he not? leader and prophet, priest and king, law-giver and poet.

There are three eras in his life of forty years:—

His first forty, in the land of Egypt.

The second forty, as a shepherd in Midian.

The third forty, as a leader of the people.

And the last forty years may again have three divisions:—

The six weeks' march from Egypt to Sinai, and the year at its base.

The thirty-eight years' wanderings from Sinai to Kadesh.

The last year of conquest of Eastern Palestine.

During all this last forty years, Moses was preserved in intimate communion with God. He knew God, not as any other prophet in a vision and a dream: "My servant Moses is not so," says the Lord (Numbers xii. 7), "with him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold."

The Mussulman to this day calls him El Kelim Allah: "The spoken to by God."

This Divine speech or revelation happened, as we have seen, in four ways.—

1. In the burning bush.
2. In the thick dark thunder-cloud.
3. In the mount, on the two occasions of his forty days' fasting.
4. In the tabernacle between the Cherubim.

The book of Exodus may be divided into two parts: the historical and the legislative. The historical is comprised in the first eighteen chap-

ters. The law is given from the 19th to the 50th chapters.

The first nineteen chapters relate to—

The increase of the people.

The birth of Moses, and his education.

His Divine call and training in the desert.

The ten plagues of Egypt.

The Passover, and flight of the people.

The journey from Egypt to Sinai.

Records of Marah and Rephidim, of Amalek and Jethro, of the Manna and the Quails.

The second portion records—

The institution of the Theocracy, or government of God—over a kingdom of priests—a holy nation.

Jehovah reveals His presence on Mount Sinai, and then ordains for Himself a tabernacle, a presence-place, and an altar on earth beneath, and prescribes vestments and ordinances for His service.

He proclaims a nation of slaves, now redeemed and set apart, as representatives of the whole human race, for the service of God and as heirs of the covenant made with Abraham. This covenant contained the spiritual promise of the Messiah: who would come to redeem all nations from their sins—of which Israel lost sight, and forgot it in their national pride and vain glory.

Alas! the same book of Exodus shews ere its conclusion, that the first use to which both the people and Moses too put this law of God, was *to break it*; the people, by idolatry and licentiousness even while Moses was in the mount; and he, in indignation and haste, which it requires yet forty days more in the Divine presence, spent doubtless in utter seclusion and humiliation (but concerning

which we hear very little) entirely to mould him into the likeness of God's own forbearance with this stiff-necked people.

How solemn is the declaration of Ex. xxiv. 9, 10:—

That “then went up Moses and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel :

“And they saw the God of Israel : and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness. Also they saw God, and did eat and drink.”

Now as our Lord Himself declares that “No man hath seen the Father at any time;” let us remember *who was* this Jehovah upon Sinai,—the Jehovah of the Jewish Church in the wilderness. The martyr Stephen tells us, just before his death, that *the angel* which spake to Moses in mount Sinai was none other than *the* angel of the burning bush—the angel of the Lord, who had said of Himself, “I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,” before whom Moses “trembled and durst not behold” (Acts vii. 32); and also none other than the Saviour, the afterwards crucified Redeemer of the world, whose voice (says Paul, Heb. xii. 26) “then shook the earth: but now He hath promised, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.”

Dear friends, when you have thought of Jesus taking upon Him the form of a servant, have you also thought of that Jesus as one and the same with the awful Jehovah of Sinai? At both times it is said of Him, “yet He loved the people” (Deut. xxxiii. 3), and “for His great love wherewith He loved us” (Eph. ii. 4).

It is good to go back in thought to Sinai, and to realize with deep reverence that the mighty God has actually spoken with men upon the earth.

When He had thus spoken, in majesty and fire, to the ear and eye of the favoured people, He did not intend the impression of that day to pass away : He had given them a Revelation,—a Law that was to separate them from all other people ; and His words to them were to endure for ever.

From the time that they became, through Moses, the keepers of the oracles of God, *they were judged by them*, and they were expected to live by them ; they became THE PEOPLE OF THE BOOK.

They had subscribed to the covenant ; they had said, “ All that the Lord hath spoken we will do.” They were “ under the Law ” ; and whenever they broke their promise, they incurred punishment and suffering, and this they continually did.

They remained before Mount Sinai a few days longer than eleven months. During this time, Jehovah made them fully understand that He was their King, and He established the regular service of His royal court by the priests and Levites. He set apart more than a fiftieth portion of the whole nation to this office. They were to receive His Law from Moses, to copy it, and to read it to the people,—not only the Ten Commandments, as written by the finger of God upon the two tables of stone, but the Book of the Covenant also, which Moses had written (Exod. xxiv. 4), and read in the audience of the people for the first time, “ by the altar under the hill.”

During these eleven months, their form of government in all things was appointed, their institutions established, and the Tabernacle fashioned and set up “ according to the pattern shown to Moses in the mount,” for the house or palace of their Divine King, who always visibly dwelt among them in the glory that was between the cherubim.

The same period witnessed their breach of the first Commandment, "Thou shalt have none other gods but me," in the worship of the golden calf,—possibly a remembrance of the Eden Cherubim—and its punishment in the death of 3000 among the people.

But we are now passing into the age when the Pentateuch began to be written. Perhaps you will like to think of the material it was written upon, and the character in which Moses wrote it. This is a piece of ancient Hebrew—the language in which the law was written—

The Bible was written by degrees, and by different persons: it took 1600 years to write. The first five books, as we have said before, are generally believed to have been written by Moses in the wilderness, as well as the book of Job; viz.:—

Genesis,	Numbers,
Exodus,	Deuteronomy,
Leviticus,	

The rest of the Old Testament books, thirty-three in number, were written by different inspired leaders, prophets, priests, and kings, of Israel, but all by Israelites—the keepers of His holy oracles: and as they were written, God himself made a law that they should be read, by the Levites, to the people continually.

But at that time there were no books like our books. The time of Moses was 1550 years before Christ our Saviour came into the world. Our mode of printing or of making paper had not then been discovered. The old Egyptians made linen, in which they wrapped their mummies, and so prepared it, that they could trace hieroglyphics upon it. They also wrote upon rolls made of their rush-papyrus, that is, of the coats which surround its

stalk. The largest papyrus roll now known is ten yards long: many of these are found in the tombs of Egypt, though not often of so great a length. A very valuable one has been taken from these tombs to the museum at Turin, containing the names of King Mykerinus, the builder of the third pyramid, and Reksharé, the architect of Thebes; but the Pentateuch of Moses is not supposed to have been written on this rush-paper.

It is thought that he must have used goat-skins, prepared and fastened together: the very oldest manuscripts of his five books known, are written on leather. There is one in the public library, at Cambridge, which was discovered by Dr. Buchanan, in the record-chest of a synagogue of the Black Jews, in Malabar, in 1806: it measures sixteen yards in length; and, though not perfect, consists



of thirty-seven skins, dyed red. There is another in the library of the British Museum, which we have seen. That is a large double roll of this description. It is written with great care, on forty thick brown skins, in 153 narrow columns: the writing is, of course, in Hebrew. It was, most probably in this form that the

world received the first part of the Word of God, —His *written voice* from heaven.

We cannot suppose that the *very* roll that Moses wrote is come down to us—that would be impossible. That very roll is supposed to have perished at the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, B.C. 586; if so, it was treasured and in existence for

eight centuries and a half—more than 800 years. Moses commanded the Levites to put it in the side of the ark of the covenant, “for a witness against the people.”

The final covenant made with Israel in the plains of Moab, with the last lofty song and eloquent prophecy, seems to have been written on a separate skin; and Dr. Adam Clarke thinks there is every reason to believe that this was the portion lost and found in the reign of Josiah, 800 years after it was written. This was called an *autograph copy*, which means *the very one that Moses wrote*. It had been lost in the reigns of the wicked kings that went before Josiah, who was a reforming king; and when he set himself to repair the House of the Lord his God, and brought hewn-stone and timber to repair the floors which the kings of Judah had destroyed, Hilkiah, the priest, found a book of the Law of the Lord *by the hand of Moses*, and gave it to the king (2 Chron. xxxiv. 14). You perceive that the frontispiece of this tract exhibits a very beautiful roll, and that underneath it is inscribed—“The Samaritan Pentateuch.”

If you look back to the frontispiece of Tract III. you will find the city of Nablus, the “Schechem of the Bible, where the very few people in the world still called Samaritans (about 150 in number), continue to live. This roll is in the possession of their priests, and is thought to be the oldest written copy of the Pentateuch now in existence.

Our Prince of Wales went to see it in the year 1862, and a fine photograph of it was made for his Royal Highness. By his gracious permission, and the kindness of Mr. Bedford, the photographer, we are permitted to present to our readers a woodcut of it in its silver case, and with its cover of crimson satin embroidered with letters of gold.

THE WRITTEN SAMARITAN ALPHABET.


 c i t ch z v h d g b a

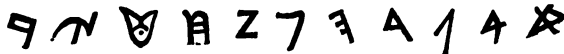
 th t sh r k ts p o s n m e

These are the ancient letters in which it is written. We received the antique alphabet from the Rev. J. Mills, who obtained it at Nablus, and has kindly allowed us the use of it. It differs from that found on coins.

The Samaritans say that their Roll is the identical one written by Abishua, the great-grandson of Aaron, fourth high priest; and others, who do not quite credit this, yet suppose it to have been written hundreds of years before the coming of our Lord. The precious relic is worn and torn with the kisses of many pilgrims, and is patched with re-written parchment. Mr. Mills considers that about two-thirds of the original writing remains.

This gentleman has twice resided among the Samaritans at Nablus, to collect all trustworthy information concerning them. He believes their old written alphabet to have been given by MOSES, and that it was either drawn from characters already existing among the Phœnicians or Canaanites, or else especially given him of God.

THE PHœNICIAN ALPHABET.


 k y t ch z v h d g b a

 t sh r k tz p e s n m l

This alphabet of the Canaanites is very old. Some of its letters are remarked by Sir Henry Rawlinson

on the sides of clay tablets full of Assyrian characters (like that on p. 28), and also on copper weights in the shape of lions, which were found in the Nineveh palaces. Sir Henry says that in these Phœnician characters he reads the names of Tiglath Pileser, Shalmaneser, Sargon, and Sennacherib, which are the Scripture names of Assyrian kings, in whose reigns those weights were current. But having mentioned the characters in which it was written, we must tell you a little more about the Roll of the Samaritan Pentateuch.

The translation of the books of Moses in our English Bibles is not taken from that Roll alone, though it is so very old, but from manuscripts which have been copied and re-copied and preserved by the Jews in the square Hebrew character, such as Ezra used after the captivity in Babylon. In their fearful persecutions and wanderings the Jews have lost the original Rolls of Hebrew, and yet from the internal evidence of Scripture the authority of the Hebrew version of the Bible has been generally considered the greatest.

Our translators have taken the utmost pains to compare with each other the three most ancient versions of Scripture—the Samaritan, the Hebrew, and the “Septuagint,” which was a Greek version, made at Alexandria, B.C. 277, by a council of seventy learned men, for the use of the Jews in Egypt, who were accustomed to speak Greek.

Alexandria was then a chief colony of the Jews, and one of the greatest cities in the world; it is said that a hundred thousand of them resided there.

Learned men consider this translation, called the Septuagint, very valuable. The evangelists and the apostles quoted from it as much as from the Hebrew, but they never quoted from the Apocryphal books

which were attached to this Greek version, and which may still be found in some few old English Bibles, bound up between the Old and New Testaments. They were *not*, as we have said, *inspired books*. Some were written by learned Jews at Alexandria, after the prophetic spirit had ceased with Malachi. Not even their writers say they are inspired: they were written in Greek and not in Hebrew, the ancient sacred language. They were never received as sacred by the ancient Jewish Church. A child may perceive the difference between them and the Holy Scriptures.

The three versions are, in most of their main points, alike, and the Samaritan copy as well as the Hebrew, may have followed the very autograph of Moses. It has been remarked by students of the two, that "if the Samaritan shall be found in some places to correct the Hebrew, yet will the Hebrew copy in other places correct the Samaritan. Each copy is invaluable. Both have been often transcribed, both therefore may contain errors; they differ in many instances, therefore the errors must be many. Let the genuine words of Moses be ascertained by their joint assistance."

In the opposite vignette you have embodied the subject of this Tract. Here are the tables of the Ten Commandments on stone, first graven by the finger of God; and the papyrus rush behind them, hints at the material for writing upon which was used at that time in Egypt. You have also the miniature of the SAMARITAN roll, with a HEBREW roll to the left, and the GREEK Septuagint to the right; while on the rock behind them, are hints of the rough inscriptions and drawings on the Sinaitic mountains. The heavenly dove hovers over the holy books, distinguished from all others in their



TABLES OF STONE—WITH HEBREW AND SAMARITAN ROLLS OF THE
PENTATEUCH—THE GREEK SEPTUAGINT—AND ALEXANDRINE
VERSION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

celestial origin. They are the first written forms of the message from God to man—the Revelation which lifts the veil from the unseen world on high.

The most important point of variation, as is well known, between these three versions, is in the Chronology, or time-table, in which some of the copyists seem to have used their own discretion, for copyists were not inspired.

	From Adam to the Deluge.	Between the Deluge and the birth of Christ.		From the Creation of man to the present Era.
The Hebrew gives	1656	2348	+ 1868 =	5872
The Samaritan gives	1307	3131	+ 1868 =	6306
The Septuagint gives	2262	3099	+ 1868 =	7229

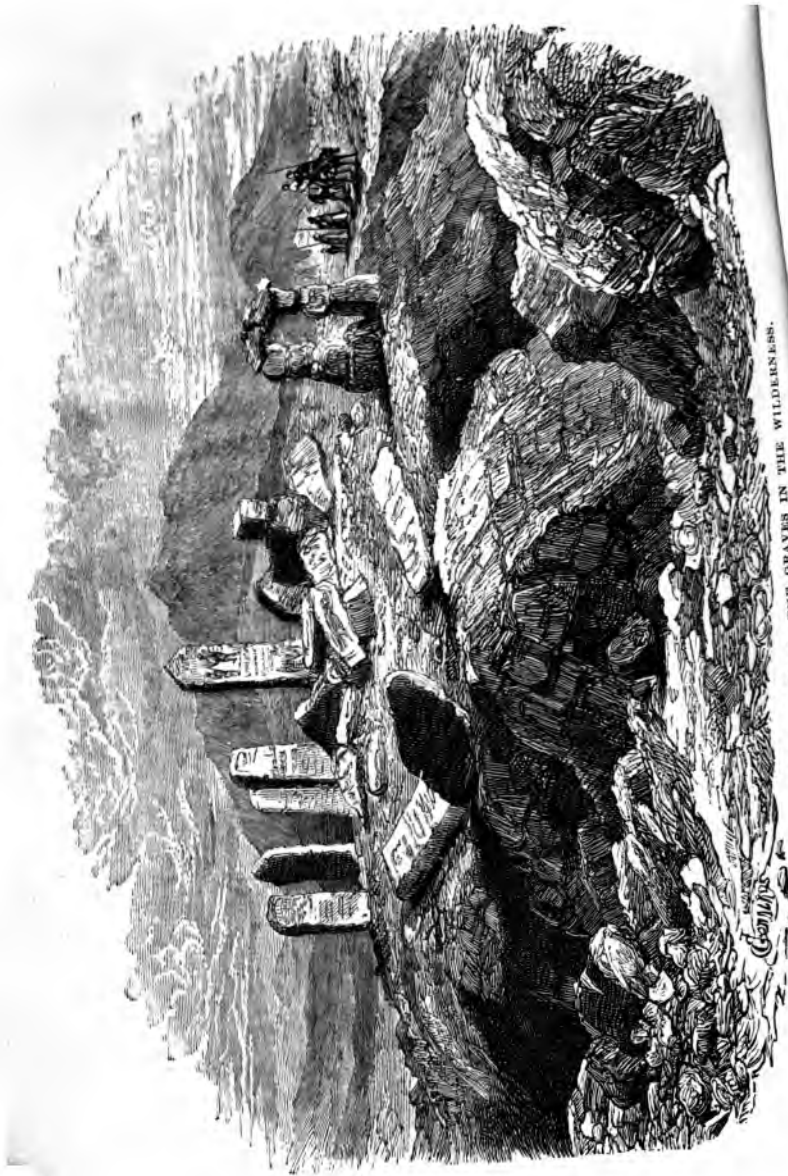
You will observe that in these Tracts we always adhere to the first, or Hebrew view, that the seventh thousand year of the world's history is yet

to come—its Sabbath in the *week of time*. The Hebrew is called the “Old fashioned” Chronology; and it is still always appended to our authorized English Bible.

The very name Samaritan was with the Jew a term of extreme reproach; they said to our Lord Himself, “Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil” (John viii. 48.) *But the Samaritans expected the Messiah* (John iv. 25), and when He came many of them believed on Him.

The Jews “had no dealings with the Samaritans,” but the Saviour had. He abode among this people for two days, after conversing with the woman of Samaria as He sat on the well at this same Sychar, and “many believed because of His own word.” Did He point them to this copy of their venerated law, and determine that it should endure among them till the hour of His coming again, as a witness to Him? And where? In the place of its earliest utterance in the Land of Promise.

We are thrice told in the Acts of the Apostles that there were churches of God in Samaria (Acts viii. 1, ix. 31; xv. 3.) The apostle Philip was a preacher of the Gospel there, “working miracles,” and the people with one accord gave heed to him and were baptized, both men and women (Acts viii. 6.) *By Peter and John they received afterwards the gift of the Holy Ghost* (ver 17). These Apostles preached the Gospel in many villages of the Samaritans, following the example of their Master, who “must needs go through Samaria,” and forgot not His ancient ISRAEL.



KIBROTH HATTAVAH—THE GRAVES IN THE WILDERNESS.

THE TIMES WHEN THE PENTATEUCH WAS BEING WRITTEN.

THE GRAVES IN THE WILDERNESS.

No. IX.

The Books of Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, all concern the Law and the pilgrimage of Israel in the desert, and it is an interesting question to ask, How much may it be supposed that the people at that time knew of the Divine Revelation?

Amid his other duties ordained by God, Aaron had, doubtless, not neglected that of copying the Law, and reading it to the people. This was especially ordered to be done for eight days together, once in every seven years; but we know that during the training of Israel in the wilderness, this was not all they heard or knew of the Law; for Moses says to them (Deut. xxx. 11—14),—

“The commandment which is written in this book of the law is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off.

“It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?

“Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?

“But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.”

“In thy mouth” seems to signify, that they learned portions of it. Moses ordered the Levites

to write his last noble song, and to teach it to the children of Israel,—“*Put it in their mouths*, that this song may be a witness for me against the children of Israel, that when many evils and troubles are befallen them, this song shall testify against them as a witness; for it shall not be forgotten out of the mouths of their seed” (Deut. xxxi. 19, 21). If an Israelite was in doubt as to any ordinance or duty, he was to inquire of the priest, the Levite, who was also the judge, and would show him the sentence of judgment (Deut. xvii. 9), as written by Moses. Any one of the people who was able, might write a copy of the Law for himself; but the Levites were in general the learned class among this pastoral people, and were not only to make, but to give away, correct copies of it; and probably they went about from tent to tent (as Scripture-readers and Bible-women do now from house to house), to read the Law to each family. It is always assumed that the people “knew it”; and in the Book of Deuteronomy, Moses threw its precepts into a new form, for the generation which had been born since the entrance into the wilderness.

But we have not yet completed our survey of Exodus, all whose forty chapters, *except the first twelve*, and the ten first chapters of the Book of Numbers in addition, concern *Israel's first year in the wilderness*. The book of Leviticus, as its name implies, is altogether a book of *Laws*. The *second ten chapters* of Numbers tell the whole story of the pilgrimage for the next thirty-eight years, till Aaron dies, and is buried on Mount Hor; and then Moses carries on the people for one more year to the conquest of Eastern Palestine before he too ascends the Mount Pisgah to die: and the main idea of this tract

must be to lead you to think of the period of the thirty-eight years, and to trace the *graves in the wilderness*, for all the generation who came out of Egypt died there, except Caleb and Joshua, (Numbers xxvi. 63—65), though a new generation of twenty years old and upwards had risen up to be numbered by Moses and Eleazar, from all the families of the patriarchs, in their stead.

The history of the wilderness is both actual and symbolical; and it is in many respects a foreshowing of the history of the whole of God's large family, who, with rare and final exceptions, are to pay the penalty of sin by death, ere they can reach the heavenly Canaan. But ere we look upon the sins of Israel and their punishment, let us first examine what Jehovah the Lord God of heaven and earth was willing to have been to the nation whom He calls His first-born. He had said to Pharaoh—

“Let my first-born go, that he may serve me.”

The Ten Commandments were the revealed standard of morals required in the Mosaic dispensation to which the Sermon on the Mount is the parallel from the lips of our Lord when in the flesh.

The Divine PRESENCE had been manifest on the Mount Sinai in thunder and in fire, in a way to efface all the faint and false heathen memories of that Presence which had once been manifested at the gate of Eden. That real and visible Presence was to dwell with this favored people in a pillar of fire and cloud, and to dwell perpetually, during their sojourn in the wilderness.

The children of Israel were introduced to this Presence immediately after their first passover, and for forty years they were perfectly familiar with it. “He spread a cloud for a covering” (Ps. cv. 39)

over that vast host of pilgrims, "and fire to give light in the night;"—a cloud that could be "darkness" to the whole camp of the Egyptians, while to Israel it "gave light." And the Lord came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle (Num. xii. 5). The cloudy pillar descended,—and the Lord talked with Moses at the door of the tabernacle (Exod. xxxiii. 9).

The Lord "took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people."—Exodus xiii. 22.

But "when the cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle," then,—

"Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle."—(Exodus xl. 35.)

The pattern of this Tabernacle in its minutest detail had been shewn to Moses in the Mount (Exod. xxvi. 30). The Lord had prepared for Himself in the wilderness, a place of Presence "between the cherubim over the mercy-seat."

The Divine autograph, the second set of the tables of the Law (Deut. x. 5), were the treasure preserved in the ark, whose lid of pure gold was beaten out at either end into the form of the cherubim; but what that form was we have no hint, except that it was "winged." The Mercy-seat was the blood-besprinkled lid that covered the law tables, foreshadowing Him who was "the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." The cherubim symbolized human nature in perfect oneness with Jesus, for they were elevated on the platform of the sprinkled mercy-seat, one with Jesus in His death, and therefore one with Him in His glory.

And it is from above the Mercy-seat, and between

the two cherubim, that the Lord declares to Moses—

“There I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee.”—(Exodus xxv. 22.)

The Almighty is said, figuratively, to *dwell* between the cherubim, to *ride* upon them, to *sit* between them. Ezekiel, in vision long after (chaps. x., xi.), saw His glory depart from off the threshold of the temple in Jerusalem, and stand over the cherubim, and the cherubim lifted up their wings and mounted up from the earth in the prophet’s sight, at the close of Israel’s “trial era,” to return no more visibly to that nation till the holy Babe of Nazareth lay in the arms of the aged Simeon in the temple of Herod, and the man of God knew *Him* to be the “Light” that would lighten the Gentiles, and “the glory” of His people Israel.

When He, the beloved Son of God, gave up the ghost upon the accursed tree, the vail of the temple with its “cunning work” of cherubim, was rent in twain. The visible Presence had no more symbol upon earth, and henceforward abode only in the hearts of His spiritual Israel—the Light to lighten the Gentiles. His people Israel, according to the flesh, have since “abode many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image (margin, ‘a standing’ before the Lord), and without an ephod, and without teraphim” (Hosea iii. 4); without all the *signs* of the Presence to which they had been accustomed; their King and their Sacrifice they had blindly rejected, and the symbols that had surrounded and prefigured Him have ever since vanished away.

Josephus declares that no man knew the form of the cherubim in his day, “their form is not like to that of any of the creatures which men have seen,

though Moses said he had seen such beings near the throne of God" (Antiq. iii. 6); but if the later Jews had lost the knowledge of the form of these mystic symbols, the allusions to them remain in God's Word, and they must always be invested with an awful interest and importance in the eye of the student of the Bible.

At the commencement of their wilderness journey, God manifested His design to claim the people for His own: and all His laws for them are framed as by their king. He meant to be the Visible and Eternal Head of this nation whom He had ransomed from Egypt, and would now ransom from Satan, and from their own sinful selves.

The heathen nations had learned evil from the Prince of Evil, whom they served and consulted, in certain ways which were an "abomination to the Lord," these practices He forbade Israel to follow.

"There shall not be found among you any one that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter; or a witch. Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. The Lord thy God hath not suffered thee so to do." (Deut. xviii. 10—14.)

We find in Leviticus xx. 27, that transgressors in this respect were to be stoned to death.

The life of this people was to be ruled by communion with a Holy Spirit from above, and not from beneath.

They were to be redeemed from Satan's power, and a law was ordained for them which stood between their better and their worse selves, as it did between Israel and heathendom; it was a gift of guidance to strengthen motions towards good in the weak, and to check the evil of the heart.

In the patriarchal childhood of the nation they had been governed as a family by *fatherhood*, and

by few and simple rules; but now in their headstrong youth they needed "commandments" that should vigorously check impulsive action. "The law was added because of transgressions," and during the first fifty days in which God led them away alone to the wilderness, they had several lessons in putting away childish things, and entering upon nobleness of life, in communion with the unseen and invisible God.

They had hitherto received only fragments of God's revelations and laws, and by those they had abode all the while they remained in Egypt, where the people had a religion of far more show. Now *a system of laws* was given to Israel by degrees, and of laws divided under different heads—ceremonial, moral, civil, and political. Side by side with the law of the father, came the law of the priest, presiding over sacerdotal affairs. This law was gradually revealed. In Exodus we have only its marked outline. Details afterwards grew up out of the requirements of the time and special circumstances. The unconnected nature of the laws in the earlier books of Moses makes this evident. Anything like a perfect system of law is only found in Deuteronomy, when the younger generation were prepared to receive it; and yet this system was not *final*, it required much after illustration by teachers and by prophets, whose office it was to explain the law.

God desired to *shew* Himself to this favored nation as their Head. He was going to place them in Canaan, and to teach them, ere they entered it, that all the land was *His*, the first fruits of it were to be offered to *Him* (Exod. xxiii. 19) all the fruits it brought forth in each seventh year were to belong to *His* poor. It was to "rest and be still," for their sake. All the people were *His*, all their firstborn

belonged to HIM, and were to be ransomed by their own parents.

The power of God was absolutely unlimited, and supreme over governors and governed—none could be cruel and despotic under HIM; Jehovah was the KING, above the prophet and above the priest, whom He raised up to study and explain His laws, for LAW regulated the whole life of an Israelite, as the Gospel now ought to regulate the whole life of a Christian, his house and home, his dress, his food, his property. By these laws the duties of worship were in all things defined, and selfishness in every way openly checked, and the necessity of an atonement for *every sin* on the part of the sinner was perpetually kept before the eyes of Israel.

The *Moral Law*, or law of conduct towards God and man, was followed by the *judicial law*, or law of judgments, and the *ceremonial law*, or law of festivals and sacrifices,—which latter required to be so many and continual, that the Apostle Peter says of them in Acts xv. 10, “they were a yoke which the fathers were not able to bear.”

This, however, only pointed to THE COMING ONE, who, and who only, would in course of time be able to fulfil the Law; who, and who only, would also bear the curse consequent on its nonfulfilment for all mankind who should believe on Him; and doubtless many a thoughtful Israelite beheld HIM under the shadow of the “Paschal Lamb,” of the “Manna,” of the “Smitten rock,” of the “Mercy-seat,” of the “High Priest,” of the “Rod that budded,” of the “Brazen Serpent,” of the “Scape-goat,” and of all the various offerings.

It was the intent of God *to set apart to Himself* the “peculiar people” to whom these Divine revelations were made.

And alas ! having shewn what it was the purpose of Jehovah that Israel *should* be, we must hasten to observe what they really were, the "manners of the people that died in the wilderness," are all summed up in one word—"in the days of the *provocation*," or provoking of God by His sinful creatures (Psalm xciv. 8).

You must look for the history of the thirty-eight years, as we have said, from the 10th to the 20th chapters of the Book of Numbers, and for the repetition of it in the first and second chapters of Deuteronomy : also for the summary of the names of the places at which the cloudy pillar which went before them rested, in the 33rd chapter of Numbers. Those writers have done great service, who have diligently explored and marked any points of interest in these thirty-eight years of which so little is recorded.

"On the twentieth day of the second month, of the second year (after they came out of Egypt) the cloud was taken up from off the tabernacle of the testimony."—(Numbers x. 11.)

"And it rested next in the wilderness of Paran, or Feiran, (ver. 12,) and they departed from the mount of the Lord three days' journey, (ver. 33); and the next we hear of them is that they complained, and that it displeased the Lord, and the fire of the Lord burnt among them. Thus they had His "fire" in exchange for His "shadow," and it consumed in the uttermost parts of the camp till quenched at the prayer of Moses; and he called the name of the place Taberah.

The Hebrew root *בָּעַר* literally signifies burning, but figuratively anger or wrath. The sense of the Arabic word *berah*, is the wrath of God. The Arabic name of the Wady Berah is therefore the record of this fact—the valley of the wrath of God. In this very valley Dr. Stewart of Leghorn, (before

quoted) found a number of blackened cairns of stone which had evidently remained undisturbed for ages. In two of them a huge stone had fallen in from the top, revealing two narrow chambers formed of granite blocks. "Travelling up the Wady Berah," he says, "we found more tombs with several chambers in each; the whole of one part of the wide valley seems to have been covered with graves, of which the stones are scattered about in all directions. There is no vestige of a town or village. The place is too distant from Feiran, for the graves to have had any connection with the ancient city there." This writer therefore believes that they are the graves of the Israelites, the graves of the murmurers at Taberah.

Dr. Stewart says nothing about the Sinaitic inscriptions in this valley, but Dr. Robinson supplies this missing link of evidence. When he passed through Wady Berah, the burial-grounds escaped his notice, but he observed and noticed the ancient writings: "I crossed this valley," says he, "and on a large rock found four inscriptions. Just by our tent was a huge detached rock covered with them; indeed, we found these writings at almost every point where the overhanging or projecting rock seemed to indicate a convenient resting-place." The occurrence of the Sinaitic inscriptions in connection with the graves in Wady Berah is a new point in the evidence, since, if it be admitted that the tombs are those of the Israelites, the Israelite authorship of the adjoining inscriptions would be rendered still more probable; and it is very remarkable that these inscriptions,—whether as read by Professor Beer's alphabet, or by Mr. Forster's, (see p. 137) would, in either case, serve *as epitaphs*. The ordinary and actual size of these mysterious letters is figured on the opposite page, as given by Laborde.



Two Sinaitic Characters, signifying, according to Mr. Forster's alphabet, "THE PEOPLE"—according to Professor Beer's, "PEACE." They stand at the commencement of a large number of the inscriptions.

If their origin be all "Nabathean," and their general date the middle of the fourth century *after* our Lord—how was it that in the age of Cosmas, *so shortly after that* in A.D. 518, all knowledge and tradition of the meaning of the characters *was lost* among the Arabs of the district, but that certain Jews professed to understand and interpret their meaning, and assigned them to the age of Moses and the Exode, and to their own ancestors, the ancient Israelites, during their wanderings in the Desert of Sin?

On either side of this Arabian desert, EGYPT, and ASSYRIA, abound in written monuments of as high and far higher antiquity. The hoar old age of the stones of Ipsambul, of Philœ, and of Thebes in Egypt, is credited even by atheists, and in some recently recovered monuments of Chaldea, the claim is advanced of an antiquity ascending nearly to the Confusion of tongues. Why then are these Sinaitic inscriptions or contemporary evidences of the authenticity of the Books of Moses to be dismissed when their claim to be such was declared twelve hundred years ago? Their numbers computed by thousands, their extent by miles, and their positions often fathoms, not feet, above the valley floors, they *cannot* have been the pastime of chance pilgrims or travellers; and, we repeat once more, why are the great mass of them *only* found in the very route of the Israelitish wanderings, as recorded by Moses? For it is indeed true that descending from Serbal, we trace these writings in continuous succession from its foot to the summit of Sarbut-el-Khadem, a line of march of about three-and-thirty miles, corresponding exactly with the "three days' journey" between Sinai and Kibroth-hattaavah of Num. x. 33; and from these points there is both an upper

and a lower route. Mr. Forster thinks that *both* were traversed by the Israelites after the camp broke up from Sinai, the former apparently by Moses and the host. The latter probably by the "mixed multitude" and other followers of the camp. They would meet in the plain of Ramleh, the only one in the neighbourhood of sufficient extent to have contained the people with their tents and baggage, and "very much cattle."

"The summit," we have said, "of Sarbut-el-Khadem," for our frontispiece will shew you—that it is a mountain height, and a mountain cemetery—a place of graves; and graves are also scattered in the surrounding valleys. This mountain and its monuments were known to geographers two or three hundred years ago, as an Israelite station. Niebuhr rediscovered it in 1762. Laval, a French artist who has modelled the inscriptions, speaks of the ascent as very toilsome up the precipitous red sandstone rock. "A narrow track winds along the face of the precipice at the head of the ravine, where a false step would have been death; and at the top we came upon a level ridge, and a tract of high table-land resembling the Saxon Switzerland, and intersected by deep ravines, while higher peaks lay all around it. Here with a dark chasm on either side are situated the singular and mysterious monuments of Sarbut-el-Khadem."

This mountain had been spoken of to M. Niebuhr as Jebel-el-Mokatteb. On ascending it, he says, he was astonished to find on the summit a superb *Egyptian* cemetery. "I give this description of it," he adds, "*though I had seen nothing in Egypt like it*; the space is filled with stones from five to seven feet high, covered with hieroglyphs; and the more one examines these stones, the more one is convinced

that they are tombstones, inscribed with epitaphs. In the midst of the stones has been erected a building of which only the walls remain, and a little chamber at the end sustained by square pillars, and these are also covered with inscriptions."

In a second visit, Niebuhr succeeded in copying these so-called "hieroglyphical" inscriptions which, he remarks, are as fine as any of the remains in Egypt. One feature particularly attaching to them however is, that the *goat*, an animal native to the desert, abounds in these, while in Egypt we notice *always the bull, and never the goat*.

Mr. Forster has copied and offered readings of Niebuhr's plates of the tablets of Sarbut-el-Khadem, and on first seeing them any cursory observer would say, "Oh, these are Egyptian hieroglyphics;" but on a more patient examination, this interpreter points us to unmistakable figures of long-legged geese, or "*nuhams*," as the prominent symbols; *twenty-five* of these birds occur in the first tablet, *ten* in the second, and *fifteen* in the third. The way of their capture is likewise indicated by a succession of archers, the same as on Egyptian monuments; there are no fewer than eighteen on the first tombstone. The Israelites of the Exode were a nation of archers.

"The children of Ephraim being armed and carrying bows."
(Ps. lxxviii. 9.)

The birds which darkened the air would fall by tens of thousands before the arrows of 600,000 armed men; and besides the archers there occur figures running with sticks, which may depict the pursuit of the "featured fowls." Owls are also prominent, "ill-omened, and emblems of death." Among all these figures are commingled Sinaitic

characters. Mr. Forster thus deciphers by his alphabet some of the mixed legends and devices.

“From the sea the cranes congregate to one spot;
 The archers shoot at the cranes passing over the plain.
 Evil-stomached they rush after the prey—
 The sepulchre their doom—their marrow corrupted by God.
 The sleepy owl, emblem of death, God’s sends destruction
 among them.

* * * * *

“The mother of sepulchres—the black and white geese,
 A sudden death. Greedily lusting after flesh, die the gluttons.
 The mountain top ascend the Hebrews,
 They eat, devour, consume, till nothing is left, exceeding all
 bounds.
 Their bodies corrupted, by gluttony they die.”

Now let us look back to the 11th chapter of Numbers.

Drunkenness and gluttony were vices against which the Israelites of the Exode had been warned by Moses; see the law made against these sins (Deut. xxi. 18—21), and that no less a punishment than death was decreed be inflicted on their account.*

“And while the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of the Lord was kindled against the people, and the Lord smote the people with a very great plague. And He called the name of that place Kibroth-hattaavah, because there they buried the people that lusted.”—(Num. xi. 33, 34.)

And for what had they lusted? they despised the manna, and desired flesh to eat, therefore the Lord in His anger brought “quails” from the sea, and let them fall by the camp, as it were, two cubits high upon the face of the earth; with which description has been connected the extraordinary

* It would be interesting to search through the Books of Moses against *how many sins* the punishment of death was decreed by God.

idea of *small birds lying two cubits high upon the face of the earth*. Both Mr. Forster and Dean Stanley have done something to prove that the reading of the Hebrew word used by Moses, "*Salu*," ought not to be "*quails*," but "*cranes*," a kind of long-legged, red goose, two cubits in stature.

At the commencement of four short Sinaitic inscriptions in the Wady Mokatteb, or Written Valley, Mr. Forster found the old Arabic word *nuham*, which in his dictionary was translated "red geese," and as *the sea* was signified by the next word, the reading of the whole was, he believed—

"The red geese ascend from the sea
Lusting, the people eat on at them,"

Or,

"Lusting the people feed to repletion."

He then began to think that probably the Hebrew word *salu* might not mean *quails*, but *cranes*. Such birds sometimes resort to the coasts of Picardy, in France, in prodigious flocks. In 1740 they destroyed all the corn near the sea coast. They were knocked on the head with clubs, but their numbers were so vast that this availed but little; *when the north wind, which had brought them, ceased to blow, they took their leave*.

Mr. Forster announced this discovery concerning the cranes from the sea in his "Voice of Sinai," *twelve years ago*, and he was much surprised and pleased to read the following fact in an *unpublished* journal of Dean Stanley's:—

"On the evening and morning of our encampment, immediately before reaching the Wady Huderah, the sky was literally darkened by the flight of innumerable birds, which proved to be some large red-legged cranes *three feet high*, with

black and white wings, measuring seven feet from tip to tip, which we had seen in like numbers at the first cataract of the Nile." He adds that Schubert saw similar flights on nearly the same spot, which must be close to Kibroth-hattaavah, and that he and his friends had eaten one of these birds upon the Nile, and had found it *very good food*. When seen at Huderah, they were on the wing from the gulf of Akaba, across the Sinai peninsula; were flying over the very scene of the Scripture miracle. These *large* birds, then, it seems, were spread abroad round about the camp to dry their flesh in the burning sands, for this was a common Egyptian custom.

It is very obvious that the costly and elaborate monuments of the cemetery of Sarbut-el-Khadem, could not have been executed in the first month of Israel's stay there. A part of the thirty-eight years must have been spent in a *return* to that vicinity, and the tombstones of that mountain-top are no work of shepherds. How they can ever have been attributed to Egyptian miners, of whom nothing is heard elsewhere, one is at a loss to conceive. It seems that no visitors have hitherto succeeded in finding the mines; yet to the east and west of the small temple dedicated to Athor, on the summit, may be seen great mounds of slag; and there is a tongue of land that forms a terrace, and projects out into the valley, coated over with slag four or five feet thick, and covered to its base with slag also. This open spot appears to have been chosen for the smelting of ore, on account of the keen draughts of wind perpetually blowing here.

But if mining were ever carried on here *by Egyptians*, by way of Tor and the Red Sea; *still the*

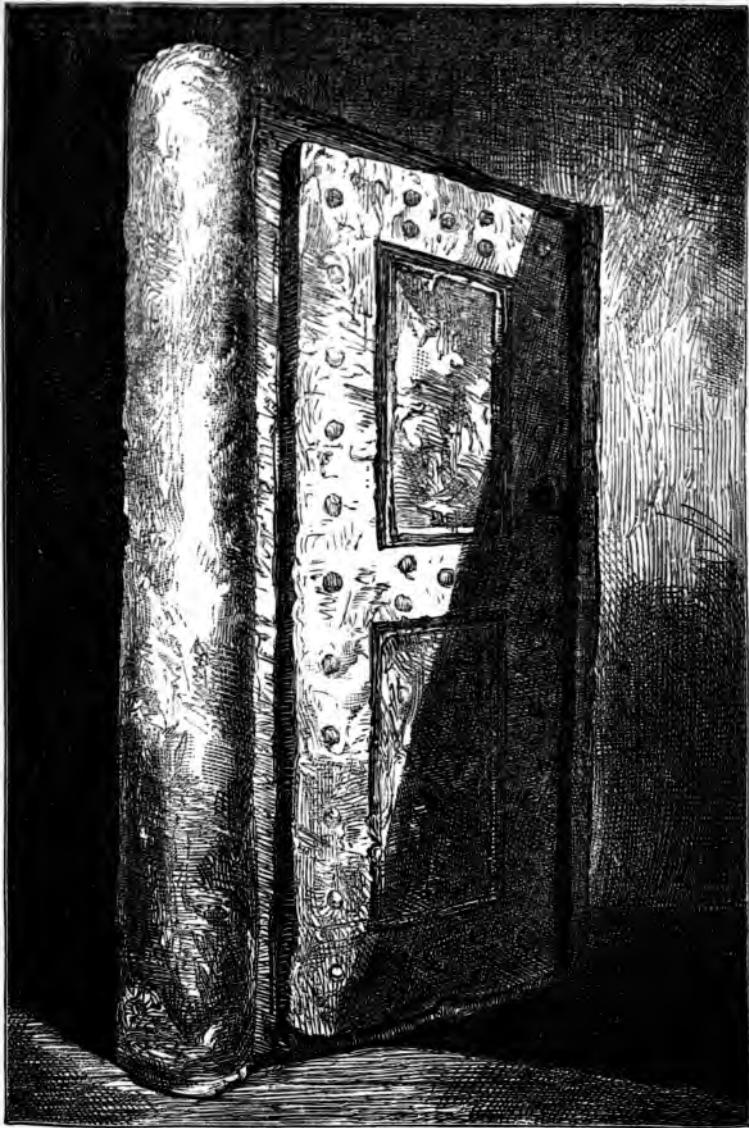
Kibroth-hattaavah, in the second year of their wanderings! That last king of the Nineteenth dynasty was the one not buried in his own tomb, and would here, by another incidental proof, be identified as the Pharaoh of the Exodus.

It seems to have been by degrees that God refined and purified their language, as well as their ideas.

Besides the tables of the Law, two memorials were ordered to be kept of the miracles of the Exode, and laid up in the ark—Aaron's rod that budded, and an omer of the manna—the bread of the wilderness. St. Paul refers to them in the Hebrews.

"The ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant." (Heb. ix. 3, 4.)

Between the laying up of the memorials of the *manna* and the *rod* may have occurred an interval of twenty years, the manna being laid up in B.C. 1491, the rod probably about B.C. 1471; but if any would, from the distinction of the priestly rod being laid up in the ark, deduce example for the undue assumption of authority on the part of the ecclesiastical orders—one deadly error of these present days—the great apostle of the Gentiles specifies that it was "the time *past* in which these things were ordained," and points to the functions of the Levitical priesthood only as illustrative of the eternal priesthood of Christ, his beloved Master, who entered in once for all into heaven itself, and having offered *Himself* unto God, thereby put away the sin alike of Jew and Gentile, and then sat down "a priest after the order of Melchisedek" at "the right hand of God, from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool." (See also Heb. vii. 18, 19.)



A STONE-DOOR FROM THE GIANT CITIES OF BASHAN.

THE TIMES OF THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY.

THE CLOSING YEAR IN THE WILDERNESS.

No. X.

THERE is a place called KADESH, where the greatest rebellion took place against the authority of Moses and Aaron, soon after the doom of forty years of wandering had been pronounced. After the fatal stay of the people for a month at Kibroth-hattaavah, their way lay onward "through a great and terrible wilderness by the mountain of the Amorites to Kadesh-barnea." (Deut. i. 19.)

"There are eleven days' journey from Horeb by the way of mount Seir unto Kadesh-barnea," (Deut. i. 2.), is the minute record of Moses; and he makes another,—

"And the space in which we came from Kadesh-barnea until we came even over the brook Zered (north of Kadesh) was thirty-and eight-years, until all the generations of the men of war were wasted out from among the host; as the Lord sware unto them."

You may look for Kadesh on the map, p. 125, which is concluded to be in the neighbourhood of Ain-el-Weibeh. The line on that map marks the route of the Israelites till they arrived at Kadesh the first time, at the beginning of the above thirty-eight years.

Kadesh was then a city, and its name meant Holy; it had been holy like Horeb from more ancient times; its old name was Enmishpat—spring of judgment. Chedorlaomer had ravaged there in Abraham's day (see Gen. xiv. 7.) and it is twice mentioned in connection with Abraham's sojourn

in this country southward of Palestine. (Gen. xvi. 14; xx. 1.) Its natural springs had probably made it famous of old.

At Ain-el-Weibeh Dr. Robinson mentions three small streams running out from a low rise of ground, two of which have a strong medicinal taste, but the third is pure and good, and flows out of a rock which seems to have crumbled away. It is here *he* places the site of Kadesh, but more recent writers think that it lay still a little north of the plain just described, where the Wady-Jerafah descends from a precipitous plateau to the Wady-Arabah; and just at the junction there is a fountain of living water, now called Ain-esh-Sheibah, at the foot of the lofty cliff El-mukrah, which exactly answers to the description of the rock before which Moses gathered the congregation when he smote it twice, and water came out abundantly; this would be within a short journey of mount Hor, where Aaron was to die, soon afterwards.

It is very much to be remarked how the punishments enforced in the wilderness life, came specially on the breach of some one or other of the Ten Commandments.

The worship of the golden calf was the transgression of the first commandment:

“Thou shalt have no other gods before me.”

And its punishment was the death of 3000 of the people.

It was also a breach of the second commandment; they had bowed down before a graven image, and forgotten that the Lord was a jealous God.

The second sin occurred also before the mount, (see Lev. x. 1), when Nadab and Abihu, Aaron's eldest sons, who had been admitted with the seventy elders into the very presence of the God of Israel,

offered "strange fire before the Lord, which He commanded not; and there went out fire from the Lord and consumed them, and Aaron was forbidden to bewail them, for this was a sin against the ordained form of worship;" and from Lev. x. 9, it may be inferred that wine or strong drink had unfitted them for discernment between the holy and unholy, the clean and the unclean.

Thus, therefore, did their heavenly King impress upon Israel His *first* and *second* commandments.

His *third* was enforced also by the penalty of death, (see Lev. xxiv. 10, 16), on the son of an Israelitish woman by an Egyptian father, who blasphemed the NAME of the Lord, and cursed.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Let all that heard him lay their hands upon his head, and let all the congregation stone him."

The fourth commandment, concerning God's DAY, receives equal witness. See Num. xv. 32.

"And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks upon the sabbath day.

"And they put him in ward, because it was not declared what should be done to him.

"And the Lord said unto Moses, The man shall be surely put to death: all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp.

And if God thus defended His WORSHIP, His NAME, and His DAY, and the people thus learned their duty towards HIMSELF, the history also illustrates His verification of the commands of the *second* table of laws concerning fellow-men. If the *fifth* commandment is broken—

"The man who smites or curses his father and his mother, shall surely be put to death." (Exod. xxi. 15, 17.)

And he that even "setteth light by them is cursed." (Deut. xxvii. 16.)

For the sixth, see Lev. xxiv. 17:

"And he that killeth any man shall surely be put to death." ▲

For the seventh :

See all the instances of marked judgment upon sins of impurity and greediness, in the "graves of lust" at Kibroth-hattaavah, (Numb. xi. 34), in the fearful plague, when four-and-twenty thousand died at Baal-peor, (Numb. xxv. 9.)

For the eighth :

He that stealeth a man, and selleth him, he shall surely be put to death, (Exod. xxi. 16); theft of a minor description is to be followed by restoring double.

And now for bearing false witness :

See the punishment of Miriam, who was smitten with leprosy, and became white as snow, for bearing false witness against her brother Moses. It is said concerning this, that

"The Lord heard it."

That was a sin that included also the breach of the *tenth* commandment; for both Miriam and Aaron seem to have coveted authority that was not theirs, and claimed an equality with Moses which Jehovah it is said, "suddenly" denied, and the anger of the Lord was kindled till the meek and forgiving brother cried, saying,

"Heal her now, O God, I beseech thee."

Thus God shewed His anger against each of the sins that He had specially forbidden. But the sins of the wilderness were all sins against God's wonderful love and mercy and power, against the "first and great commandment" the Lord had given; they were the sins of murmuring and distrust. And, alas! how like are we to wandering Israel even to this day. How many a young life begins with secret repining at a lot it would not have chosen, as Israel did at the manna—with not forgiving God when He takes away our idols—with longing to re-

turn to the leeks and onions of Egypt—with doubt of His power to give us all that is good for us—with getting tired of His way for us—and attempts to carve out our own—and yet our heavenly Father does not give us up. He leads us about from station to station; He empties us from vessel to vessel; He restoreth our souls; He is better to us than our fears; He teaches us what to pray for, and gives us more than our desire; He humbles, and He comforts; He covers our iniquities, and bears all our sorrows. And even if He makes our grave in the wilderness, our souls arise with a risen Saviour to the heavenly Canaan—the promised land, from which none return like the unfaithful spies, to tell us it cannot be won.

These spies went up in the second year of the wandering to see the land of Palestine, and in consequence of their search discouraged the people. They brought back glorious grapes from it, but they said the men of the land were giants, and that they should not be able to go up against them, for they felt like grasshoppers in their sight.

“And the men that did bring up an evil report upon the land, died by the plague before the Lord.” (Num. xiv. 37.)

The Syrian vine is still famous for the size of its clusters. There was one of these vines in the grounds of the Duke of Portland, at Welbeck, near Work-sop, from which a cluster of grapes was gathered, weighing nineteen pounds; and intelligent travellers aver, that those who have only seen the vines in France and Italy can have no just idea of the size to which the clusters attain in Syria.

The evil part of their report was not probably in itself incorrect, that they had seen people of great stature; for Moses verifies their statement in speaking of the “Anakim, great and tall,” and of

other old gigantic tribes, with a reference to the sons of Anak; and in the prophecy of Amos it is said (Amos ii. 9), "yet destroyed I the Amorite before them, whose height was like the height of the cedars, and who was strong as the oaks." Goliath, whom David slew, was a son of Anak; his stature may be taken at about nine feet: but they forgot that He who had dried up the Red Sea before them, and had overcome the Egyptians with His mighty plagues,—if His pillar of cloud and fire had pointed them towards the high-walled cities of the tall Anakim,—would have given them victory in Palestine also; but, as Moses afterwards says to them (Deut. i. 32), "In this thing ye did not believe the Lord your God."

And now the thirty-eight years having passed away since the spies had given their evil report, and "all the generation of the old men of war being wasted out from among the host as the Lord swore unto them," Moses adds—

"Now rise up, said I, and get you over the brook Zered. And we went over the brook Zered." (Deut. ii. 13.)

In the second chapter of Deuteronomy Moses by no means denies that the race they were about to conquer had in old time been gigantic. Still he adds—

"Rise ye up, take your journey, and pass over the river Arnon: behold, I have given into thine hand Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his land: begin to possess it, and contend with him in battle.

"This day will I begin to put the dread of thee and the fear of thee upon the nations that are under the whole heaven, who shall hear report of thee, and shall tremble, and be in anguish because of thee.

If you will now turn back to the map at p. 44, you will find the river Arnon to the east of the Dead Sea, and studying the second chapter of

Deuteronomy will shortly find Heshbon mentioned, and Sihon its king, who would not let Israel pass, and who is smitten with his sons and his people, and all his cities, till none remained; the cattle only and the spoil being reserved for a prey, "from Aroer by the brink of the river of Arnon, and from the city that is by the river, even unto Gilead." Our little map will shew you the position of all those places, and you will see that Moses is advancing upwards in his conquest of Palestine, east of the Jordan.

We told you in our third tract that the land of *Eastern* Palestine has only of late years been re-discovered by recent travellers, having long been hidden from the eyes of the western nations; all access to its rocky hiding places and old stone cities being forbidden by the Druses and the Arabs, the modern children of Moab and of Ishmael.

When our fathers and grandfathers therefore read in the book of Deuteronomy of the last conquests of Moses before his people crossed the Jordan, they had none of the evidence that *we* have, of the minute truth of the noble and stirring narrative.

"I feel so glad," says Mr. Porter (who has written a most beautiful book called "The Giant Cities of Bashan"), "that I have been able to visit, even for a brief period, a country so renowned in earliest history, and sacred as one of the first provinces bestowed by God upon His ancient people. I enjoyed the beauty of the scenery, the grandeur of the ruins, the patriarchal welcome of my hosts; but *above all, the overwhelming testimony afforded at every step to the accuracy of the Mosaic history.*

"I had often read of Bashan, I had observed the statement that a single province of Og's kingdom, Argob, contained *threescore great cities!* and I had examined my map and had found that the whole of

Bashan, in which Argob is situated, is not larger than one of our English counties, and now when I came to the spot itself I found the story was all true! I had a list of more than *one hundred ruined* cities and villages situated in these mountains, in my hand, and more than *thirty* of them I had myself visited or passed closely by."

The Scripture name "Argob" means "the stony." The Druses now call it "El Lejah," and it lies like an island in the midst of the green and fertile plains of Bashan, on which scarcely a stone is to be seen; but an island of basalt, whose edges resemble a rocky sea coast; its general shape is almost oval, it is sixty miles long and twenty miles broad; and it doubles our interest in this strange tract of land to know that it was really the kingdom of Og, the giant of Bashan. And he was no giant in a fairy tale, but a true Scripture giant, and the last of his race named in the 3rd chapter of Deuteronomy, 11th and 13th verses. Moses even mentions his bedstead of iron, nine cubits long and four broad, (a cubit was either fifteen or eighteen inches.)

Let us think a little longer about this giant's kingdom. The rocky island is rent in the most wonderful manner. Great wide fissures extend for miles, which can neither be crossed by man nor beast; the rugged ridges of rocks are ascended by a winding path like a goat-track, and thence Mr. Porter came suddenly on the ruins of Edrei, Og's ancient capital city. Its situation is most remarkable, without a single spring of water, without river or stream, without access except over rocks, without tree or garden. Og had thought of nothing here but security and strength: "Edrei" means "strength." Ruins and rocks alike are black as if scathed by lightning.

This adventurous traveller ascended the terrace roof of a house to obtain a general view, and saw several squares, towers, temples, churches, and mosques; the inhabitants are chiefly fanatical Moslems: and while afterwards copying an inscription he was struck down with a club, and had to escape for his life to the house of the sheikh of a small Christian community, who protected him till midnight with a Druse guard, when he and his party fled from Edrei, scarcely venturing to hope they should ever reach the plain in safety. The night was bitterly cold, their wounds were stiff and painful, and the mournful howl of the jackal, the sharp-ringing bark of the wolf, and the savage growl of the hyena were heard all around: they saw by the bright starlight and the flashing eyes that the rocks were tenanted by brute enemies as bloodthirsty as the men. Here was a practical illustration of Isaiah's prediction: "The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the wild beasts of the island, and the satyr shall cry to his fellow."

"The Lord hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea."

How is all this scenery so recently explored, repeopled from the pages of our Bible! We must pass on with Moses from Arnon to Edrei. (Deut. iii. 1—5.)

"Then we turned, and went up the way to Bashan: and Og the king of Bashan came out against us, he and all his people, to battle at Edrei. And the Lord said unto me, Fear him not: for I will deliver him and all his people, and his land, into thy hand; and thou shalt do unto him as thou didst unto Sihon king of the Amorites, which dwelt at Heshbon. So the Lord our God delivered into our hands Og also, the king of Bashan, and all his people: and we smote him until none was left to him remaining. And we took all his cities at that time: there was not a city which we took not from them, threescore cities, all the region of Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan. All these

cities were fenced with high walls, gates, and bars; beside unwallled towns a great many."

It will be observed by the Bible-reader, that Og was not conquered in his own stronghold; he never could have been. "We confess," says Mr. Cyril Graham, "we had often wondered how it happened that Og had been brought to fight in the plain; now from a casual notice in other parts of Scripture, (Josh. xxiv. 12), we actually find that God sent a special scourge among these Rephaim, in the shape of swarms of hornets, which we may conclude harassed them so much in their stone houses, that they preferred the alternative of meeting the Israelites, to perishing from the stings of those creatures."

God had promised this by Moses (Exod. xxiii. 28)—

"And I will send hornets before thee, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite, from before thee.

"Moreover the Lord thy God will send the hornet among them until they that are left, and hide themselves from thee, be destroyed." (Deut. vii. 20.)

And Joshua speaks of it as being fulfilled. (See Josh. xxiv. 11—13.)

Edrei fell into the hands of Moses, who gave it to the half-tribe of Manasseh, with all the rest of Og's sixty cities, in the region of Argob in Bashan. The conquest appears to have been completed by Jair the son of Manasseh.

Having now an idea of "Argob," or the stony, let us return to the *Hauran*, that province of Eastern Palestine, to the south of it, twice mentioned by Ezekiel in defining the borders of the Promised Land in a day, which even to us is yet future (chap. xlvii. 16—18):

"And the east side ye shall measure from Hauran, and from Damascus, and from Gilead, and from the land of Israel by Jordan, from the border unto the east sea. And this is the east side."

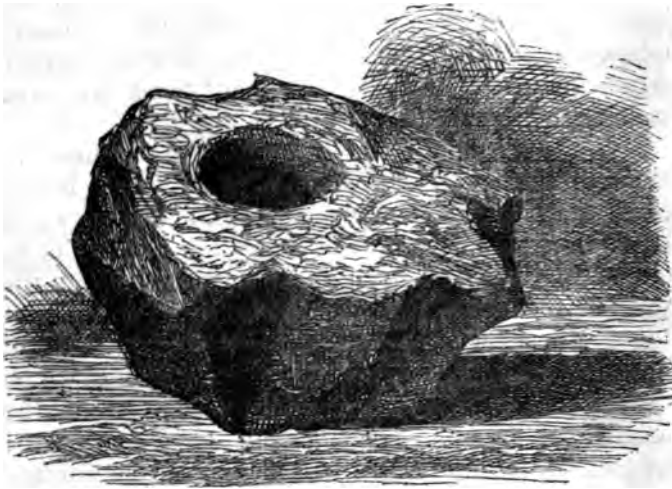
We have heard already of foliage and herds of the "oaks of Bashan," the "fat bulls" and "kine of Bashan." The plain of the Hauran is as rich, and dotted over with a hundred towns and villages, composed of the same old stone houses, mostly *deserted*, but *not* ruined; and about them we have something more to say.

Mr. Porter and Mr. Graham both witness to the wonderful productiveness of that deep, black, loamy earth, with its luxuriant grass and teeming crops of grain. No part of Palestine can be compared to it in fertility, and no wonder that the pastoral tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh preferred these wooded hills and grassy places of Eastern Palestine, to the bleak, bare range, which they saw on the west of the Jordan from the heights of Moab. You may in idea ascend the heights of the old castle of Salcah (see the picture in our fourth tract), and then open the forty-eighth chapter of the prophet Jeremiah. For it is the old cities of Kerioth and Bethgamul, Bozrah and Salcah, standing as they stood in the days of Abraham and Lot, the cities of the Rephaim in Ashteroth Karnaim, of the Zuzims in Ham, and the Emims in the plain of Kiriathaim (Gen. xiv.), that adventurous recent explorers now enable stay-at-home travellers to realize.

Cities still standing,—not ruined cities, but desolate and without inhabitant,—cities of four and five hundred houses composed of everlasting slabs of stone; the thick walls are built of large square stones, the floors and the flat roofs are slabs of stone, the doors and the window-shutters also stone, turning on pivots of stone.

The frontispiece of this tract shews you one of these doors, which is now in the British Museum.

Here also is a sketch of the socket in which such a door has turned.



Race after race have dwelt and died in these stone cities from the Rephaim downwards, their giant builders and first occupants, soon after the Flood. They were constructed to endure, like the pyramids of Egypt, by the children of Ham, according to the solid simplicity and massive grandeur of their specific architectural taste, whether evidenced in Egypt, Assyria, or Canaan.

The black basalt of which these cities are composed, is almost as hard as iron. "I measured," says Mr. Porter, "a door in Kerioth; it was nine feet high, and four and a half feet wide, and ten inches thick. I saw folding stone gates in another town in the mountains, still larger, just such as a race of giants would build. They are, I believe, eternal witnesses of the narratives by Moses of the conquests of Jehovah, and the only specimens in the

world of the ordinary private dwellings of remote antiquity."

The monuments designed by imperial Rome are fast mouldering to ruin in this land; Greek temples and tombs are shattered or prostrate in the dust,—but the simple massive houses of the Rephaim are perfect as if only completed yesterday.

"In the Beth-gamul of Jeremiah xlviii., not far south of Kerieth," says Mr. Graham, "I wandered about quite alone in the old streets of the town; entered one by one the houses, went upstairs, looked into the rooms, and made a careful survey all around. So perfect was every street, every house, and every room, that I could almost have fancied, as I was wandering alone in this city of the dead, seeing all perfect and yet not hearing a sound, that I had come upon one of those enchanted palaces that one reads of in the 'Arabian Nights,' where the population of a whole city had been petrified for hundreds of years.

"These old houses are perfectly adapted to receive new tenants. The Druses, supposed descendants of the old Moabites, are now the only settled inhabitants of a few of them; and all they do in taking possession, is to throw down a mat or a piece of carpet, and to bring with them the few cooking utensils of which they have need. When they shut their stone doors, they are secure from all attacks. As soon as the early rains fall, they may begin to sow in the fertile soil around these ancient dwellings; but, as the corn ripens, their difficulties increase. They must be constantly on the watch to defend families, flocks, and corn, against the Arab—the 'wild-ass man,' the son of Hagar, of Genesis xvi. 12, 'whose hand is against every man, and every man's hand against him, and who dwells in

the presence of all his brethren.' Oh, how old is the heritage of the desert!—as old as these old stone dwellings of the people of the land in Ishmael's time!"

The Moabites and Ammonites, as descendants of Lot, were permitted to destroy the Hamites. The Lord said to Moses—

•“Distress not the Moabites, neither contend with them in battle: for I will not give thee of their land for a possession; because I have given Ar unto the children of Lot for a possession. The Emims dwelt therein in time past, a people great, and many, and tall, which also were accounted giants.” (Deut. ii. 9, 10, 11).

The Moabites dwelt to the south of Bashan; we are aware of *their* dark descent, and may now be induced to search for all that is said of them in Scripture. The nursery of this race was Zoar; and while the roving and unsettled brother, Ammon, wandered to the north-east, and took possession of the tracks formerly occupied by the giant Zuzim, or children of Ham (see Gen. xiv. and Deut. ii. 21), Moab, whose habits were more settled and peaceful, remained nearer to the south-east of the Dead Sea.

We have now, however, realized Israel, under the guidance of their great law-giver, entering on the country beyond Arnon.

The tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, inhabited for seven centuries these ancient cities of Bashan, and dwelt in the stead of their former occupants (see 1 Chron. v. 22), till they themselves were carried captive by Tiglath-Pileser, to the cities of the Medes, to Ghozan, and Halah, and Habor, which latter is, according to Mr. Layard, the modern Khabour, in the region of the Euphrates.

The narrative is continued in the way of successive events, in Numbers xxii. 2:

"And Balak the son of Zippor [king of the Moabites at this time] saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. And he sent messengers to Balaam, saying, Come, I pray thee, curse me this people; for they are too mighty for me."

Led to the top of Pisgah (whence Moses himself afterwards went to survey the Promised Land, west of the Jordan, and to die), Balaam gazes also from these hills on the mighty host abiding in their tents, and, moved by the resistless power of God's Spirit, owns that he dare neither curse nor defy this people whom the Lord hath blessed, whom God hath brought out of Egypt, who have as it were the strength of an unicorn; who are to rise up as a great lion, and not lie down till they eat of the prey and drink the blood of the slain.

How thankful we ought to be in these latter days, for the books that are constantly coming out to illustrate the Bible, and to prove to modern eyes the extreme accuracy of its historical details! Chapter after chapter in the Old Testament, full of ancient names and threatening prophecies, hitherto of apparently no concern to *us*, is often now suddenly brought to notice, as an indisputable document that verifies the research of a recent traveller, or the discoveries of an eminent antiquarian. And so God in His own time restores the old inhabitants of that particular region to our memory. Thus the learned, who may hitherto have studied every book *but* their Bible, are not left without witness to direct their attention to the inspired volume, which may lead them in the way of eternal life.

The first twenty years of this century revealed the existence of these cities by the travels of Burckhardt (who followed Seetzen through the desolate region), disguised as an Arab, and professing to be a merchant in search of saltpetre, the "gunpowder salt," which accumulates profusely

within those deserted chambers; but otherwise all this fair land of Eastern Palestine lay hidden from the eyes of the men of the West, from the time that the Saracen power superseded the Roman in that locality. Ishmael has long entered into the inheritance of Isaac, and the promise of dominion to Israel from the Nile to the Euphrates *has yet to be fulfilled.*

Race after race has left its mighty marks in Bashan: the giants their ponderous workmanship, of the character of our own Druidical stones. Then follow Jewish masonry and names; Greek temples and inscriptions; Roman roads; Christian churches; Saracenic mosques; Turkish desolations,—all alike confirming the perfect accuracy and truth of the Bible history. *And, more strange than all,* will be the winding up of the wondrous tale of successive empires in Eastern Palestine, according to the voice of prophecy, *in a return of God's people Israel to these selfsame ancient cities.*

The last blessing of Moses to Dan, is—

“Dan is a lion’s whelp, he shall leap from Bashan.” (Deut. xxxiii. 22.)

not Reuben, or Gad, or Manasseh, who in the time of Moses received this possession, but Dan, whose name is blotted from the list of the tribes in the book of Revelation.

In Isaiah’s wondrous prophecies of restoration to Israel he says:

“For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.” (Isaiah liv. 3).

“And I will multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel, *even* all of it: and the cities shall be inhabited, and the wastes shall be builded. And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are fenced, and are inhabited.” (Ezek. xxxvi. 10, 35).

"Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him: I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the LORD. Set thee up waymarks, make thee high heaps: set thine heart toward the highway, even the way which thou wentest: turn again, O virgin of Israel, turn again to these thy cities." (Jer. xxxi. 20, 21).

That it was given to Moses of the Holy Spirit to see the scattering and the *final* return of His people, the whole book of Deuteronomy forbids us to doubt, especially chapter xxx. 4, 5:

"If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven from thence will the LORD thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee: And the LORD thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it: and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers."

He was then in the wilderness with Israel in their last year before their entrance to the land.

This book of Deuteronomy appears to have been written in the plains of Moab, a short time before his death, 1451 B.C.: his death itself, as recorded in the 34th chapter, was probably added by his successor, Joshua; and the last four verses of that chapter, which concern Joshua, were, it is most likely, written by Ezra the scribe, when he collected the books of the Old Testament together.

A little before the repeating of the Law, Moses had held up to the suffering people the serpent of brass upon a pole, that every one who was bitten, when he looked upon it, might live (Num. xxi. 9), —the type, as our Lord tells us (John iii. 14, 15), of His own lifting up on the Cross, "that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." That shore of the Red Sea, where the Israelites were bitten, is still remarkable for abounding in serpents, as indeed the wilderness does generally. In Deut. viii. 15, Moses calls it "a

great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought"; yet we never hear of the people being bitten and killed by them till now. They had been marvellously protected from this, as from other dangers of the way; and the protection was only now withdrawn on account of their oft-repeated sin of murmuring.

They had, however, nearly finished their course in the wilderness, and would not much longer murmur against their great leader, for he was about to ascend Mount Nebo, and to die! And he left them saying, "Secret things belong to God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us, and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of the Law." (Deut. xxix. 29.)

Yes! he left behind him the revealed and written LAW OF GOD for that people, besides the wonderful book of Job.

He had looked upon all Egypt's glory. He had seen a nation fall before him in the wilderness; he had been made the means of giving God's revelation to earth; and now he himself was about to pass into the fuller revelations of heaven.

Having ordered the elders of Israel on the day that they should pass over Jordan, to set up great stones and plaster them with plaster, and themselves to write upon them all the words of the Law very plainly (Deut. xxvii. 2.), Moses ascended the Abarim range overlooking the Dead Sea.

The accomplished recent traveller, Mr. H. B. Tristram, has given a most interesting description of the mountain which *he* considers to be Mount Nebo: "On those brows overlooking the mouth of the Jordan, over against Jericho, we halted, and gazed at a prospect on which it has been permitted to few European eyes to feast. The day was clear,

and revealed to us (whether or not we were standing on the exact spot), at least, the very same landscape as that on which Moses, the servant of the Lord, closed the eye of his mortality. The height of this brow cannot be less than 4,500 feet, so completely does it overlook the heights of Hebron and of central Judea. To the eastward, as we turned round, rolled in one vast unbroken expanse the goodly Belka, one boundless plain, one waving ocean of corn and grass, stretching down towards the rosy granite peaks of Arabia. Well may such wealth of soil have poured forth its teeming myriads of flocks and herds, the riches of that mighty sheepmaster, the king of Moab of old. Not a tree nor a bush could be seen; but the glass revealed the black tents of the Beni Sakk'r, dotted in clusters far and near, testifying that the population, though vagrant and far short of the teeming multitude of the Roman cities, must still be very great. Turning westwards, in front of us, two or three lines of mountain terraces descended to the Dead Sea. It lay like a long strip of molten metal beneath our feet, with the sun mirrored on its surface. Then, almost in the centre of the line a break in the ridge, and a green spot below, marked Engedi, the nest of the ancient rock-dwellers, and now of the wild goat. Still far below us, and lower too, than the ridge of Hebron, we saw Bethlehem, and not the buildings of Jerusalem, but all the familiar points in the neighbourhood; the Mount of Olives, with the church at its top; the gap in the hills leading up from Jericho, and the rounded heights of Benjamin on its other side. Closer still beneath us, had Israel's vast camp extended in front of our green-fringed terraces."

The dark, sinuous bed of Jordan, clearly defined near its mouth, was soon lost in dim haze. Then,

looking over that, the eye rested on Gerizim's rounded top, and further still opened the plain of Esdraelon, the shoulder of Carmel, just showing to the right of Gerizim; while the faint and distant bluish haze beyond it told us that *there* was the sea, the utmost sea, the Mediterranean. It seemed as if but a whiff of air were needed to reveal it clearly. Northwards again, rose the outline of Tabor, aided by which we could identify Gilboa. The snowy top of Hermon was mantled with cloud, and Lebanon's highest range must have towered behind it; but in front, due north of us, stretched the dark forests of Ajalon, with the steep bold sides of mountains, terminating in Mount Gilead; the Bozrah too was distinctly visible.

"And the Lord showed Moses all the land of Gilead, unto Dan, and all Naphtali, and all the land of Judah, unto the utmost sea; and the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, unto Zoar." (Deut. xxxiv. 1—3).

He went up as he had often done before, to be alone with God—but to return to men no more. Farewell, then, to Moses as he ascends Mount Nebo—his eye not dim, nor his natural force abated, though he had borne the burden of 120 years.

He was not sinless; he was not to be worshipped; and lest he should have been (for never was human being so visibly endued with Divine power), God marked his only recorded sin with punishment,—the great punishment of not entering the Promised Land; but that circumstance was employed as a type, that *the Law*, which he personified, cannot conduct us into the heavenly Canaan. Joshua, who took possession, is, as his name signifies, the type of Jesus, through whom only is obtained the "abundant entrance" "by grace and not by works."





JERUSALEM.

THE TIMES OF THE BOOK OF JOSHUA.

JOSHUA, MOSES' MINISTER.

No. XI.

THE last chapter of Deuteronomy in our Bibles may in former days have belonged rather to the succeeding Book of Joshua ; for the Hebrew Bible, as we have shewn you, was written in columns on parchment or leather, and without the present divisions of chapter and verse. These were chiefly adopted for the convenience of finding particular passages ; and the holy books were first thus divided by Cardinal Hugo only about 600 years ago.

The first *English* Bible divided into verses was printed at Geneva in 1560, and our own King James's "Authorized English Bible," published in 1611, and now in use, adopted these divisions from Archbishop Parker's, or "The Bishop's Bible," published previously.

The substance of the last chapter of Deuteronomy, —the death of Moses, was presented to you in our last Tract ; and now we begin the *historical* books of the Bible which carry on the narrative beyond Moses as far as Esther, the beautiful Jewess who became the Persian Queen.

These books are in number *twelve*, and they take in the history of well-nigh a thousand years, from the death of Moses to the reforms effected by Nehemiah after the seventy years' captivity in Babylon, when a small remnant returned to the land of their fathers, to hold it henceforth as vassals only to superior lords.

The Book of Genesis comprised to
the death of Joseph, 1635 B.C. 2369 years.
From Joseph's death to the birth
of Moses there were 64 „
Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and
Deuteronomy were all written
during the life of Moses . . 120 „
The Book of Joshua comprises . . 25 „
and brings us to the 2578th year of
the world, and to the 1427th year before the
coming of Christ.

The Book of Joshua contains the stirring story of a great military hero, living in the age of miracles ; and its first twelve chapters, at least, bear internal evidence of having been written by an eye-witness, if not by Joshua's own pen, with here and there an addition by an after scribe. In the last chapter—Joshua himself is said to have written the words of the Covenant—the words of the last Covenant he made with the people in the Book of the Law of God ; but in the whole Book of Joshua, otherwise, there is a striking and marked change from Moses speaking in the first person, and recording the words of God and his own words, viz., 'The Lord said unto me,' etc., to the narrative of what *Joshua* did and said—by some one else—perhaps by Eleazar, the high priest and son of Aaron, whose duty it was, not only to instruct the people by reading and speaking to them of the law, but also by writing to instruct posterity in the acts and ways of God. We are first introduced to Joshua by a touching title: "Moses' minister," and informed that the Lord spake to him, saying,

"Arise, go over this Jordan.

"As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

"Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant

commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.

"This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success."

Now this is the book—*none other than the Pentateuch*, which people who fancy themselves wise, are setting aside as unworthy to be believed in one part and another, at this advanced age of the world,—but still it holds true, dear friends, and may you always believe it—that those who turn not from it to the right hand or to the left *are prospered* like Joshua whithersoever they go. They *do* find cause still "to meditate therein day and night," and *so* "they make their way prosperous," and *so* "they have good success."

Is not this the history of our Bible-woman movement? The blessed Book is our crest and our shield. It goes before us in all our ways, and upon our trust in this ancient, everlasting Word of the God of Israel—He still, to this hour, bestows His blessing. Go, read afresh the marvellous narratives in the first twelve chapters of the Book of Joshua, and observe how the Lord was with that new leader—even "as he was with Moses."

From the acacia groves of Shittim, on the east of Jordan, Joshua sends two men to view the land, even Jericho. When escaped to the scarped heights that overhang it, by the advice of Rahab, for three days, they doubtless did thus view it, and brought back the news that the history of Israel, was known to the Canaanites; how the Lord had dried up the water of the Red Sea for His people; and also the wars of Moses with the giants Sihon and Og whom he had utterly destroyed; which had caused the hearts of the men of Jericho to melt with fear.

And now the majesty of their *entrance* on the wilderness life is mated by their *exit* from it; and the true measure of the *first* miracle, illustrated, by the *second* sweeping of a path through the waters, the Divine object being one and the same in both miracles, a rapid transit of the people altogether.

At the brim of the water stand the priests with the ark upon their shoulders. At a distance of a mile behind followed the great mass of the people.

Suddenly as the soles of the feet of the priests touch the water, the full bed of the Jordan is dried before them, "very far," as far as the eye could reach (the names of cities are given as boundaries), the waters which come down from the Sea of Tiberias stood and rose up upon an heap. (Moses had said that the Red Sea had stood "up right as an heap;" and also that its waters were a wall on the right hand and the left.) Now the priests go forward, enter the river, and stand firm on dry land in the midst of Jordan. The waters of Jordan are piled up above, and cut off from the Dead Sea,* and the host of Israel pass over on either side of the symbol of the divine presence, while the priestly bearers halt in the middle of the bed. This is all recorded in the fourth chapter of Joshua, and referred to in the Book of Psalms.

* This sea, scripturally called "the Salt Sea," (by the western world "the Dead Sea,") is the final receptacle of the river Jordan, the lowest and largest of the three lakes which interrupt the rush of his descending course from the Lebanon. The Salt Sea has no visible outlet. The level of its waters, more than 1,300 feet below the surface of the ocean, is the lowest in the world. It is nowhere said that the sinful cities of the plain were submerged in this sea. They had been destroyed 450 years before the passage of the Israelites, by "fire and brimstone rained from heaven."

"The sea saw, and fled, Jordan was driven back. . . .
 "What ailed thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest? thou Jordan, that thou wast driven back?" (Ps. cxiv. 3, 5.)

These two verses settle the whole question. The stupendous scale of both miracles, and the value of every word of Scripture employed to describe them, is corroborated by a decisive proof when Joshua (the sole adult survivor of the *first* miracle except Caleb,) describes it to the generation born in the wilderness, and to those who were 'little ones' at the crossing of the Jordan (see Deut. i. 39), and in that day had no knowledge between good and evil.

"For the Lord your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over, as the Lord your God did to the Red Sea, which he dried up from before *us*, until *we* were gone over." Josh. iv. 23.

Joshua certainly knew the facts of both miracles, and had not the one been the counterpart of the other, *he* would not have compared them; and the change of persons from 'you' and 'ye' to 'us' and 'we' distinguishes with historical exactness the past and the then present generation.

The people of Israel might have proceeded towards the Promised Land without crossing the Red Sea at all; and they might have crossed the Jordan where it was a brook, near its source; but they were ordered to cross *its full stream*, in order that the nations they were to conquer might perceive their mission from God; and it is said, "neither was there spirit in them any more, because of the children of Israel."

The twelve memorial stones which the tribes had by command, brought up out of the bed of Jordan were pitched upon the rising ground of Gilgal, where Joshua encamped to the east of Jericho, and which

then overlooked a forest of palms between them and the city of Jericho. The last tree of this palm forest, seen as late as 1838, has now disappeared. It must have recalled to the invaders, the palm groves of Egypt, and as it was the time of the barley harvest they must have seen stretching through the spaces under the trees, fields of ripe corn.

Here at Gilgal the reproach of their uncircumcision was rolled away, for this ordinance had been neglected in the desert wanderings; and the next event was the celebration of the Passover—a new observance to most of the people, the generation who had been educated in the free, pure air of the wilderness, while their fathers were dying out for their unbelief.

The Passover had been observed only once in Egypt, and once again at Sinai, and this was its third celebration.

On the next morning, the manna ceased to fall: the “old corn” of the Promised Land supplied its place.

The great *new* leader of Israel had already been known by the people, all that he commanded them they had promised to *do*, and wherever he sent them to *go*. Like Moses, he was the guardian and student of the written revelation. Each read it to the people, and caused them to act upon it. Joshua lived twenty-five years after taking them into the land; and as he died at 110, he must have known for forty-five years what was the bondage of Egypt, and must have seen all, except Caleb, die around him in the wilderness; and he was now appointed as the conquering general of the people with whom God had made a covenant, to destroy every other league and covenant existing among the Canaanitish

nations. That God had *given* him the strength and courage to which he was exhorted may be seen in the narrative of his going up to the man with the drawn sword, by Jericho, saying, "Art thou for us or for our adversaries?"

"And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant?"

"And the captain of the Lord's host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so."

"So the Lord was with Joshua;" and then came the first act in "the wars of the Lord," the siege of Jericho, and the falling of its massive walls to the blare of the trumpets; and the saving of Rahab according to promise, and the forbidding of the "accursed thing" to be taken from the city. This was neither silver nor gold, nor brass nor iron, for those were to come into the treasury of the Lord; but some symbol or sign, as we may fairly conclude, which was prominent in idolatrous worship.

Let us look for the light that Scripture throws on this "accursed thing."

It is spoken of by Moses in the seventh chapter of Deuteronomy as to be found among the seven nations of Canaan, greater and mightier than Israel whom the Lord would destroy utterly before them, and with whom therefore no covenant was to be made.

"The graven images of their gods shall ye burn with fire: thou shalt not desire the silver or gold *that is* on them, nor take *it* unto thee, lest thou be snared therein: for it *is* an abomination to the Lord thy God.

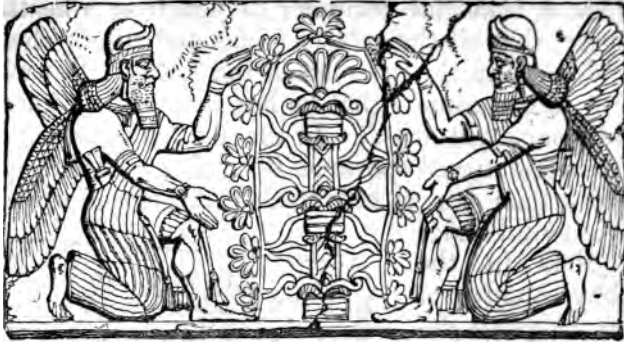
“Neither shalt thou bring an abomination into thine house, lest thou be a cursed thing like it: *but* thou shalt utterly detest it, and thou shalt utterly abhor it; for it *is* a cursed thing.”

Now Achan's sin was the first open transgression of this command. The Lord tells Joshua (vii. 11) that Israel have taken of the accursed thing, and have stolen, and dissembled also, and have put it among their own stuff; and Achan's confession was not of the secreting of any visible idol, but only of “the goodly garment,” and of “200 shekels of silver” and a “wedge or tongue of gold” of fifty shekels weight.

In the fifth verse of the seventh chapter of Deuteronomy, of the “graven images” above defined as the accursed thing, it is said:—

“Thus shall ye deal with them; ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire.”

Now it had long been known by Hebrew scholars that the word which is here translated “groves” should have been left a proper name, as in the original, and that this name was Assheerah. Even before the Assyrian sculptures were brought to light Dr. Margoliouth had pointed out that the Assheerah was a *symbolical tree* representing the host of heaven. “No one,” says Mr. Ferguson, “can now read the passages in the Bible referring to the worship of the groves without seeing that they do not mean a group of trees, but must refer to just such a symbol or idol as that here figured.” In Judges iii. 7 it is said, “the children of Israel forgot the Lord their God, and served Baalim and the groves.” There is always a tradition of a sacred tree in all Eastern systems of idolatry, and this tree of the Assyrian monuments is, as we have seen,



SACRED TREE AND HEATHEN CHERUBIM.

very often accompanied by the symbol of the "presence" of Ashur over it (see p. 39) *to which presence alone belonged worship and sacrifice.* This presence attended the king in his battles, and was



THE PRESENCE OF ASSHUR IN THE TRIUMPHAL PROCESSION.

carved on his signet, and embroidered on his robes.



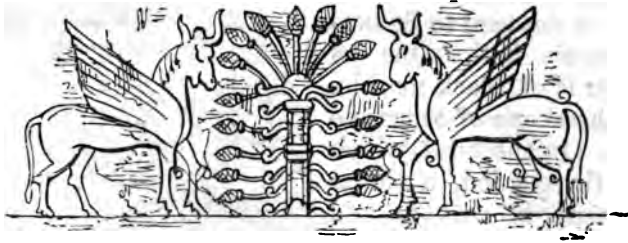
A ROYAL CYLINDER OR SIGNET.

What a beautiful reminder though from a heathen source, that all the acts of kings and rulers should be done as in the presence of the Lord! But what does Achan confess that he has stolen? "A goodly Babylonish garment." In the British Museum we have a fine carved specimen of such a garment, *with no less than ten sacred trees embroidered upon it.*

It is found under a glass in the lobby chamber of the Assyrian department, and the date attached to it is 1120 *before Christ*, and three hundred years after Joshua's time. Nevertheless, there is evidence in the Book of Joshua of a goodly garment coming from Babylon, and being an "accursed thing," probably from its idolatrous embroidery. It is fringed with the Assheerah, dress and helmet also, and similar emblems odious to God, as caricatures of the Cherubic forms at



Eden's gate, are found by careful search, though not at first obvious to the eye, on the dress of the kings of Nineveh, as well as on the winged figures that



SACRED TREE AND GRIFFINS ON DRESS OF KINGS OF NINEVEH.

attend them; so that there was long-enduring meaning in this peculiar ornament, and owing no doubt to its widespread use among the Canaanitish nations also, did it become such a snare to Israel in the after times of the Judges and the Prophets. We now see how closely connected with the worship of Baal were the *Chammānīm*, rendered in the margin of most passages "Sun Images" (see 2 Chron. xxxiv. 4). During King Josiah's reformation he brake down the altars of Baalim, in his twelfth year, and the *Sun Images that were on high above them* he cut down, and the groves (or Assheerah), etc. In Elijah's time the prophets of Baal were four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the "groves" four hundred, which ate at Jezebel's table (1 Kings xviii. 19).

The other "accursed thing" that Achan had taken was the "wedge" or tongue or triangle of gold, which another Babylonian monument of the same date, 1120 B.C. throws light upon. These

two curious Babylonian monuments in the museum are thought to have been landmarks, and are covered with curses on those who remove them. They are at the head of the stairs which descend to SENNACHERIB'S hall. One of them is of black marble, in the shape of a massive fish. On the head, which is three-sided, a large serpent is carved, and around him, are scattered arrow-headed characters, which decipherers say, commence the curses of the inscription. An arrow-head or wedge also appears as an offering on an altar. The early Babylonians worshipped their god "Anu" (supposed to be Noah) under the form of a wedge. "Anu" means also "the word." There is a remarkable stone altar now in the National Library



of Paris, which was found among the ruins of Babylon upon which is laid a *long triangular wedge*, thus shown to have been *worshipped* in Chaldea; perhaps as the first letter of the earliest alphabet, of which our A retains the outline. This may have been the wedge of gold that Achan stole.

All these idolatries of men and kings were "accursed" in the sight of Jehovah. They broke His *first*

commandment, and from the decree for the stoning and burning of Achan for the sake of the Babylonish garment and the wedge of gold—to *all* such sin committed through the reigns of all the kings of Judah and Israel, the curse of the Lord extended, and the people were punished accordingly, during their trial or probation era of almost 800 years in the land of promise.

And, alas, through the reigns of all the kings, Israel built them images *and groves* "on every high hill and under every green tree" (1 Kings xiv. 23). When it came to Manasseh's building altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the Lord, *and setting up a graven image of the groves* that he had made, in the very temple of Solomon,* the *trial* era of the chosen nation was declared to be at an end: "Cast them out, . . . let them go forth," ~~with~~ the Lord. "I will cause them to be removed into all kingdoms of the earth, . . . for that which Manasseh did in Jerusalem" (Jer. xv. 1, 4), "to be chastised seven times for their sins" (Lev. xxvi. 18, 24, 28), "to receive at the Lord's hand double for all their sins." (Isa. xl. 2.)

But if there were this sad *ending* to their probation, they were only just *entering* upon it, under their great hero Joshua. Jericho has fallen to the sound of his trumpets, and Ai has bowed to his spear, and now he builds an altar unto the Lord God of Israel in Mount Ebal.

"As Moses the servant of the Lord commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses, an altar of whole stones, over which no man hath lift up any iron: and they offered thereon burnt offerings unto the Lord, and sacrificed peace offerings.

"And he wrote there upon the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he wrote in the presence of the children of Israel.

* 2 Kings xxi. 7.

The people having crossed the Jordan, are come again to Schechem or Nablus, the frontispiece of our third tract. It is marked also on the edge of the map of Eastern Palestine in the same number. It was to Shechem and to Gerizim that it had been foretold that they *would* come again in the fourth generation, according to the vision of their great forefather, bringing Joseph's bones, which they had carried with them, by his desire, through all their forty years of desert wandering (Gen. l. 25); and they buried them in Shechem, in the inheritance of the children of Joseph (Josh. xxiv. 32). "At the mouth of the Valley of Shechem two slight breaks are visible, in the midst of the vast plain of corn—one a white Mussulman chapel, the other a few fragments of stone; the first covers the alleged tomb of Joseph, Ishmael's mark of present triumph over Isaac's exiled race; the other, THE WELL, choked up by ruins, but still the well of 'our father Jacob.'"

Here, while the ark remained in the valley, up the sides of the twin mountains stood the thousands of Israel, the chiefs, the judges, the Levites, the women, the children, and the stranger, six tribes uttering the curses from the barren Ebal, and six the blessings from the pleasant Gerizim, and as each curse and blessing was pronounced there came with a vast voice from each of those living hills the Amen of the consenting multitudes (Josh. viii. 33).

"Those who have seen the spot," says Mr. Mills, "can readily realize the scene. Just where the two mountains approach each other nearest are the two lower spurs, looking like two noble pulpits prepared by nature—and here the Levites would stand to read. The valley running between looks just like the floor of a vast place of worship. The slopes of both mountains recede gradually, and offer room for hundreds of thousands to be conveniently seated.

"An objection has been made, that the distance between the two mountains is too great for the human voice to traverse; and this would have greater force with those who imagine the reading to have taken place on the very summits of the mountains. I am not aware whether any experiment to test the point had ever been made upon the spot, previously to my own. In company with two friends I pitched my tent in the valley, where I supposed the Ark formerly to have stood. I clambered up Gerizim and one friend up Ebal, the third party remaining with the men at the tent. I opened my Bible, and read the command concerning the blessings in Hebrew, and every word was heard most distinctly by the friend in the valley, the Rev. David Edwards of Newport, as well as by Mr. John Williams of Aberystwith, who stood on Mount Ebal. The latter then read the cursings in Welsh, and we heard every word and syllable.

"It has been observed by many authors how much farther one can see and hear in Palestine than in Great Britain, owing to the different state of the atmosphere. Dr. Robinson mentions a spot in Lebanon where the voice can be heard for two miles."

We must now endeavour to settle clearly in our minds the first conquests of Joshua in Western Palestine, accomplished under "the captain of the Lord's host," whom this hero so faithfully served.

There are three divisions in the little slip of country we call Palestine, or the Holy Land, on the Mediterranean side of Jordan:

1. The central plain of Samaria, or Esdraelon.
2. Galilee on the north of it.
3. Judea on the south.

It is but a strip of country, about the size of Wales. Its length, from Dan to Beersheba, is not 200 miles. Its breadth, from Jordan to the Mediterranean, rarely more than fifty. The highest number of its inhabitants is not reckoned at much more than *double that of London, i.e.*, between six and seven millions; but these were thickly congregated, for Wales has only a million of people. Palestine is, above all countries in the world, "the land of ruins—of ruins everywhere—not a hill-top but is covered by the vestiges of some fortress or city of former ages. The Saracens, the Crusaders, the Romans, the Greeks, the Jews, even the Canaanites, have all left their tokens in the land,—so long the "battle-field of Babylon and Egypt," the "high bridge between the Nile and the Euphrates," the "thoroughfare and prize of the world."

And why is it a high bridge? Because a mass of hills or mountain ranges runs up the country, bordered on both sides, east and west, by a broad belt of lowland, sunk deep below the high level. The Canaanites, Philistines, and Phœnicians lived in the plains that skirted the Mediterranean, and the settlements of the tall and haughty Anakim, or Rephaim, lay along the mountain range; it seems that, from superior size and wisdom too, they were the masters of another race of people, called the Amorites,—a degraded nation, and very wicked, and whose "iniquity was full" at the time that Israel entered the land.

The Rephaim had military outposts and fortresses in strong positions among the mountains. They had even a city, Kirjath-sepher, or the book-city, the city of letters, or of archives. Joshua conquered it; but its records are all lost—not come down to us. We know nothing of these "tall" and "haughty"

rulers of old time, but what is said of them in the Bible, and, strange to say, what is carved and written about them on the old Egyptian temple of Karnak.

Yes! they are there,—these men of “Onk” or Anak. They are supposed to have been the shepherd-kings who once conquered Egypt; and in the reign of Rameses III., Egypt conquered them in their own land. She never records her own defeats; but she has described her conquests over the Rephaim as ranging through three centuries.

Another of the ancient cities, named on Karnak, is Hebron, or Arba, where Abraham lived, died, and was buried. This city “was built seven years before Zoan, in Egypt” (Num. xiii. 22).

The victories of Joshua comprise three distinct series of events. First, his campaign against the Amorite league, in which he swept round the mountain of Judah, returning by Hebron to Gilgal. Secondly, the campaign against the northern Canaanites,—“Joshua made war a long time with all those kings” (Josh. xi. 18). Finally, the general statements of particular expeditions against those tall Anakim, till destroyed in their cities and forts,—“there were none of the Anakim left in all the land of the children of Israel,” only the Philistines in Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod; and then Joshua took the whole land, and gave it for an inheritance unto Israel by their tribes (Josh. xi. 22). Balaam the son of Beor had been slain in this war (Josh. xiii. 22). Yet these conquests after all were imperfect, very much land remained to be possessed, and seven of Israel’s tribes had not yet received their inheritance, when, in the eighteenth chapter of Joshua, it is said :—

“And the whole congregation of the children of Israel

assembled together at Shiloh, and set up the tabernacle of the congregation there."

IT IS MOST IMPORTANT FULLY TO REALISE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CENTRES OF SHECHEM AND SHILOH, FOR THE SPACE OF 400 YEARS TO ANCIENT ISRAEL.

We have seen that the capital of Ephraim and of the kingdom of Israel was Shechem; its great sanctuary was SHILOH.

Shechem is considered to be the portion given to Joseph by Jacob when near his end—"the portion above his brethren." This central tract and this "good land" were naturally allotted to the powerful house of Joseph in the first division of the country; and it is very true, as has been said, that "we are so familiar with the supremacy of the house of JUDAH, that we are apt to forget its recent date comparatively with that of EPHRAIM."

Alas! as the psalm of Asaph tells us (Ps. lxxviii. 9):—

"The children of Ephraim being armed, and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle. They kept not the covenant of God, and refused to walk in his law. . . . Then the Lord . . . refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim: but chose the tribe of Judah, the Mount Zion which he loved."

The sites of heathen oracles have been always shrines for classic pilgrimages; but the site of SHILOH was completely forgotten from the time of Jerome until the year 1838. *Yet here the tabernacle of the wilderness erected by Joshua abode 300 years* (Josh. xviii. 1). The "tent" or "tabernacle," that last relic of the wandering life of the chosen people, is described in the Rabbinical traditions as a structure of low stone walls, with a tent drawn over the top, exactly answering to the Bedouin villages of the present day, where the stone enclosures often remain long after the tribes and tents have vanished. Had

it not been for the precision with which the site of Shiloh is described in the Book of Judges (xxi. 19), its situation could never have been identified with the present "Seilun :"—

"Shiloh, which is on the north side of Bethel, on the east side of the highway that goeth up from Bethel to Shechem, and on the south of Lebonah."

Shiloh is ten miles south of Shechem, and twenty-five north of Jerusalem.

But now there is another scene at Shechem. The stalwart Joshua, the Lord's captain, "goes the way of all the earth, and again he gathers all the tribes here, and the elders and the judges present themselves before God." After reciting the Lord's dealings with them he says :—

"Choose you this day whom ye will serve ; whether the gods which your fathers served that *were* on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell : but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

"And the people said unto Joshua, The Lord our God will we serve, and His voice will we obey.

"So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem.

"And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God, and took a great stone, and set it up there under an oak, that *was* by the sanctuary of the Lord."

And it is really recorded, in the last chapter of this most interesting book, that

"Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the Lord that He had done for Israel."

We have given you JERUSALEM as the frontispiece of this tract, because the name of "the Holy City," the *only* city of the *past*, the *present*, and the *future*, is linked for ever with the Holy Land as its metropolis ; but at the same time it is with a special request *that you will observe* that Jerusalem did not

become the capital city of the Jews for 400 years after Joshua's period.

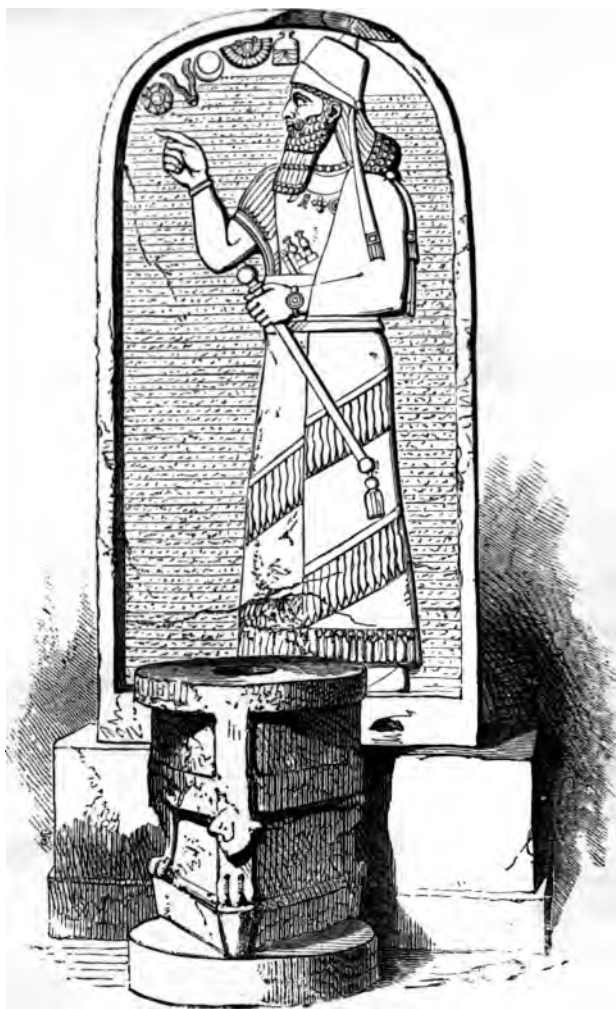
Jerusalem lay long unknown save as a heathen fortress in the midst of the Promised Land. "It is strange to think how often Joshua, Deborah, Samuel, Saul, and even David, must have passed and repassed those gray hills and spacious caverns in which David had hidden himself, when he fled to the mountains, unconscious of the fame reserved for Zion in every future age" (Ezek. v. 5).

"Thus saith the Lord God; This *is* Jerusalem: I have set it in the midst of the nations and countries *that are* round about her."

Jerusalem is situated on the edge of one of the highest table lands of the country. From every other side than that of Hebron, the ascent to it is perpetual. The city is a mountain city, enthroned on a mountain fastness. Deep and precipitous ravines guard it on the west, south, and east. On the north this city is on a level with the mountain plains. A long and deep ravine divides it into two unequal portions, one lower than the other. That on the west is the Mount Zion, and was the early fortress of the Jebusites, and defied the attacks of Joshua.

The eastern hill is lower and smaller. Here was Mount Moriah, and on this brow at present stands the great mosque of Omar. The earliest notices of Jerusalem are in Joshua xii. 10 and xv. 8, when Joshua is said to smite its king. In Judges xix. 10, we hear of "Jebus, which is Jerusalem." It is mentioned also in Judges i. 7. But it is David who removes the seat of government from Hebron to Jerusalem, and who makes it the metropolis of the tribe of Judah 1047 B.C., or 396 years after Joshua's death. Solomon lays the foundation of the Temple, B.C. 1011, or 480 years after the coming out of Egypt.





A KING OF NINEVEH AND HIS ALTAR.

THE TIMES OF THE BOOK OF JUDGES.

No. XII.

“The Book of JUDGES is to the *Old Testament* what the ACTS OF THE APOSTLES and the Book of REVELATION are to the *New*.”—*Canon Wordsworth*.

THE Book of JUDGES is connected with the Book of Joshua as closely as Joshua is with the five Books of Moses.

See its first sentence :—

“Now after the death of Joshua it came to pass.”

The conquests of the great general, as related in the twelfth chapter of Joshua, seem to be continued in the first chapter of Judges by the houses of Judah and Simeon and Joseph; “the Lord was with *them* (vers. 19, 22); but the tribes of Manasseh, Ephraim, Zebulun, Asher, and Naphthali, are mentioned as *not* driving out the Canaanites; and an angel or messenger of the Lord rebukes them with a voice from God at Bochim, and for a season the people weep and repent. The account of Joshua’s death and burial is then repeated (ii. 8, 9), as if taken up again from the close of the Book of Joshua; and the words are quoted thus, that,

“Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord that he did for Israel.”

And then, alas, it is added,

“That when all that generation were gathered to their fathers, then arose another generation after them which knew *not* the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel.”

This new generation forsook the Lord, and served Baalim and Ashtaroth, and the Lord in His anger delivered them "into the hands of spoilers," and "sold them into the hands of their enemies, and they were greatly distressed." Then His mercy mingled with judgment, and it is written :—

"Nevertheless, the Lord raised up JUDGES, and delivered them out of the hands of their enemies all the days of the Judges."

Now here is the key to the plan of the whole book. *Its first fourteen* chapters bring us down to the death of Samson, and are almost entirely a history of these wars of deliverance. The author had a certain design in view ; to show that the sufferings of the Hebrews after the death of Joshua were owing to their apostasy from Jehovah and their idolatry. When they repent and obey, they are pardoned and delivered. To illustrate this fact, the writer collects striking fragments of their personal history, which prove his point, between the times of Joshua and Eli. His design does not seem to be to give a complete national history of the Hebrews. If it had been, he would surely have named the number of tribes for whom a judge arose, and the relation in which they stood to other tribes, for a judge was not a king set over all the tribes. These judges were temporary and special deliverers sent by God to meet certain emergencies. They were *not* supreme magistrates succeeding to the authority of Moses and Joshua.

There is a kind of appendix to the Book of Judges, beginning with the 17th chapter, and continuing to the close of the book, in which there is no mention made of any judge ; but we find allusions to the "house of God," the "ark" and the "high priest,"

and the period of this part of the history of the people is marked thus :—

“ When there was no king in Israel ” (Judges xix. 1).

The appendix contains two narratives illustrating the previous times of lawlessness and anarchy, that of Micah, who worshipped molten and graven images, and that of the dreadful history of the Levite's concubine, and the consequent massacre of almost the whole tribe of Benjamin. The appendix, therefore, describes the times of lawlessness, in contrast to the peaceful times described in the Book of RUTH, which originally it is said formed a part of the Book of Judges ; but which from the time the Bible was translated into Greek has taken its place as a separate book.

The lawless times are also alluded to in Deborah's song. When travellers were afraid to go by the highways, and chose byways for safety ; and when quiet villages seemed to have been forsaken of their inhabitants for fear :

“ Then I Deborah arose—a mother in Israel ” (Judges v. 7).

To restore, doubtless, the influence of good mothers in the nation ; and she stirs up Barak to the conquest of Sisera. Extraordinary mention is made of Deborah. She dwelt in Mount Ephraim, under the palm-tree which was named from her, as the oak was from her predecessor and namesake, Rachel's nurse. The palm-tree is supposed to have been rare in Palestine, and therefore mentioned. Under its shadow the children of Israel came up to Deborah for judgment. She is evidently an inspired prophetess, for she foretold the death of Sisera by the hand of Jael.

The institution of the order of Judges took place before the Hebrews lost their great leader Moses,

who had been their prophet, priest, and even “king in Jeshurun ;” *he* appointed for them JUDGES, by Jethro’s counsel, “able men, such as fear God; men of truth, hating covetousness,” to preside over sections of the people (Ex. xviii. 21). They were chosen at first for *moral* fitness, and while the Levites instructed the people in the Law, the Judges enforced its fulfilment. The Judges mentioned as standing before Joshua (chap. xxiv. 1), had doubtless been elected from the same class of patriarchal senators.

The Levites were also the keepers of the standard weights and measures in the sanctuary, to which, in case of dispute, reference was to be made. The high priest was the chief judge in the nation before kings were appointed, and always in case of need would be supernaturally directed in his decisions, *i.e.*, he would “inquire of the Lord” by the appointed means. Yet we hear of no high priest acting as judge but Eli, and it has been remarked, as a fact of some weight, that none of the special deliverers of Israel called judges, except Samuel, were of the *priestly* tribe, and that few of them became as much noted as Deborah. The judges were fifteen in number.

During their times, *i.e.*, between the days of Joshua and SAMUEL (who combined in his own person the offices of judge, high-priest, and prophet), the Israelites suffered six servitudes :—

1. To Mesopotamia’s king	.	.	8 years.
2. To Moab	.	.	18 ”
3. To Jabin and Sisera	.	.	20 ”
4. To Midian	.	.	7 ”
5. To Ammon	.	.	18 ”
6. To the Philistines	.	.	40 ”

Total 111 years.

Definite periods are also named, during which they were delivered by the JUDGES from captivity:—

1st Judge.	Othniel, who governed	40	years.
2nd "	Ehud	80	"
3rd "	Shamgar	—	"
4th "	Deborah and		
	Barak	40	"
5th "	Gideon	40	"
6th "	Abimelech	3	"
7th "	Tola	23	"
8th "	Jair	22	"
9th "	Jepththah	6	"
10th "	Ibzan	7	"
11th "	Elon	10	"
12th "	Abdon	8	"
13th "	Samson	20	"
14th "	Eli	40	"
15th "	Samuel	—	"

339

Add 111 the time of the servitude.

And the total is 450 years.

By the statements of these years it appears that the Book of Judges exactly agrees with St. Paul's reckoning, *if he did thus reckon*. See Acts xiii. 19—20.

"And when God had destroyed seven nations in the land of Chanaan, he divided their land to them by lot.

"And after that he gave *unto them* judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet."

Such is the reading of our English translation; but this would disagree with the important statement in 1 Kings vi. 1—that the temple of Solomon began to be built in the 480th year after the Exodus—a date which we do not know how to part with, in the Hebrew chronology. Canon Words-

worth, however, who would be the last to trifle with an Apostle's testimony, whether in figures or facts, brings fresh light to this question concerning Old Testament history. He considers that the 450 years in Acts xiii. "is grounded on an erroneous reading and interpretation of St. Paul's words," and says that the *true* reading has been happily restored from the oldest MSS. in the Latin, Coptic, and Armenian versions—viz., that "after about 450 years, *i.e.*, from the great epoch to which St. Paul had referred at the beginning of his speech, the birth of Isaac, the people entered into and possessed the land. The reception of Israel into covenant with God in Isaac *was* about 450 years before their entering the land.

Birth of Isaac	1896 B.C.
Conquest of Canaan	1446 B.C.

450

It is generally considered that some of the judges judged only *portions* of Canaan, and that *more than one judged at the same time*, in different places. There is reason to suppose this of Samson and Jephthah; the one being judge in Eastern Palestine, and the other in the west, and also that Ibzan, Elan, and Abdon, of whom we know no more than their names, may have lived in the days of Samuel, who *completed* the deliverance of Israel from the Philistines (1 Sam. vii. 1—14), which Samson was only to begin. (See Judges xiii. 5.)

We now perceive how the Book of Judges follows Joshua, as in the New Testament the Acts of the Apostles follows the Gospels, or the life of Jesus the heavenly Joshua. We have seen how every historical book of the Old Testament after Genesis is tied to that which went before it. Every book has successively the story to tell of its own time, and

every book adds something to the course of events, which foretold and prepared the world for the coming of Christ. Therefore, in the walk to Emmaus,

“*Beginning at Moses and all the prophets*, the Lord expounded to the two disciples *in all the Scriptures*, the things concerning himself.” (Luke xxiv. 27.)

Canon Wordsworth, in his *Notes on the Bible*, computes the events of the history as follows:—

Wanderings of Israel . . .	40 years.
Victories of Joshua . . .	17 ”
First captivity to Nineveh . . .	8 ”
Othniel—Judge, and rest . . .	40 ”
Oppression by Moab . . .	18 ”
Ehud and rest . . .	80 ”
Shamgar and Jabin . . .	20 ”
Deborah and rest . . .	40 ”
Midianitish slavery . . .	7 ”
Gideon and rest . . .	40 ”
Abimelech . . .	3 ”
Tola . . .	23 ”
Jair . . .	22 ”
Eli, judge . . .	40 ”
Samuel, judge . . .	19 ”
Saul, king . . .	20 ”
David . . .	40 ”
Solomon to beginning of Temple . . .	3 ”
<hr/>	
	480 ”

All the history books of the Old Testament have a prophetic character, and prefigure that future coming. The Books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings, are called by the Hebrew church “the *former* prophets.”

The *after* prophets filled up the reigns of the Jewish kings till Malachi, the last, who finished his prophecy with the key-note of the coming of Jesus Christ.

But we must turn again to the Judges before we approach the Prophets and the Kings.

The entrance into the land and the building of the Temple were earnest and figures of the entrance opened into heaven, and of the building up of the Christian Church by the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross.

The Book of Judges exhibits the miraculous operations of the Holy Spirit in some of those military heroes who were raised up from time to time to deliver Israel. The acts of only a few persons are recorded as specimens of what God the Holy Ghost wrought by them all; and the eye is often raised from the human agent, *by his personal imperfections*, only to look at what he was in the hands of God. The Book of Judges, like the Book of Revelation, is full of solemn warning, and it has been observed that the main part of both is a history of downfall and decline, in the chosen nation and in the Christian Church, through idolatry. Man glorifies himself and his own inventions and creations instead of his Creator, and the Book of Revelation shows that he will do it more and more to the end of this dispensation.

The Book of Judges is full of what Israel might have done in those wondrous days of miracle, if they had obeyed God; but, on the whole, they seldom answered to their mighty call. They served their own lusts, and sought their own interests. Perhaps they thought themselves more merciful than God when they put the Canaanites to tribute, instead of driving them out at His command; "*their* iniquity was full;" but Israel intermarried with them, and served their gods and kings. They served Baal and Ashtaroth, so the hand of the Lord was against them.

Let us specially notice who the enemies of Israel were.

They were Assyria, Moab, Midian, and the Philistines. All the light that falls upon old Assyria in the present resurrection of her images, casts a ray on the history of the Old Testament. Those enemies were the type of our spiritual enemies. In the strength of Christ we should be ourselves Othniels and Ehuds to the sins which war against our souls. "The actions of these imperfect judges are presented to us by the Holy Spirit," afterwards—* as of those who "by faith subdued kingdoms," such as Barak, Gideon, and Jephthah; "wrought righteousness, stopped the mouths of lions," as Samson; escaped the edge of the sword, as Gideon and Samson; "out of weakness were made strong," as Deborah and Jael, "waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens." Truly Paul takes his examples from the Book of Judges, and therefore we are bound to study their lives and doings. Whatever be wrong or fleshly in the type of these "saviours," Jesus the antitype corrects it. They point the thoughts to a greater Gideon, who now that He is come, teaches us to read the ancient history aright, and to perceive in the story of the fleece (ch. vi. 36), the likeness of the Jewish Church and the Church Universal. The dew of heavenly teaching fell first on the fleece, and the fleece only, and not on the floor around—on the Jewish people alone, while all around was in darkness. Afterwards the dew fell on the floor, and not on the fleece—the Gospel was preached and accepted in the Gentile world, while the Jewish fleece was dry.

There are abounding lessons in the Book of Judges, for the use of modern Christians. We see that sin and misery, in a large measure, often arises from the acts of a single household, as they issued

* Heb. xi. 32.

from the household of Micah, whence idolatry spread through the whole tribe of Dan. (See chapters xvii. and xviii.)

“And they set up Micah’s graven image which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh.”

The nations all around Israel had other lords and gods than Jehovah. In Samson’s history we hear of DAGON the god of the Philistines, whom they believed had delivered Samson their enemy into their hand. They took him and put out his eyes, and bound him with fetters of brass, and put him to grind in the prison house.

Now in the lapse of more than 3000 years the very form and likeness of these graven images had been forgotten; but strange to say God has caused in our day their resurrection, as witnesses of the truth of His word.

In passing along the Nineveh gallery of the British Museum, we come to a figure with a remarkable fish-cloak. It is impossible not to identify this figure, (of which Mr. Layard found several specimens), with the Dagon of Ashod, and the description 1 Sam. v. 4. He who fell before the ark of the Lord, when it was brought into his great temple at Ashdod, “and the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands were cut off upon the threshold, only the *fishy part* of Dagon was left unto him.” Here it is for our inspection. “The head of the fish forms a mitre,” says Mr. Layard, “above that of the man, whilst its scaly back and fan-like tail fell as a cloak behind, leaving the human feet and hands exposed. We can scarcely



hesitate to trace this mythic form to the Oannes (Noah) or sacred manfish," who brought to the Chaldeans civilization and arts out of the sea. His worship seems to have extended over Syria, as well as Mesopotamia and Chaldea. In the tenth chapter of Judges we hear, that

"And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim, and Ashtaroth, and the gods of Syria, and the gods of Zidon, and the gods of Moab, and the gods of the children of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines, and forsook the Lord, and served not him."

Perhaps the most remarkable subject that has yet been found among the ruins of ancient Assyria, was a monstrous form, whose fanciful and hideous head has long pointed ears, and extended jaws, armed with huge teeth. Its body is covered with feathers, its fore feet are those of a lion, its hind legs end in the talons of an eagle, and it has the spreading wings and tail of a bird. Arrayed against this monster is a grand figure, whose dress consists of a plain bodice with a skirt of skin or fur, an under robe fringed with tassels, and the sacred three-horned cap, which marks a supreme god; he has sandals, armlets, and bracelets. A long sword is suspended from his shoulders by a belt, and he grasps in each hand a double and winged trident, which would seem to have been the original of the thunder-bolt so often represented in the hand of the Greek Jupiter.

This mighty being is in the act of hurling the tridents against the monster, who turns upon him. In the traits of this Assyrian demon, may be seen the prototype of John Bunyan's Apollyon; though John Bunyan had surely never seen this graven image. It is now happily so uncommon to find an English Bible comprising the Apocryphal or un-

inspired Books, that comparatively few persons will be able readily to turn to one of these by name ; we refer to

BEL AND THE DRAGON,
to which the Assyrian illustration might well serve



BEL AND THE DRAGON.

for a frontispiece. It was inserted by the Grecian Jews in the Septuagint, and acquires a new interest in relation to this sculpture. It speaks of the idol

Bel of Babylon, for whom his priests claimed "forty sheep a day and twelve great measures of fine flour, and six vessels of wine, and the king went daily to adore it, while Daniel worshipped the Lord his God." The proof given by the prophet to the king of the hypocrisy of the seventy priests who, with their wives and children, always consumed these provisions, and his authorized destruction of Bel and his temple, and also of the "*dragon in that same place, which they of Babylon worshipped,*"—all these things point curiously back to that which now appears before our eyes in the British Museum. We have here the Chaldean Bel, or Baal, destroying the dragon, and in the Apocryphal but ancient book we have Daniel destroying both.

In the same gallery of the Museum with these gods of Babylon and Nineveh, are stone pictures of

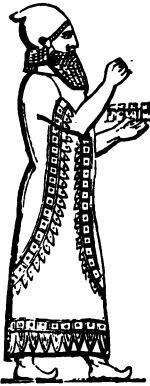


JEWS BRINGING TRIBUTE.

a race of men bringing tribute. A different race from the Assyrian warriors, who, age after age, wear a high-peaked helmet, which distinguishes *them* from any people with whom they may be at war, and *the actual old rusty peaked helmet itself* may be seen in a glass case in the Museum also.

Of one of these tribute-bearers, however, the cap is different; it is composed of felt, or folds of linen. The other has a fillet round his head, and both wear the same curious boots, turned up at the toes; on a slab opposite to the tribute-bearers, the same race, recognized by caps and boots, are fleeing on horseback, and yet turning round to fight the Assyrians, who are in chariots.

The same people are found on the black obelisk in the centre room of Assyrian relics. They have also the cap with the peak backwards, long fringed robes, and curious boots, with the toes turned up, like those of the men who are leading monkeys on the large tablet from the North-west Palace.



This is the Jewish costume which is so definitely presented to the eye, in every age of these sculptures, that we must *search the Scriptures* to see if any laws had been given for the general dress of the Chosen Nation; for that may impress a *meaning* on these peculiarities so constantly noticeable in the people whom the Assyrians have humbled and vanquished.

“The people shall dwell alone,” said God, by the mouth of Balaam (Num. xxiii. 9). “Shall dwell in safety alone,” says Moses (Deut. xxxiii. 28); and all the institutes of the great lawgiver tended to make them do so. Men are known by their externals; and their dress

was so arranged as to distinguish them from other people.

Fifteen hundred years after the Exodus, the historian Tacitus says of the Jews, "that they kept to their antiquated modes." If we inquire what these were, we shall find laws given to them about the *robe*, and the *beard*; and in the narrative of Daniel we have something relating to the *boots* and the *caps*. The prophet speaks of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, as cast into the burning fiery furnace "bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their other garments." We see the Assyrian king and his warriors in helmets, but never in hats or caps, or in boots, or "hosen."

The beards differ also. The Israelite was commanded "not to mar the corners of his beard;" the peak-pointed beard (not squared as the Assyrian's) distinguishes the conquered people, very often; and in other cases close black curls without a vestige of plaiting, equally mark the Jew. He was not to wear a garment of woollen and linen together (Deut. xxii. 11), and was to make fringes upon the four quarters of his vesture, and to put upon the fringe a riband of blue. The Lord in ordering this costume throughout their generations, said, "It shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the Lord, and do them;"* and the settlement of this mode of apparel it appears was intended to hinder them from seeking perpetual variety, and going "after their own heart and their own eyes." (Num. xv. 39.)

The Hebrews did not at all abhor the society of idolaters; they liked it, and practised their ways.

* M. Botta repeatedly notices at Khorsabad the inscriptions on the bottom of the dresses of the Hebrew prisoners in the cuneiform character.

"I know that after my death ye will utterly corrupt yourselves," says Moses, "and turn aside from the way, and evil will befall you in the latter days." (Deut. xxxi. 29.)

There is something very definite said about the dress of Christian *women* by the Apostle Peter, and by Timothy the beloved of St. Paul—what it *is* to be, and what it *is not* to be. They are to "adorn themselves in modest apparel with shamefacedness and sobriety," which certainly would not designate the apologies for bonnets of the present fashion, which seem to be specially arranged for *display* of "braided hair and gold (or its counterfeit) and pearls, and costly array of tinkling ornaments," and "head bands," and round tires like the moon, exactly similar to Isaiah's picture (see chap. iii. 16), which "the Lord would take away."

The Christian women and the Christian workers in our congregations ought surely to set their faces against these increasing vanities, and have a modest style of their own, which would be far more becoming and far more consistent for those who are "zealous of good works."

We have to come again to the lesson in the New Testament of old times, and not to be ashamed of that separateness from the world which God has appointed for the sons and daughters of Zion. It is not for them to imitate the "woman arrayed in purple and scarlet, decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations" (Rev. xvii.), and even She does not so array the women She sets apart for the service of her Church.

Here is a warlike king of ancient Nineveh, seated on his throne. A eunuch stands behind him, with bow and quiver, and in one hand holds a fly-flapper over the royal head. The king is seated,

and has a cup in his hand, from which he is supposed to be divining—therefore a “cup of abomination to the Lord. The throne on which he sits is orna-



KING OF THE NORTH-WEST PALACE.

mented with rams' heads. In the glass case opposite this sculpture, in the Nimroud side gallery, may still be observed, as found by Mr. Layard among the earth and rubbish in this palace, *the throne itself* re-constructed from many fragments, “earth’s oldest throne,” or one of its oldest, for the sculptures on these slabs portray, as must be allowed, an age or ages previous to their own. *These were evidently not the first sculptures*, though the first in our possession. All this magnificence in dress, the fringes and the tassels, the bracelets,

and the plaiting of the hair and beard, and the royal state, and the trapping of the horses, imply great luxury and civilization, as regards the ornamental arts. The early Ninevites and Babylonians, bent on carrying away captive other nations, had paid much and long attention to their own adornment. They were no rude savages, though they were cruel conquerors in the times of Israel's Judges. They had spent their minds upon the flesh and all its luxuries.

The early Assyrians clothed their horses in embroidered housings, and decorated them with plumes, tassels, and chains. And in the twelfth century B.C. the kings of Midian slain by Gideon are spoken of as having purple raiment, besides collars, or sweet jewels (see margin, Judges viii. 21 and 26), and chains and ornaments like the moon on their camels' necks. Ezekiel says (ch. xxvii. 20) that "Dedan was the merchant of Tyre in precious clothes for chariots," in the after history of the kingdom.

THE ASSYRIAN CHARIOTS.

Much is said about chariots in the Bible, and these in the Nineveh sculptures are evidently the chariots intended. The Canaanites of Palestine were able to resist the Israelites so successfully (unless Divine power drove them out) because of their chariots of iron. Jabin, King of Canaan, had 900 chariots. (Judges iv. 3.)

The prophets frequently allude to chariots as typical of power. King David says (Ps. xx. 7) :—

"Some trust in chariots, and some in horses, but we will remember the name of the Lord our God."

These are the war-chariots carrying archers, just as

spoken of in our Scriptures (Isa. v. 28), "raging in battle." "Rage ye chariots!" (Jer. xli. 9.) The prophet Nahum speaks of Nineveh in Sennacherib's latter day as—

"A city of blood, all full of lies and robbery; . . . and of the noise of the rattling of wheels and of the prancing horses, and of the jumping chariots." (Nahum iii. 1, 2.)

And God says (by Nahum ii. 13), that He

"Will burn her chariots in the smoke."

As He most assuredly did in thousands, while He left to us these few stone likenesses of them. You see it is necessary to study the Book of Judges before you can understand the value of the relics in our Nineveh galleries.

The figure of a king of Nineveh stands as a frontispiece to this tract, and marks the early rise in Scripture history of the *first* of the prophet Daniel's heathen kingdoms called "beasts," and defined as Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome; for the first of these had now begun to arise in conjunction with Israel. You see the king has in his hand a sceptre or rod.

The King of Babylon is called by the Lord "His hammer," and the Assyrian His "rod" (Isa. x. 5). God has many figures for the Assyrians: the "cedar in Lebanon," whose root was by great waters; there was not "any tree in the garden of God like unto him in his beauty;" all the trees of Eden envied him." (See Ezek. xxxi. 8, 9.) Then we read that his branches are fallen, his boughs are broken, and—

"All the people of the earth are gone down from his shadow, and have left him." (Verse 12.)

If Israel, as a literal people, foreshadow God's

spiritual Israel, Babylon and Nineveh foreshadow the world-power which has always been in array against the Church of God. So with the other armies of the heathen. The league of Jabin, the King of Hazor, was like the marshalling of anti-Christian forces against the early Church in an after day. The horses and the chariots were signs of power and strength; the very much people as the sand of the sea-shore," were like the furious myriads who with clamorous outcries against Christ and His Church, made themselves heard in Rome in the words, "The Christians to the lions." The Book of Revelation tells us that this struggle will be more fierce than ever in the latter day.

"The power of this world," says the writer whose motto we have taken for this tract, "and its wisdom will again muster their forces against Jesus Christ and His people. There will be a godless rebellion of human intelligence against Divine Revelation." Some sounds of the conflict are already heard. The dust of the legions of Antichrist is already rising in the air. Spiritual Jabin is coming forth from the Hazors of their strength, and march at the head of an innumerable multitude against a Divine Joshua; but He will conquer, as of old time. In the old and ruined Colosseum of Rome the white cross still stands as a Christian trophy. After the final conflict is over, there shall be peace upon Israel.

It is thought by many that the Book of Judges was written by the prophet Samuel; but, whoever was the historian, his courage and truth are seen in the unflinching way in which he exposes the sins of the Hebrews, and declares their frequent ingratitude for the amazing love of God.



"SAMUEL THE PROPHET."

No. XIII.

SAMUEL, "the asked or heard of God," was his mother's name for the temple child, who afterwards became the last of the JUDGES, the first of the regular succession of PROPHETS,* and the founder of the Hebrew monarchy.

No character so great had arisen in Israel since the days of Moses, and God Himself by the mouth of Jeremiah links them together. (Jer. xv. 1.)

"Then said the Lord unto me, Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be towards this people. Cast them out of my sight, and let them go forth."

You would perhaps naturally suppose that Samuel wrote the books of the Old Testament that are called by his name. They formed one original book or roll, and were not divided into two, in the manuscript copies of the Hebrew Scriptures; but in the Greek Septuagint or first *translation* of the holy books, they are called the first and second "books of the kingdom." The Hebrews considered they had three rather than six books of the history of the kings of Israel and Judah, but they were each afterwards divided for convenience into 1st and 2nd Samuel; 1st and 2nd of Kings; and 1st and 2nd of Chronicles.

The first twenty-four chapters of the first book of Samuel *may* probably have been written by Samuel

* "All the prophets," says Peter, Acts iii. 24, "from Samuel and those that follow after."

himself, and the rest by the prophets Gad and Nathan, who continued the history of their own times, but whose names are not given to any books of Scripture now thus known, as it seems they once were, for in 1 Chron. xxix. 29, it is said that—

“The acts of David the king, first and last, behold, they are written in the book of Samuel the seer, and in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer.”

The *Hebrew* word here used for “*seer*,” signifying “*one who sees*,” is used but ten times in the Bible, and in seven of these it is applied to Samuel. There is a time when he first rises to our recollection as the little child in the linen ephod, and in the little mantle his mother brought him—as the child Samuel sleeping in the tabernacle at Shiloh, to whom the Lord “*revealed Himself*.” That expression literally means, “The Lord uncovered his ear,” as if the person who confides a secret should move away the long hair of his friend to whisper what none else may hear;” and this inner voice of God gave miraculous insight into the secrets of heaven and the future. Samuel was called of God to be the first of that long line of prophets, whose lives and sayings run *side by side* with the Jewish monarchy from the first to the last king, Samuel being the first, and Malachi the last of the line.

The prophets were messengers sent of God, whom He inspired to declare His will to the one chosen nation of Israel, and they foretold events long before they came to pass. Enoch, Noah, Jacob and Moses, had delivered many prophecies, which are included in their individual histories.

The inspiration that came upon the prophets was a wonderful thing; the men to whom it was vouchsafed felt it to be a power that they could not withstand. It took possession of them, filled them,

excited them, bore them along, enabled them to speak words which they could not have uttered at any other time. "The Spirit of God," it is said, was upon them, and their spirits felt like a vessel impelled before the wind. This was the inspiration vouchsafed to the higher class of prophets, as Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, and *also* to those who in Scripture are called the *minor* or *lesser* prophets, because the prophecies they uttered were *short*, though as important. The Scribes wrote all these shorter prophecies together on one roll, lest any of them should be lost.

This inspiration from on high was not denied to women, who seem to have accompanied it with music and song. Let us listen to Hannah chanting in the tabernacle of Shiloh. Hannah ("the mother of Samuel," as women are still spoken of in the East) sings a *Gospel* song, inspired by the spirit of prophecy in the times of the Levitical law. (1 Sam. ii. 1—10.) You should read by its side the song of Sarah on the birth of Isaac (Gen. xxi. 6, 7), and the *Magnificat* of the Virgin Mary, as the mother of Christ (Luke i. 46). There had been a song of Miriam, "the prophetess," after passing the Red Sea (Exodus xv. 20), and a song of Deborah, the prophetess, praising the Lord for His deliverance by women, and it was given to women to sing all these songs, which foreshadowed the victories of the promised seed of the woman.

Some have thought that Hannah's song is too grand for the birth of Samuel, but the grandeur of *sacred* poetry consists in that it often merges the individual in the nation; it is an utterance of the Holy Ghost, and looks forward to all mankind. Hannah's song has been called a link between the song of Moses (Deut. xxxii.) and the song of David (2 Sam. xxii.).

The ancient Hebrew Church considered Hannah's song a prophecy of Christ. She is the first person in Scripture who uses the words "His anointed," or who invokes Jehovah as the "Lord of hosts." David, God's chosen king, was to be anointed by her son Samuel, but before that, her son would also see God's own ark, the symbol of His Presence, which had led Israel to victory for 400 years, taken captive by the Philistines, and transported from Shiloh to Ashdod, to be placed in the temple of Dagon. Yet this was only to shew that before HIM Dagon must fall prostrate, and that HE would cause the Philistines themselves to return it to Israel; but when they did so Shiloh was pillaged and its sanctity had passed away, for the tabernacle—the last relic of the wilderness life—was gone, and the institution of the priesthood lay desolate; the predictions were fulfilled which God had caused the child-prophet to utter to Eli, and had been so manifestly fulfilled "that all Israel knew, from Dan to Beersheba, from north to south, that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord." (1 Sam. iv. 20.) This account of him may perhaps be an addition by one of the after Scribes.

In the Old Testament there are clear, strong, vivid, examples given, of the character of king, priest, and prophet. Samuel obeyed the call of God to act in both the latter capacities, and he anointed kings. The prophet was not an antagonist to the priest, but he was often raised up to supply the lack of service in the priesthood. The prophet directed the actions of the king, and warned him from his wanderings in times of national confusion and error; and prophet, priest and king, each imperfectly foreshadowed Christ, who in Himself alone, perfectly united the three offices thus dimly outlined a thousand years before.

In all God's government arranged for Israel, everything stood on the base of their religion, their duty towards Himself. Their ruler was God, and all their magistrates, judges, kings and prophets, were His ministers. We have seen them come up out of Egypt, scarcely then to be called a nation, but a body of tribes, each tribe having its princes and its heads; and these still subsisted in the Promised Land. God and His TABERNACLE were the centre of all their history, whether in the time of "Moses, His servant," or of Joshua, Moses's minister, or of the Judges who followed Joshua. The Tabernacle was the place where man met with God. When pitched at Shiloh, the site which HE had chosen for it (Joshua ix. 22; xviii. 1) in the centre of the land, it continued to be the gathering point of the heads of the tribes, during the whole period of the judges, for councils of peace or war (see Joshua xxii., Judges xxi.), and for annual solemn dances, in which the women of Shiloh were conspicuous. Afterwards corruption crept into these mixed assemblies, and the tabernacle of the congregation was profaned by its own priesthood; a divided worship was paid at other altars, and ere long the ark of God was taken by the Philistines, and upon the very sanctuary was written,

"Ichabod"—"The glory hath departed." (1 Sam. iv. 22.)

"For they provoked him to anger with their high places, and moved him to jealousy with their graven images. When God heard this, he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel: So that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which he placed among men." (Psalm lxxvii.)

After this the Tabernacle did not perish, but it never recovered its glory. Even Samuel, who had been brought up within its precincts, treats it as an

abandoned shrine, and sacrifices to the Lord elsewhere. He sacrifices, though only a Levite and not a priest, at Mizpeh, (1 Sam. vii. 9), at Ramah, (ix. 12), at Gilgal, (x. 8.) The tabernacle probably became again a moveable sanctuary, for under King Saul it seems for a while to have been settled at Nob. (1 Sam. xxi. 1—5.) Here the priests were massacred, and hence Abiathar the high priest fled; and the oracle of God by the ephod—the answer by Urim and Thummim, was known no more after Abiathar's time. He answered David by the ephod once in this way, after his flight from Nob (1 Sam. xxiii. 9), probably also again in 2 Samuel xxi. 1, but now the word of the Lord was to be uttered by the voice of the Prophets, instead of the Urim and Thummim.

Do you want to know what was meant by these words? No one now can *certainly* tell, but their literal sense is "Lights" and "Perfections," and the Jews must have been aware what they meant up to the time of Solomon. By Exod. xxviii. 15—30, we learn that the Urim and Thummim were placed *within* the breastplate of judgment worn by the high priest, which, with wreathen chains of gold, was attached to the shoulder-pieces of his ephod.

The breastplate was of cunning work, gold, blue, purple, and scarlet, mingled with fine twined linen in its "foursquare" construction, and upon this groundwork of gorgeous colour were "filled in" glittering jewels, in four rows—ruby, topaz, and carbuncle; emerald, sapphire, and diamond; opal, agate, and amethyst; beryl, onyx, and jasper; each gem set in ouches or clasps of gold, and graven with the name of one of the twelve tribes of Israel. There is especial mention made of the *inner* side of

the breastplate, and on this inner side were to be placed the Urim and the Thummim.

The breastplate passed from Aaron to Eleazar and his son, and the Urim and Thummim with it.

Moses mentions them as the crowning glory of the tribe of Levi (Deut. xxxiii. 8, 9). Such inquiries as the following seem to have been made of the Lord, and answered doubtless by these means, always in conjunction with a priest and an ephod. According to the Urim the children of Israel were to go out or come in. (Num. xxvii. 21.)

“Who shall go up for us against the Canaanites first?” (Judges i. 1.)

“Which of us shall go up first to the battle against the children of Benjamin?” (Judges xx. 18.)

“Shall I go and smite those Philistines?” (1 Sam. xxiii. 2.)

“Will the men of Keilah deliver me into the hand of Saul?” (1 Sam. xxiii. 12.)

The answer is in all cases very brief, and amounts to little more than an affirmative, or a negative, and one question only is answered at a time.

Never after the days of David is the ephod with its precious breast-plate connected with counsel from Jehovah.

The nation on their return from the captivity desired a priest with the Urim and the Thummim, but he was no more found. No relic of the ark or its golden cherubim remain, and none from Solomon's Temple were preserved to tempt Christ's followers to idolatry. If they had been, in these days of fresh reverence for the external and the sensuous, who can tell but they might have been worshipped like the crucifix of Rome?

It seems most probable that the light from the Urim and the Thummim within the breast-plate (whatever they were) shone visibly to those without

through the precious stones, which were probably *set clear*—so the light and love of Jesus in the heart will be evident, especially to brethren in Christ, the “household of faith,” who know for themselves the Divine source of such illumination.

But to return from the ephod to the tabernacle.

All things in the Tabernacle had spoken of Christ—in symbol—in symbol to Israel—in vivid types to *us*, for we can look back upon the Old Testament by the light of the New. A symbol was a sign, which might refer to past, present, or future; a type was always prefigurative. God ordered symbolic actions in the prophets. Jeremiah’s breaking a potter’s vessel (Jer. xviii. 2, 10), and his hiding a girdle in a rock on the banks of the Euphrates, which when looked for proved to be rotten, signified destruction shortly to befall the abandoned Jewish people (Jer. xiii. 1—7). The building of the temple was a symbolic prophecy prefiguring the incarnation of God in the person of Christ, and of the raising up in Him of a spiritual house that should be an “habitation of God through the Spirit.” (Ephes. ii. 20—22.)

The old Tabernacle of the wilderness is spoken of in the first book of Samuel, as the “house,” or the “temple” of Jehovah, and, indeed, the Temple of Solomon was neither more nor less than the exact repetition of the pattern “which God showed to Moses in the mount,” only it was erected of more durable materials, and was just double the size of the holy tent in the wilderness; therefore a knowledge of the meaning of the symbols in the one structure is necessary to understand the other.

The outer court of the tabernacle was formed by pillars of brass, with capitals of silver, five cubits or seven feet seven inches high, and the same distance

apart, to which were attached, by hooks of silver, white curtains, it is supposed of network, so as to permit the tribes around to witness the proceedings within. These curtains enclosed a space which was a double square twenty-five yards broad and fifty yards long. The entrance on the eastern side was fifty cubits or twelve and a half yards wide, through curtains wrought with needlework of gorgeous colours, blue, purple and scarlet, on a white ground—all which also spake in symbol to the Israelite. The *white* was to cause him to think of God's holiness and purity fencing and surrounding His house; the *blue* lifted his eyes to the sapphire sky, God's throne; and the blue riband prescribed for the hem of his own garment reminded him that he was God's servant while upon earth; the *purple* was the colour of kings, and spoke to him of the presence of a Royal Master; while the *scarlet* (blood-colour) told him that *that* holy and heavenly and royal Presence could only be approached by an offering of the shed blood—the blood of the Lamb “slain from the foundation of the world.”

The lamb which was to be offered as a burnt-offering for the sins of the people, every morning and every evening, on the brazen altar, was the first object that struck the eye on entering the outer court of the Tabernacle. On this altar was always burning the fire which had been kindled by a flash from the Schechinah, or Presence within the Vail; it “came out from before the Lord” (Levit. ix. 24), and this fire was never to go out. This altar spoke to the Hebrews of pardon for sin through perpetual sacrifice.

The second object in the outer court was the laver of brass, at which the priests were to wash their hands and their feet. The altar was the place of

pardon and justification through the blood of Christ, the laver of purification was the sign of sanctification through the Spirit.

Then, on entering the Tabernacle itself, which only the priests might do, there were again symbols of the same things. The little table of shewbread, with twelve loaves upon it, one for each tribe, to be renewed every seventh day, and a double one on the Sabbath, prefigured the Saviour who declared that He was the bread of life, which bread He broke for His disciples in symbol of His body broken on the accursed tree. The place of worship was to be the place of spiritual food and light, and communion with God, as it should be to this day.

The interior of the Tabernacle was dark, but for the light of the seven-branched golden candlestick, signifying the illumination of the Holy Ghost. The form of this sacred candlestick is preserved to us to this day on the arch of Titus, the Roman conqueror, who destroyed Jerusalem for the last time seventy years after Christ, and sculptured the trophies of its holy things on the triumphal arch which was to endure to *his* pagan glory *even to this present day*. You have in the frontispiece a fine wood-cut, made from a noble photograph of this treasure of treasures among the relics of antiquity.

Rome shows on this tablet that in the first Christian century she held in pawn, as it were, the holy things of God, as a heathen power. Where she hid the originals none can tell. The precious candlestick revealed not to *her* the glorious meaning of the table of shewbread, or of the golden altar of incense, ascending before the vail of the Temple, and which signified the place of communion with the unseen and invisible. We might think that the Book of Leviticus contained nothing for *us*, till the Book of

Hebrews points us back to the consideration of all these symbols, or figures, and what they signify. See the whole *ninth* and *tenth* chapters of Hebrews, and then turn to the sixteenth of Leviticus, and watch the offering of the Scapegoat.

Two goats are taken by the priest, both alike in age and beauty, and lots are cast upon them. One is sacrificed; upon the other Aaron lays his hands, and makes over it a confession of the sins of the people, and then sends it far into the wilderness. Christ is typified by both these goats. They signify two acts of Christ. I. His sacrifice of Himself for the sins of the people. II. His bearing away our sin into a land not inhabited by us, even into heaven, whither He ascended, and is looked upon by God as bearing our sin. The Hebrew name for the scape-goat is Azazel, which means "the bearer off, the carrier away." The whole figure represents not only the dying of Christ for our sins, but His rising again: "He rose again for our justification." A single goat could not have represented both ideas; the disappearance of the goat is the type of the blotting-out of our sins, which God will remember no more. When He forgives He forgets. *We* cannot do this. *We* sometimes forgive, and yet remember; but God blots out, and for ever.

Aaron was to take the blood of the first goat that he killed, before the dismissal of the second, and bring it within the vail, and sprinkle it on the mercy-seat and before the mercy-seat, and also upon the horns of the brazen altar. There was to be no man in the Tabernacle while he did it; but the Awful Presence of the Lord would be there; and he was to take a censer full of burning coals from off the golden altar of incense before the Lord, and to sprinkle the incense on the fire, that the cloud of

the incense might rise up and cover the mercy-seat of the ark of the testimony, as it is said, "that he die not." He waved the censer that the clouds of incense might be as a vail before that exceeding brightness, which would otherwise glare him into blindness, and then he sprinkled the blood on the mercy-seat, and *seven* times on the floor—and when God saw the blood, as in Egypt, He passed over the sin of priest and people.

This was done on the great Day of Atonement, the tenth day of the seventeenth sacred month, Tisri, between the Feast of Trumpets and of Tabernacles.

The Commands of Leviticus, you will remember, were delivered at Sinai in the beginning of the second year of the wanderings, when it was supposable that the Israelites would be obedient, and march directly for Canaan; but they rebelled at Kadesh Barnea, and were condemned to wander for thirty-eight years in the wilderness. For all these years they were under a ban—out of favour with God—and that generation all died in the wilderness. They could not even fulfil the requirements of the Levitical law. It was not intended for a rebel people in the desert, but for an obedient people in Canaan. When they passed into the land with Joshua, the Levitical law awoke with the resurrection of the people, and to the devout Israelite must have suggested many meanings beneath the surface of its letter. But it has been well observed "that the hieroglyphics of the Levitical law could never have been fully intelligible till the Holy Spirit deciphered them. In the first days of the Gospel the literal requirements of the Law were fulfilled and done away with in Christ. They fell off like the husks of swelling seed, or the blossoms of

setting fruit; but their spiritual meaning is still fruitful for ever."

But to return to Samuel. He was an intercessor with God.

"Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among them that call upon his name; they called upon the Lord, and he answered them."

This is the way that King David remembers Samuel, in the ninety-ninth Psalm, and Samuel himself says to the people, "God forbid that I should sin in ceasing to pray for you." (1 Sam. xii. 23.)

We must now look for the scope and general meaning of the First Book of Samuel, so called. At the end of the first twenty-four chapters, which chiefly consist of biographies of Samuel, Saul, and David, the twenty-fifth chapter begins with the announcement:—

"And Samuel died, and all the Israelites were gathered together, and lamented him, and buried him in his house at Ramah."

The main design of the first book seems to be to continue the history of the Israelites under the last two judges, Eli and Samuel, and then to introduce the choice of the people in King Saul, and to show the cause why the form of government was changed into a monarchy.

Before Moses bade farewell to the Hebrews in the wilderness, he had foreseen that they would desire a king at some future day, and had thus provided that he should be an enlightened king.

When he sat upon his throne, he was to write him a copy of the law in a book, out of that which is before the priests, the Levites. He was to do this for himself, and he was to read in it all the days of

his life (Deut. xvii. 18, 19), which many proofs in the Psalms assure us that David continually did.

The life of David occupies *sixteen* chapters of the First Book of Samuel, beginning at the sixteenth chapter, and the whole *twenty-four* chapters of the second Book, besides *two* chapters of the first of Kings, and *nineteen* chapters of the first of Chronicles. If Samuel was his biographer up to the twenty-fourth chapter of this first book, and the time of his own death, his part of the story chiefly dealt with David's early prowess, and his wanderings and sufferings under the jealousy of Saul.

After reading his conquest of Goliath, in chapter the seventeenth, let us turn to Psalm ix., where he praises God for his triumph, and after the story of Jonathan's advising him to flee from his cruel father, Psalm xi., where David confides in God. In Psalm lvi., he complains of his persecutors; in Psalm lix., he prays for deliverance; Psalm cxlii. is his prayer in the cave of Adullam.

In 1 Samuel xxii. there is an account of Doeg's treachery; and the Doeg Psalms, as they are called, depicting David's state of mind in those circumstances, are the 17th, 35th, 52nd, 64th, 109th, 120th, and 140th Psalms, and we may then follow him into the wilderness of Ziph, in the 23rd chapter of 1 Samuel, and in his own Psalms, 31st, 57th, 58th, and 63rd. Both of the books of Samuel are very important to the illustration of the Book of Psalms.

The First Book of Samuel begins and winds up the story of SAUL, of whom it has been said that *he* was "but a parenthesis in the counsel of God concerning Israel," like the Levitical law "added because of transgression." His beginnings were fair as long as he was little in his own eyes, but he soon

grew self-confident and vain-glorious. He fell away from being *God's* king as early as the second year of his reign, and the gift of the Spirit to him for that office was taken away and bestowed upon David. Saul had trifled with God's Word, and followed the law of his own will, and more of his life passed in pursuing after David, the Lord's servant, than in driving out the enemies of Israel. He was puffed up and rejected, and then deserted, and given up to the guidance of an evil spirit, and to envy and hatred of David, and even of Jonathan his son, so far nobler than himself.

A prey to desolation and despair, he resorted to Samuel when dead, to whom he would not listen while living, and thus filled up his cup of abomination with necromancy, which is in the sight of God so hateful. (Deut. xviii. 11.)

Saul's consultation with the witch of Endor opens a solemn question? Was this really the departed spirit of Samuel returned to the earth, or a Satanic spirit in his form? It is quite possible with God, for demons to appear to men by His permission, but it would be inconsistent with the style of Scripture that the Holy Spirit should use the name of Samuel throughout the story, while, at the same time, Satan was intended; and Dr. Hales says that the Hebrew words are *Samuel himself*, the latter word being omitted in the English.

Many students of Scripture are of opinion that God *really* permitted the spirit of Samuel to appear to the terror and surprise of the woman, and for the last warning of the wilful Saul. Yet we cannot for a moment suppose that Satan, or a witch, or any who hold forbidden intercourse with evil spirits, have any power over the spirits of the just made perfect, so as to cause them to leave their heavenly

rest to answer the questions of men upon earth. This was a solitary case in which God permitted such intercourse. Dr. Hales suggests that it may have been for three reasons:—I. To make this, Saul's last crime, the instrument of his punishment in the foretaste of his impending doom. II. To show to the heathen world that God could set His prophets even above the powers of darkness to their own terror. III. To confirm the belief in a future state by "one who rose from the dead," under the dispensation of Moses. How awful was the message conveyed, and how true. The next day followed Gilboa's slaughter of both father and son. David thus generously laments over his enemy, and his dear and noble friend Jonathan:—

"The beauty of Israel is slain upon the high places.
How are the mighty fallen!
Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives,
And in their death they were not divided.
They were swifter than eagles;
They were stronger than lions.
How are the mighty fallen,
And the weapons of war perished!"

DAVID.

David reigned in Hebron seven and a half years. King, but at first, only over Judah, his power gradually increased, and at last the voice of the whole people called him to occupy the throne. His twenty-seventh Psalm, "The Lord is my light and my salvation," the Psalm "before the anointing," shows on whose arm he leaned in his rise from the sheepfold to the crown of all Israel, which he held for thirty-three years.

The second Book of Samuel details the reformation of the Jewish Church as established by David, records his many royal triumphs, then his sins

and his troubles, and finally, his restoration ; and it is a most delightful task to follow out his history with his own poetic and inspired records in the Psalms. He is called the sweet Psalmist of Israel, and he tells us that the Spirit of the Lord spake by him. (2 Sam. xxiii. 1.)

It was doubtless by Divine authority that he appointed the singing of his Psalms by chosen and skilful persons in the solemn worship of the Tabernacle, which Solomon continued in the Temple, and which was re-established by Ezra after the Captivity. Thus the people became acquainted with the "songs of Zion," and were celebrated in surrounding countries for their melodious voices. Babylon required of them a song in her strange land.

There has been a wonderful communion of saints in the Psalms of David for 3,000 years. It is well to know to which to turn on particular occasions.

There are penitential Psalms.

vi., xxii., xxxviii., li., cii., cxxx.,

Psalms of dejection under afflictions.

xiii., lxxvii., lxxxviii., cxliii.

Psalms in which help is asked of God.

vii., xvii., xxvi., xxxv., lvi.

Psalms expressive of firm trust in God under affliction.

iii., xvi., xxvii., xxx., liv., lvii., lxi., lxii., lxxi.

Thanksgiving Psalms.

ix., xviii., xxx., xxxiv., xl., xlviii.

Prophetic Psalms.

xi., xvi., xxii., xl., xlv., lxviii., lxxii., lxxxvii., cxviii.

Historical Psalms.

lxxviii., cv., cvi.

Messianic Psalms.

ii., xxii., xlv., cx., cxviii.

You will find titles to many of the Psalms, which point you at once to the occasion on which they were written. "They contain the Hebrew history

set to music." Fifty of them are anonymous, and of the hundred that remain, Moses is the author of *one*—the 90th; King David of 73; King Solomon of two (Ps. lxxii., cxxvii.); Asaph of 12; the sons of Korah of 11; and Ethan of one (Ps. lxxxix.); all which were arranged in one volume or roll by *Esa* the Scribe.

No fewer than ten of the Psalms,* either in their traditional titles or internal evidence, bear marks of having been composed for the high festival of the ark going up to Jerusalem, in the musical glories of which the poet-king, playing on stringed instruments, also personally shared.

The erection of Jerusalem into the new capital introduces us to a new era in David's life. He now became a king, on the scale of the great oriental sovereigns of Egypt and Assyria. "I have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great men that are in the world," says the Lord, by Nathan the prophet. Within ten years from the capture of Jerusalem he had reduced to a state of permanent subjection the Philistines on the west, the Moabites on the east, the Syrians on the north-east, as far as the Euphrates, the Edomites on the south, and finally the Ammonites; and a general peace then followed, commemorated in the name of the peaceful Solomon, the son born to him at this crisis.

King David was a man of war; the Scripture outlines his character: "The son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, cunning in playing, a mighty valiant man, a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely person, and the Lord is with him." (1 Sam. xvi. 18.) This portrait formed his intro-

* xxix., xxx., xv., xli., ci., lxxviii., xxiv., cxxxii., while parts of Psalm cv. and cvi. are given in 1 Chron. xvi., in the historical account of the heartfelt ceremony.

duction to the court of Saul. The Lord placed him at that point in the Hebrew history when the heathen nations were yet to be overcome, and many of David's psalms show the spirit in which he overcame them.

He was the man for his time. *So far from faultless* that we now derive our chief instruction, not from the history of his conquests and his splendour, but from his humble penitence after his recorded crimes. His passion and his tenderness, his generosity and his fierceness, stand out in bold light and shadow in the history of the world. Yet the Lord chose him and his. Even Christ is far less often called the son of Abraham, than the "Son of David." Most of David's sins, and the sorrows that grew out of them, sprang from the polygamy, with all its evil consequences, into which he had plunged on coming to the throne, thus forsaking the law for the king, so wisely given by Moses. But one thing he had always on his heart, to entreat the presence of the Lord in his city and his kingdom. In a day when he had assembled all the princes and captains of Israel—

"Then David the king stood up upon his feet, and said Hear me, my brethren, and my people: As for me, I had in mine heart to build an house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and for the footstool of our God, and had made ready for the building.

"But God said unto me, Thou shalt not build an house for my name, because thou hast been a man of war, and hast shed blood.

"Howbeit the Lord God of Israel chose me before all the house of my father to be king over Israel for ever.

"And of all my sons (for the Lord hath given me many sons), he hath chosen Solomon my son to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of the Lord over Israel.

"And He said unto me, Solomon thy son, he shall build my house and my courts; for I have chosen him to be my son, and I will be his Father."

Among all the Psalms there is none that proves

how David loved and studied the Word of God as much as his longest psalm, the 119th—the *Bible Psalm*—in which every one of the 176 verses speaks with love and joy of this precious word.

Have you noticed that every verse, under the different names of testimonies, precepts, statutes, commandments, ordinances, judgments, law, refers to the Bible?—and David's Bible comprised only the five books of Moses, Job, Joshua, Judges, and Ruth, and the history of Israel by Samuel, to which he added so largely of his own psalms.

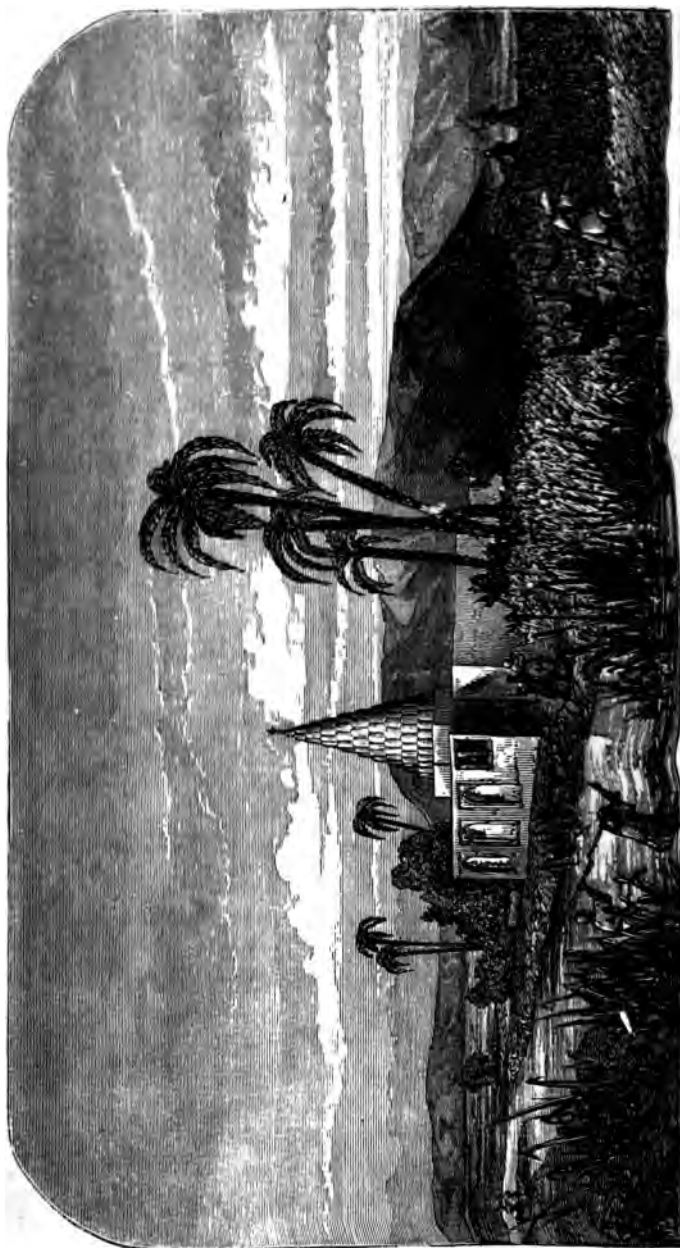
The whole Christian world, as well as the *Jews*, may thank God for their poet-king, with all his short comings and sins. It was seen in David as the German hymn says—that

“The more the cross, the more the praying,
The bruised plant yields sweetest balm ;
Man doth not seek to find the pole
In quiet seas and steady calms,
And how had *we* had David's psalms
Had *he* not had a troubled soul ?”

So David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David. He lives in his undying and inspired songs, most precious in their prophecies of the kingdom of Christ; and to this day he makes himself a place in every Christian heart, a place nearest and dearest in our darkest hours of sorrow and tribulation.

The Psalms are quoted about seventy times in the New Testament. The Spirit of Christ had spoken in David; and He Himself explained to His disciples the meaning of what had been spoken of Him in the Psalms. (See Luke xxiv. 44, 45.)

“These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you; that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding that they might understand the scriptures.”



THE TIMES OF THE KINGS AND THE PROPHETS.

No. XIV.

WE are come now to the books of Kings and Chronicles, and we cannot fail to see how *they* belong to the books of Samuel, which come before them, for the first and second chapters of Kings are needed to close the life and reign of David; nineteen chapters too of the first book of Chronicles, are taken up by David's story, *told over again* in the aforesaid annals of his nation.

David's life, indeed, takes up no less than sixty-one chapters of the three different books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles. His son Solomon's life, with all his "glory," is allowed much shorter space, it only occupies twenty chapters, viz., the *first eleven* of 1st Kings, and the *first nine* of 2nd Chronicles.

The first book of Chronicles is filled by genealogies, and by the life of David. The other sixty-three chapters of the first and second of Kings, and of the second book of Chronicles, comprise the history of the *divided* kingdoms of Judah and Israel.

Of Judah there are twenty kings, and of Israel nineteen kings, and their reigns include the times of *all* the Prophets whose names are given to books of the Bible; so that the books of Kings and Chronicles, with the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther, which follow them, present the great

platform of Jewish history (occupying about 530 years), on which all the Prophets moved and spake, although their books seem to *come* after the Kings in the Bible.

We shall offer you a Table, which will make this clear to you, and then take up each Prophet in his turn, and consider his times, but you cannot at all understand the Prophets unless you remember the king and his times under whom each lived, and how these kings succeeded each other.

It is astonishing how those who have received Christ, and love the New Testament, should think it of so little consequence to climb the ladder of the Old Testament history which led up to *Him*. Every child brought up in a Christian family, or taught in a Christian school, ought to be able to count the "rounds" of that ladder as easily as they can say their alphabet, yet how very few of us are thus able. If our young people, even in the educated classes, had been thus informed, and had daily studied the histories inspired by the Spirit of God, with half the zest to which they can turn to those of heathen nations called "beasts," in the prophet Daniel (but which we call "classics," and make the foundation of our modern literature); if they were as versed in Bible lore as they are in Greek and Latin (the languages of old Greece and Rome), they would perhaps have had better morals in these days, and would have been harassed by fewer doubts. The school of Colenso is best fitted for those who are ignorant of Scripture *in its connection*, and who are not "well furnished" to meet its clever but baseless cavils at the *Story* which God Himself has vouchsafed to tell to man.

We have tried to trace this story step by step; we have seen how Genesis prepared the way for

Exodus, Exodus for Leviticus, Leviticus for Numbers, Numbers for Deuteronomy. Then these five books of Moses were necessary for the understanding of Joshua, Joshua for Judges and Ruth, Judges and Ruth for the Books of Samuel, which begins the history of the kings and the prophets, and describe the occasions of many of David's Psalms. We have now in the first book of Kings to observe how the reign of David flows into that of Solomon, and how distinctly, though of course in a human and earthly manner, they each prefigured Christ. David, as the conqueror of Jerusalem, and purchaser of the site of the Temple, and provider of treasures for it; Solomon, who is called the Prince of Peace, the wise Judge and King, the builder of the Temple—each after all is but a faint shadow of the King of kings, and Lord of lords, “the Lord of hosts,” and the “Prince of peace;” He who had prepared for the building of His spiritual temple in the beginning by the lives and utterances of patriarchs and prophets, and has carried it on even through all their mistakes and sins, and those of priests and kings; and who has completed the work by evangelists and apostles, whom He filled with the Spirit sent down from heaven, they also not being perfect, but made perfect in Christ Jesus.

To these it was given to prepare for us the records which they were inspired to write; and still, ever since, has the same Heavenly King been polishing the corner-stones for His palace above, “making them ready in many a quarry before they are brought thither,” as Solomon did the stones of *his* temple (1 Kings vi. 7), “so that there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house of the Lord while it was building.”

Every living stone in God's spiritual temple has been, and will be to the end of all Church history, "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

But now let us fix our thoughts on the life of Solomon as recorded in the books of Kings and Chronicles. His acts seem to have been formerly contained in "books" referred to as those of Nathan the prophet and Iddo the seer (see 2 Chron. ix. 29); and a "Book of the Acts of Solomon," spoken of in 1 Kings xi. 41, may have supplied many details which have come down to us in the summing-up of the Books of Chronicles, which tell us that "King Solomon passed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom. And all the kings of the earth sought the presence of Solomon, to hear his wisdom, that God had put into his heart."

Under the influences of Bathsheba, David, and Nathan, the royal child had grown up. At the age of ten or eleven he must have passed through the revolt of Absalom and shared his father's exile. He would have been taught all that priests or Levites or prophets had to teach—music and song, and the "Book of the Law of the Lord" in such portions as were then written. In the course of years he emulated his father's Psalms: the 2nd, 45th, 72nd, 127th, are on good grounds referred to his time. Science and art, music and poetry, had in this age received a new impulse.

The young sovereign at the age of nineteen or twenty came to the throne. Born to the purple, his soul cradled in grand liturgies, he had been

trained to think unceasingly of the surpassing palace of Jehovah, of which he was to be the builder.

Never before, and never after, did the kingdom of Israel take such a place among the great monarchies of the East—able to ally itself or to contend on equal terms with Egypt and Assyria, and stretching from the river Euphrates to the borders of Egypt.

Alas ! the very first act of the foreign policy of Solomon's reign was to make affinity with Egypt. He married Pharaoh's daughter. (1 Kings iii. 1.) Since the time of the Exodus there had been no intercourse between the two countries ; and Solomon's marriage is thought to have been a political movement. The immediate results were perhaps favourable enough. The new queen brought with her as a dowry the frontier city of Gezer. Gifts from the nobles of Israel and of Tyre were lavished at her feet, and a separate and stately palace was built for her ere long outside of the city of David, where she dwelt with "the virgins her fellows," probably conforming partially to the religion of her adopted country.

Solomon was a merchant-king. His alliance with the Phœnicians or Tyrians was only the continuance of that of his father David ; for Israel was to be supplied from Tyre with the materials for the Temple.

The Jews now joined the Tyrians in their voyages of commerce, and Solomon's wide possessions opened a new world for that barter between nations. The new ships were manned by Phœnicians, but built at Solomon's expense. They sailed down the Red Sea to the Indian Ocean, to the Ophir either of Arabia or India, and to Sheba, the land of the sons of Joktan ; and after three years' absence brought

back gold and silver, precious stones and woods, spices and ivory, and new forms of animal life—"apes and peacocks." We are told that Solomon himself travelled to Ezion-geber, perhaps to see this fleet set sail (2 Chron. viii. 17); and thus may have been caused the thoughts which appear in the Psalms on the wonders of the great deep, and on doing business in great waters. (Ps. cvii. 23—30.)

This, however, was but one branch of the traffic organized by Solomon; for to him was owing the foundation of cities like Tadmor in the wilderness, and others on the route to the Euphrates, which *had* each its own special market for chariot-horses and stores; while the erection of towns on the Lebanon points to a still more distant commerce, which developed the resources of Central Asia.

"And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much: and Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, the Arabians and Indians, and all the wisdom of Egypt: and he spake three thousand proverbs, and his songs were a thousand and five."

What has become of these proverbs and songs of the wisest of men? Such of them as were the utterance of the Holy Spirit to his soul, doubtless stand recorded in the Book of Proverbs as we have it, and in the "Song of Songs," which is Solomon's; and many more may be still bearing fruit in the wise sayings of the sages of the East, and even in the Apocryphal Books of "the son of Sirach" (Ecclesiasticus), and "The Wisdom of Solomon"—which, though not counted inspired, contain much that is to be remembered with profit.

The men of Judah watched for seven long years the rise of the Cyclopean foundations of vast stones which yet remain when all beside has perished. These gradually rose up and covered the area of

the threshing-floor of Araunah, till at last, "like some tall palm the massive fabric grew" to its perfection, and the day arrived when the ark from Zion was to be brought to its new home; and as it was solemnly placed in its golden sanctuary, the cloud—"the glory of the Lord," "the Presence"—as in the Tabernacle, filled the house of the Lord; the two tables of stone within it, the manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, being the links that connected the wilderness life of the people with this their "Solomon's glory."

Alas! that a sovereign so honoured and even taught of God, departed afterwards from the shadow of His wings—*did not dwell in* "THE PRESENCE." There fell on him, as on other crowned voluptuaries, the weariness that seemed written upon all things, and which has impressed on the world for ever—

"Vanity of vanities; all is vanity."

Ecclesiastes is the last of the three books that remain to tell the history of his mind; and the confessions of "The Preacher" are often used of the Holy Ghost to draw souls from things earthly to things heavenly; for Solomon above all men had been allowed to try all forms of earthly good, and to pronounce all alike unsatisfying. He had not gained this wide experience *unharméd*: "the world, the flesh, and the devil," prepared deep trouble for Solomon; his deep declension shaded the brightness of what was really his testimony for God, and showed the weakness of all flesh when depending on its own strength.

Solomon, like David, had great influence over Tyre, "the city on the rock in the midst of the sea," which Josephus says had been founded 230 years before Solomon's Temple. Hiram was the

Although Solomon had a thousand wives, we hear but of one son, REHOBOAM, whose mother was an Ammonitess. The history of his seventeen years' reign is contained at its greatest length in 2 Chron. x., xi., xii., but nothing is said of him during his father's lifetime. He must have been forty-one years of age when he came to the throne, and there is a bitter expression of Solomon's feelings in Eccles. ii. 18, which may probably have referred to him.

"I hated all my labour which I had taken under the sun: because I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me."

He must have been trained in the lap of luxury, and his character appears to have been, at least on his accession, light and headstrong; one on which his father's wisdom was thrown away. He went to the old sanctuary at Schechem to be crowned king of all Israel, all Israel having come to their ancient capital to make him king, and here Jeroboam, an appointed rival whom even Solomon had feared and sought to kill, being sent for from Egypt by all the congregation, returned from his exile, and spoke to Rehoboam in the name of the ten tribes, saying—

"Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore make thou his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee." (1 Kings xii. 4.)

Rehoboam asked three days to consider, and he took counsel with old men and young men of his father's court, but it appears took no counsel of God; and then he gave the ungracious answer as the young men, who had grown up with him, advised him,

"My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke; he chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions."*

* The Rabbis translate this "knotted whips with points."

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF THE KINGS

THREE KINGS OF ALL ISRAEL :—REIGNED 40 YEARS : SAT. 1005 B.C.

PROPHETS OF JUDAH	Reigned Years	20 KINGS OF JUDAH.	Years B.C.	19 KINGS OF ISRAEL.
SHEMALAH	17	REHOBOAM	975	JEROBOAM
ODED	3	ABEJAM, or Abijah	958	
AZARIAH	41	ASA	955	NADAB
HANANI			954	BAASHA
JERU, son of Hanani,			953	ELAH
			930	ZIMRI
			929	OMRI
			918	ARAB
	25	JEHOSHAPHAT	914	
ELIEZER			897	AHAZIAH
JARAZIEL	8	{ JEHORAM, or Joram (4 years jointly with JEHOSHAPHAT and 4 years alone.) }	899	JEHORAM, or Joram
	1	AHAZIAH	885	
	6	ATHALIAH	884	JERU
	40	JEHOASH, or Joash	878	
			856	JEHOAHAZ
ZACHARIAH, son of } Jehoiada				JEHOASH, or Joash
	29	AMAZIAH	838	
			825	JEROBOAM II.
ZACHARIAH, (who had understand- ing in the visions of God. 2 Chr. xxvi. 5,)	52	UZZIAH, or Azariah	810	
				{ Interregnum for Eleven Years. }
			784	
			773	ZACHARIAH
			772	SHALLUM
				MENAHEN
ISAIAH			761	PEKAHIAH
MICAH	16	JOTHAM	759	PEKAH
	16	AHAZ	758	
			742	{ Hosea kills Pekah. Anarchy for some years. }
				{ HOSEA settled in the kingdom }
			739	
			730	
			721	
NAHUM	29	HEZEKIAH	726	The Kingdom of Israel overthrown by the Assyrians.
JOEL	55	MANASSEH	721	
	2	AMON	698	
JEREMIAH	31	JOSIAH	643	
HABAKKUK	3 Ms.	JEHOAHAZ	641	
ZEPHANIAH	11	JEHOIAKIM	610	
EZEKIEL, DANIEL,	3 Ms.	JEHOIAKIM, or Jeconiah	599	
OBADIAH	11	JEHOIAKIM	588	
JUDAH carried captive to Babylon				
GOVERNORS OF JERUSALEM AFTER THE CAPTIVITY.				
IIAGGAI		ZERUBBABEL	536	
ZACHARIAH		EZRA	457	
MALACHI		NEHEMIAH	445	
		Book of Esther		

AND PROPHETS OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL.

REIGNED 40 YEARS: DAVID, 1055, B.C. REIGNED 40 YEARS: SOLOMON, 1015, B.C.

Years Reigned	PROPHETS OF ISRAEL.	KINGS OF SYRIA.	KINGS OF ASSYRIA AND BABYLON.	KINGS OF EGYPT AND ETHIOPIA.	ELAM OR PERSIA.
22	Man of God from Judah. AHIJAH.			SHISHAK—1 Kings xi. 40. ZERAH, <i>or Ooarkhen</i> —2 Chron. xiv. 9—15.	
2		Benhadad 1 Kings xv. 18			
24					
2					
7 Ds.					
12	ELIJAH.	Benhadad 1 Kings xx.			
22	MICAH.				
2					
12					
28	ELISHA.	HAZAEI.			
17					
16	JONAH.	Benhadad 2 Kings xiii. 25.			
41	HOSHA.				
	AMOS.				
6 Ms.					
1 Mb.			PUL		
10			TIGLATH-PILESER— 2 Kings xv. 29; xvi. 7 9.		
2					
20					
	ODED,		SHALMANESER— 2 Kings xvii. 3. SARGON; Isaiah xx. 1.		
9					
			SENNACHERIB ESARHADDON—2 Kings xix. 37.	PHAROAH, <i>or Sethos</i> TIRHAKAH	
			NEBUCHADNEZZAR	PHAROAH-NECHO Jer. xlvi. 1, 10; 2 Kings xxiii. 29.	
			BELSHAZZAR	PHAROAH-HOPHRA Ezek. xxix. 3; Jer. xlv. 30.	CYRUS DARIUS HYSTASPES AHASUERUS

Thus the kingdom was divided, through Rehoboam's rashness; and our readers will see the time when the double table of kings begins, and when Shishak was reigning in Egypt, who soon after came up against Jerusalem.

And by this answer the kingdom of all Israel has from that day to this been rent in twain. It is added "The cause was from the Lord," or literally "it was a turning brought about by the Lord, that He might perform this saying by the prophet Ahijah to Jeroboam, the son of Nebat. This Jeroboam was an Ephraimite, who had grown up to be a "mighty man of valour," and was employed as engineer in the works of fortification round Jerusalem. Solomon had noted his energy and made him overseer of the works.

He had gone one day out of the city, when he met in a cornfield with a prophet named Ahijah, clad in a new garment, to whom had come the Word of the Lord concerning Jeroboam. This messenger snatched the new garment from his own back, and rending it in twelve pieces, gave ten of them to Jeroboam, telling him the Word of the Lord, that he would rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, excepting one tribe—the tribe of Judah, which should remain faithful for the sake of David, while the other ten should be given to Jeroboam, but not until after the death of Solomon.

When this matter reached the ears of Solomon, he sought the life of Jeroboam, but the young man fled to Egypt and remained there with Shishak its king, as we have seen, until Solomon's death.

We may mark this table of kings into three great periods.

1. Of 90 years; from the division of the kingdom to the death of Abaziah, king of Judah, and Jehoram, king of Israel, both by the hand of Jehu B.C. 884

- II. 163 years from thence to the carrying away captive of the ten tribes by Shalmaneser, king of Assyria B.C. 721
- III. 133 years, including the remaining history of Judah, down to the captivity of Babylon B.C. 588

And it is quite worth while to try and get a definite idea fixed in the memory of annals, that as we first read them in the Scripture, seem rather intricate. The Spirit of God has recorded, and it is for us to classify them in our remembrance.

The kingdoms were very small ; that of Israel not ten thousand square miles, and that of Judah not four thousand. Israel's territory may have been a little less than Yorkshire, Lancashire, and Cumberland, united. Judah a little less than Northumberland, Durham, and Westmoreland. Judah, however, lay South, and Israel North. Judah retained the capital, Jerusalem, with most of Solomon's treasures, and the worship of God was maintained at His chosen seat in Solomon's temple, for the sake of His covenant with David.

Although Jeroboam was chosen by God to punish Solomon's sins, this does not justify *his* becoming a rebel leader and then an idolator ; his very first acts severed the bond of union with Jehovah, and his course was followed by his successors, of whom one after another, with scarcely an exception. We read,

"And he did evil in the sight of Jehovah, and walked in the way of Jeroboam, who made Israel to sin."

In the line of David and the tribe of Judah the crown was handed on generally from father to son, while in that of Israel the line of Jeroboam ended with his son, and then followed a series of murders and usurpations amidst which the families who reigned longest, those of Omri and Jehu, numbered

only four or five kings each. During the first span of ninety years we have mentioned after the disruption, Judah had six kings and Israel had nine.

The prophets of this era, in the idolatrous kingdom of Israel, were ELIJAH and ELISHA, and also Micaiah; the prophets of Judah being Shemaiah, Oded, Azariah, Eliezer, Hananai, Jehu his son, Eliezer, and Jahazeel. All these are named in Scripture, and their particular messages to the kings declared, but none of them give their names to the prophetic books of the Bible, which sixteen later prophets do, commencing with Jonah.

It has been remarked that grander prophets were sent to the Ten Tribes than to Judah, and among the noblest was Elijah the Tishbite, but Elijah came in consequence of their apostacy; kings had failed to keep the people from idolatry, and so had priests—then the prophets arose to remonstrate, prophecy was God's fresh protest by their mouth against man's sin.

We must notice the early messages to kings: Shemaiah is called "a man of God;" and when Rehoboam had assembled an army of 180,000 men, from the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, who yet adhered to him, to fight against Israel, and, as he hoped, conquer the rebels.

"Then the word of the Lord came to Shemaiah the man of God, saying,

"Speak unto Rehoboam the son of Solomon, and to all Israel, saying,

"Thus saith the Lord, Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren: return every man to his house: for this thing is done of me. And they obeyed the words of the Lord, and returned from going against Jeroboam.

The second message of Shemaiah was one of rebuke, but also of comfort. He first said to the prince of Judah,

"Thus saith the Lord, Ye have forsaken me, and therefore have I also left you in the hand of Shishak."

When in answer to this, the people humbled themselves, the Word of the Lord came to Shemaiah, saying,

"They have humbled themselves: therefore I will not destroy them, by the hand of Shishak.

"Nevertheless they shall be his servants; that they may know my service, and the service of the kingdoms of the countries."

Now this Shishak, king of Egypt, has left a list of the places he conquered, on the walls of the old Temple of Karnak, in the city of Thebes; and the Spirit of God has given us a list relating to the same times, of the cities that Rehoboam made "fenced cities" in Palestine. (See 2 Chron. xi. 5—10.) Shishak came up with 1,200 chariots, 60,000 horsemen, and people without number, and "took the fenced cities" which pertained to Judah (2 Chron. xii. 4); in the fifth year of Rehoboam, when that king "forsook the law of the Lord, and all Israel with him."



In the year 1828 the French student, Champollion, on his passage down the Nile, landed at Karnak, and pointed out the accompanying figure, one of sixty-three prisoners presented to Sheshonk by his god Amunra.

The turreted oval enclosing the name means that it is a walled city. Shishak is depicted as a gigantic figure holding a captive by the hair of the head, with one hand, which he is going to strike off with the other: there are five rows of such captives as these, with features evidently Jewish.

The cap with the lappets and the pointed beard may also be observed as worn by

the prisoners labouring on the mounds of Nineveh for Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, in Hezekiah's later day. They can be seen on the bas-reliefs in the British Museum; how remarkable that God should have brought them up from their grave, when they had been

“Buried three thousand years;”

and recently directed the research of the learned of this day, to old carvings on ruined temples which have endured thus long—to records whose age and value is now fixed only by the statements of the Bible.

Champollion read the Egyptian inscription within the turreted oval, as “Judah Malek, king of the country of Judah;” but while this reading is disputed by later scholars, the monument, according to their observations, is quite as valuable in confirmation of the list of Rehoboam's fenced cities. No one disputes the Jewish physiognomy of the whole series of captives. Very mean and diminutive they are made to appear in contrast with the gigantic god, Ammon—who leads them by strings fastened round their necks, to deliver them to his colossal king Sheshonk, or Shishak. Beneath eleven of the captives are inscribed in hieroglyphs, as above, the names of their cities; two or three of which you will find in 2 Chron. xi. 5—Shoco, Aijalon, and Adoraim, while others are identified as well known in Bible history. Taanach, Megiddo, Gibeon, Beth-horon, Mahanaim, Rehob, and Beth-Shan; and the Bible does not tell us that Shishak took prisoner *the king* of the country of Judah, but only his fenced cities.

You can look for the messages of God by Oded and Azariah in 2 Chron. xv. 1—8, referring to “a long season when Israel had been without a teach-

ing priest and without law." Also to the prophecies of Hanani and his son Jehu, chiefly directed to the kings Asa, Baasha, and Jehoshaphat, (1 Kings xvi. ; 2 Chron. xix.) and after studying the reigns of each of the kings in the two lists as far as the avenger, Jehu the son or grandson of Omri, we had better fix our attention for the rest of this era on these grand prophets, Elijah and Elisha, who with Micaiah, appear in the list of the prophets, not of Judah, but of Israel.

Elijah the Tishbite was in his time like another Enoch and another Moses. Each prophesied of judgment to come, and asserted the Divine supremacy in the face of heathen idolatry around them; each proclaimed or revived the law of God, each of the two latter had the gifts of miracles, and each left the earth in an extraordinary manner.

Elijah's life was a crisis in the history of Israel. The life of Jeroboam had been followed by that of Ahab, and the worship of the golden calves, even if meant to be cherubic at first, had become mere Baalism. The God of Israel had been supplanted by the idols of Tyre. The curse of God on the builders of Jericho was defied, the thunders and lightnings of Sinai forgotten. The law of Moses was exploded. Jezebel, a daughter of the priest of Baal, shared the throne which had been occupied by David, and the abominations of Tyre and Sidon domineered in the capital of Israel.

Then God overruled evil with good, and sent forth an Elijah. The character of that age is commented upon in the New Testament, implying that it has to be studied in the Old. In the Revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ to St. John, when He would speak of a corrupt priesthood, He calls it a Jezebel, (Rev. ii. 20), and when He would describe those who shall rise up and witness against Anti-

the Kings, which will close the Old Testament history.

**TABULAR VIEW OF THE PROPHETS,
SHOWING THE PERIODS DURING WHICH IT IS SUPPOSED THEIR PROPHECIES
WERE DELIVERED.**

KINGS OF JUDAH.		KINGS OF ISRAEL.															
R. C.		IAHAZ.	JOSEPHAT.	ELACH.	DAVID.	BAASA.	JOEL.	ABIA.	ASAPH.	JOASH.	AMEL.	HAZON.	HAZARU.	ZEPHANIAH.	PAACHAI.	ZERUBABEL.	MALACHI.
829	a Amaziah, 829																o Jeroboam II, 829
810																	
810	b Uzziah, 810																
800																	
790																	Interregnum, 790
780																	p Menahem, 778
770																	q Pekahiah, 741
760																	r Pekah, 730
750	c Jotham, 756																
740	d Ahaz, 742																Anathoth, 731
730																	s Hoshea, 726
720	e Hezekiah, 727																
710																	
700																	
690	f Manasseh, 688																
680																	
670																	
660																	
650																	
640	g Amon, 643																
630	h Josiah, 641																
620																	
610	i Jehoahaz, 610																
600																	
590	j Jehoiakim, 610																
580	k Jeconiah, 590																
570	m Desc. of Jerusalem, 598																
560																	
550																	
540	n Zerubbabel, 538																
530																	
520																	
510																	

Continued of Israel—those Kings being overthrown by the Assyrians, B. C. 721.

Exile of Judah.

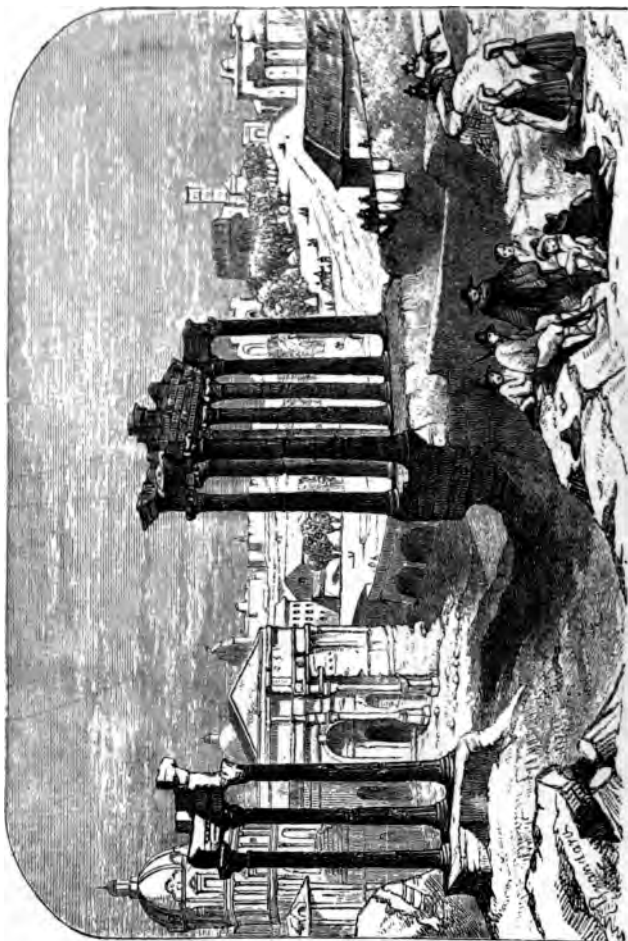
* Malachi, between 450 and 430.

The date after each king's name indicates the commencement of his reign.—Joel is placed twice, as it is doubtful at which period he lived.

2 KL 14: 2 Ch. 27.
 3 KL 14: 21; 2 Ch. 26. 1.
 4 KL 15: 32; 2 Ch. 27.
 5 KL 16: 1; 2 Ch. 28.
 6 KL 16: 19; 2 Ch. 29: 1a, 36, 37, 38.
 7 KL 20: 1; 2 Ch. 33.
 8 KL 21: 19; 2 Ch. 33. 31.
 9 KL 22: 1; 2 Ch. 34. 1.
 10 KL 23: 31.
 11 KL 23: 36; 2 Ch. 36. A.
 12 KL 24: 8; 2 Ch. 36. A.
 13 KL 25: 2; 2 Ch. 36. 17.
 14 Ezra 2: 4, 5.
 15 KL 14: 28; 2 Ch. 12. 6.
 16 KL 15: 14.
 17 KL 15: 22.
 18 KL 15: 26.
 19 KL 17: 1.

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ANCIENT TEMPLE.

THE SECOND PERIOD OF
THE TIMES OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL :
FROM ELISHA TO ISAIAH.

No. XV.

WE hope that you will so study the Table of Kings and Prophets given you in our last chapter in its three separate portions, that the great messengers of God who lived and spoke in each era, will rise in your memory with each period of years.

The first period, you will remember, included ninety years after the division of the kingdom—that is, from 975 B.C. to 885 B.C. The names of the comparatively *good* kings of Judah are given in large capitals. Perhaps you referred to ASA, and remember God's protecting him against the mighty Ethiopian army under Zerah, or "Osarken" (named on Egypt's tablets), because Asa said, "O Lord God, in thy Name we go against this multitude." (See 2 Chron. xiv.)

Elijah's portrait occupied us last, and our present study must commence with Elisha, who stood to him somewhat in the light that Joshua did to Moses.

"He went after Elijah, and ministered to him." (1 Kings xix. 21.)

It is supposed that he did this for the space of eight years before Elijah's translation; Elisha's call to such ministry is said to have taken place about 906 B.C., and his death, after the discharge of his

prophetical office for nearly seventy years, occurring about 838 B.C. When we hear of him first, he is a young man, ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen in the rich pastures of the Jordan valley.

"Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle (of rough sheep skin) upon him."

This was in fulfilment of the word of the Lord:

"Elisha, the son of Shaphat, shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room. And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay: and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay." (1 Kings xix. 16, 17.)

Hazael was king of Syria, who stepped to the throne by smothering his master. Elisha had foreseen "the evil he would do," as he read his doom with tears, on the previous day; while Hazael, amazed, enquired, "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?" God made that usurper the scourge of both Judah and Israel, whose kings united in self defence against him and the Syrians. Jehoram was king of Judah who had married Athaliah, the idolatrous daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, Jezebel herself being the daughter of Ethbaal, the Canaanite king of Zidon. This accounts for all the Baal worship that arrayed itself against the commandments of God in both kingdoms, and to punish which God raised up Elijah, and prophesied as above, of the avenging Jehu.

But ere we mark the avenger Jehu, we must note the career of Elisha. His early life, it would seem, had been agricultural and domestic. He asks leave to take farewell of his friends, and then obeys the Divine summons, and attends his master to the close of his wondrous history. After seeing him parted from his side by a chariot of fire and horses of fire, and swept up into heaven by a whirlwind, Elisha received in that hour according to his earnest

prayer, a double portion of the Spirit that had moved his grand and awful friend. His native character seems less powerful and more gentle than Elijah's, but he was equally used as an instrument of the Holy One—of the Most High God—as Elijah had been, to deliver messages of judgment, whose truth was often proved by their instant fulfilment. "The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha," said the sons of the prophets.

To part the waters of Jordan, to increase the measure of the widow's oil,—to heal the bitter poisonous spring, to inflict and cure disease, to warn and counsel kings, and to defy their rage,—knowing himself surrounded and protected by unseen angelic guards,—to raise the dead to life, and even in his own dead bones to preserve the gift of healing. (2 Kings xiii. 21.) All this was in Elisha's destiny. Elisha so different from Elijah, and yet so one with him in soul! No wild and shaggy hairy man, but with smooth and well shorn locks,* which the very children contrasted maliciously with those of his forerunner,—using a walking staff like other citizens, glad of quiet repose in the friendly balcony, where bed, table, and chair, were prepared for him by the kindly lady of Shunem. He is not found in the desert of Horeb, or lonely on the top of Carmel, but in the crowded thoroughfares of Samaria, in the gardens of Damascus, and by the waters of Jordan. Still ever the Lord's mouthpiece, and instructing kings till his dying day, when Joash the monarch of Judah receives from him a promise of success against Syria, whose measure was to be the measure of his own perseverance and energy. "Thou shouldst have smitten

* This is implied in the term "baldhead."

five or six times," says the prophet, "then he smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed it" (The man of God was wroth, for the king smote three times, and stayed.) King Joash however was privileged to repeat to Elisha at the time of his death the very words which Elisha had uttered to Elijah—"My father! my father! the chariots of Israel, and the horsemen thereof." Were the royal eyes unsealed as the servant's had been previously at Elisha's request, to see these glorious attendants of the man of God's departure? (2 Kings vi. 17.) They had, *we know*, surrounded him in mortal peril; what so likely as that they bore his soul to the mansion of its rest?

It is Elisha who sets apart Jehu to his office of avenger; but he does not do this personally.

"Elisha the prophet, called one of the children of the prophets," and bid him "gird up his loins and take a box of oil in his hand and go to Ramoth Gilead, and look out there Jehu, the son of Jehoshaphat, and pour it on his head, and say, Thus saith the Lord, I have anointed thee king over Israel."*

It is needful to observe to some of our readers that this Jehu was not the son of Jehoshaphat king of Israel in the table; he is most often known as the son of Nimshi. There are also two Joram's in the table who were not the same, but brothers-in-law, by marriage of Joram, king of Judah, who *was* the son of king Jehoshaphat, with Athaliah (the daughter of Jezebel) who as a widow succeeded for seven years her son Ahaziah, whom Jehu slew.

What a scene of the retributive justice of God is depicted when Jehu, after his sudden anointing and

* Tradition says that Jonah was this prophet, also that he was the son of the widow of Zarephath, brought to life by Elijah, and destined afterwards to be the messenger to Nineveh.

asty enthronement by his captains on the top of the stairs (see 2 Kings ix. 13) takes his own war chariot and drives according to his habit, "furiously" to Jezreel, and meets the two kings Joram and Ahaziah uncle and nephew, in the field of Naboth the Jezreelite.

"Is it peace, Jehu?" said King Joram.

And Jehu answers—"What peace? while the witchcrafts of thy mother Jezebel are so many?"

"There is treachery," cries Joram to his nephew king, while Jehu draws a bow with his full strength, and Joram sinks dead in his chariot—Ahaziah by other hands sharing the same fate; and then Jehu remembers the day, when with his captain Bidkar, he had followed Ahab to this very plat of coveted ground acquired by murder, and heard the Lord's threatening by the mouth of Elijah, "I have seen the blood of Naboth, and I will requite thee in this plat, saith the Lord."

But Jehu is a man of blood; and not only *one* son of Ahab, but *seventy* must fall; "all that remained" of the idolatrous house; and then proclaiming "by subtilty" an assembly for Baal, as if *he* would be his servant, even more than Ahab had been, he gathers together all his prophets and his priests throughout the land; and when the house of Baal is full from one end to the other, by a sweeping massacre does this same Jehu remove by the united blows of fourscore men without, (his guard and his captains,) the whole heathen population at a stroke, from the kingdom of Israel.

Oh how striking it is, after studying this story, to behold in the galleries of the British Museum the war chariots, and driving such as Jehu's, gone

out of mind and memory for thousands of years, but come up from their grave to throw light on these very chronicles of Israel.

Who does not know the black obelisk in the central Nineveh room of the British Museum ? Mr. Layard had carried a trench fifty feet into one of his sandy mounds; it appeared to yield but little worth notice, and he did not intend to pursue it further, when just as he left the spot a corner of black marble was uncovered, at the very edge of the trench. This corner was that of an obelisk lying on its side, ten feet below the surface, sculptured on the four sides, having on each five small stone pictures ; and above, below, and between them were arrow-headed inscriptions, 210 lines in length ; all the figures sharp, and well defined.



The habits and dress of the Assyrian king on this

obelisk seem not greatly to have varied from those which distinguished him in the portrait given you at p. 39 and p. 221; he is here twice represented, followed by attendants bearing his arms. He has precisely the same simple helmet, and "the Presence" of Assur accompanies him as before. A prisoner, whom he has conquered, is at his feet, and before him his vizier with folded hands appears submissively to wait the royal decree concerning him. In the second bas-relief below, the same figures are repeated, but the king has the royal umbrella held as at p. 20, over him, and has also the divining cup in his hand. In the first compartment he had his bow and arrows—he had just won his victory. In the second he appears in peaceful state—he offers a libation before the Presence. Perhaps, like the King of Babylon, described by Ezekiel in after years (chap. xxi. 21), "He stands at the parting of the way, at the head of the two ways," to use divination, he has "*made his arrows bright, and consulted with images.*" This may explain the double representation of the king.

It will also be remarked that the person bowing down at his feet, has on the peculiar cap and long robe—the cap like a bag, the end of which falls back, instead of towards the front like the Phrygian cap, and this costume, wherever found, seems by all writers on the subject, to be considered to belong to the Hebrews. Sir H. Rawlinson fixes the scenes represented upon this obelisk to the date of the usurper Jehu. He reads in the inscription that Shalmaneser I. led twenty-three expeditions into the kingdoms of his neighbours, and among these he names the Israelites. From all the conquered peoples he took tribute; and the inscription mentions the name of Hazael king of Syria. "I went to the

towns of Hazael of Damascus, and took part of his provisions." "I received the tributes of Tyre, Sidon and Byblus."

Consequently on the submission of the above, according to Sir H. Rawlinson, follows that of Jehu, "Son of Omri" who sends as tribute to Shalmaneser a quantity of gold and silver in bullion, together with manufactured articles in the more precious of the two metals.

This submission of Jehu, is *not* recorded in the Bible, but a similar submission *is*, of Ahaz to Tiglath-pileser.

"So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-pileser, King of Assyria, saying, I am thy servant and thy son. Come up and save me out of the hand of the King of Syria, and out of the hand of the King of Israel, which rise up against me.

"And Ahaz took the silver and gold that was found in the house of the Lord, and in the treasures of the King's house, and sent it for a present to the king of Assyria." (2 Kings xvi. 7, 8.)

The tribute or spoil, whichever it may be, on the obelisk, seems rendered in the form of elephants' tusks, gold dust, rich vestures and vases, precious woods, wine-skins and fruits, copper caldrons or kettledrums, all borne by the wearers of the long robes, some of them with fillets round their heads and bare feet. Animals also appear in the procession; the elephant and rhinoceros, camels and apes; some are dressed for the sacrifice, according to heathen custom, so that man and beast are declared subjugated to the Assyrian king of kings. The turned up toes and twisted caps are found on three levels, out of five.

Sir Henry says this is Shalmaneser's obelisk, but an earlier Shalmaneser than the one said in the Bible to have "come up against" Samaria. (2 Kings xvii. 3.) It seems to have been *ready to be* carried away with the sculptures by Esarhaddon, for HIS palace at the

south-west corner of the Nimroud mound, for it was lying on its side, and had been buried for five-and-twenty centuries, when the finger of Divine Providence so remarkably guided towards it, the apparently unprofitable trench.

You should notice that the obelisk was *not* found in the earliest north-west palace which lay *the deepest* in Mr. Layard's mound, *and is represented by the first long Nineveh gallery* in our museum. It was found in the *central* palace, which lay next in the mound, and is represented in the museum *by the central room* between the first gallery and the second, in which last are grouped all the conquests of Sennacherib. The obelisk attracts immediate attention in the central room, and some slabs on the walls also should be noticed, which have a singular history. When Mr. Layard first excavated here he came upon many tombs; one, when he lifted its alabaster slab, contained a skeleton, the skull entire, but it crumbled to dust on the entrance of the air. *Five feet below* these tombs he traced the remains of a building; walls of unbaked brick could yet be seen, from which slabs seemed to have been removed. After clearing away twenty tombs, a space of fifty feet square presented a singular appearance. Above a hundred sculptured slabs were uncovered, placed in rows one against another, like the leaves of a gigantic book, and evidently ready for removal to another place.

Three or four of these slabs, removed by the labourers of two thousand five hundred years ago, were to find their place, not in any fresh Assyrian palace, but in the British Museum. One of them represents the taking of a city, within the walls of which grew Judah's palms. The place has been sacked, and the conquerors are carrying off the

spoil. Two eunuchs, standing near the gates, count as they pass the sheep and cattle driven away, and write the numbers with a pen on rolls of paper or leather. On another slab one of Judah's daughters, clothed in sackcloth, and with her elegantly formed pitcher, tends her camels; and on yet another issuing from the city gates, with fettered hands and driven by a proud Assyrian, the sons of Judah, with the caps and turned-up boots already named, seem to lament and mourn.

To this conquering nation of Assyria some time after the reign of Jehu, there was sent the Jewish prophet JONAH, the first of the sixteen prophets whose writings are preserved in our Scriptures.

From his time, to the destruction of the kingdom of Israel, there were raised up six prophets.

<i>To Judah.</i>		<i>To Israel.</i>	
Joel.	From Uzziah's	From Jeroboam II.	Jonah.
Isaiah.	reign to	to	Amos.
Micah.	Hezekiah's	Hosea.	Hosca.

THE PROPHET JONAH.

During all the reign of Solomon we hear **nothing** in the Bible of Assyria or Babylon; and the **fact** that the Euphrates was recognized as the **boundary** of Solomon's kingdom (2 Chron. ix. 26), suggests the inference that the monarchies between the Euphrates and the Tigris were then comparatively feeble.

We heard of Assyria at its rise—in the days of Assur and Nimrod. Balaam mentioned Assur in his desert prophecy. Mesopotamia led ISRAEL captive after her grand conquests under Joshua; therefore the new conquerors could have possessed no insignificant military power some centuries before the building of the Temple on Zion. And now Assyria looms again before our eyes, as “the

word of the Lord came to Jonah, the son of Amittai, saying, Arise ! go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it ; for their wickedness is come up before me."

This was an unusual commission for a Jewish prophet ; and it was certainly not the first that had been given to him, for this Jonah, the son of Amittai, a prophet of Gathhepher, of Zebulon, had predicted the restoration of the ancient boundaries of the kingdom of the ten tribes (2 Kings xiv. 25), and that prediction received its accomplishment in the reign of Jeroboam II., in whose reign, it would seem, Jonah must have lived. Jeroboam was thirteenth King of Israel, and son of Joash, whom he succeeded on the throne 825 B.C. Jonah may have prophesied early in his reign, as we must again remember that *great cities are not built in a day*, it is to the Nineveh of which these very palaces at Nimroud formed a part that Jonah comes—perhaps, a century and a half after the time of Solomon—to a "Nineveh" containing a vast population, more than 60,000 persons of the ignorant or infant class, and those and their elders *not* packed together as in our western cities, but scattered over the plains of the Tigris as the different mounds are now—the city made up of several distinct walled quarters, distinct from one another, divided by cultivated lands. (Isfahan and Damascus to this day occupy as much space as London or Paris, and do not contain a tithe of the population.) We are told that the so-called Nineveh was three days' journey in extent ; and a day's journey being twenty miles, this makes its circumference sixty miles, which Mr. Layard tells us would enclose the various mounds as in a circle, thereby verifying the description of the Bible.

This is the first notice we have, after the mission of Jonah, of kings of Assyria, in connexion with the kings of Israel and Judah. Menahem's thousand talents of silver were equal to £340,000.

The Assyrian inscription says, that "Menkihimni of Samirina" (Menahem of Samaria), paid tribute to a king of Assyria—Phuloch, or Pul, or Vul-lush.

That record is on a pavement slab from the chambers of the Nimroud palace. Menahem's tribute has been thought excessive, but it is here stated that from the King of Damascus, Vul-lush took 2,300 talents of silver, besides tribute in gold and copper.

With Pul began the conquests of Assyria over Israel, which were continued by his successors. The prophets, Amos and Hosea, at this period uttered little else but threats and warnings—"I will sit the house of Israel among all nations, says the Lord by Amos, like as corn is sifted in a sieve."

All the chapters of this Prophet are a sorrowful wail over the sins of his people, till, in a few verses of the last chapter, the inspired herdsman sings a far-off strain of comfort at the close of his dirge, unfolding times of mercy yet to come to the Lord's ancient exiled people. (See Amos ix. 14, 15.)

Amos was a shepherd of Tekoa and a dresser of sycamore trees, chosen to fill the office of a prophet, though not trained in the regular prophetic schools. He makes numerous allusions to natural objects and agricultural occupations, as might be expected; and he tells us that he prophesied in the reigns of Uzziah, king of Judah, and Jeroboam, the son of Joash, king of Israel, "two years before the earthquake." This earthquake is referred to in Zech. xiv. 5, in illustration of one which is yet future, as affecting the Mount of Olives.

The duration of HOSEA's gift of prophecy seems

to have been nearly fifty years, thus resembling that of the Prophet Isaiah. Hosea's prophecies related chiefly to the kingdom of Israel, and Isaiah's to that of Judah. Both commenced to prophecy in the reign of Jeroboam II., and continued during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. Both Prophets therefore see the invasions of the Assyrian kings — Tiglath Pileser, Shalmaneser, Sargon, and Sennacherib.

You should read the reign of Uzziah, lasting fifty-two years (2 Chron. xxvi.)—a good and prosperous king of Judah, "whose name spread far abroad, for he was marvellously helped till he was strong." And then, alas! when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction. What a lesson of fear and caution for the successful—his heart was lifted up. He wished to usurp the office of the priests in the temple, and to burn incense; and the Lord smote him with leprosy in his forehead, and he was a leper to the day of his death; and Jotham his son judged the people of the land in his father's stead.

Jotham is a good king. He became mighty and established his ways before the Lord his God; but yet the people became more and more corrupt. And in those days the Lord began to send against Judah Rezin king of Damascus, whose attacks proved so disastrous under Jotham's weak and wicked son Ahaz, who "made molten images to Baalim;" "he sacrificed unto the gods of Damascus," "which were the ruin of him and of all Israel." (2 Chron. xxviii. 23.)

The people of Assyria you will remember carved, *as the only object to be worshipped* in their temples, not a statue, but a *sign* or *symbol* of the presence of their great god Asshur—we gave it you on p. 38.

They expressed the idea by a winged human figure rising out of a circle; and it always accompanied their king.

This winged figure, which was very universally worshipped, is called in Scripture "Baal," or Baalim, and the Sacred Tree which accompanied it "The Groves;" but the word "groves" has given a wrong impression—it ought to have been left as in the Hebrew, "Asshayrah." How marvellous is it to suppose that we have in the Museum before our eyes "the groves" so often mentioned in the Books of Kings and Chronicles. The Baal symbol is sometimes called the *Chammānim*, rendered in the margin "Sun Images." (See 2 Chron. xxxiv. 4.) During King Josiah's reformation he brake down the *altars* of Baalim, in his twelfth year, and the *Sun Images that were on high above them* he cut down, etc. We have seen what Elijah did to the 950 prophets of Baal and of "Asshayrah" which ate at Jezebel's table (1 Kings xviii. 19); for God had said to His people Israel :

"Ye shall make you no idols nor graven image, neither rear you up a standing image, neither shall ye set up any image of stone [margin, 'any stone of picture'] in your land, to bow down unto it: for I am the Lord your God."

"*Know ye not what these things mean?*" saith the Lord, to us who pass by such stones "crying out," after nearly 1900 years of privilege in the Gospel dispensation. To *us* they ask a solemn question. While they point the Jews to their ancient sin of the worship of Baalim and the Groves, a sin which has rung the funeral knell of their empire, and laid it low for the "seven times" of God's prophetic wrath—they point both Jew and Gentile to *nothing less* than "the True Presence" which these idolatries caricatured.

THE WINGS OF GOD.

"Keep me, oh, keep me, King of kings,
Beneath Thine own Almighty wings."

Now before and after the Flood, men have wilfully gone out from "the presence" of God, and have made an idolatrous use of the symbol of the wings, and, nevertheless, this image is often used in Scripture. "The Lord recompense thee," it was said to Ruth, "under whose wings thou art come to trust." (Ruth ii. 12.) "Hide me," says David, "under the shadow of thy wings." (Ps. xvii. 8.) "In the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge." (Ps. lvi. 1.) "He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust." (Ps. xci. 4.) "In the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice." In Ps. cxxxix. this presence is described as world-surrounding—"Whither shall I flee from thy presence?" etc., the wings are over all the earth; and this implied protection.

What said the living Saviour to Jerusalem?

"How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not. Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." (Matt. xxiii. 38.)

And did He not say to His disciples, "Go ye, therefore, and teach *all* nations," and it may aid us afresh to comprehend that Divine and overshadowing love to realize it in the figure of "coming under the wings."

What is it that constitutes a Christian? Is it not dwelling in the Presence, coming under the wings? Once drawn by the Holy Spirit into that blessed shelter, once in the Presence, through the shedding of the blood, the blood of the Lamb—who is he that condemneth?

"It is Christ that died," is the reply, and who shall separate us from the love of Christ? (Rom. viii. 35,) or from those whom we love who are in the

same Presence? It may be said of those who dwell in the Presence that "*they never die*;" they only draw nearer and nestle closer under the Almighty wings when they leave the earth. Have we beloved ones at the world's end—on the other side of the globe? If they are in the Presence, they are not beyond the wings. The Egyptian and Assyrian idea of the wings which by men of old time was perverted to idolatry, may be for those "in Christ," a blessed idea, and worth gathering up from these old stones, for it includes St. Paul's description of our inheritance in Eph. i. 3.

NEBO.

Before we leave the subject of these ancient idols, we must observe two figures of the Babylonian god Nebo, forwarded to this country by Sir H. Rawlinson from the South-east palace of Nimroud. An Assyrian king was named after him 1,200 years B.C.



THE GOD NEBO.

The kings of Babylon take their names from him—Nabo-Nidus, Nebuzaredan, Nebuchadnezzar; and he is named in Scripture in association with Bel. The ponderous and erect appearance of this idol would seem alluded to in the words:

"Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth. Their idols were upon the beasts, and upon the cattle. Your carriages were heavy laden; they are a burden to the weary beast. They stoop, they bow down together. They could not deliver the burden, but themselves are gone into captivity." (Isa. xli. 1, 2.)

There is great importance in the resurrection of these heathen deities, as witnesses of the truth of God's Word.

Sir H. Rawlinson is said to read the arrow-headed characters on Nebo's robe as follows:—
 "That this statue was dedicated by the sculptor to Phulukh (Pul), the king of Assyria, and to his lady, Sammuramit, or Semiramis, Queen of the Palace." It is here declared that Nebo is "the God who teaches or instructs;" "he who hears from afar," "he who possesses intelligence." Nebo is elsewhere called "inventor of the writing of the royal tablets." In an inner chamber of his temple, the Biris Nimroud, all the bricks were found stamped with an arrow-head.

The idolatrous kings of Israel and Judah who bowed down to these images, were always punished for the forsaking of the Law, while those who observed the Law prospered. The kingdom rose or fell according to that rule; this renders the history of the Jewish people especially interesting and instructive, and Israel was now unconsciously tottering to its fall.

ISAIAH.

Isaiah prophesies in the days of four sovereigns—Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. His first general message is to Uzziah and Jotham, when to the outward eye their kingdom is flourishing in its worldly condition, but to the prophetic eye all is soon to be laid waste. Isaiah sees the chosen nation in the light of a man wounded unto death, and soon to be left desolate. The seeming religion of Judah is now all hypocrisy; "the silver is become dross," and "Zion must be redeemed with judgment." Oh! what a guide are the first chapters of this prophet down the Kouyunjik side gallery of the British Museum. But we are not going to enter this last Nineveh gallery till the next chapter, as we shall want your fresh attention to Isaiah's wondrous book.

MICAH.

We want to fix in your minds at the close of this second portion of the Table of the Prophets two great events,—I. The carrying of the ten tribes of Israel into captivity by Shalmaneser 722 years B.C., which was predicted by the prophet Micah (i.—6) about thirty years before it happened (for it took place in the sixth year of the reign of Hezekiah); II. We wish to point you to the *time* of this prophecy of Micah's, uttered in the reign of Jotham, as that when the infant power of ROME arose (753 B.C.) and became the standing date from which *all* the great kingdoms of this world have agreed to reckon. We give you as a frontispiece, the ruins of Ancient Rome as they endure to this day.

Micah recalls the name and the mercy shown to his father Abraham (vii. 20), and therefore *looks back* from the exile of the ten tribes, no less than 1260 years, to the time when Terah abode in Ur of the Chaldees, and Abram was a youth of eighteen, to whom the Lord God appeared when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran. It was from this very point of the leading captive the ten tribes that it was given to the Prophet Daniel and to the Apostle John to *look forward* 1260 years, and see Rome Papal arise out of the ashes of Rome Pagan, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up. Gibbon the historian of Rome tells us that the first Pope was elected A.D. 538, which, added to the date of 722 B.C., makes the number 1260; but this would lead us on to the New Testament era. We must first close the Old Testament story with the exile and partial return to Jerusalem of the royal house of JUDAH.



THE PEAKS OF ISH-TA-MIN.

THE FALL OF JUDAH.

No. XVI.

WE cannot say whether the prophet Isaiah stands out most as the man of his own age, or as the world's teacher for ever.

The passing wars of his time are in his prophecies dignified by their connexion with glowing predictions of the future kingdom of the Messiah; his soul is ever looking "onward and upward;" and we feel that he must for himself have realized by earnest faith that "beautiful and glorious," "Branch of the Lord," (ch. iv. 2,) which would sometime spring from the old root of Israel's desolations. His writings are placed in our Bibles, *first* in the order of the books of the prophets (so-called), chiefly because of those sublime predictions, and possibly because Isaiah's *one* book, as we have it, is larger than those of all the *twelve* "minor prophets" put together.

Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, are commonly called "the greater prophets," and their books follow one another in our canon, although, actually, *between* ISAIAH and JEREMIAH, come Joel, Micah, Nahum, and Zephaniah—*between* JEREMIAH and DANIEL, Habakkuk—and *between* DANIEL and EZEKIEL, Obadiah. After EZEKIEL, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, complete the list.

Jonah, Amos, and Hosea, we must remember, preceded all the rest, and of these we have spoken; now let us fix our minds on ISAIAH, the prophet of four kings' reigns (see the first verse of the prophecy),

Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, and belonging therefore like Hosea to our IInd and IIIrd periods. See p. 270.

Let us observe how he tells us of his marvellous consecration to his office :

In the year that king Uzziah died, (*i.e.* B.C. 757, and his death occurred at the age of 70, and in the house of lepers), Isaiah beholds a vision in the court of the temple ; appears to gaze into the holy place, and to see through the cedar gates and veil withdrawn, straight on to the throne of the heavenly king within ;

“ His train filled the temple.”

Unearthly and radiant beings float around that Presence. The Lord of Hosts, who spoke in the burning bush to Moses, in the still small voice to Elijah, now appears in His cherubic brightness to Isaiah, and, in so doing, gives to the young prophet an abasing view of himself in his earthly weakness, so that he cries out, “ Woe is me, for I am cut off. I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell among a people of unclean lips.”

Then on these defiled lips was laid by a flaming seraph a living glowing coal from off the altar, and henceforth those lips were to utter the words that for all ages would move the world. Then comes the voice from the sanctuary, “ Whom shall I send? and who will go for us?” and the prophet thus made ready, replies, “ Here am I, send me.”

And he is sent, as he is warned, on a forlorn and hopeless mission, to blind eyes, and heavy ears, and unconverted hearts ; the description of his own people for age after age in misery and exile, concerning whom his far off comfort could only be according to the name he had given to his son, “ Shearjashub,” a remnant shall return—a remnant

from the destructions of Assyria and Babylon—and far away in the future, in a day which is future still, when the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox, when the earth is full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea,—*in that day* the Lord shall set His hand “*again a second time*” (chap. xi. 11) to recover the remnant of His people from Assyria and from Egypt, and from Cush (Africa), and from Elam (Persia), and from Shinar (Mesopotamia), and from Hamath (Syria), and from the islands of the sea, (very possibly Great Britain); and He shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth; in that day “with joy shall they draw water out of the wells of salvation.”

But meanwhile across what a wilderness of woe, and on what hundreds of years of destruction, does the prophet's eye look for his people. Isaiah had a second son, whose symbolic name was Maher-shalal-hashbaz, or “speed to the spoil,” (see chap. viii.) and before this child could utter the name of his father or his mother, the vengeance was to begin; and Damascus with Samaria (the northern kingdom of Israel) were to be carried away to Assyria; the prophetic symbol of Assyria and Babylon was an eagle (see Ezek. xvii.) and Isaiah says in his viiith chap. “the stretching out of *his* wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, oh Immanuel.” The people had refused to dwell under the wings of God, had “cast away the law of the Lord of Hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel,” (Isa. vi. 24) therefore the Lord would “hiss for the nations from afar,” and “behold they shall come with speed swiftly,” “with speed to the spoil,” whose arrows are sharp, and all

their bows bent, and their wheels like a whirlwind; (look at the Assyrian war chariots, and the kings with their bent bows on the Assyrian marbles), they were to "roar and lay hold of the prey, and carry it away safe, and none should deliver it." This was the prophecy to Ahaz previous to the fall of Samaria.

Judah also is warned in the prophet's tenth chapter. "Shall I not, as I have done to Samaria and her idols, so do to Jerusalem and her idols?" And then it is said, that having begun with His own people, the Lord would next punish "the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks."



SENNACHERIB IN HIS CHARIOT.

Behold him at Kouyunjik: the king stands in his chariot, beneath the royal parasol, to receive the captives and the spoil taken from the conquered people.

There would be no better guide than Isaiah the

prophet, if girded in the black haircloth of mourning, he could utter his third and fourth chapters down the Kouyunjik, or third Nineveh Gallery, in the British Museum, how the "mighty man and the man of war, the prudent and the ancient and the captain of fifty, the cunning artificer and the eloquent orator" must "go into captivity," for "Jerusalem is ruined and Judah is fallen." They must go and pile mounds for Sennacherib's palaces, and must transport his great bulls.

Oh! if this great prophet could indeed arise and see how Sennacherib has delineated his conquests and his achievements! We perceive how the "high places were builded;" and upon the builders the prophet would say, as in his forty-seventh chapter—

"Thou didst show no mercy; upon the ancient hast thou very heavily laid thy yoke."

The Assyrian artist has most successfully conveyed a remarkable expression of fatigue into the attitudes, and of age into the countenances and limbs of the king's captives. Many of them are surely Jewish: here is the cap-point turning back, and lappets now cover the ears; bare-footed, and bowing beneath their heavy baskets of stones, the "honourable man" and the "mighty" and the prudent and the counsellor painfully ascend the mound. These are no labourers born—they are patrician slaves. There are younger men among them, whom the task-masters seek to afflict more heavily; and some of these wear fetters, others are chained two and two. (In the glass cases before these slabs lie *the very fetters*, massive and sprinkled with the verdigris of age, which galled those limbs of old.) Has the Lord returned evil for evil? Isaiah says:

"The Lord will enter into judgment with the ancients of his people, and the princes thereof: for ye have eaten up the vineyard; the spoil of the poor is in your houses.

"What mean ye that ye beat my people to pieces, and grind the faces of the poor? saith the Lord God of hosts." (Isaiah iii. 14, 15.)

"O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation.

"I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like mire of the streets." (Isaiah x. 5, 6.)

THE SIEGE OF LACHISH BY SENNACHERIB.

The prophet Isaiah sings the Psalm of the vineyard (see Isaiah v.):—

"My well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill. ... What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?"

Judea was the land of the vine and the olive. In the delineation of the country conquered by these Assyrian lords, and in defiance of all perspective, vines with great bunches of grapes, causing us to think of the vines of Judea, overhang the scenes of blood and murder.

The remaining bas-reliefs in that gallery all belong to the time of Sennacherib, and depict further details of Assyrian cruelties. On the mound men are doing the work of horses—either pulling the king in his chariot (a sort of moveable throne), or dragging carts, or, along the river-sides, boats containing weighty obelisks; and they are all men with the peak and lappet caps, driven by tyrant overseers with sticks.

"In this living and universal language of art, we may well believe that we see a picture of the sufferings to which the children of Israel were ex-

posed when their cities fell before the conquering Assyrians, and their inhabitants were sent to colonize distant provinces of the empire; and thus, doubtless, were driven the inhabitants of Samaria through the desert to Halah and Habor, by the river of Gozan, and to the cities of the Medes."

THE SUBTERRANEAN HALL.

We can now re-pass the central saloon, and by way of the lobby chamber descend the stairs to inspect the records of further deeds of cruelty by Sennacherib before Lachish.

The besieged have defended themselves with great determination: archers and slingers are showering arrows, javelins, stones, and blazing torches on the enemy. Part of the city has, however, been taken. Beneath the walls the Assyrians are commencing their tortures. A procession of captives is driven into the presence of the king, who, gorgeously arrayed, receives them seated on his throne.

Again, we see the unmistakable Jewish physiognomy of the defeated race, and the women clothed in sackcloth are in the same carts as in the central palace slabs. The captives are brought into the royal presence by the Tartan of the Assyrian forces, possibly the Rabshakeh himself (followed by his principal officers), who were speedily afterwards despatched to Jerusalem.



SENNACHERIB.

"And the king of Assyria sent Tartan and Rabсарis and Rabshakeh from Lachish to king Hezekiah with a great host against Jerusalem." (2 Kings xviii. 17.)

Submission on the part of Hezekiah to tribute appears to have taken place at Lachish.

"And Hezekiah, King of Judah, sent to the King of Assyria to Lachish, saying—I have offended, return from me; that which thou putteth upon me I will bear; and the King of Assyria appointed unto Hezekiah King of Judah 300 talents of silver and thirty talents of gold."

Sennacherib's own record of this on his cylinder, and also between the feet of the Kouyunjik bulls is as follows:—

Then Hezekiah, King of Judah, who had not bowed down to my yoke, forty-six of his large cities, and smaller towns belonging to them without number, in the fury of my vengeance I utterly destroyed.

Two hundred thousand one hundred and fifty persons, small and great, male and female, horses, mares, mules, camels, oxen, and sheep, without number, from the midst of them I carried away and distributed them as spoil. He himself, like a fugitive bird, shut himself up in his royal city, Jerusalem.

He built towers of defence (or battlements) over it, and he strengthened and rebuilt the bulwarks of his great gate.

In the meanwhile, the cities which I had sacked I finally cut off from his dominions, and I gave them to Mitinti, King of Ashdod, Padiah, King of Amgarrun, and Ismi Bel, King of Gaza.

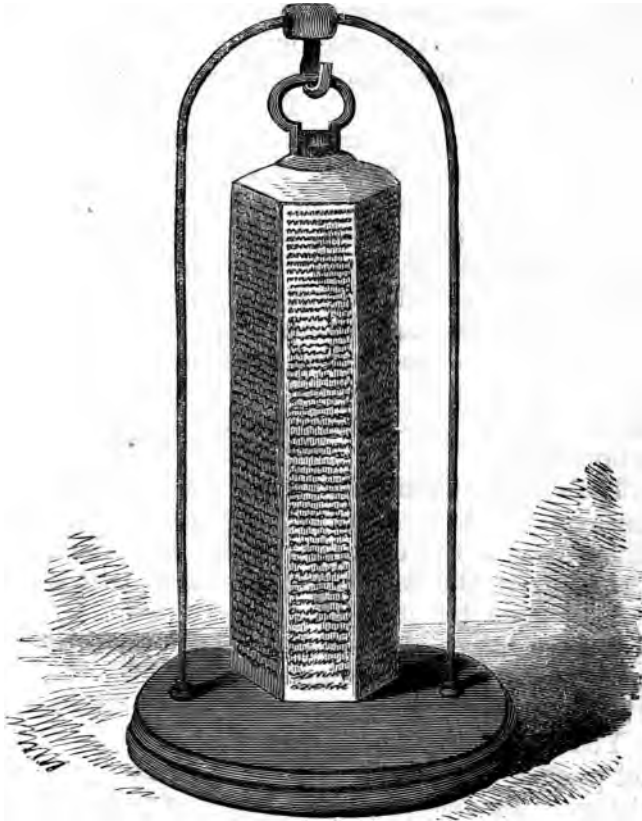
Thus I diminished his country. And in addition to the former tribute and the land-gift (or land-tax) I augmented the tribute of . . . and imposed this burden upon them. As to Hezekiah himself, the dreadful terror of my power had overwhelmed him.

Then I seized and carried off all his artificers, and all the other . . . whom he had collected in order to fortify Jerusalem . . . with thirty talents of gold, eight hundred talents of silver, scarlet robes, precious stones (?), royal thrones (?) made of ivory, palanquins of ivory for travelling, skins and teeth of elephants, beautiful precious woods of two kinds, altogether a vast treasure. And also his daughters, and the female inhabitants (?) of his palace, and their men slaves and women slaves.

This mighty spoil, unto Nineveh, my royal city, after me I brought away. And he swore a solemn oath to pay tribute to me, and to do homage to me in future.

In passing through the lobby chamber at the top of the stairs in the Nineveh gallery you may find

the cylinder *suspended on a frame* on which all the above inscription is written. It is called Sennacherib's cylinder, and Sir Henry Rawlinson reads upon it that he inscribed his records in the 16th year of his reign.



CYLINDER OF SENNACHERIB.

The characters on this cylinder appear when magnified as at p. 29 of this volume. They expressed the thoughts of the old Chaldeans, Assyrians, and Per-

sians, ere the commencement of profane history, and only fell into gradual disuse after the time of Alexander's conquests, about 330 B.C.

The heathen annals of Sennacherib have been compiled not only from this which is called the Taylor cylinder, but from large inscriptions *between the limbs* of some Colossal Bulls at Kouyunjik, the upper part of whose figures had been destroyed.

"These bulls," says Mr. Layard, "were all more or less injured. The same convulsion of nature, for I can scarcely attribute it to any human violence, that overthrew these great masses, had shattered some of them into pieces, and scattered the fragments amongst the ruins. Fortunately, however, the lower parts of all, and consequently the inscriptions, had been more or less preserved, and to this fact we owe the recovery of some of the most precious records with which the monuments of the ancient world have rewarded the labours of the antiquary."

These inscriptions may now be seen in the Museum, *on the wall*, behind the great bulls from Khorsabad, at the entrance of the Egyptian Hall. The name of Hezekiah upon them is spelt **Hiskiah**; and the *thirty* talents of gold exacted as his tribute, both according to the Scriptures and the records of this cylinder, is a very wonderful coincidence. (See 2 Kings xviii. 14.)

You will notice that in the book of Isaiah all is not prophecy, there are portions of the most stirring history. In the year 722 B.C. the kingdom of Israel ceases, and Judah subsists alone under Hezekiah. After various predictions against the surrounding nations, Egypt and Assyria, and Tyre and Babylon, the thirty-sixth chapter commences with the fourteenth year of the reign of Hezekiah,

which had been given in 2 Kings xviii., xix., and xxth chapters. Isaiah does not mention the tribute, but describes Rabshakeh's wrath and Hezekiah's prayer.

And it is Isaiah who repeats the wondrous tale of 2 Kings xix. that the angel of the Lord went forth and destroyed the army and smote in the camp of the Assyrians 185,000 men, and in the morning they were all dead corpses.

The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold.
The sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,
Where the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

Like the leaves of the forest when summer is green,
That host with their banners at sunset were seen ;
Like the leaves of the forest when autumn hath blown,
That host on the morrow lay withered and strown.

For the angel of death spread his wings on the blast,
And breathed on the face of the foe as he passed ;
And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill,
And their hearts but once heaved and for ever grew still.

The widows of Asshur are loud in their wail,
And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal ;
For the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord.

It was the word of the Lord by Isaiah, that He would put His "hook in the nose, and His bridle in the lips" of the Ninevite king ; and that He would cause him to fall by the sword in his own land, and then he records its fulfilment.

"So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh. And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword : and they escaped into the land of Armenia : and Esar-haddon his son reigned in his stead." Ch. xxxvii. 37, 38.

had an evil influence over his young son Manasseh, for it is certain that the religious errors of Manasseh were Babylonish, and his punishment came from the same quarter.

The description of Manasseh's idolatries exceeds that of all other forms of vice that Israel had learned from the heathen. He restored all the groves and high places that his father had removed, re-established the worship of Baal, which Jehu had overthrown, and added to the licentious rites of Ashtoreth such awful abominations as made princes and subjects "rulers of Sodom" and "people of Gomorrah." The ark was displaced from its shrine in the temple, and altars for the worship of the host of heaven were set up in its courts. Manasseh dealt with wizards and necromancers, and seduced the people to do more wickedness than the nations whom Jehovah had destroyed before them. Against these awful sins witnessed all the prophets of the time as Isaiah had done, in the visions which foresaw them, but the king tried to silence all remonstrances by the fiercest of persecutions. Manasseh filled Jerusalem with innocent blood. Josephus says that executions took place *every day*. And there is an abiding tradition that Isaiah himself was among the martyrs. He must, however, have been nearly ninety years of age at the accession of Manasseh, therefore it is scarcely probable.

After the death of Isaiah the prophetic voice is hushed till the time of Josiah.

Esarhaddon carries Manasseh captive to Babylon. This king (some of whose bricks have been recently recovered) is otherwise called the great and noble Asnapper who re-colonizes Samaria with settlers from Babylon and other places. Manasseh's captivity marks the beginning of the fall of Judah, and

the Bible mentions it as a very important era. Jer. xv. 1, 4. When God said *as certainly* that He would "cast this people out of his sight, and let them go forth," as He had said to Abraham that He would choose them and give them the land of Canaan, He fixes the date of His Divine resolve from the time and sins of Manasseh, rather than from the fall of Jerusalem afterwards.

To the very king, Manasseh, whose personal sins were specified by God as winding up the doom of his people—to that very king was at last granted repentance, and as it seems "repentance unto life." His evil son Amon succeeded him in a short reign of but two years, and then came Josiah the pious and righteous child-king who rose into manhood as a reformer of all evil, and in the eighteenth year of his reign sent to Hilkiah the high priest for silver to pay the workmen whom he had set to repair the house of the Lord. Josephus says the errand was for *gold* to cast fresh cups and vials for the temple service; and in bringing out the money, whether gold or silver, from its hiding-place, the high priest lighted on the holy books of Moses, long unread, and gave them to Shaphan the scribe to read to the king, to whom they came with all the force of a fresh revelation of the will of God.

"The king having heard that," says Josephus, "sent to Huldah the prophetess (2 Kings xxii. 15), that she might seek to appease the wrath of Jehovah, which the books said was upon the people for their transgressions, lest they should incur the peril of being cast out of their country like the ten tribes."

Huldah was evidently the person most distinguished at that time for prophetic gifts in Jerusalem. Jeremiah was yet at Anathoth unknown to fame, although the word of the Lord began to come to

him in the thirteenth year of Josiah. (See Jer. i. 2.) When the prophetess heard the appeal of the king's messengers, says Josephus, she told them from God that He had *already* passed sentence, and meant to destroy the people and cast them out of their country, a sentence no prayers could reverse, since it had fallen upon them on account of their long transgression of the law, but concerning the young king who sent to enquire, it was added—

“Because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the Lord, I will gather thee unto thy fathers . . . in peace, and thine eyes shall not see all the evil.”

THE BURNT ROLL.

We must now pass on from Josiah, who *found* a part of the word of God when it was lost, to JEHOIAKIM, who dared to *burn* a part of it, in defiance of God and His prophet Jeremiah.

Josiah and Cyrus are the only two persons in Scripture besides our Lord, prophesied of *by name*, long before their birth. You will find the prophecy concerning Josiah in 1 Kings xiii. 2, and its literal fulfilment in 2 Chron. xxxiv. 5.

When he found the roll, he honoured it, and caused the people to “stand to it,” as for thirteen years afterwards they did. With Josiah ended the peace, the prosperity, and the piety of Judah; and the history of that kingdom closes with the reign of Jehoiakim, which lasted eleven evil years. *He was the first person who dared to destroy any part of the written word of God*, and he might therefore well be Judah's last king. The reverence of the Jews in general for their Divine writings was so great, that if, in copying the manuscripts, they made a single error, they would reject the material thus spoiled, and have begun all again. They never permitted

themselves to retouch or erase; and in coming to the name Jehovah, they always wiped their pens and refilled them. When the manuscripts became at all old or injured, they reverently buried them in graves; and this is the reason why there have not hitherto been found any very old Hebrew manuscripts of the Scriptures—none earlier than A.D. 1200.

Jehoiakim felt none of this reverence. He daringly sent his page, Jehudi, to fetch the roll of the prophecy which he heard Jeremiah had written against him, from the scribe's chamber in the temple, and then he also told Jehudi to read it to him.

Jehudi, however, had read but three or four columns, when the king, who sat in his winter house with a fire burning before him, snatching it from the reader, cut it with a penknife, and cast it into the fire.* Two or three of the princes around begged him not to burn it, but he would not hear them. He was then about to seize the writers, Jeremiah and Baruch, but it is said, "the Lord hid them."

For this crime it was decreed by God that Jehoiakim should have none to sit upon the throne of Judah, and that his dead body should be cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost, which was literally fulfilled, as recorded by Josephus in the eighth chapter of his tenth book,—“the body of the king was thrown into the fields without the walls of the city;” “his burial was as the burial of an ass, beyond the gates of Jerusalem;” and then all the wealth of the city, its princes, its mighty men, and many thousands of captives, were carried away into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar, for seventy years, to Babylon.

* See Jeremiah xxxvi. 23.

THE TAKING OF JERUSALEM BY NEBUCHADNEZZAR.

Jehoiakim's son, Jehoiachin, was placed on the throne as a vassal prince, but retained his position only three months, and was then carried captive to Babylon; his uncle Zedekiah, governed eleven years under the same tribute to Babylon, after which, rebelling, Jerusalem was once more besieged, and finally "spoiled" by Nebuchadnezzar. "The virgin marble of the courts ran red with blood like a reeking winepress in the vintage," and the two great pillars of the temple porch—Jachin and Boaz—with the brazen sea and its twelve bulls, were broken up and carried to Babylon; after which the temple and city were set on fire, and the walls levelled with the ground, while Moab and Seir were saying—"Behold, the house of Judah is like unto all the heathen" (Ezek. xxv. 8), and the house of Edom cried also—"Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof" (Ps. cxxxvii. 7, 9.)

THE FALL OF NINEVEH.

And sixteen years before Judah passed into captivity, 588 B.C., she had seen the fall of Nineveh—she knew the prophecies of her inspired Nahum—and she knew how well the prophet's words had been fulfilled.

The "cedar," "whose root was by great waters, whom all the trees of Eden envied," his branches were fallen, his boughs were broken, and it was written—

"All the people of the earth are gone down from his shadow, and have left him." (verse 12.)

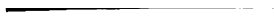
The destruction of Nineveh and the extinction of the empire took place between the time of Zephaniah and that of Ezekiel, about 606 B.C. The city

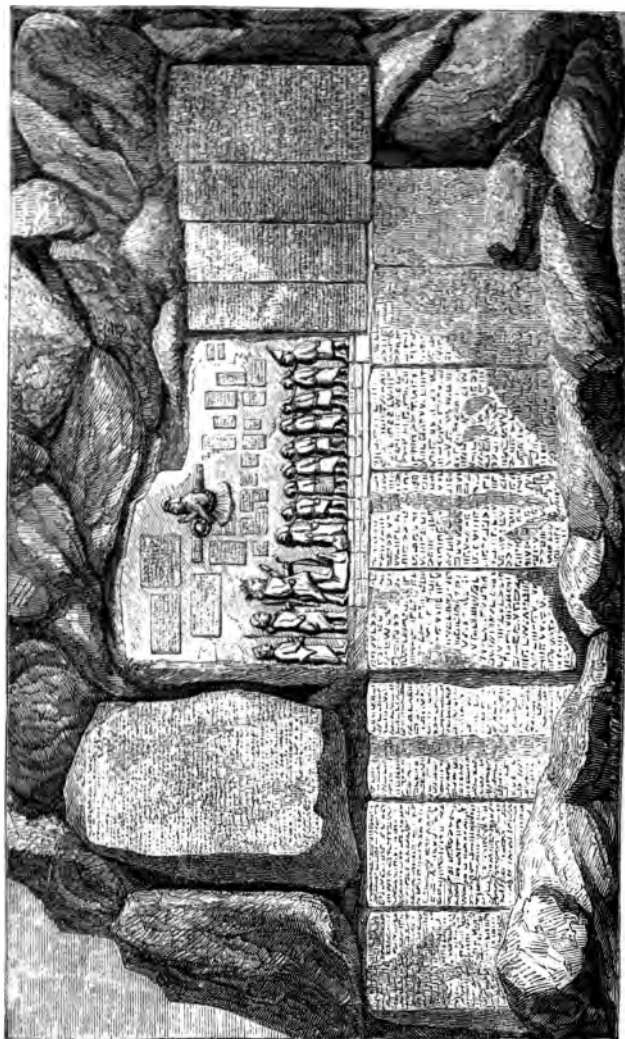
to point them to Jesus Christ the Good Shepherd. We have had letters from Nestorian Bible-women dwelling with their missionary husbands in such lonely glens.

In the interim between this and the Day of Pentecost their race have been the "salt" of the Eastern world during the "dark ages" of Europe. The Tablet of Segnanfoo cries out in witness that they had penetrated with their Bible even to China.

"When the Day of Pentecost was fully come," and the Holy Spirit spake by the disciples in the "own language" of "every nation under heaven" to the foreign dwellers at Jerusalem, *who*, besides the devout Jews, *first* understood the utterance of "the wonderful works of God"? *Who but the Parthians (the modern Kurds or Chaldeans), Medes and Elamites (Assyrians and Persians), and the dwellers in Mesopotamia?* The blood of Israel in their long captivities was mingled with those old nationalities, and only the two tribes had returned to Jerusalem under Ezra. The inspired men of Palestine now took their ancient brethren captive with the truth—the truth that "all the house of Israel might know assuredly that God had made that same Jesus whom Judah had crucified, both Lord and Christ." (Acts ii. 36.)

There seems no reason to doubt that at this era, the era of their baptism and receiving of the gift of the Holy Ghost (see Acts ii. 38, 39), that Chaldean Church of Christ took rise which has ever since called itself the "Beni Israel." At this hour their forlorn remnant is completing its almost 4000 years' history,—the children of Abraham by divine choice, of Abraham who himself was called of God out of Ur of the Chaldees.





THE ROCK OF BEHISTUN.

JEREMIAH AND THE NATIONS.

No. XVII.

It was for her IDOLATRY that Judah lost her land. She rejected God and His word: and since the days of Jehoiakim, she *has never possessed her kingdom* but as the servant of some foreign power. She held it under the Babylonians, the Persians, the Grecians, and the Romans,—the four Gentile kingdoms which the prophet Daniel calls “Beasts,” in his seventh chapter; and even now under the Roman power in its papal form, (the so-called “holy shrines” being scattered over all her mountains,) Jerusalem still abides till the times be fulfilled, when, returning *first* to that Moses and the prophets (Mal. iv. 4) whom Jehoiakim cast aside, she shall forswear the vain traditions with which she has overlaid the Law, and go up once more to build the old wastes, and repair the desolations of many generations; and there, “*at Jerusalem*, the spirit of grace and supplication being poured upon her,” as Zechariah tells us, at chapter xii. 10, “She shall look upon him whom she hath pierced, and mourn;” and “all nations shall call her blessed in her delightful land.” (Mal. iii. 12.) The prophecies foretelling the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar will be found in—

Isa. iii.

Jer. xxv. 9—12; xxvii.

Ezek. xii.

She had worshipped, after the manner of Egypt, creeping things and abominable beasts (Ezek. viii.) even close to the sanctuary of God, therefore He at

last had dealt with her in fury ; and Ezekiel (x. 8), had seen Him depart from off the threshold of the house on the cherubim's wings, "scattering coals of fire" over the devoted city, as He went to return no more in glory in that dispensation.

It is from the three great prophets, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, that we are enabled to learn most about the scenes of the seventy years captivity. The warnings of Jeremiah followed his people on their way, the visions of Ezekiel on the river Chebar assured them that the glory which once filled their temple was not wholly withdrawn from them even as outcasts and exiles, Ezekiel helped them thus to bear their sorrows, and Daniel cheered them on to their partial return into Palestine.

The prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel were directed to write their prophecies in a roll, as well as to utter them in some public place where all might hear. The roll was in many cases affixed to the gate of the temple, where all might read it; and they often accompanied their message by some significant action on their own part. Jeremiah made a yoke and put it on his neck, to foretell the captivity of Babylon. Isaiah walked barefoot, and stripped off his rough prophet's garment, to show what was coming on Egypt.



When the prophecy was not to be fulfilled for ages, they were commanded to seal it up, "it being requisite that the originals," says Mr. Horne, "should be compared with the event when it occurred." It seems to have been a custom for the prophets to deposit their writings in the temple,

and lay them up before the Lord. There is a belief among the Jews that all the sacred books were placed in the side of the ark. We here give you a picture of the cases in which written rolls were generally kept in this age, and long after it.

Isaiah is the chief prophet in the *first*, or Assyrian period of prophecy; and Jeremiah is the chief prophet in the *second*, or Babylonian period. King Hezekiah and probably Isaiah died about 700 B.C.—Jeremiah's long career begins 70 years afterwards, in the reign of Josiah, whom he so greatly loves and tenderly laments.

Jeremiah continues to prophesy until after the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar; it is probable that his inspired warnings extend over a period of more than 50 years. He must have seen the destruction of Nineveh, and it is remarkable that in writing his twenty-fifth chapter, "in the fourth year of the reign of Jehoiakim, when taking the" wine cup of divine fury at the hand of God, and causing all nations to drink of it; "all the kingdoms of the world which are upon the face of the earth" (ver. 26,) Assyria is not mentioned. Hence it is believed that *already*, and perhaps just previously, God had "caused the nations to shake at the sound of its fall," (see Ezekiel xxxi.) "Behold the Assyrian was a cedar in Lebanon." The date of Ezekiel's prophecy is from the year of the destruction of Jerusalem, 588 B.C.; and he goes down into exile to Babylon with his people. Jeremiah remains in Palestine, and is afterwards carried against his will to Egypt, with Baruch, his friend and scribe.

But we must trace his remarkable life from its beginning.

He had a wonderful call to his prophetic ministry,

which we find recorded in his first chapter. Before his birth, like Josiah and Cyrus, the Lord tells him he was sanctified and ordained as "a prophet to the nations," *i.e.*, not only to Israel, but to the other kingdoms of the earth. He was to hand the cup of doom to Judah first. In humble fear at such a summons, Jeremiah says :

"Ah, Lord God ! I cannot speak, I am a child."

But the touch of the Lord is laid upon his mouth, like Isaiah's glowing coal, and his mournful and mixed message is declared to him.

"Whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak.

"I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord.

"See, I have this day set thee over the nations, and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down . . . and to build, and to plant."

Then the prophet sees the vision of the fast budding almond tree, and of the seething-pot, about to overflow, against "all who have burned incense to other gods, and worshipped the works of their own hands," whilst testifying against all such by Divine authority. Jeremiah, the prophet of evil, is to be made a defenced city, an iron pillar, a brazen wall, no body can hurt or hinder him till his message is delivered against kings and princes, people and priests ; morning after morning, year after year, "rising early and speaking," (chap. xxv. 3,) from the time of Jehoiakim to Zedekiah. The doom must be uttered, and uttered daily, leaning on Him who said, "I am with thee to deliver thee."

And it was so.

But who is this child in his own esteem, thus made by the Almighty His messenger ?

Jeremiah is the son of Hilkiah, of the priests that were in Anathoth ; his uncle, Shallum, bears the same name as the husband of Huldah the prophetess.

(2 Kings xxii. 14.) Hanameel was his cousin; he seems to have been in his early youth intimately connected with the persons most remarkable in the religious history of the period. As a boy he would hear among the priests of his native town, not three miles distant from Jerusalem, of the idolatries and cruelties of Manasseh and his son Amon; he would doubtless have studied the writings of Micah and Isaiah, and as he grew towards manhood he would be keenly alive to the work of the reforming king Josiah, and the teaching of the prophetess Huldah, probably his own relative. His friends, Baruch and Seriah, were the grandsons of Maaseiah the governor of Jerusalem. And now came the word of the Lord unto himself, and (at about, it is supposed, the age of twenty) a life-long martyrdom was set before him, a struggle against all the earth. At this time is found the lost portion of the book of the law of the Lord. The king rends his clothes and cannot rest till he has found a prophet to expound its meaning, and it is declared to him by Huldah. (2 Kings xxii. 15.) The secretary, Shaphan, brings her message to Josiah, and the king aloud recites the newly found roll of the law, probably the Book of Deuteronomy, from end to end, to an immense concourse of the people in the court of the temple, while he leans against the pillar at the entrance of the inner court. (2 Kings xi. 14; xxiii. 3.)

And then his reformation began: and he held the great last Passover, and to the utmost of his ability, began to uproot the shrines of the pagan worship on all the surrounding hills. He burned the images and ground them to powder, and executed the priests of the false worship on their own altars, and then arose at the call of God, even a greater than Josiah, this young prophet Jeremiah, to set forth afresh the

code of Sinai, but with a nobler meaning now than in the days of Moses, to shew forth the Love of God, as the chief ground for his dealings with his people, and responsive love to God for the first time is set forth as the true ground of service to Him, and urged upon the nation with the force of Divine appeal.

But it did not reach their hearts: "*too late*" is written upon even this revival. The word *had gone forth* for Manasseh's sake, as Jeremiah tells us (chap. xv.), and the doom had begun. Forty years before had Manasseh been carried captive, and in less than as many years more the Holy City too would be trodden under the foot of the heathen. Zephaniah looks out, the watchman of Jehovah, and declares—

"The day of the Lord is at hand,
The great day of the Lord is near :
A day of clouds and thick darkness :
Against the fenced cities,
Against the lofty towers."

And it came—it came in the death of Josiah, slain by the Egyptian archers in his chariot at Megiddo, and carried to Jerusalem to die, when Jeremiah chants his funeral-song, as pathetic as David's over Jonathan. Every family shut it itself up and mourned apart, as one mourneth for his only son, for the last, the very last, royal hero of Israel. His loss formed the burden of mournful songs even after the captivity.

But it is in the reign of Jehoiakim, placed on the Jewish throne as a puppet of Pharaoh-Necho of Egypt, that Jeremiah comes forth to fulfil his prophetic destiny and testify against that evil king. Here the great struggle of his life begins.

On one of the solemn feast-days, when the temple

was filled with worshippers from all the cities of Judah, Jeremiah appears to predict that Jerusalem shall become a curse. (Jer. xvi. 8.)

"Now it came to pass, when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking all that the Lord had commanded him to speak unto all the people, that the priests and the prophets and all the people took him, saying, 'Thou shalt surely die.'"

Yet for a time he escapes their vengeance, as powerful friends protect him, and as had been promised "the Lord was with him to deliver him:" he is deterred by no terror; he re-writes the roll which Jehoiakim destroyed. As the dangers he prophesied drew near, there was given to this prophet a clearer insight of the purposes of God for His people—he was shown the potter casting away the imperfect vessel, and as we see in his twenty-fifth chapter and twelfth verse, the term of the seventy years' captivity is clearly revealed to him.

But, it is wonderfully given him as it was to the prophet Isaiah, to *see beyond* the gloomy cloud into a glorious future. He is himself put in the stocks, and thrown into a hideous pit in the prison where he sank into the mire; but still "the Lord is with him to deliver him," and he is taken out of it but to reiterate his message and advise surrender to Nebuchadnezzar. He was not carried captive to Babylon, but left with a small remnant of his friends in the Holy Land, which remained even when the Holy City was no more. The new capital was to be at Mizpeh, on the ridge overlooking Jerusalem from the north-east. From these heights Jeremiah may have descended to pour forth his Lamentations, which you find at the end of his prophecy, and of which each chapter is a separate elegy. From this point he could watch the pilgrims flocking in the first

freshness of grief, as *they do still*, to the Jewish wailing-place. (Jer. xli. 6.)



THE PILGRIMS TO JERUSALEM.

Jeremiah was weary of the weak and wayward rule of the unhappy princes that closed the line of Judah; but God gives him to console himself with the thought, that while the ancient covenant is to be done away, there will be a new covenant, a new understanding, between God and man—written in the hearts of those who are brought into union with their Heavenly King.

The Almighty Ruler of nations has unsealed his eyes, and shown him that he stands on the edge of a vast revolution in his part of the globe, *for the old primeval kingdoms which were founded after the Flood were about to be broken up, dissolved,*

and swept away by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, of Babylon, "the hammer of the whole earth"—just such a revolution as if England, France, Spain, Italy, Germany, Austria, and Turkey were to be extinguished by the sudden spread of the Russian empire over the breadth of Europe, amid tremendous conflicts and fearful massacres.

The details of this revolution form the main subject of the writings of Isaiah, Nahum, Amos, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, and Jeremiah. The prophet Daniel foretells the four great empires that were to be founded on the ruins of these earlier monarchies—the BABYLONIAN, the PERSIAN, the GRECIAN, and the ROMAN.

"Not to understand something therefore of this revolution," it has been truly observed, "is not to understand nearly half of the Old Testament Scriptures;" therefore we have endeavoured to lead you by these successive steps through the books of the Bible, and to know a few things that the last fifty years have brought to light concerning them; so that in approaching the revolution of Nebuchadnezzar you may *realize this most stirring tragedy* enacted in past times on the sorrowful earth, and directed by the providence of God.

During the thirty-three years that our Redeemer trod the soil of the ancient East—while, in the depths of His humility "He came to His own, and His own received Him not"—the eye of the All-seeing must surely have beheld the heathen relics piled in darkness beneath the foundations of Arab villages. He remembered His prophet Jonah, and took him for a sign of His own tarrying in the tomb; and He remembered Nineveh and its burial, when He said it should rise in the judgment with the generation to whom He spoke, which could

have been none other than the Jews, His countrymen.

From Palestine, the "strip of country about the size of Wales," which yet was "the high bridge between the Nile and the Euphrates, (see p. 216,) Jeremiah could look down in idea—and in part *actually*—on all the nations to whom he prophesies evil, from his 44th to his 51st chapter. First he writes to the Jews in Egypt, and tells them that the country where they have taken refuge shall not escape: neither shall *they* by their flight. (See ch. xlv. 12.) Nebuchadnezzar shall smite Egypt, "Pharaoh and all that trust in him."

This ancient kingdom was intensely proud. Her king, Pharaoh Hophra, says Herodotus, "had boasted that it was not even in the power of God to dethrone *him*"; and Ezekiel compares him to a great dragon lying in the midst of his streams, and saying, "My river is mine own, and I have made it for myself." (Ezek. xxix. 3.) Nebuchadnezzar caused him to be strangled in his own palace. He made dreadful havoc in the dominions of the Pharaohs. God had put the sword into his hand, and he was to break the images, and burn with fire the houses of the gods, while the Jews, who had gone down to Egypt, and wickedly determined to burn incense to the queen of heaven *there*, were to be consumed in these judgments, till there was an end of them.

From that hour Egypt has been the basest of the kingdoms, and Israel has leant upon it as a staff no more. The prophecies against it are found in—

Isaiah, xix. ; xxx. 1—7. Ezek. xxix. and xxx.
Jer. xlv. Ezek. xxxi. 1—18 ; xxxii.
Joel. iii. 19.

And for their fulfilment, besides the destruction

caused by Nebuchadnezzar, you must likewise refer to the times when the Persian war-cry rang through the crowded streets of Thebes, when Cambyses laid his destroying hand on Karnak and its sculptures, and when Alexander the Great completed the ruin his predecessors had begun.

PHILISTIA.

The 47th chapter of Jeremiah concerns the destruction of the Philistines, the people of the five powerful cities to the south of Palestine—Gaza, Ashdod, Askelon, Gath, and Ekron. Their country, from its situation, held the keys of Egypt, and through its rich plains passed the commerce of Syria and Phœnicia from the North, and the spices of Arabia from the South. The Philistines had ships and traded in slaves with Edom. See the prophets Amos and Joel. Nebuchadnezzar took Gaza and reduced the population to a remnant.

TYRE.

The same 47th chapter of Jeremiah also includes the prophecy concerning Tyre, which is so much enlarged upon by Ezekiel. Tyre, the capital of Phœnicia, to the north of Palestine, on the sea-board—the city on the rock, overlooking the sea—the noblest colony of the sons of Mizraim (Gen. x. 14; Jer. xlvii. 4), reposed beneath the shadow of mount Lebanon. Four years after Nebuchadnezzar had been used to chastise the Jews, he was employed in punishing the sins of Tyre.

Tyre, the merchant-city, was to the old world what London now is to the new. Her glory is described in the 27th chapter of Ezekiel; her fall is prophesied in the 28th. Of Nebuchadnezzar's army during the siege it is said, that by the toils of

thirteen years before its walls every head was made bald, and every shoulder was peeled—a result arising from wearing their armour so long, and carrying burdens to build the high terraces from which they made their attack. Seldom has the deep gathered such a harvest to its treasures as when Tyre fell in the midst of its waters. Its ruined pillars of red and white marble lie scattered along the shore. For the prophecies of the destruction of Tyre, see—

Isaiah xxiii. ; Ezek. xxvi., xxvii., xxviii.

Tyre yielded to Nebuchadnezzar B.C. 571, nineteen years after the prophecies against it. Like all the heathen cities, Tyre was wicked and proud. She had said, “I am perfect in beauty;” and her heart was lifted up because of her beauty.

Her magnificence has been brilliantly described by inspired and modern writers. “Those Phœnicians were the Englishmen of antiquity; yet they spoke a language not unlike the Hebrew, and had an Asiatic aspect. let us imagine these skilful and enterprising merchants, colonizers and brokers, dyers in purple, great ship-builders, vast cultivators of the fine and useful arts, building up for a thousand years a marvellous fabric of wealth and grandeur. Tyre and Sidon are their London and Liverpool; their kings have marble palaces ceiled with cedar; the temples of their gods are plated with gold; the shore is skirted with the noble mansions of their merchant-princes. And behold the Tyrian galleys: benches of box inlaid with ivory, flags of fine linen embroidered in scarlet and blue, and awnings of purple, made them “very glorious in the midst of the seas.”

The Mediterranean is covered by their lofty ships of traffic: three hundred Phœnician colonies—Car-

thage at their head—depend for their supplies on the commerce which the mother-country draws to her ports of the wealth of all the eastern nations. It comes by multitudes of caravans through the deserts from afar. Tyre bears the treasures to Sicily and Italy and Spain, and by Gibraltar to the western shores of Europe; and their adventurous ships even reach Penzance to trade for tin. The jewels of Ceylon and of India are in these markets, the ebony and ivory of Ethiopia, the embroidered robes of Babylon, the sword-blades of Damascus, and blue mantles from the looms of Kedar.

The king of Tyre sits aloft “like a god in the midst of the seas,” and he sees not that through the infinite villanies of his traffic he has incurred the wrath of the King of kings. Tyre and all her fleets are soon to burn like a mountain of cedars in the midst of the waters, and the sceptre of the seas will pass away to other men.

THE CITIES OF BASHAN.

The nations to which Jeremiah was the prophet—and a prophet of evil and curse, of “rooting up” and “pulling down”—lay all round the land of Bashan. Jephthah the Gileadite had dwelt among the mountains of Gilead, on the east of the Jordan. And how early was that fertile soil far-famed for its sovereign balm and spices! Did not the Ishmaelites, who carried away Joseph with them (Gen. xxxvii.), come from Gilead, with their camels bearing balm and myrrh, going down into Egypt?

Bashan was the land that the Lord had blessed.

Look back to the castle of Salcah (p. 61), and survey all eastern Palestine, with the help of the

small map on page 44, in which you will find all the names Jeremiah mentions in his 48th chapter. It is the land of the old stone cities, of which you have the stone door at page 181, and the description in our tenth chapter. Jeremiah utters his prophecies against all these—Moab and Ammon, Bethgamul and Kerioth and Kunuwat; which, while Nineveh, Tyre, and Babylon have passed away and are no more seen, still—YES, STILL, at the end of more than 2000 years—present their glorious massive ruins, the ruins of all intervening ages to the eye of the traveller,—temples, palaces, towers, columns, and tombs rising out of the foliage of the oaks of Bashan; while luxuriant creepers of each modern summer wreath their capitals. A colossal head of Ashteroth, with the crescent moon upon her brow, takes us back at Kunuwat to the Ashteroth Karnaim (meaning two-horned) of Gen. xiv. 5.

We have yet to ascertain the meaning and see the fulfilment of Jeremiah's 31st chapter, where he says,—

“Set thee up waymarks, make thee high heaps: set thine heart toward the highway, even the way which thou wentest: turn again, O virgin of Israel, turn again to these thy cities.

“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of man, and with the seed of beast.

“And it shall come to pass, that like as I have watched over them, to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict; so will I watch over them, to build, and to plant, saith the Lord.”

How many cities in all parts of the world have been founded, destroyed, and founded again, and then a second time swept away, so that the very spot where they stood has long since been forgotten! But here, in this land, are memorials that have been suffered to *remain*, though for centuries hidden from the gaze of man; perhaps, it has been said, “in an-

ticipation of a day when men should begin to doubt the history recorded in Scripture, and when such doubt should increase into utter and wide-spreading infidelity: then, when most required as witnesses for the truth, these old places should be again brought to light by various travellers, to give a mighty though silent testimony to the minute accuracy of the Scriptures, which seventy years ago was neither known nor needed, as, alas! it is at present."

PETRA.

Next in order Jeremiah mentions Edom (chap. xlix.,) of which the southern capital is Petra.

When Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem, the Edomites were almost as numerous as the Jews. Moses tells us (Gen. xxxvi. 1), that Esau is Edom. Esau had hated Jacob, and their children were always at enmity. The Edomites had united with Nebuchadnezzar to besiege Jerusalem, and urged him to raze it even with the ground (Psalm cxxxvii. 7.) The prophecies against Edom are very many, and are a continuation of God's wrath upon Amalek, which became the ascendant race and general name for all the children of Esau. These prophecies are distinct from those against Ishmael, whose children are spoken of as the tribes of Kedar and Nebaioth. On Esau, or Edom, the judgments pronounced are by far the most severe, and on his city, Petra, they were chiefly poured. Spoiler after spoiler ruined it. The people worshipped the sun and moon, and made their houses, palaces, and temples in the rocks and sides of the mountains which surround the valley in which Petra is situated. This wondrous city, with its rock-hewn pillars and statues of exquisite beauty, once the halting-place and mart of all the caravans of the wilderness, fell under the dominion of Jews, Greeks, Romans, and Arabs, till it became what it

now is,—“an utter desolation,” “none passing through it for ever.” For 1200 years its very existence was unknown: it is approached only through a narrow defile of rocks, two miles in length, through which but two horsemen can ride abreast, under festoons of climbing plants and trees. At the end of the defile, Petra, the dead city, bursts upon you, silent and beautiful in its desert tomb. For the prophecies against Edom see—

Jer. xxvii. 3—11; xlix. 7—22; Joel iii. 19.

Ezek. xxv. 12—14; xxxii. 29; Obad. ver. 1, 8, 9.

And that all these things were fulfilled before the time of Malachi, we know from Mal. i. 2, 3.

THE JEWS.

Meanwhile what does Jeremiah say of his own people finally by the word of the Lord? See his fiftieth chapter.

“Israel is a scattered sheep; the lions have driven him away: first the king of Assyria hath devoured him; and last this Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon hath broken his bones.

“Therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will punish the king of Babylon and his land, as I have punished the king of Assyria.

“And I will bring Israel again to his habitation, and he shall feed on Carmel and Bashan, and his soul shall be satisfied upon mount Ephraim and Gilead.

“In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve.”

The two latter verses cannot yet be said to have been fulfilled. We have now brought the people to the point of their exile.

There is a touching picture of the sufferings of Israel in the Subterranean Hall of the British Museum, which certainly seems to give the figures of Jewish priests with the “linen bonnet” which Mr. Holman Hunt, the eminent modern painter of

OUR SAVIOUR IN THE TEMPLE, has often noticed and remarked that he studied his picture from similar living models in Jerusalem. It is said in Exod. xxviii. 40, concerning the sons of Aaron—

“And bonnets shalt thou make for them, for glory and for beauty.”

The edge of this “consecrated” bonnet appears to be jewelled; it is a “goodly bonnet of fine linen” (Exod. xxxix. 28); but the wearer in his



CAPTIVES TAKEN IN SUSIANA.

long robe is so emaciated that he seems nearly starved to death. The contrast between the stout arm of the captors and the thin, shrivelled limbs of the sufferers praying for quarter is indeed a “dumb stone crying out.”

We know, from what is said of Daniel and Ezekiel, that, in the days of their exile, the people were not without their Scriptures. By the rivers of Babylon they sat down and wept; they wept when they remembered Zion.

On their return from their long captivity, and after they had rebuilt their temple, they having forgotten the Law, it was re-delivered to them by Ezra, of whom the Jews always speak as of a second Moses; and they say he lived, like Moses, for 120 years.

This forgetting of the Law, on the part of the people, argues, that the copies of it had been very scarce, and that it had not been publicly read to them all the while they were in Babylon; and yet, even there, Daniel, who wrote in kings' courts, and Ezekiel, on the river Chebar, in solitude, at thirty miles' distance from the city, had been inspired to add to the sacred writings two of the most wonderful of the prophetical books—bearing their own names.

At the appointed time, King Cyrus, having conquered Babylon, (according to the book of Daniel,) and being made to see, by that prophet, the prophecies that God had uttered concerning him, in the days of Hezekiah, as the deliverer of the Jews (Isa. xliv. 8), issued an edict, permitting them to return to Jerusalem.

You will find the history of their return in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah.

Only the "remnant" of the nation returned; many, it seems, preferred staying in Babylon; vast numbers went to Egypt. A hundred thousand earnest men (perhaps scarcely so many, for Ezra speaks of the return only as "giving us a nail in the holy place") sought once more the land of their fathers. The journey occupied four months, and was accomplished in two bodies, or caravans. They still suffered great distress on their arrival, and did not for twenty years begin to rebuild their temple; and when it was completed, the elder Jews, who had seen the holy and beautiful house of Solomon, wept over this second temple in comparison with it,

for, alas! in this temple four things were wanting. There was no ark, no sacred fire on the altar, no answer by Urim and Thummim, no Shekinah or cloud of glory between the cherubim. Still they rejoiced in the re-establishment of the passover and the temple service; and under Nehemiah the city walls were rebuilt on the old foundations.

The republishing of the Law by Ezra did not take place till 80 years after the return of the first caravan of pilgrims from Babylon.

This we must reserve for our next and last chapter.

On the western frontiers of Media, and on the high road from Babylonia to the eastward, a rocky hill rises abruptly from the plain to the height of 1700 feet. It is not an isolated hill, but the face of the end of a range of hills. This hill has always been considered sacred. The Greeks say that a temple of Jupiter once stood upon it. The name Behistun is derived from Bagistane, or "The place of Baga" (*i.e.*, God).

In the year 1837, Colonel Rawlinson, then a young man, happened with his troop to be in the neighbourhood of this ROCK OF BEHISTUN; and his attention was drawn, not for the first time, to the remarkable figures and inscriptions upon it, carved at an elevation of 500 feet from its base. Now he knew that the neighbouring Arabs spoke of these as the sculptures of DARIUS, and he remembered to have heard, when a boy at school, that some scholar in Germany had made out a name in some similar inscription: and this vague remembrance allured him onwards.

He soon observed enough to make out that the writings were in three languages, though in a similar character: a clue to the reason of which was afforded by the fact, that if a governor of Bagdad at the

present day wished to publish an edict for general information, he would be obliged still to employ three languages—the Persian, Turkish, and Arabic. In the ancient age the languages must have been Assyrian, Medean, and Persian.

The grand interest of this rock is, that after twenty years of toil with other learned students Sir Henry Rawlinson is convinced that these inscriptions contain the alphabets which alone unravel all the secrets of the Assyrian marbles.

He pronounces this rock a record made by the Darius Hystaspes mentioned in Ezra vi., and inscribed in the year previous to his ratification of the decree of Cyrus for rebuilding the temple at Jerusalem (521 B.C.)

It therefore comes in course as an illustration to our present period of Jewish history.

The frontispiece of the present chapter is THE ROCK of Behistun, which belongs to the era of Israel's return from the seventy years' captivity.

On this rock is written, according to Sir Henry Rawlinson's readings, what was the extent at that time of the mighty PERSIAN EMPIRE.

"Says Darius the king: I am the ninth of my race. By the grace of Ormuzd I have become king. Ormuzd has granted me the empire.

"Says Darius the king: These are the countries which have fallen into my hands by the grace of Ormuzd,—Persia, Susiana, Babylon, Assyria, Arabia, Egypt, Sparta, Ionia, Armenia, Cappodocia, Parthia, Zarangia, Aria, Chorasamis, Bactria, Sogdiana, the Sacce (Scythians, the Sattagydes, Arachteans, the Mœcians—being twenty-one countries.

"Says Darius the king: These countries have brought tribute to me; that which I have said to them by night and by day they have performed."

The AHASUERUS of the book of Esther is now considered to be XERXES, the son of this DARIUS.

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THE PARTHENON OF ATHENS.

THE PROPHETS OF THE CAPTIVITY, AND THE RETURN OF THE REMNANT.

No. XVIII.

It was only quite towards the close of Jeremiah's lengthened day that Ezekiel received his commission from heaven: and there was a wide difference of character between them. Jeremiah is gentle, calm, and tender in spirit; Ezekiel is full of consuming fire; he was the son of a priest, and was taken captive to Babylon eleven years before the destruction of Jerusalem; he dwelt, with other Jewish exiles, on the Chebar, a stream of Babylonia.

Here God's message first reached him (Ezek. i. 3); although the Jews had a notion that the Divine Presence could not overshadow and inspire a prophet out of the Holy Land. He was called of God in the fifth year of Jehoiachin's captivity.

Ezekiel was priest and prophet among his companions, a precious sign to them that God had not entirely forsaken them; his mission extended over twenty-two years (see chap. xxix. 17), during part of which Daniel was living, and already famous. Ezekiel's prophecies are wonderfully varied. They include instances of visions, chap. viii., xi.; symbolic actions, iv. 1—8; parables, chap. xvii.; proverbs, chap. xii., xviii.; poems, chap. xix.; allegories, chap. xxiii., xxiv. The Jews thought his prophecies obscure, and did not allow them to be read till the age of thirty; yet they placed him in the highest rank of prophets.

His book is divided into two great parts, of which the destruction of Jerusalem is the turning point.

His *first twenty-four* chapters are delivered *before* that event, and the remaining twenty-four after it; and the first thirty-two chapters chiefly deal in correction and reproof, while the rest are full of consolation and promise. There seems a parenthesis in the midst of the book (like Jeremiah's), from the xxv. to the xxxii. chapter, containing a group of prophecies against *seven* heathen nations, Ammon, Moab, and Edom, the Philistines and Phœnicians, also on Egypt and Persia, and in chap. xxxii. we are pointed to their "graves in the sides of the pit."

At Erech (or Warka) in Chaldea, the second city of Nimrod, the daughters of the famous ancient nations took their places alike literally and symbolically "in the sides of the pit," at the fall of their kingdoms. Here the dead were buried for more than 2000 years. Warka was a vast necropolis; all Lower Chaldea abounded in sepulchral cities of immense extent, but Warka seems to have been the most sacred. Sir Henry Rawlinson considers it to have been Ur of the Chaldees. Ezekiel's description is magnificent, and surely applies to it. *It comprises all the sons of Noah; Shem's race are there in his posterity of Elam and Assur; all the children of Ham are there.* Mr. Layard found some Egyptian remains in the Mound of Nimroud which he could not account for. Nor is the line of Japhet wanting, for there are Meshech and Tubal with all their multitudes.

"Asshur is there and all her company; his graves are about him: all of them slain, fallen by the sword;

"There is Elam and all her multitude round about her grave.

"There is Meshech, Tubal, and all her multitude. . . .

"There is Edom, her kings, and all her princes. . . .

"There be the princes of the north, all of them, and all the Zidonians." (Ezek. xxxii. 22—29.)

But the line of Arphaxad were not laid in that grave. In *their* great "valley of dry bones" the

same prophet (Ezek. xxxvii. 2) sees them lie *alone* :—

“Very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were dry.

“And God said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord God, thou knowest.

“Then He said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel; behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost; we are cut off for our parts.

“Therefore prophesy, and say unto them . . . Ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves.”

“Ur,” or “Hur,” (the name found upon its cylinders,) or “Erech” means “the ark city.” Its mounds are found to be composed of coffins, piled in layers of perhaps sixty feet in depth. From the foundation of Warka by Nimrod until it was finally abandoned by the Parthians, a period of probably two thousand five hundred years, it appears to have been a place of graves. The city cannot have been less than fifteen miles in circumference, and an unknown extent of desert beyond the walls is still filled with relics of the dead.

The Parthian coffins are shaped like a slipper. Hundreds are yearly broken up by the Arabs in search of gold and silver ornaments, and they bore through one coffin into another for this purpose. The small antique funeral lamp is often also carried off from vault or trench. One or two of these fragile coffins have, with great



care and pains, been brought to England, and may be seen in the Nineveh galleries of the British Museum.

They are glazed with a rich thick green enamel, and were only removed in safety by papering them within and without.

Into that deep abyss, that grave of nations, Ezekiel sees the giant form of the Assyrian empire hurled with a crash like some aged cedar of Lebanon. (Ezek. xxxi.) Here too, old Egypt, so famous for her august burials, was to descend, not into the deep repose of painted sepulchre, or of massive pyramid, but to be dragged like the dying crocodile of her own rivers (Jer. xlvi.), and cast out with the unclean, blood-stained corpses of uncivilized races—the wild hordes of Northern Asia, into the promiscuous pit, and ere the funeral procession closed, it would include another mighty form.

Jeremiah had turned his prophetic eye to the fall of the all-conquering Babylon itself. Who has not heard of its brazen gates and its 676 squares, its walls and its hanging gardens, where Nebuchadnezzar said, "Is not this great Babylon which I have built?" Who does not remember the hand that wrote in fire on the walls of Belshazzar's palace? and having referred to the prophecies of the fall of this mighty empire in—

Isa. xiii. ; xxi. 9 ; xlviii. 14—20 ; Jer. l. ; li.

—you will be prepared to read the sublime narration of Daniel, who was the eye-witness of all its horrors, in the fifth chapter of his own book.

DANIEL was the fourth of the greater prophets, but of his family and parentage little is known. He appears however to have been of royal or noble descent, and of great personal endowments. He was taken to Babylon in the third year of Jehoia-

chim, and trained for the king's service. Him also God called to be a prophet, and to interpret dreams, which lifted him into the position of "ruler of the whole province of Babylon;" and at the accession of DARIUS he was made first of "three presidents" of the empire. At the accession of CYRUS he still retained his prosperity, and beheld his last recorded vision on the banks of the Tigris.

During the Babylonian captivity, Daniel was inspired to give to the world two pictures of the further events that would occur in the 400 years which were to introduce the kingdom of the Messiah.

The figures which compose his first picture had previously been presented in a dream to the mind of Nebuchadnezzar himself; and Daniel was called upon to declare what the king had seen, and to explain its meaning.

Nebuchadnezzar had seen in his dream an image with a head of gold, its breast of silver, its middle of brass, and its legs of iron, the feet partly iron and partly clay, and he had seen a stone cut out without hands smiting this image on its feet, and breaking the whole fabric to pieces.

This dream Daniel was commissioned thus to explain. He told Nebuchadnezzar that he, the King of Babylon, was himself the head of gold; that after his kingdom should come three other kingdoms, each less glorious than his; and that all four should be destroyed by a greater kingdom than any of them,—the kingdom of the God of Heaven, which should last for ever. You must read the dream and its interpretation in the second and third chapters of the book of Daniel.

The prophet's second picture is contained in his seventh chapter; and it is a picture of the same

four great empires, but now represented under the form of four great beasts, who were also to succeed one another in dominion.

Further visions (in the eighth chapter) informed Daniel that the second kingdom was that of the Medes and Persians, the third that of the Grecians. The fourth empire is not named, but it is fully described, and events proved it to be the mighty power of Rome.

All ancient history confirms the truth of this magnificent prophecy. The Babylonian empire passed away, as we have seen, at the taking of Babylon by Cyrus: the Persian empire fell when Darius was conquered (B.C. 330) by Alexander, who is the leopard of the picture, with four heads; while the Grecian ceded to the Roman power about 150 years before Christ, which then began to eclipse all others, and having conquered Carthage soon became the sovereign of the world.

It principally concerns us to know what became of the Jews during this period. Among themselves the high-priests had the chief power. The sixth in succession from the time of their governor Nehemiah was Simon the Just: his most important work (according to tradition) was the final arrangement of the books of the Old Testament. He added to Ezra's collection the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, and Malachi; and thus completed the canon of Scripture.

We must not forget to realize Ezra's ministry to the remnant that returned from Babylon.

EZRA'S MINISTRY.

Upwards of 50,000 of the people were assembled in Jerusalem, in the square of the water-gate—as many as were assembled in Trafalgar Square, in

London, at the funeral of the late Duke of Wellington.

A surging sea of human faces is always a grand sight. On the day that Ezra preached (and it was early in the morning of the Jewish Sabbath) 50,000 faces were upturned towards the pulpit of wood on which he stood, surrounded by thirteen more preachers on a platform or gallery—six on one side of him, and seven on the other. Thirteen other teachers seem to have been present on another platform, to read by turns, so that all the people might be addressed.

When Ezra ascended the pulpit and opened the roll of the Law, the whole congregation stood up: then he offered prayer and praise to God, the people bowing their heads and worshipping, with their faces to the ground; and at the close of the prayer, with uplifted hands they said, "Amen."

Then, all still standing, Ezra (assisted sometimes by the Levites) read the Law distinctly, gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading: a model of what preaching still should be.

The Law as delivered by Ezra so affected the hearers that they wept exceedingly, and about noon Ezra and Nehemiah thought fit to restrain it. From the great excitement they evinced, it would seem that the reading of their Scriptures in the language they understood (Chaldee) was a new thing to them. In the temple service it had no doubt been read in the sacred language (Hebrew).

On the second day the reading was resumed, they were again instructed in the Law; and they then appear to have arrived at the 31st chapter of Deuteronomy, when Moses commanded the keeping of the Feast of Tabernacles, which they immediately prepared to obey. They gathered, as of old, branches

of palm-trees and willows of the brook, the pine, the myrtle, and the foliage of the Mount of Olives, to make booths ; and there was very great gladness.

Under the shadow of these booths, for the space of seven days, they remembered all the toils of the wilderness ; and day by day Ezra read to them in the books of the Law of God,—probably in *all* the books ; for the Old Testament was now complete, with the exception of the history of the current times. Doubtless the *history* of the nation was read, and they were made to review God's dealings with them ; very likely the *Psalms* were sung relating to the events which David and others had celebrated ; and we cannot but believe that Ezra also pointed to the *Prophets*, and showed the people how minutely many of the words spoken by them had been fulfilled.

They knew that God's revelation was supported by the great pillars of miracle and prophecy ; and at this era the common people under Ezra's teaching must have been taught to feel the strength of both. *They stood in the midst of the circle of doomed countries, on all of which the threats of their sacred writings had been fulfilled, as well as most bitterly upon themselves.*

Nineveh, Tyre, Petra, Thebes, and Babylon as well as Jerusalem, had all been desolated within the space of forty years by Nebuchadnezzar. Judgment had begun at the house of God, as it always does ; and the divided kingdom of Israel had, as we have seen, fallen by the hand of the kings of Nineveh, 730 B.C.

How deeply the lesson of all these vast fulfilments of the Word of God was impressed upon the minds of the returned remnant of Judah, we may judge from the fact, which all history confirms, that they ever afterward felt a profound dread and aversion for all the Pagan idolatries.

Ezra did much to cut off idolatry at its root, by causing them to put away at once their heathen wives. This was a severe and terrible measure, and it grieved him deeply to enforce it (see Ezra ix. 10); but he felt it was essential to their future existence as a nation.

Haggai and Zechariah prophesied during the rebuilding of the Temple at Jerusalem. They urge it on, and exhort the people to repentance; they herald the coming Messiah, the Prince of peace, whose appearance in the second temple was to be its chief glory. Zechariah extends his predictions to the Second Advent, as many of the prophets had been inspired to do before him (see chap. xiv. 1—11), and speaks of it as attended by the conversion of the nations.

Malachi prophecies against fresh corruptions introduced during Nehemiah's absence in Persia. He also predicts the Messiah. His last prophecy concerns the blessedness of those who fear the Lord; and his book closes the canon of the Old Testament Scriptures, 400 years before Christ.

While Nehemiah was governor of Judea the Jewess Esther was raised to the Persian throne; and with her beautiful history the records of the ancient world, as given to us in the Bible, are ended.

When we look back on the whole Story of the Divine Book, we see that it is a history of a *chosen* people taught of God, and chosen to serve Him and Him *alone*—chosen from a larger human family who did not serve the true God, but served their own false memories of Him, and made images of gods to worship from their own vain imaginations. Their natural instinct bade them worship something better than themselves; but “their foolish heart

was darkened," and they set up as gods the symbols of their own worst vices.

These vile examples, as you have seen, God's chosen people, who possessed His Word, yet obstinately and strangely followed, and were in consequence rejected, abhorred, and cast away; *yet not for ever*. They still walk the earth in singular nationality: forgotten or persecuted, massacred or spared, they never die out.

Where is there a nation so old as this nation? With its cradle in remote antiquity, its history has bridged all these centuries; and across this bridge we of modern days alone communicate with ages long gone by. How is this? The Jew folds in his vesture his imperishable Book of the Law and the Prophets given him of God. Those inspired authorities have told his story; and even the science and literature of this advanced era must come to him and his old ancestral records when they would seek to illuminate the lately disinterred remains and monuments of the men that were his foes. Babylon and Assyria and Egypt are gone down into darkness—they have perished, but the Jew remaineth; for with him a faith has succeeded to a kingdom.

The book of Esther in our Scriptures may be looked upon as the link between the history of the scattered nation of the Jews and that of the Greeks, whose capital city ATHENS, forms the illustration to our last chapter. That beautiful daughter of Israel shared the Persian throne of Ahasuerus, who is now considered to be the same with Xerxes, the son of Darius Hystaspes who wrote on the Behistun rock.

Of this Persian king there had been a prophecy recorded in the book of Dan. xi. 2. It was uttered in the third year of Cyrus. (See Dan. x. 1.)

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“And now will I shew thee the truth. Behold, there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia; and the fourth shall be far richer than they all: and by his strength through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia.”

The three kings that stood up after Cyrus were Cambyses, Smerdis the Magian, and Darius of the rock inscription. Xerxes the son of the last, was the fourth king mentioned, and his invasion of Greece is the chief event of his reign. It was he “who stirred up all by his riches” against Greece.

Besides the Persians, superbly clad, with lances knobbed with gold and silver, he had in his army Ethiopians clothed in lion skins, Indians in cotton, wandering Scythians, and wild hunters, Medes and Bactrians, Lybians and Arabians.

When he reached the shore of the Hellespont he ascended a lofty marble throne and beheld at one view his fleet and army. At first the show delighted him, but he soon burst into tears, and when asked why—“Because,” said he, “before the end of a hundred years all this vast multitude will have passed away.”

After fierce battles and many losses, Xerxes did succeed in burning Athens—Athens, whose language and its poet Homer, could win the world’s ear from then till now—but the Persian king did not conquer Greece.

As the empire of Judah sank below the horizon of nations, the Greek empire had risen; and ere the Son of God appeared upon the earth, according to the word of the prophets, the dominion of each of the four “beasts” of Daniel had been established; each for its “season and time,” BABYLON, PERSIA, GREECE and ROME, had in turn succeeded each other, and even for the scattered Jews at Alexandria, it was found desirable to translate for the first time their ancient holy books: THE OLD TESTAMENT (as we call it) from Hebrew into Greek, the language of

Athens, in which the **NEW TESTAMENT** was written from the first. Thus the Word of God was *first* given to the Gentile world, whose "times" had been said to commence from the rise of the Babylonian power—Daniel's "head of gold."

Our British city of Edinburgh is called the "modern Athens" from some likeness in its site to that classic city. A magnificent rocky eminence in the centre of each, crowned with grand edifices, commands the surrounding country. Both cities are beside the sea. We shall have more to tell of Athens in the days of Paul. It was then the world's university of learning, but it reached *its* greatest splendour and power fifty years after its burning by Xerxes. It was then called **THE CITY** of all Greece.

And here we will part with our readers till we resume the Story of the Book as contained in the New Testament, and as it has gradually spread through the world.

The **VERBAL CHRONOLOGY** of the **OLD TESTAMENT** is not difficult to remember in a few great periods.

See p. 4—The World before the Flood	^{YEARS.} 1656	
„ p. 5—After the Flood to Israel's Exodus when Moses was 80 years old ...	857	
„ p. 225—From the Exodus to the Foundation of Solomon's Temple, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign...	480	
From the Foundation of Solomon's Temple to Birth of Christ	1011	by common
	4004	consent.

On the 1st of January, 1869, will be resumed the issue of the **NEW TESTAMENT** Series of **TRACTS** and the Story of the circulation of Holy Scripture through the world—which together will form the entirely new edition of "**THE BOOK AND ITS STORY.**"

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ERRATA.

Page 217, erase "Balaam the son of Beor had been slain in this war." (Josh. xiii. 22.)

Page 203, For "The giants Sihon and Og," read "king Sihon and the giant Og."

