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S.H. 1028

THE

TIMES OF THE GENTILES.

BY

THE REV. HUGH M^c NEILE,

RECTOR OF ALBURY, SURREY,

AND CHAPLAIN TO HIS GRACE THE ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN.

“Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.”—St. LUKE.

“The harvest is the end of this dispensation. (*συντελεια του αιωνος.*) As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this dispensation.”—St. MATTHEW.

“Yourselves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction shall come upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness that *that day* should overtake you as a thief.”—St. PAUL.



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DEDICATION.

TO

HENRY DRUMMOND, ESQ.

My dear friend and brother in the Lord,

I THINK myself happy in the opportunity of presenting this discourse to you, and under your auspices, to the church of our Lord and Saviour.

1. Because it is a personal gratification to myself to bear a public testimony to my warm affection for you, a gratification, of which I must not be deprived, either by false delicacy, or any fear of being misunderstood or misrepresented. My affection towards you is associated with the noblest enjoyments of this world, and the brightest

hopes of the world to come; and while I meditate on the subject of the discourse now presented to you, I retrace those hours of affectionate and friendly intercourse, when the high and holy themes of our common faith occupied our attention, and cemented our mutual attachment.

2. Because I rejoice thus to express the gratitude which I, in common with many others, feel towards you, for the services which you have rendered to the cause we have at heart; as well as for the affectionate kindness and unwearied hospitality with which you have cheered us, while searching into the mind of the Spirit concerning things to come.

3. Because, that in connexion with the subject of this discourse, you are evil spoken of, by those who love expediency better than truth, and court the popularity of a fashionable (because worldly-wise) religion, rather than the honour which cometh from God only. Yes, you are evil spoken of, and that falsely, as I have been able frequently to prove in

private, by those who have neither moral courage nor divine faith to act simply upon principle, "uncaring consequences," but are continually speculating upon probable effects as their rule of duty. In this I have in some degree shared your reproach; and I earnestly pray to God to grant unto us, that while on the one side we never either act or speak for the purpose of offending men; we may, on the other side, never for a moment be deterred by the fear of offending, from pressing forward in the direct and plain, though narrow path of revealed principle.

4. Especially because I know that you are well acquainted with the Scriptures of God concerning the "Times of the Gentiles," and are also a diligent student of all that is revealed concerning the approaching advent and glory of the King of the Jews. My brother, "believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest." Wherefore I beseech you to examine what I have written, with the holy severity of a mature and dis-

passionate judgment in the light of the infallible word of God. To interpret Scripture truly is our object, and not to defend any human scheme ingeniously ; and I trust I may venture to say, in the words of a much valued friend of ours, that any opinions which we have formed on these momentous topics, “ will be as readily retracted, as they are conscientiously entertained ; as far and as soon, as they shall be proved to be either defective or redundant, according to the standard and balance of the sanctuary.” *

Believe me,

My very dear friend,

Your's always,

With faithful affection,

HUGH M^c NEILE.

* See Preface to Palingenesia.

*Albury Rectory,
May 26th, 1828.*

P R E F A C E.

THE following pages contain the substance of a Sermon which was preached some months ago in the parish church of St. Clement Danes, in the Strand; and again on Monday the 12th instant, at St. John's chapel, Bedford-row. In its original form, this discourse composed one of a connected series on the prophetic scriptures; and the Author had no intention of publishing it, until he could command time for the correction and arrangement of the whole series.

Impressed with the exceeding importance of the subject discussed in it, rendered more urgent by the existing circumstances, and generally received expectations of the Christian church; he very gladly availed himself of an opportu-

nity to preach it a second time in the presence of many of his most intelligent and cultivated brethren.

Various circumstances which have occurred since, but which it is not necessary to make public, determine him upon sending these few pages to the press in a separate form, without however relinquishing his intention of printing them in the connexion in which they were originally composed.

He is aware, that to the student of prophecy, there is nothing in this pamphlet but what is perfectly elementary; but he is of opinion, that an elementary treatise on this subject is still a desideratum to the church

THE
TIMES OF THE GENTILES,

&c. &c.

It is written, that "there is a time for every purpose under heaven," Eccles. iii. 1—8. And as in the affairs of men here enumerated, so also in the great purpose of God, there is a time for the accomplishment of each part. In each of these times, the Lord gives out, or dispenses a portion of his eternal design. Hence a dispensation of religion may be thus defined. A revelation of some part or parts of the divine will to his creatures, accompanied by the performance of some corresponding part or parts of the Divine plan.

It will not be denied, that from the beginning, or ever the mountains were brought

forth, Jehovah had a plan in view, concerning this world: not its commencement merely, but its continuance also, and its termination; according as it is written, "Known unto God are all his works from the foundation of the world." A part of this plan was, that at some particular period, known only unto himself and kept in his own power, all the families of the earth should be blessed with the true and saving knowledge of God—the great enemy of God and man being bruised under the seed of the woman. This we know, by referring to the promises made to Adam and Abraham, as recorded in the book of Genesis. Our attention is then directed to the manner in which it has pleased God to proceed towards the accomplishment of this his gracious purpose.

He did not make Eve the mother of the promised seed of the woman, and so destroy the serpent at once, and make a short work upon the earth.—No! the promise was given; but the performance of the thing promised, was delayed. Meanwhile, however, some few of the families of the earth were blessed: they believed the promise; through faith they became interested in the benefit of its yet future accomplishment, and being influenced by the blessing "they walked with God:" but the

bulk of the inhabitants of the earth, were still under the curse, led captives by the devil at his will, and working uncleanness with greediness. This state of things continued a considerable time, till the iniquity of man abounding in the earth, so moved Almighty God to anger, that he destroyed the guilty race, saving only the small family of his servant Noah. At that time, the promise to Adam, instead of being fulfilled, or in apparently progressive fulfilment, seemed to be forgotten: nay more, it seemed to be contradicted. But God's ways are not as our ways; neither is God's mode of proceeding to be judged of by what seems suitable to us.

Again, when God called Abraham, and told him, that in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed, he did not make Sarah the mother of the promised seed. Here, as before, the promise was given—but the performance delayed. In the meantime, God separated to himself a people—a peculiar nation—and gave them in types and prophecies more and more clear instruction respecting the execution of his plan. Some believed; through faith, they became interested in the benefit of the yet future accomplishment of the promise; and influenced by the same faith, they too “walked with God:”

but the bulk of even that favoured nation, and all the rest of mankind, were still under the curse. This state of things continued a considerable time, till the abounding iniquity of that nation so moved Almighty God to anger, that he cut them off from all their privileges; destroyed their temple and city; and dispersed them in disgrace and degradation, among the heathen. At that time the promise to Abraham, instead of being fulfilled, or even in apparently progressive fulfilment, seemed to be forgotten; for the families of the earth, instead of being blessed, were still under the wrath and curse of God. But God's ways are not as our ways.

The promised seed was now indeed come: but so unlike what had been expected—so unlike the powerful One, who could bruise the serpent's head, and bless all the families upon the earth, that few, very few, recognized him as the seed: few, therefore, derived any benefit from his coming; the nation rejected him; and thus the accomplishment of the promise made to Abraham was partly brought to pass, and partly delayed. The seed was come: the families of the earth were not blessed in him.

Then it was, that in the wisdom of God,

true religion was extended to other people and nations. Another portion of the Divine plan was dispensed. Another dispensation was introduced. The glad tidings of salvation by the long predicted seed of the woman, were preached to the Greeks and Romans, and other heathen nations, that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles through Jesus Christ: and then it seemed as though the whole of the great promises made to Adam and Abraham, and repeated by all the prophets, were about to be fulfilled: the head of the serpent bruised; all the families of the earth blessed; and the whole world covered with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea!

But experience should teach us, that God's mode of proceeding is not to be judged of by what seems right to us. We see that the antediluvian dispensation held out a prospect of the glorious promise of universal blessedness being fulfilled, the serpent's head being bruised. (Some of our most learned critical commentators have given it as their opinion, from the language used by Eve when Cain was born, that she thought she had gotten the man, the Lord, who was to be the deliverer.) They were right in expecting this—but wrong as to the time.

Their dispensation fell short of the accomplishment. We see that the patriarchal and Levitical dispensations held out with increasing clearness, a prospect of the great promise being fulfilled. They were right in expecting it—but wrong as to the time. Their dispensation fell short of it. Now we see this dispensation holding out a still more animating prospect of the final promise being fulfilled. We are right in expecting it—but we may be wrong as to the time. Our dispensation may fall short of the glorious consummation; and another change may take place, similar to the destruction of the old world—similar to the rejection of the Jews.

This is possible, to say no more: and whether it will really be the case or not, deserves at least a fair enquiry. Is this dispensation under which we are living, the final dispensation, which will issue in the full performance of the divine plan of mercy to the whole world? or, is it another introductory dispensation, such as those which have preceded it?

The more common opinion is, that this is the final dispensation; and that, by a more copious outpouring of the Holy Spirit, it will magnify itself, and swell into the universal blessedness predicted by the prophets, carrying with it

Jews and Gentiles, even the whole world, in one glorious flock, under one shepherd, Jesus Christ the Lord. This is reiterated from pulpit, press, and platform. It is the usual climax of missionary exhortation, or rather missionary prophecy.

On the supposition that this is the truth, it must be admitted, that the accomplishment of the promise has advanced, and is still advancing, very slowly; and that even now in the nineteenth century of its working, comparatively little has been done; for, although Christianity established itself on the downfall of the most cultivated Paganism, with sufficient rapidity to convince every candid mind, that it was from God: yet in reference to the great promise affecting the whole world, its progress has hitherto been slow indeed. This, however, would of itself be no argument against our dispensation being the final one; because slowness in the eye of man, is not necessarily slowness in the proceedings of God.

But supposing this to be the final dispensation, the dawn of the day of universal blessedness, we might expect to find the light, though slow, yet progressive. Now it must in fairness be admitted, that the history of the Church of Christ does not answer to this expectation. Christianity has not been holding her ground in

the world while she advanced to further conquests. Her course resembles the emigrations of a pilgrim, rather than the triumphant establishments of a conqueror. From many places, where once she presided in her beauty, she has departed without leaving even her name behind her: from others all that was valuable about her is gone, and only a name remains. For look along her wake! Where is the apostolical church of Jerusalem over which James presided in the sober dignity of inspired wisdom? Gone! The holy city is trodden down of the Gentiles. The crescent of the false prophet of Arabia waves over its walls. Where are the churches of Ephesus, of Smyrna, of Pergamos, of Thyatira, of Sardis, of Philadelphia, of Laodicea, to whom the Spirit spake by the beloved disciple? Gone! all gone! The name of Christian is indeed retained in some of those districts, but it is an empty name. Where are the churches of Carthage and Hippo Regius? Gone! The voices of Cyprian and Augustin find no kindred spirit to prolong their echos on the shores of north-eastern Africa: even the very name of Jesus has been eradicated from the barbarous soil. Where is the fair daughter of heaven, who appearing in the hired lodging of Saul of Tarsus, and making her way into Cæsar's household, shone so long with simple beauty in imperial

Rome? She retains indeed the name of Christian, and usurps the name of Catholic; but, alas! how grievously is she defiled by the fornication of the kings of the earth! her native purity is gone, and abomination, yea, Mother of Abominations is written upon her forehead. Where are the churches of Wittemburg and Geneva, those lights from the Lord which burst upon the darkness of Europe by the instrumentality of Luther and Calvin? Gone! Reasoning infidelity, under various well-sounding names, presides over the fountains of instruction, poisoning the streams, while darkness has again covered the land, and gross darkness the people. In our own favoured country what has been the progress of Christianity? Thanks be unto God, the candlestick has not been removed from the churches established in these islands. We have and hold in our articles of faith a true scriptural creed: but it is painful to ask and answer the question, has true scriptural religion increased among us? For omitting that portion of our population which is infidel in creed, or openly ungodly in practice, or both, (a portion of fearful magnitude,) and confining our observation to the more regular, formal, and apparently Christian members of our community, what shall we say? Information has indeed increased

an hundredfold. Education has spread her benign embrace around the length and breadth of our land. Decency and order and harmony and peace delightfully prevail. But need you be reminded, brethren, that all these things may be where true scriptural religion is not? that the gospel by its collateral effects may civilize and reform and polish a whole community, while it directly evangelizes and saves only a very small remnant? that (to use the language of Luther) it may produce Reguluses and Fabriciuses, upright and righteous men according to man's judgment, and yet have nothing in it of the nature of genuine righteousness before God? And is it not true at this moment in this city and in this kingdom, that the prevailing tone of Christianity has so subsided into a goodnatured quietness, a plausible profession of individual humility slyly praising itself, while at the same time it affects too much diffidence to find fault with any other; and an indiscriminate charity, which kindly implies that all creeds are equally safe at last? I repeat, is not the prevailing tone of Christianity in this country so infected with the atmosphere of this fashionable liberality, that any thing approaching the spirit, and fire, and zeal, and faith of primitive piety, is denounced as fanaticism, as

unholy because unhumbled impetuosity, or at least shrunk from and shunned as enthusiasm, needlessly offensive, and therefore exceedingly injudicious? And is not this the secret of the great apparent increase of religion among us? The church has relaxed in both her doctrine and practice. She occupies a lower and broader platform than is meet; and having laid aside, as ultra and unnecessary, much of what is forbidding to the carnal mind, she has enticed multitudes to join hands with her, whose hearts are not right with her Lord, and who would never have made a show of joining her, had she adhered to the faithfulness of her Lord's truth, and the holiness of her Lord's example. It is not so much that genuine Christianity has increased, as that a spurious mixture, diluted down to the palate of the world, is passing current for the true.

But granting the full extent of what some contend for, as to the increase of true religion in England, yet still it cannot be maintained that Christianity has been progressive, acquiring and retaining influence over the families of the earth. And in reference to the promise of universal blessedness, the fulfilment of which is anticipated under this dispensation; it is worthy

of remark, that the inspired description of what all the families of mankind shall be, is not yet applicable (neither has it ever been) to even one single family in the most favoured city or village of Christendom: so that in order to complete the glorious work, the success of our dispensation must not only be enlarged in degree, but also become different in kind.

I do not say that these considerations contain a proof of this dispensation not being the final one: but I certainly think that they are at least calculated to excite in unprejudiced minds a suspicion that it may not: and that when compared with the histories of former dispensations, they supply strong presumptive evidence that it will not. At least they should prevent any intelligent man from rejecting *à priori* and without examination, the opinion that it will not.

What say the scriptures then

- I. *As to the design of this dispensation?*
- II. *As to the termination of it?*

I. When the gospel light made progress among the Gentiles by means of the preaching of Paul and Barnabas; that is, at the commencement of this dispensation, and when a

controversy arose at Antioch respecting the circumcision of the Gentile converts, a council of the apostolical church was called together at Jerusalem, to consider and determine the point in dispute. In that council Peter referred to the special revelation by which he had been led some time before to go and preach in the house of Cornelius the Gentile centurion ; upon which James made the following remarkable comment : “ Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for his name,” Acts xv. 14. Now if we believe (as we profess to do) that this is not merely the opinion of the apostle, but that he spake these words as he was moved by the Holy Ghost, then we have here a distinct declaration of God himself that the design of this dispensation is to take and save a people *out of* the Gentiles, which is certainly a very different thing from converting and blessing all the families of the earth. On this point, proofs may be multiplied from the experience, the number, and the character of the real disciples of Jesus Christ, as largely described in the New Testament.

Concerning the experience of true believers under this dispensation we read, 2 Tim. iii. 12, “ All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall

suffer persecution;" Matt. v. 11, "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake;" also John xv. 19, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own, but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you;" Luke xii. 51—53, "Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you nay, but rather division: for from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother-in-law against the daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against the mother-in-law;" Matt. x. 36, "And a man's foes shall be they of his own household."

Concerning the number of true believers we read, Matt. xxii. 14, "Many are called but few are chosen," Matt. vii. 13, 14, 21, 22, 23, "Enter ye in at the strait gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and

few there be that find it. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you, depart from me ye that work iniquity."

Concerning the characters of true believers, we read, 1 John ii. 15, "Love not the world, neither the things of the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him;" James iv. 4, "The friendship of the world is enmity with God, whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world, he is the enemy of God;" 2 Cor. vi. 7, "Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord. And I beseech you by the mercies of God," saith the apostle, "that ye be not conformed to this world." Rom. xii. 1, 2.

These passages of scripture avowedly belong to this dispensation. They have applied in every age, and do still apply to the true disciples of the Lord Jesus. On the supposition that we have rightly interpreted the language of James at the council of Jerusalem, and that

the design of this dispensation is *to take* a people *out* of the Gentiles, these scriptures will continue to apply till the end of this dispensation: but on the supposition that the dispensation is to enlarge itself, by degrees, into the universal blessedness predicted by the prophets; then these scriptures will not continue to apply; and who is to determine at what point of the progress they cease to be applicable? If the world become Christian, the world will no longer persecute Christians. If all the families of the earth be blessed with eternal life, the way of life will be no longer narrow. If the world become Christian, then Christians cannot separate from the world. It is obvious that in the passage from our present state to a state of universal holiness, these characteristic sayings of the New Testament must cease to have any application, and become obsolete, not to say false: and again, I ask, who is to determine at what point of the progress they cease to apply? If it be answered, when the more favourable circumstances of the church cease to require them, the question recurs, who is to judge of those circumstances? Some persons in this country think that already true religion is not thus exposed to hatred and enmity, but only extravagance and enthusiasm,

provoking a cross for themselves : while others consider such an opinion as a proof that those who hold it are themselves ignorant of what true religion is. We maintain, therefore, that as the statutes of the book of Leviticus continued binding until another plain and direct communication from the God who gave them showed that they were superseded, and a better order of things introduced ; so these scriptures, describing the experience, the number, and the character of the Lord's people under this dispensation, must continue applicable till another plain and direct communication from him who gave them shall show that they are superseded, and a still better order of things introduced. This communication is what is so frequently called in scripture, " the coming of the Lord," " the coming of the Son of Man," " the appearing of Jesus Christ," and, consequently, we conclude, that we have no reason to expect, until the coming of the Lord, any such change in the aspect of the church, as would falsify or nullify these statements of the New Testament.

But, then, let us not be misunderstood. While we thus declare our conviction that the present dispensation is for an elect church only, we do not for a moment imagine that God's final purposes of mercy towards the world are

to be limited to this election. Far otherwise— To suppose that because this dispensation is for the salvation of a remnant, therefore, there will be no subsequent and wider salvation, would be as absurd as it would have been for an ancient Jew to suppose, that because his dispensation was for a particular people, therefore, no other people could have true religion extended to them. No, my brethren, we joyfully maintain, that the saving mercy of God in Christ Jesus will eventually extend over the length and breadth of the whole world; and be experienced in the circle of every family then on the earth. We maintain, that the sacrifice of the death of Christ is a sufficient, and will eventually prove, an efficacious atonement for the sins of the then population of the whole world; we say the *then* population of the world: for we utterly reject the ensnaring heresy of the universalists, which seems to be Satan's gilded bait to allure and destroy by unsanctified benevolence. And this seems to throw light upon the controverted question of the extent of redemption. The most strenuous advocates for universal redemption do not pretend to say, that as a matter of fact, there has ever yet been any one period when all the inhabitants of the earth were actually saved: and the sub-

ject now before us, while it makes the doctrine of this dispensation correspond with the history of the church, provides at the same time for a universal dispensation; called by the Apostle, "the dispensation of the fulness of times," Eph. i. 10. in which the largest descriptions of the efficacy of the atonement shall be fully verified.

Our judgment, therefore, is (and, we think, not without evidence, yea, not without proof) that the design of the present dispensation is not the conversion of the Gentile world, but the calling of an elect people out of the Gentiles to the knowledge of God and salvation by Jesus Christ. In confirmation of this view, I revert to what has been already stated, and observe, that if this be the design of the dispensation, then we see the progressive accomplishment of that design in the history of the church.

Another design of this dispensation is revealed to us, by comparing Deut. xxxii. 21 with Rom. x. 19 and xi. 11. "They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God, they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation." Rom. x. 19, "But I say, Did not Israel know?

First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you." xi. 11, "I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles for to provoke them (the Jews) to jealousy." From hence, we learn, not only that extending the blessings of the gospel to the Gentiles, would, in the first place, excite the anger, and jealousy, and enmity of the Jews; but, also, that eventually the Jews being recovered from their stupidity and carelessness about the things of God, and perceiving the Gentiles to be in possession of the riches of the Messiah, would be moved to a holy emulation, that they might not be surpassed in the service of Jehovah by any people.

To this agree the words of our Lord: "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled;" by which it is clearly implied, that when the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled, Jerusalem shall not be trodden down any longer. And it is equally clear, that until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled, all attempts to raise up Jerusalem as a nation must fail. We say, *as a nation*, because individuals may be raised up,

and Christians may be, as they have been, the favoured instruments of doing what the apostle to the Gentiles laboured and prayed for, that is, of saving some.

Thus, as during the times of the Jews, "all were not Israel who were of Israel:" the whole nation being called, but only a remnant really chosen and saved; so now, during the times of the Gentiles, all are not Christian who are of Christendom: all are called, but only a few are chosen and saved. The way of life is narrow. And in hope of a universal salvation, we are waiting for the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who will bruise the serpent's head, restore the Jews, and cause the whole Gentile world to flow together to the glory of the Lord, as manifested in the church of Israel. This harmonizes the scriptures, and provides for the rich abounding mercy of Jehovah to the world in due time, without attempting to mar the symmetry of the gospel, by arguing for the salvability of the heathen nations during this dispensation. God concluded the Jews in unbelief saving a remnant. He will conclude Christendom in unbelief saving a remnant. And when he hath concluded all in unbelief, and secured to himself for ever the acknowledgment of

every creature, that salvation is of grace, then he will have mercy upon all! “O! the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out.”—Rom. xi. *passim*.

These then, we conceive, are the designs of the present dispensation—1. To take a people out of the Gentiles. 2. To provoke the Jews to jealousy—so making way for the restoration and conversion of the Jewish nation, and the happiness of the whole heathen world.

II. With respect to the termination of the times of the Gentiles, it may be considered either as to its nature, or as to its date.

The nature of it will be to all Christendom, what every day of it is to some individuals in Christendom, that is, a separation, everlasting salvation to some, the damnation of hell to others. Of this most important and alarming statement, we have, what appears to me, direct and satisfactory proof in the ancient prophecies, in the parables of our Lord, and in the apostolical epistles.

In the ancient prophecies.—The chief enemies of the Jewish nation, during the times of the Jews, were Edom and Babylon. Edom, who

shook off the yoke of Jacob according to the prophecy of Isaac, and Babylon, who held Judah in a seventy years captivity. It is the general opinion of the Christian church, that the Jewish nation was a type of the true spiritual church of Christ, whence the application so constantly made of the Old Testament promises, to what is called the spiritual Israel of God. Upon the same principle, we maintain, that the enemies of the Jewish nation were types of the enemies of the church of Christ, and make a similar application of the Old Testament denunciations of wrath against what we call the spiritual or mystical Babylon, or Edom, or Moab. The circumstances of the times in which the prophets lived, supplied a language, in the use of which, as applicable to those times and circumstances, the Holy Ghost overruled the mouths of the prophets to speak of greater things than those. Thus, in the opening of the sixty-third chapter of Isaiah, the language is swelled far beyond the description of any literal victory which the Jews ever gained, under any of their leaders, over Edom or Babylon.

“ Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this, that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength?—I, that speak in righteousness,

mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat?—I have trodden the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with me: for, I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury, and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment; for the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.” This passage is usually applied to our Lord Jesus Christ, at his first coming to make an atonement for sin; but will the language bear such an application? At that time, our Lord shed his own blood only; here he is described as stained with the blood of his enemies. At that time, he manifested his loving kindness and tender mercy towards his enemies, making intercession for them even in the agonies of death. Here, he is described as treading them down in his anger, and trampling them in his fury. At that time, peace, and love, and free forgiveness, were in his heart towards the vilest of sinners, evidenced in his reception of the expiring thief; here he is described as having the day of vengeance in his heart. When, therefore, it is maintained that for their blood we should read his blood, that for anger and fury, we should read loving-kind-

ness and tender mercy, and that for vengeance, we should read free forgiveness, and undeserved love—then, it may also be maintained, that the passage before us applies to the first coming of our Lord in his humiliation unto death. But, until these errata, in the language of Isaiah, shall be pointed out on sufficient authority to alter the text, we must espouse the contrary opinion, and maintain, that the passage before us applies to a very different coming of our Lord, at a period predicted by himself, when he shall say concerning those enemies of his, who would not have him to reign over them, “bring them forth, and slay them before me.” Luke xix. 15—27.

Thus also, in Jeremiah l. and li. throughout, the great idolatrous apostasy of the times of the Gentiles, is denounced by the same name of Babylon, and with the same details of vengeance which are afterwards reiterated by the apostle John, long after the literal Babylon had ceased to exist: compare Rev. xviii. with Jer. l. and li. On this theme of dreadful judgments to be inflicted upon the enemies of the people of God, at the close of this dispensation, when the Jewish nation shall be restored, and the saints gloriously saved, the prophets are peculiarly full and explicit. Nothing, indeed, can be more

clear, than that the times of the Gentiles will end in a great separation. We have further proof—

In the parables of our Lord. In the parable of the Tares and the Wheat, which is written and expounded in Matt. xiii, Jesus describes the mixture of the children of the kingdom, and the children of the wicked one, as continuing all along till the harvest; which harvest is expounded to mean the end, not of the material world *του κοσμου*, but of this dispensation or age, *του αιωνος τουτου*, and then the separation—the tares bound in bundles to be burned, and the wheat gathered into the barn.

In like manner, in the parable of the net that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind; which, when it was full, they drew to the shore, and sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away: so shall it be at the end of the world, (here again the expression is *αιωνος*, the age, or dispensation,) the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

So also in the parable of the ten Virgins, we find a separation at the end of the dispensation, or in other words, at the coming of the Son of

Man. “Five of them were wise, and five were foolish;” “they all slumbered and slept;” “the bridegroom came; the wise went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut.” “Afterwards, came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us; but he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.” This is even more alarming than the former, because this applies to the state of the professing church in Christendom, as distinguished from the nations generally, and it shows us that the true remnant, who enter into the joy of their Lord, will fall short not only of the world commonly so called, but also of the seemingly religious world.

My brethren, take heed unto yourselves; in Jesus Christ there is salvation for you; and no where else: his blood cleanseth from all sin, and nothing else can cleanse from any sin: his righteousness justifieth from all things, and nothing else can justify from any thing; he is a complete Saviour, and there is no Saviour but he; a just God and a Saviour there is none else. Depend on him, venture on him, yea, venture wholly without hesitation or reserve, counting all your own best righteousness but as dross and dung, that you may win Jesus Christ, and be found in Jesus Christ. And

now, brethren, I say unto you, "Watch, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."

Here it is objected, that the parable of the Leaven gives a different view of this subject; and represents the assimilating process of the gospel as continuing, till the whole is leavened. In reply to which it is observed, that the quantity of meal in which the leaven is described as being hid, is a definite and small quantity—three measures: while the field in which the tares are described, is indefinitely the world, ο κόσμος; which circumstance has induced commentators to apply the one parable to the mixed aspect of the gospel kingdom, as set up in the world; the other, to the progressively sanctifying nature of it, as it is set up in the heart of the individual.* In adopting this distinction, therefore, we are not framing an ingenious device, to support our scheme, but simply following Mr. Scott and others, in what they have felt necessary, in order to avoid making the parables contradict one another; and, it is obvious, that this distinction wholly removes the

* See Scott on Matt. xiii. 33. If this distinction be correct, then in the *three* measures of meal, there may perhaps be an allusion to the three component parts of each individual, as enumerated by the apostle. 1 Thess. v. 23.

objection to our general view, grounded upon the parable of the leaven.

The conclusion then, which we would draw from these parables is, that the termination of the times of the Gentiles, will be a separation of the saints from the ungodly, of the just from the unjust, similar to the separation of Lot from the men of Sodom; accompanied also with a dreadful judgment upon Christendom, similar to that upon the cities of the plain. This conclusion is confirmed by the memorable words of our Lord, Luke xvii. 26—30, “ And, as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise, also, as it was in the days of Lot, they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded. But, the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.” We have further proof—

- In the apostolical epistles. Paul says to the Thessalonians, “ Yourselves know perfectly, brethren, that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say

peace and safety, then sudden destruction shall come upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief; ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day; we are not of the night, nor of darkness; therefore let us not sleep, as do others, but let us watch and be sober."—"Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and, to you who are troubled, rest with us when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day." Here a separation is marked between the church and the world, in that day as wide as between light and darkness—salvation and destruction. These passages addressed to the Gentile church are of the utmost importance: for whereas the coming of the Son of Man, spoken of by our Lord himself, is commonly interpreted to apply exclusively

to the destruction of Jerusalem ; it cannot be maintained that the apostle referred to that event when writing to Christians in Greece, who were in no way interested in the fall of the holy city. The chronological marks contained in 2 Thess. ii. put this beyond any reasonable doubt.

We have now further to consider the date of the close of this dispensation. On this point I shall not enter upon the direct chronological calculations, with which it has pleased God to supply the church, and whereunto they that are wise and learned do well that they take heed ; but, I shall merely observe upon the relative date of the termination of the times of the Gentiles, that it will synchronise with the restoration of the Jewish church, and precede the introduction of millennial blessedness.*

The proof of this has been anticipated ; for, if Jerusalem be trodden down till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled, those times must be fulfilled when Jerusalem is lifted up ; and if, as we have seen in the parable of the Tares and the Wheat, a *continued* mixture of good and bad growing together, be a characteristic of this dispensation, then this dispensation cannot include a period when all will be good ;

* See Mr Faber's Sermon before the Jews' Society in 1822, where this subject is ably discussed.

and consequently, it must end before the Millennium begins. This supplies the true answer to those who allege, that the descriptions of separation given above at the coming of the Son of Man, apply to a period subsequent to the Millennium, when a great falling off will have taken place: for, however the question may be determined, concerning the condition and character of the nations of the earth during the Millennium, it is clear, that our Lord's description of the state of the field *until the harvest*, and the description which the prophets have given of the prevalent, if not absolutely universal righteousness of the millennial nations, cannot, without violence, be applied to the same period.

I forbear from any detailed application of the subject at present; simply observing, that if this view of the dispensation be indeed scriptural—and if, instead of being in the dawn of wide-spreading improvement, making progress towards the meridian of millennial righteousness, Christendom be really on the eve of a tremendous overthrow—then nothing can be more obvious than the connexion between this view of the subject, and the watchfulness of the church of Christ: what he said to his immediate disciples, he says to us all, watch!

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