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SECOND LETTER TO A FRIEND

ON THE

STUDY OF PROPHECY.

X. 2

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SECOND LETTER TO A FRIEND ON THE STUDY OF PROPHECY.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

It is not as a subject of mere interesting speculation, that I would desire to bring before you the promised period when “creation shall be freed from the bondage of corruption” (Rom. viii. 21), and “when nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more” (Mic. iv. 3);—it is rather that we may avoid speculation and conjecture, and learn simply from the Scripture: for if it is the Scripture which alone enables us to say that such a period will come, it will surely be wise in us to inquire whether it also reveals any thing respecting the characteristics of this time of blessedness, and the steps which lead to it, and to beware of forming any conjectures respecting the appointed means, beyond (or otherwise than) what God has declared.

The Church of God believes (for they have learnt it from the prophetic Scripture) that the Lord Jesus will come again—that His saints shall be raised to meet Him at His coming—that Satan shall be bound; and that a period of peace and righteousness on earth shall finally be accomplished. But the *order* of these events we have sought to arrange for ourselves, I might also say without reference to Scripture; and thus the stream of events has been supposed to be flowing steadily forward into the haven of predicted peace; the abyss which lies open at the close of this present Gentile dispensation, has been concealed; and we have not been taught, like the early Church, “to wait for God’s Son from heaven” (1 Thess. i. 10), as the one necessary prerequisite to those times or restitution, “which God hath spoken of by the mouth of

all His holy Prophets, which have been since the world began" (Acts iii. 21).

The Scriptures testify that the Lord must first "come out of His place," and then the *inhabitants* of the world will be punished, and *Satan* also ; *the world itself* will be filled with fruit, because Israel shall blossom and bud (Is. xxvii. 6). The 97th Psalm, which describes not the destruction, but the rejoicing of the earth, because the Lord reigneth, cannot, according to the testimony of the Apostle (Heb. i. 6) be fulfilled, until God again bringeth the firstbegotten (i.e. the risen Jesus) into the world (see Col. i. 15) ; and when our Lord himself speaks respecting the coming of the "kingdom of God," His words are these :—"There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars : and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring : men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth ; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken ; and then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory...When ye see these things coming to pass (*γινόμενα*), know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand" (Luke xxi. 25—31).

The "groaning of creation" (Rom. viii.) beneath the power of Satan, of "the strong man armed"—the thick darkness which broods over the heathen countries—the hopeless apostasy of those districts where the Apostles first preached—the increasing profligacy and infidelity of Germany and the western nations—the thralldom of the Church, where it does exist, to the schemes and interests of an ungodly world—all these things, and many more, sufficiently show the meaning of that inquiry, "When the Son of Man cometh shall He find faith on the earth?" It is for this reason we are commanded to pray, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth as it is done in heaven,"—because the foundations of the earth are out of course, and so will continue to be, until He come that shall come, and "take unto Himself His great power, and destroy them that destroy the earth" (Rev. xi. 17, 18).

The necessity of the direct government of God (as a

prerequisite to the earth's blessing), and its future exercise by the Lord Jesus (in the distinct though combined characters of the Son of David, and the Second Adam), has been referred to in my former letter ;—we have now to consider the future glory of the Saints, as “ bone of His bone, and flesh of His flesh,”—a help-meet for the Second Adam, in the enjoyment of His glory.

But He was “made perfect through suffering” (Heb. ii. 10), and it is written of the saints likewise that they must suffer, in order “to reign with Him” (2 Tim. ii. 12). The Lord Jesus suffered because He lived AGAINST the course of this present world, and never sought to deliver Himself by resistance when trial or persecution came. When He was reviled, He reviled not again ; when He suffered, He threatened not ; He was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and like a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth. The fierce spirit of the world has not altered, neither has the lamb-like spirit of the Lord of glory ; and His words unto His followers still continue to be, “Behold, I send you forth as lambs in the midst of wolves ;” for the time is not yet come, when it can be said of the earthly path of the redeemed, “that no lion shall be there, neither shall any ravenous beast go up thereon.” Daily at present are they in danger from him, who, as a ravening lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour ; and they would soon fall before his devices, if they were not watched over by the Almighty power of Him who is their Head, and who sustains and guides them by His Spirit. But there is only one path into which He guides, — the path of meek and long-suffering patience : “When one smiteth thee on the one cheek, turn to him the other also.”—“If when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.” Whenever therefore it can be said by any that they are suffering, in consequence of meekly and humbly following the commandments of the Lord ; whether they suffer from conflicting with their own evil natures, or with the world's evil, or with some messenger of Satan, who may be sent to buffet them, they are suffering because of Jesus their Lord. They suffer because of their contrariety to evil,

and to the world, whilst it is still allowed to lift itself up against God. The family of faith have in every age suffered; and so it will continue to be until the Lord taketh unto Himself His great power, and destroys them who destroy the earth.

Accordingly, we have seen that those who sleep in Him, are to be raised to meet him when He cometh, before He inflicts the judgments which He cometh to minister; and it is in this awful ministration, that they are first spoken of as united with Him in His glory. “He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessel of a potter shall they be broken in pieces: even as I received of my Father” (Rev. ii. 26). These words refer to the 2nd Psalm, which describes the period already referred to in my last letter, when “the kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against His Christ, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh them to scorn, the Lord shall have them in derision.” This is written of those who shall soon be gathered together to the battle of that great day of God Almighty; when He shall send the rod of Christ’s power out of Zion, saying, “Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies” (Psalm ex. 2).

But there are other passages also, which connect the ascension-glory of the saints with the state of the earth, as blessed and governed by them. The creation is said to be earnestly waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God; and if it be asked what the manifestation of the sons of God is, the Apostle tells us, that it is their being made like unto their Lord at His coming. “Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it is not yet manifested what we shall be; but we know that when He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is” (1 John iii. 2). Surely nothing can more plainly show that the hope of creation rests on the manifestation of Jesus and His risen saints. The following passages bear testimony to the same truth:—

“Know ye not that the saints will judge (or, rule) the world?” (1 Cor. vi. 2). “Thou hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign over (ἐπὶ) the earth” (Rev. v. 10). “This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death shall have no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years” (Rev. xx. 5, 6).

If this were the only testimony, there would be enough to show that the first creation, which God made and blessed, does not pass away when the saints are raised in glory; but if we examine further, we shall find abundant confirmation. In the last two chapters of the Revelation, we find the only description which the Scripture furnishes of the heavenly home of the glorified. There is nothing fleshly there; but all is heavenly, and according to the state of those who are in spiritual bodies, made like unto the body of their risen Lord. “The children of this world marry and are given in marriage; but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; neither can they die any more, for they are equal unto the angels, and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection” (Luke xx. 34—36). But although there will be nothing earthly there, yet it is written, “that the kings of the earth shall bring their glory and honour into it; and again, “they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it” (Rev. xxi.); and although there shall be no sickness or sorrow *there*, yet the tree of life, yielding her fruit, shall be in the midst of it; and “the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations” (Rev. xxii. 2). Now whatever may be thought respecting the tree of life, whether it be a symbol or reality; yet this at least is evident—that the home of the saints, where all is perfect according to the perfection of God, is connected with an earthly state, external to itself, where imperfection and suffering are; and this suffering is remedied by secondary means, which God dispenses through the medium of the heavenly city.

Such a connexion between earth and heaven was one

of the earliest subjects of prophetic vision. When the patriarch Jacob took the position of a child of Faith, and (in consequence of choosing the *future* blessing of the birthright) was driven as a solitary wanderer from his father's house, "he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven, and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it" (Gen. xxix. 12). This vision hath never yet been fulfilled, even as it is written of Jacob and the others, of whom the world was not worthy, that they, "having obtained a good report through faith, *received not the promise*," God having appointed that they should wait until we, who believe in the blood of Jesus, are added to them, before they attain the perfection of their promised blessing. The fulfilment therefore of the vision has been delayed ; but it was again proposed by our Lord as an object of faith, when he said to Nathanael, "Hereafter ye shall see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man" (John i. 51). For a short moment the heavens were opened over Jesus, in testimony that there was something upon earth which God could approve ; and the Lord Jesus opened them over Stephen, His faithful servant ; thus manifesting His own predicted exaltation to the right hand of God, and also His care for those who kept His testimonies ; indicating too, that all the children of faith were beloved children in Him, and were (though it might not be manifested) standing in that same relationship to heaven, in which He had stood when it was said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Heaven is not slow to be opened, when there is any thing which it can sanction on earth. It gave its sanction unto Jesus ; but Jesus was despised and rejected, and therefore we have never yet seen heaven opened, AND (i. e. in addition thereunto) the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man. But when the hitherto rebellious seed of Jacob "shall look upon him whom they have pierced" (Zech. xii. 10) ; when they shall be named the priests of the Lord ; and when men shall call them the ministers of our God ; when it shall be said unto Jerusalem, "Arise, shine, for

thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee ; thy people also shall be all righteous" (Isa. ix.) ; then at last heaven can be opened over the earth, not merely in transient testimony, but in abiding and manifested ministration of blessing to it.

"I will make the place of my feet glorious" (Isa. ix. 13, and Ezek. xlivi. 7), are the words in which the Lord has declared His purposes towards His earthly city ; even as it is written, "Jerusalem is the city of the great King" (Mat. v. 35). It is, as it were, the place where the foot of the ladder of Jacob will rest ; a place which is not heaven, but will be connected with heaven, just as the court of the Jewish worshippers in the temple was not the holy place, but it was connected therewith, and therefore brought into direct reception of blessing.

Accordingly, the resurrection-glory of the saints is as distinctly connected with Israel and Jerusalem as with the earth. On the night of the last supper, just after the Lord had given the cup of the New Testament in His blood to His disciples, He said unto them, "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations ; and I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me, that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom ; and sit on thrones, *judging the twelve tribes of Israel*" (Luke xxii. 28—30). And again, "Verily I say unto you, that ye which followed me in the regeneration (i. e. the times of restitution) when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Mat. xix. 28). And again, "In that day shall they call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord" (Jer. iii. 17).

The place of Israel, as gathered around the foot of Sinai, when the Lord descended upon it, may illustrate what the position of Jerusalem will be in the days of her coming glory. The Israelites were not in the glory, for it was far above them ; yet it came for their sakes, and they received blessing through the ministration of angels therefrom. And so when the appointed time cometh, Jerusalem and all the regathered seed of Jacob, fitted to enjoy and to retain the blessing, shall walk in the light

of that glory in which the saints shall dwell, as ministering priests unto them. And again, when the Queen of Sheba beheld the glory of Solomon, it is neither "the meat of his table, nor the sitting of his servants, nor the attendance of his ministers," which is mentioned as the consummation of his glory, but "his ASCENT by which he went up into the temple of the Lord" (1 Kings x. 5). And so doubtless, the great marvel of Jerusalem's future glory will be the ascent of her King, in the glory of his Melchisedek Priesthood into the heavenly city ; even as it is written in Israel's earthly song of praise: "God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet. Sing praises unto our God, sing praises ; sing praises unto our king, sing praises. For God is the King of all the earth : sing ye praises with understanding" (Ps. xlvi. 6, 7). And again, "O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth, who hast set thy glory ABOVE the heavens!" (Ps. viii. 1).

But it is in the courts of the temple, patterns (as we are told by the Apostle) of greater things (Heb. ix), that we find the clearest illustration of the future connection of earth and heaven. It is manifest to the most casual observation, that the books of Moses, (and especially his songs and dying prophecies,) are pregnant with reference to the glory of the earth and to Israel in the latter day. "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heavens in thy help, and in His excellency on the sky. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms ; and He shall thrust out the enemy from before thee ; and shall say, Destroy. Israel then shall dwell in safety alone : the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine ; also his heavens shall drop down dew. Happy art thou, O Israel : who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and the sword of thy excellency ! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee ; and thou shalt tread upon their high places" (Deut. xxxiii. 23—29). These are the closing words of Moses. Accordingly, that tabernacle of which it was said, " See that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the Mount," was devised,

not merely to typify something which man's wilfulness might shatter, but as a type and security for blessings which God's power and faithfulness would fulfil.

The outermost inclosure of the temple was the court of the Gentiles ;—the innermost was the holy of holies, where the glory of God rested upon the mercy-seat. These two courts were united by means of others, which were links (as it were, intermediate links) in the chain of blessing ; and this is just a picture of what the promised blessing is,—God sitting upon the throne of His holiness, and dispensing blessings through intermediate agency, even to the very limits of creation.

It may tend to the illustration of this subject, to consider the place of the Lord of glory in reference to these courts, when He came to be a Servant, and to learn obedience by the things which He suffered. He descended, as it were, into the lowest, even as it is said, “Out of Egypt have I called my Son ;” and again, His dwelling place was not Jerusalem, but Galilee of the Gentiles. His proper place (as being of the seed of Abraham) was of course in the second court, or that of Jewish worshippers ; beyond which none but the Levitical priesthood were allowed to enter.

It was when He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, that he may be said to have figuratively entered the third division, or court of the Priests, where the altar of burnt sacrifice was placed ; and it was here our blessed Lord completed His last act of *earthly* worship, “in offering Himself without spot to God.” These three divisions then,—the court of the Gentiles,—the court of the Jews,—and the court of the Levitical priesthood, may be considered to represent the sphere of *earthly* worship.*

Whilst the Lord Jesus was upon earth, “He could not be a priest” (Heb. viii. 4) ; but as soon as he was lifted

* First, because the earthly service of the Lord was terminated in them ; secondly, because they were all uncovered in the open air, as if to indicate that they belonged to the things seen and open to the eyes of men ; and thirdly, because it is only the two remaining divisions—viz. the holy and the most holy places, which are noted by the Apostle as typifying *things in the heavens*.

upon the cross, into dissociation from the earth, and had shed the blood which was needful to priestly consecration, the Father said unto Him, "Thou art a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedek." Here then was His title to enter, not only into the Holy Place, but even into the Holy of Holies within the veil, where the present place of His blessed ministration is; and they who own Him, have "A High Priest that is passed into the heavens;" but they who own Him not, have no Priest and no sacrifice, and therefore their sin remaineth.

But if we look at Leviticus xvi. (where the ministration of the High Priest is specially described), we find that the consecration of the Holy and most Holy Place was only one part of the appointed service; and that the outer courts (i. e. the courts of earthly service) were to be hallowed also. Whilst atonement is being made for the Holy Place, it is written that there shall be no man with the High Priest, UNTIL he come out, and have made an atonement for himself and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel. Accordingly, we know that Jesus is still by Himself alone, "the first fruits of them that sleep;" but when the time cometh for the result of his atonement for His household, i. e. the Church (Heb. iv. 6), and for all the congregation of Israel, to be manifested; then He shall remember the place of earthly service, and he shall go out unto the altar that is before the Lord, and shall cleanse it, and hallow it from all the uncleanness of the children of Israel. When He came in humiliation as Jesus of Nazareth, and entered Jerusalem as its King, upon the ass's colt, His first act of royalty was His purification of that house, which He said should be "a house of prayer for all nations." He came in weakness (2 Cor. xiii. 4), and therefore His work was frustrated; but it remains as a type of what will be on that day when He will come, not in weakness, but in Melchisedek glory, to take possession of that which is His own: "The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the Covenant whom ye delight in: behold He shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts. But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? for

He is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap ; and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and He shall purify the *sons of Levi*, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. Then shall the offering of *Judah* and *Jerusalem* be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years" (Mal. iii. 1—4). "Also the sons of the stranger that join themselves to the Lord, to serve Him, and to love the name of the Lord, even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer : their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon my altar, *for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations*. The Lord God, which gathered the outcasts of Israel, saith, Yet will I gather others to Him, besides those that are gathered unto Him" (Isa. lvi. 6—8). Wherefore we have not only typical, but also direct prophetic testimony, to the coming of that time, when all the courts of God's house, from the holiest to the outermost, shall be hallowed, through the Beloved One, unto the Lord.

But who, it may be asked, dwell in these courts ? God dwelleth in the holiest, on the mercy-seat ; and no veil divides His dwelling-place from that where the household of Jesus—i.e. the Church of the first-born—minister ; as answering to the shew-bread and to the golden candle-stick. Little is revealed respecting the heavenly places ; but we know that there is a third heaven (2 Cor. xii. 2), and the heaven of heavens. We know also, that the heavenly Jerusalem is not the heaven of heavens, because it descendeth therefrom ; neither is it separated from the manifested presence of God, and they who dwell therein are "kings and priests unto Him." But priests for whom ? for those upon earth—for men, righteous indeed and servants of the Lord, but still in unredeemed and corruptible bodies ; needing intercession, and looking for every blessing from above ; even as it is written, "I will hear, saith the Lord, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth" (Hos. ii. 21). So that the ministration of the heavens, and those in the heavens, unto the earth, will be the great feature of the

Millennial blessedness : “ Thou hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign over the earth.”*

Such then being the appointed relation of the saints to the earthly system in its Millennial blessedness, we can well understand the words of the Apostle, when he says, “ that all creation, groaning and travailing in pain together, waiteth for the **MANIFESTATION** of the sons of God” (Rom. viii. 22; 1 John iii. 2). The creation has been subjected, not willingly, but on account of the first Adam’s transgression, to disappointment and sorrow ; and it awaits the period when the kingship and priesthood of the saints of Jesus shall be manifested in glory, unhindered and unresisted by the power of Satan. “ We see not yet all things put under them ; but the time will come when in virtue of the glory of Jesus their Head, all things shall be put under them, “ all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field, the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas ;” for nothing is too lowly for God to bless, who careth for the sparrows and feedeth the ravens. It is to this period that such Psalms as the following belong, where all creation is called upon to praise the Lord : “ Praise the Lord from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps ; fire, and hail ; snow, and vapours ; stormy wind fulfilling His word : mountains, and all hills ; fruitful trees, and all cedars ; beasts, and all cattle ; creeping things, and flying fowl : kings of the earth,

* Stars are the symbol employed to represent the relation of the saints, as well as of the Lord Jesus, to the earth in this time of glory. It is said of Him that He is “ the bright and morning star ;” announcing by its appearance the dawning of the day of God. And again, “ To Him that overcometh, will I give the morning star.”—And again, “ They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament ; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever,”—belonging as it were to unknown and distant regions, having systems and orbits of their own, but yet ministering light and guidance to those upon the earth. As “ the root and offspring of David,” the Lord Jesus is the source, and also the Heir and Administrator of every earthly promise to Jerusalem ;—as “ the bright and morning star,” He is the bringer of new and unknown blessings from the glories of another world.

and all people : princes, and all judges of the earth : both young men and maidens ; old men and children : let them praise the name of the Lord : for His name alone is excellent ; His glory is above the earth and heaven. He also exalteth the horn of His people, the praise of all His saints ; even of the children of Israel, a people near unto Him. Praise ye the Lord" (Ps. cxlviii. 7—14).

I quote this Psalm the more especially, as connecting the deliverance of creation with the restored glory of the children of Israel. This is often referred to in the Scripture. For example, in the 3rd of Acts it is said, not to Gentiles but to Jews, " Repent and be converted, *that* (ὅπως ἄν) the times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord : and that he may send Jesus."* And again, in Hosea it is written, respecting Israel, that when the Lord shall again speak comfortably unto her, and cause her to sing as in the days of her youth, as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt, " In that day, saith the Lord, I will make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground ; and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely ; and I will sow her unto me in the earth" (Hos ii.).

The iniquity which will characterise Jerusalem in the day when, for the last time, she shall be visited by the judgments of the Lord, has been already referred to. It shall be a day of fearful visitation, when " The Lord, whom they seek, shall suddenly come to His temple" (Mal. iii. 1). But neither Jerusalem, nor the Gentile nations, will be ready to receive Him. Nevertheless He will spare "*a third part*" of the inhabitants of Jerusalem (Zech. xiii. 9) ; and " the multitude of the terrible ones that afflict her shall be as the chaff that passeth away ; yea, it shall be at an instant, suddenly" (Isa. xxix. 5) ; for He " will remove the iniquity of that land *in one day*"

* The following is the literal translation of this passage (see "Christian Witness," vol. i. p. 360):—" Repent and be converted, with a view to the blotting out of your sins, that the times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus," &c.

(Zech. iii. 9). And “a nation shall be born at once” (Isa. lxvi. 8). “I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, saith the Lord, but for mine holy name’s sake ; for I had pity for my holy name” (Ezek. xxxvi. 21—32).

In that day the vision of Ezekiel shall be fulfilled (ch. xlivi.) in which the glory (which he had previously seen depart) was again beheld returning to the beloved City :— He beheld the likeness of the appearance of a man sitting upon a throne of sapphire, *above* a firmament of crystal, and controlling the agency of living creatures beneath. And “when the living creatures went, there were wheels which went by them ; and when the living creatures were lifted up, the wheels were lifted up ; whithersoever the spirit was to go, they went—thither was their spirit to go, and the wheels were lifted up over against them : for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels” (Ezek. i. 19). In other words, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of the blessed, shall sit upon the sapphire throne of the God of Israel, above the firmament, in the perfectness of the purity of heaven, and thence direct all the executive agents of the power of the Most High God, in their resistless course, perfect in intelligence, for “the wheels were full of eyes,” and resistless in power, for, “they turned not when they went.” Such was the glory which Ezekiel saw returning to Jerusalem in the latter day ; and at the same time he heard a voice saying, “Son of Man, the place of my THRONE, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever” (Ezek. xlivi. 7). “In that day they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord” (Jer. iii. 17). “The name of the city shall be from that day forth (Jehovah-Shammah) *the Lord is there*” (Ezek. xlviii. 35). “Then the Sun shall be confounded, and the Moon ashamed, when the Lord of Hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before His ancients gloriously” (Isa. xxiv. 23).

Thus then, through the return of their King, even of Him who was born, and in derision was robed, crowned, and crucified as “King of the Jews,” and hereafter is to be manifested as the Lord God of Israel, through His return “the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Je-

rusalem ; for unto her shall it come, even the first dominion" (Mic. iv. 8). But she shall not only be glorious in the eyes of men, she shall be truly holy unto the Lord ; for " Her people shall be all righteous, they shall inherit the land for ever." " All her children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of her children" (Isa. lx. 21 ; liv. 13). " They shall be priests of the Lord ; men shall call them the Ministers of our God" (Isa. lxi. 6).

Jerusalem shall be, as it were, the earth's altar, where " Prayer shall be made continually, and the King be daily praised" (Ps. lxxii. 15). It shall be a place in which also the goodness of earth shall be consecrated to the glory of the Lord (Mic. iv. 13). And the difference will be shewn between Babylon which glorifieth herself, and the City where God's name only shall be excellent. Immanuel's land shall be delightsome in the sight of the nations, and " all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of God."

But though blessed to the full of human capacity upon earth, yet it is an earthly city still. Its inhabitants will be in bodies unredeemed ; Death, the last enemy, will not be destroyed (1 Cor. xv. Rev. xx.) ; and there will still be the possibility of sin : " 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 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. In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge. But every one *shall die for his own iniquity, every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge*" (Jer. xxxi. 27—30). Nevertheless, the blessedness of Jerusalem shall be steadfast for ever, even as it is written, " I will betroth thee unto me for ever ; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies ; I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord" (Hos. ii. 19) ; for the power of the Lord shall countervail the weakness

of man : even as it is at present the case with all Believers, whose strongest and most blessed expressions of confidence now, are *borrowed* from the triumphant songs of Jerusalem then.*

But the blessedness of Jerusalem will be strictly the blessedness of *earth*, and, therefore, different in character from that of the heavenly city ; for the glory of the terrestrial is one, and the glory of the celestial is another. Nevertheless, the happiness of both is based upon the same principles of unchanging grace ; they are “ married” by the same covenant ; and the lesser glories of the one will be reflections of the more excelling glories of the other.

It is thus that the descriptions, which in the Old Testament are confined to the earthly city, are used by the Apostles to express the glories of Jerusalem which is above ; for these are the expansion and heavenly antitype of the typical (though real) glories of Jerusalem below. They both belong to the same system ; they are different courts of the same glorious temple, *visibly united* and yet distinct. In virtue of this union their glory is one, † and

* In the Millennial kingdom of our Lord, it will be fully manifested that, however men have marred and perverted from their proper end the things which God hath made, yet that these things are essentially “ very good,” and capable of being brought to minister unto His praise. “ The merchandise of gold, and of silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, ’ are things not evil in themselves ; but they are things which the world hath ever lusted after in all its systems, and all its ways, in order that it might glorify itself, and forget its Maker. But all these things shall be rescued from the hands of men, and consecrated unto the Lord of the whole earth (Mic. iv. 13), in the city which He hath chosen, to set His name there. “ The multitude of camels shall cover it, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah ; all they from Sheba shall come ; they shall bring gold and incense, and they shall shew forth the praise of the Lord. The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir-tree, the pine-tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary ; and I will make the place of my feet glorious.” It is most interesting and important to compare the description of Jerusalem’s glory in the Old Testament Prophets with the description of Babylon’s glory in the Revelation ; to contrast the city of man with the city of God.

† Even as the glory of the Head is the glory of the members.

both are hallowed by the ministration of the same High Priest, and the sprinkling of the same blood ; yet it was the Holy of Holies in which the presence of the glory was ; and it was through connection with it that the other courts derived their principal excellency and their glory.

But not only Jerusalem ; the land of Immanuel also shall teem with blessedness : “ The wolf and the kid shall dwell together.” “ They shall sit every man under his own vine, and under his own fig tree.” These things are blessed in themselves, but they will be outwardly and manifestly then, what they are in description to the eye of faith now—that is, pledges and symbols of a more perfect “ rest which remaineth for the people of God.”

But when it shall be said unto Jerusalem, “ Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee,” what shall be the state of the nations ? The Scriptures answer, that “ darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people ;” and, therefore, even as she receives her blessings from another city which is above, so also she is herself made the communicator of blessing unto others. “ The remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people as a dew from the Lord, as the showers upon the grass that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men” (Micah v. 7). “ If the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness ? for if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead ?” (Rom. xi. 12, 15).

Nevertheless, while she is thus the witness and administrator of blessing to all who submit themselves, she is also the minister of chastisement and destroying judgment to those who refuse and rebel. Thus it is written, “ The nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish ; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted” (Is. ix). And, again, “ The remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles, in the midst of many people, as a lion among the beasts of the forest ; as a young lion among the flocks of the sheep, who if he go through, both treadeth down, and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver” (Micah v. 8 ; see also Isa. xli. 15). Nothing can more plainly show,

than these and similar passages, the imperfectness of the Millennial state on earth ; for the rod of chastening and correcting power is unneeded and unknown in Heaven ; there is no conflict with moral evil there—*earth* only is the place where it is necessary to “rebuke” the nations.

But there is yet one more character, in which we have to regard Jerusalem. It will be not only the source of judgment, and of kingly power ; it will also be the source of merciful and converting testimony ; even as it is written “ How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation : that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth ! Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice ; with the voice together shall they sing : for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion ” (Isa. lli. 7). “ And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills : and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob ; and he will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths : for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem ” (Isa. ii. 2, 3).

It will be the great harvest time from the earth ; for they who are at present gathered in this season of humiliation, are but as a “ kind of firstfruits of His creatures ” (James i.), an earnest of those which shall be finally gathered into the garners of God.

Whilst, therefore, the deliverance of creation from the curse, the binding of Satan, and the blessed guardianship and rule of the Son of Man and His saints (Dan. vii. 22), will render the state of the earth during the Millennium, essentially different from its condition now ; yet whilst the bodies of those that dwell on it are still fleshly and unredeemed, and whilst death remains undestroyed, it will *not* be a state perfect according to the perfection of God, but will still require the *further* exercise of that

power which is able to say, “Behold I make all things new.”

The *progressive* subjection of evil during the Millennial period, is clearly referred to by the Apostle in 1 Cor. xv. It is between the “resurrection of the saints of Christ” at His coming, and “the end.” It is during this interval (which we learn from the Revelation to be a thousand years) that He is engaged in putting down, “all rule, and all authority, and power;” “the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death;” but not (as we are taught in the Revelation) till the end of the Millennial period, “the end” which is spoken of in 1 Cor. xv. when He shall deliver up unto God, even the Father, the power which He received as Son of Man, that God may be all in all. The kingdom of the Son, as glorifying the Father, is over that which is evil and unreclaimed; but all that is perfected, and fully reclaimed from the power of evil is placed in the kingdom of the Father; even as it is written of the saints, as perfected in glory at the coming of Jesus, that they shall “*then* shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father;” whilst earth remains under the special government of the Son, until the time when that also shall be fully and perfectly reclaimed unto the Father. The terms which are used in Scripture to denote the Millennial period, such as “the times of refreshing [or, re-animating]” (Acts iii. 19), “restoring” (Acts iii. 21), “regenerating” (Matt. xix. 28) “redeeming” (Eph. i. 14), (for such is the literal translation of the words), appear purposely intended to indicate the progressive advance towards the period of completion, when all things shall be fully regenerated and restored. And although the judgments at the close of the present dispensation upon the rebellious Jews in Jerusalem, upon the Gentile nations who are gathered together against it, and upon the tares, or those who profess the name of Christ, shall be more fearful than we can attempt to describe, yet some (though they be but as the gleaning of grapes when the vintage is done) shall be spared to illustrate, as it were, by the future operation of His grace towards them, that although He may be slow in perfecting the

counsel of His grace, yet that it is not because He is slack in giving, but because He is "long-suffering, not desiring that any should perish;" for even the Millennial period shall be a time of salvation unto many, "who shall look upon Him whom they have pierced," and find Him the true Joseph, blessed alike to Jew and Gentile, who was sent beforehand to preserve life.

Perhaps our present condition as Believers, may tend to illustrate the relation of the heavenly city to the earth, during the Millennial period. We have a new nature, distinct from our old, but acting on it, and bringing, not only much present blessing, as the means of fellowship with the Lord, and service in His household, but being also the earnest of a more glorious change hereafter, when all shall be made new. Such as it appears to me, will be the relation of the heavenly city to the earthly system. The earthly Israel will have, by their connection with Jerusalem above, present blessing; but this will not be all; they will see in it the earnest of a new heavens and a new earth, when the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind; and whilst they are encouraged to expect this, they are at the same time bidden to rejoice and be glad in that which had been already bestowed upon them; and to know (howsoever it might be with others) that *their* blessing should be steadfast for ever. I say, howsoever it might be with others, because we know that whilst Jerusalem is "betrothed for ever" (Hosea ii.), the other nations are again allowed to be assailed by Satan; and, in spite of every privilege, again rebel, till fire cometh down from Heaven and devoureth them all. This is on the Millennial earth; and then He saith, "Behold I make all things new; the first heaven and the first earth pass away, and there is no place for them;" and a new earth is formed, fit for entire communion with Heaven and the heavenly city, where God is "all in all."

Such I believe to be the revealed purpose of God, as to the means of bringing in the promised blessing. How forcibly the knowledge of them bears upon us practically, our consciences may feel. I will only add, that as grace only could give, so also grace alone could fit for such an

inheritance of glory. "It is of faith, that it might be by grace, to the end the promise might be sure." It is received in Him, who, after having by Himself purged away for ever the sins of all who believe, hath sat down on the right hand of God, the witness of complete forgiveness and blessing, that he that glorieth might glory in the Lord. Yours truly,

X. Z.

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