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THE INTELLIGIBILITY OF PROPHECY.

TO PROFESSOR STUART.—LETTER VI.

REV. AND DEAR SIR:

THE second of the three leading divisions of your work I find devoted to the consideration of the question, *whether prophecy is intelligible before its fulfilment*. Your decision is unequivocally in the affirmative; and from a pretty close examination of your pages, I am unable to perceive that you attach any importance at all to the fulfilment as a means of acquainting ourselves more fully with the import of any particular prediction. The grounds upon which you build your conclusion on this head are, that the ancient prophets, speaking under divine dictation, were made personally cognizant of the facts which they announced, and that their own conscious *meaning* and *intention* in what they uttered, is the true measure of the *revelation* vouchsafed either to them or to us; or, in other words, that no more revelation was made *through* the prophets than was made to them; and as what was made to them is of course made to us, so we virtually stand upon the same ground with them as to ability to comprehend what was uttered. The idea that God had a meaning in the prophetic oracles beyond that which is conveyed by the simple letter—a meaning of which the prophets themselves were ignorant—and one which was to be apprehended only by the actual accomplishment of the events foretold—though held by Hengstenberg, Tholuck, Olshausen, and a host of the most distinguished names in theology, you are pleased to treat as a very illogical, not to say idle, notion, serving in fact as a kind of covert, behind which “to hide the faults of our imperfect know-

ledge," and as an excuse for "dispensing with all future effort and trouble which would result from pursuing inquiries into the dark domain of the Scripture"! "It has become," you say, "with many, a kind of universal menstruum, in which all the difficulties of prophecy are solved." This, though somewhat keen as satire, is not, I think, over courteous as compliment, or over cogent as reasoning. The force of the remark obviously rests on an assumption which is far from being self-evident, and against the truth of which, I conceive for myself the most valid objections may be urged. This assumption is, that the prophets must necessarily have *understood* all that they have uttered, and as they must employ *human* language in addressing *human* beings, therefore what was intelligible to them must be likewise intelligible to us, and the difficulty of comprehending prophecy is all imaginary, and an idle pretext for avoiding the labor of investigation. But for fear that I may possibly fail, in my representations, to do entire justice to your sentiments, I make yourself your own expounder.

"Let us now suppose a case for the sake of illustration. John, we will say, has uttered many things in the Apocalypse, which will never be understood until they are fulfilled. Let it be then, that 2000 years after he has written his book those things are to be fulfilled. The first question that we naturally ask, is: To what purpose did John write those predictions? During 2000 years they have been or will be, by concession, neither more nor less than a dead letter. The Church is neither admonished, nor instructed, nor comforted. Why then were they written? Was it to show that God can move in a mysterious way, and shroud himself in clouds and darkness? There is proof enough of this in every quarter of his works, without a resort to such means. All heaven and earth bear witness that his ways are often past finding out. And would he resort, then, for the sake of making this impression, to such means as those now under consideration? The suggestion seems derogatory to his majesty and dignity. To make a *revelation*—and yet that revelation (so called) be entirely *unintelligible*? How can we conceive of his sporting with the hopes and expectations of men in such a way? To make one, moreover, which for thousands of years remains a perfect enigma to his Church—is this any relief of the difficulty? To my own mind, at least, it is none at all."

"The first question that we naturally ask, is: To what purpose did John write those predictions?" Allow me, under favor, to suggest, that the first question which we naturally ask has no relation whatever to John's purpose, but to the purpose of God himself. John had no purpose in writing but to be "obedient to the heavenly vision;" to yield himself as an organ through which the Holy Spirit might speak to the ears of the Church the things that belonged to her peace. The arraignment, therefore, of the folly of John in inditing unintelligible prophecies, is in fact the arraignment of the wisdom of Jehovah; for neither John, nor Daniel, nor any of the other prophets spake otherwise than as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. The question accordingly comes directly to neither more nor less than this:—Does it comport with infinite wisdom to

utter predictions through the lips of his servants which shall not be fully understood till accomplished? To this I reply with a *pleurophory* of assurance, Yes; while you, on the other hand, return a negative equally decided.

And here I must beg leave to advert to an under-current of fallacy and false issue which runs along the whole course of your reasoning on this head. The sentiment which you are professedly opposing you have made to express itself in the following language: "When the events come to pass to which the prophecy relates, then, and not till then, shall we be able to understand the prediction." To this view of the matter you object, not only, as above, that such predictions are useless, but you say farther:

"This is not the end of the matter. There is a still more serious difficulty to be met. We are told that 'the prophecy will be understood then, and only then, when the thing predicted comes to pass.' What then is the thing which comes to pass? I may surely be permitted to ask this question. What is the *thing predicted*? It is conceded, that by the laws of language no proper meaning has been, or can be, made out from the prophecy in question. But after 2000 years, something will take place, it is said, to which we may apply it. Apply *what*? If an *event* is compared with a *prophecy*, the only means of comparison possible, is, that we first assign some definite meaning to the prophecy, and then compare the event with that meaning. If this be not the case, then we merely make a comparison of a *known* thing with one that is *unknown*. How then are we to ascertain that they agree, when we confess that one of the two things compared is (so to speak) an *unknown* quantity? So long as it is unknown, or treated as unknown, we can have no means of ascertaining whether there is an agreement, or not, in the case supposed.

"Is not this whole matter, moreover, mere reasoning in a circle? The prophecy (an unknown something) agrees with the event, because the event agrees with the prophecy! Some laws of language then, after all, must first be applied to the prophecy, in order to make out any definite meaning; and if so, why could not these have been applied at a period antecedent, as well as now? It seems impossible to vindicate with success any such method of reasoning—such a complete *ὑστερον πρότερον* as this. A prophecy, unintelligible by the laws of language, can never be a *revelation*; nor can there ever be any certainty among uninspired men, that it is truly and correctly understood."

I object to this as an unfair and fallacious exhibit of the views which you are aiming to refute. "It is conceded, that by the laws of language no proper meaning has been, or can be, made out from the prophecy in question." Who makes this concession? Assuredly I do not. Has any one ever dreamt that even the obscurest predictions of holy writ had not a sense, conveyed by the letter, which was capable of being ascertained by the laws of language? The question concerns not the *existence*, but the *application*, of such a sense. In other words, does such a definite meaning legitimately apply to such a particular event, or to some other? The fact that we may not chance at the first essay to make the right application, does not necessarily argue an ignorance of the proper meaning of the words in which the prediction is conveyed. Let me illustrate

this. An advertisement appears in a public print, announcing the fact of a grand forgery, burglary, or theft, together with a description of the person of the perpetrator, and a reward for his apprehension. Now what is easier than to conceive, that while I have no difficulty in understanding the terms of the advertisement, I may still be at a loss as to its correct application. Here is a comparison to be made of a *known* description with an *unknown* person; and although there is little or no danger of mistake when the *right* person appears, yet I may in the mean time be deceived by similarity of form, feature, and air, and apply the description to the *wrong* person. But certainly it would be the height of absurdity to say that I did not understand the terms of the description, because I did not at once hit the truth of the application. Equally obvious is it, that I have a *fuller* intelligence of the purport of the document when the right person is discovered, and I perceive the harmonious adaptation of the verbal statement to the real fact. Yet it would be a strange abuse of language to affirm, that the advertisement made no *revelation* of the person of the offender.

So in regard to prophecy. I can by no means admit the justice of the presentation which you have made of the subject. "How are we to ascertain," you ask, "that the *event* and the *prediction* agree, when we confess that one of the two things compared is (so to speak) an *unknown* quantity?" The fact is, it is *not* an unknown quantity. We understand the prediction to a degree, so that of two given events, or orders of events, we should not hesitate to say, from its intrinsic character, that it applies to the one rather than the other, although neither perhaps were the true one. Vagueness and obscurity, to a certain extent, may indeed hang over the terms of the prediction as originally uttered, and yet so much of a definite meaning may attach to them as shall put the mind of the reader in a posture to recognize the truth with an intuitive glance as soon as it appears. And shall it be said that God, properly speaking, makes no *revelation* in prophecy, simply because we do not perceive, till after the lapse of 2000 years, the designed adaptation of certain words to certain events? But upon this head I have already been so full in former letters, that it will be unnecessary to expatiate here. I can see no more reason why the Scriptures should all be *understood* in one age, than why they should all be *given* in one age. The more obvious impression, I think, would be, that infinite wisdom would provide aliment for the faith of every successive era of the Church, the latest as well as the earliest, and consequently that prophecy would be constructed on the principle of *gradual development*. That such is the principle, I shall venture to hold till I see it disproved by more weighty arguments than you have as yet adduced.

But abstract principles come home to the mind with more force when brought to the test of specific examples. Let us select, there-

fore, as an instance in point, the woe of the fifth trumpet, which the mass of modern interpreters regard—correctly, I believe—as announcing, under the symbol of a desolating plague of locusts, the ravages of the countless hordes of Saracens, marching forth, under Mohammed and his generals, with the sword in one hand and the Koran in the other, to conquer and to proselyte the world. The oracle is thus framed, Rev. 9 : 3—11.

“And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth : and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree ; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads. And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months : and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man. And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it ; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them. And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle ; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men. And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions. And they had breast-plates, as it were breast-plates of iron ; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails : and their power was to hurt men five months. And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon.”

Here is a prediction of a very peculiar nature, the *full* meaning of which I contend could not be discovered prior to the accomplishment. And yet I would be far from granting that no sense whatever could be elicited from its terms before the event disclosed the plenary import. From the somewhat parallel prediction in Joel, the “locusts” would be apt to be understood as a symbol of *armies* composed of hordes of *plundering soldiery*, but its particular application to a future intended military power could not be determined till that power arose, and *history* had thus set its seal to the ultimate reference. But when the progress of events had developed into being the religion of Mohammed and the career of his Moslem followers, the Saracens, then the *events* forming the counterpart of the mystic prediction would stand before us, and no difficulty remain in perceiving their mutual adaptations, which are striking beyond measure. Arabia has always been distinguished for its prodigious swarms of locusts, and this insect is in fact represented in an oriental romance as the national emblem of the Ishmaelites. When Yezid went forth upon his expedition against Syria, he was thus instructed by the Caliph, Abu Beker :—“Destroy no palm-trees, nor burn any fields of corn ; cut down no fruit trees, nor do any mischief to cattle, only such as you kill to eat.” A coincidence more punctiliously exact it would not be easy to conceive. But this is not all. Every item of the announcement finds itself verified in the facts of the Saracen history. The apostate Christians of that

period, who had lost the purity of religion and fallen away to the worship of saints and martyrs, are represented by the men that had not the seal of God in their foreheads, and those portions of the Roman empire in which this apostacy had taken place, were those that fell under the Saracen woe. The others providentially escaped. It is moreover well known, that the strength of the Saracens, like that of the Ottomans who succeeded them, consisted very much in their cavalry, and they have always been distinguished for wearing turbans approaching nearly to the form of the oriental crown. The stings in the tails of the locusts, resembling them to scorpions, denote the poisonous and deadly nature of the false doctrines which they propagated, and the five months, or 150 years, the period during which their principal ravages continued. In view of the whole, we may well adopt the language of Dr. Zouch on this part of the Apocalypse :—"The prophetic truths comprised in the ninth chapter of the Revelation, are of themselves sufficient to stamp the mark of divinity on that book. The Saracens, a people which did not exist in the time of John, and the Turks, a nation then utterly unknown, are there described in language the most appropriate and distinct." *Zouch's Works, Vol. II. p. 255.*

I am well aware that you give all this part of the book entirely another reference, and interpret the first eleven chapters exclusively of the destruction of Jerusalem, as if actuated by a kind of *phobia* of applying any of the predictions of John to the later events of the history of the Church ; but this moves me not from the steadfastness of my conviction, in which I am far from standing alone, that the woes of the seven trumpets embrace the great series of calamitous events which have befallen Christendom through the lapse of more than fifteen centuries. I do not hesitate, therefore, to adduce the present as an instance in point of the utter impracticability of *fully* understanding the inspired predictions before they are accomplished. Can any man seriously believe that, in penning this prophecy, John was miraculously endowed with a knowledge of the particular people by whom it was to be fulfilled ?

I do not lose sight of the fact that you have proposed, by a more critical exposition of certain passages, to rebut the force of the objection, that the sacred writers were often ignorant of the burden of their own oracles. As to the argument founded upon the use of unknown tongues in the Apostolic Church, it has, I conceive, very little relation to the point before us, and I shall not attempt to gainsay your conclusions on that head. Your remarks on the appeal often made to 1 Pet. 11 : 12, where we are told that the prophets inquired and searched dilligently as to the drift of the Spirit in his communications, are less convincing, as the original phrase (*εις τινα η ποιον καιρον*) denotes, I think, not so properly the strict *chronological* question, to which *χρονος* would be more appropriate, as the *form* and *manner*, or *distinguishing characteris-*

tics of the coming dispensation, and this would seem to differ little from the *subject matter* of their disclosures. Still, I will not insist upon this, nor upon any dissent which I may cherish, from your interpretation of Dan. 12 : 8, where the prophet says he heard and understood not, and which you maintain has respect mainly to *consequences* connected with the events predicted. That the prophets have in repeated instances uttered oracles which they did not themselves understand, in their full import, is a position which needs not, in my opinion, an express declaration of Scripture to sustain it. The truth of it grows out of the very nature of prophetic revelation: You have yourself admitted that the prophets possessed but a *partial* knowledge of futurity.

And this you say arises from the fact that words at best are but inadequate exponents of *all* the ideas which are connected in the mind of a writer with the subjects of which he treats; and that even God himself is not to be expected to reveal in human language *all* the truth that may lay in his own infinite mind in reference to the themes which he discloses. This would be impossible from the imperfection of the faculties of his creatures, and therefore it is an impeachment of the divine wisdom to suppose that he has designed to reveal what men are incapable of knowing. But your own language will be more express on this head :

“ When predictions of future and distant events are uttered, no words, it will be admitted, can of themselves describe all which appertains to those events. God indeed knows all; but he does not communicate, nor does he design to communicate, all his knowledge to men. To assume that a prophecy is designed to reveal all which the divine mind knows respecting the event predicted, is such an assumption as no reason nor laws of language can justify.

“ The question then comes fairly before us : How much does the Holy Spirit mean to convey, by the words of any particular prophecy ? The answer is not difficult. God speaks by men, and for men. The prophets were inspired by the Holy Ghost. But why ? In order that they might with certainty and authority *give information* respecting things past, present, or future. To *give information* necessarily presupposes, that they themselves possessed it. If the Holy Spirit employs such a medium of communication, i. e., speaks through prophets, it is plainly in order that *human* language may be addressed to *human* beings. The language employed, therefore, means just what the writers designed it should mean. *Every book is fully interpreted, when the exact mind of the writer is unfolded.*”

The grand assumption that underlies this whole train of remark obviously is, that the prophets themselves *understood* all that can fairly be said to have been revealed *to* them or *by* them; and therefore, as they used language in its ordinary sense, and must be supposed to have spoken *intelligibly* what they had received *intelligently*, we do in fact stand upon the same vantage-ground for comprehending the divine oracles that the prophets themselves did. “ What the prophets did know, they have communicated; and they have done in this case the same thing which they have

done in all other cases, where they have made any revelation, i. e., they have spoken in an intelligible manner what they designed to speak." But to all this you anticipate the very natural reply that prophecy is, in many respects, still confessedly obscure, containing enigmas which have never yet been satisfactorily solved; and what is your rejoinder to this?

"To say that many things are dark to us which they have uttered, is only alleging our own ignorance, and is not, and cannot be, any proof that they did not speak intelligibly to their cotemporaries. To say that we may now understand, better than they did, the *things* or *occurrences* which they predicted, is saying nothing to the present purpose. It is beyond all doubt true, that the man who visits London can better understand a description of that metropolis, than one who never saw it. It is beyond a doubt true, that, had we been present at any of the scenes recorded in ancient or in modern history, we could enter with more interest and intelligence into the meaning of faithful narratives respecting them. But subsequent knowledge, acquired by readers at the time when events predicted are or have been developed, although it may greatly aid them in readily understanding the predictions, can never be the rule of exegesis. Any writing means that, and only that, which the author designed it should mean. If the author of any prophecy, then, had a meaning, (and who will deny this?) we cannot help believing that he designed to impart it. And if, for the sake of parrying the conclusion that would follow in this case, any one should aver, that *God is the real author of the Scriptures*, still this will make no important difference. God cannot impart all his knowledge to his creatures, i. e., cannot make them omniscient, because their imperfect natures render this impossible. Nor can we rationally conceive, that he, when intending to make a revelation to them through the medium of language, would employ language in any other way than in one intelligible to them. The design in question would be entirely defeated by such a process."

Upon the sentiments here embodied I have several suggestions to offer; and first, I must profess my utter inability to perceive the grounds of your intimation, that what is dark to us in the disclosures of the prophets must necessarily have been clear to their cotemporaries. If this be so, how happens it that the Jews, as a people, so generally mistook the drift of the prophecies which respected the person and the kingdom of the Messiah, and so unanimously rejected him when he appeared? And how has it occurred that there are at this day such endless diversities of theory as to the import of the predictions of Daniel and John relative to the latter day? This is a problem not quite so easily solved on the hypothesis you have stated. But upon this point of the greater alleged perspicuity of the ancient prophets to their cotemporaries, allow me to introduce an extract from Bishop Hurd, (Introduction to Study of Prophecy, Sermon V. p. 145,) who, in answer to the objection, that the authority of the Jews, in the controversy with the Christians, is greater than theirs, inasmuch as they must best understand their own prophecies, and judge best of their completion, thus expresses himself: "I do not perceive on what ground of reason this is said. The old prophecies belong to us,

as well as to them ; and have been considered with as much diligence by Christian, as by Jewish expositors. Their customs, their history, their traditions, are equally known to both parties. Their very language hath been studied by Christians with a care, not inferior to that which the Jews themselves employ upon it ; with a *care*, that not unfrequently in *both* hath degenerated into superstition.

“ If it be said, ‘ that the *ancient* Jews, that is, the Jews in the time of Christ, must have been better qualified, than we now are, to interpret the prophecies, the language they spoke being only a dialect of that in which the prophecies are written,’ the answer is already given, under the last article : to which we may further add, that Christianity being much better understood now than it was then, the force of the prophetic language concerning it (if, indeed, the prophecies have any such thing in view) must be more distinctly apprehended, in many instances, by Christians at this day, than it could be by the Jews, even when they spoke a dialect of the Hebrew language. So that still I do not see, upon the whole, what advantage the Jews, whether of ancient or modern times, can be thought to have over us, in explaining the prophetic Scriptures.”

How it can be rationally denied, that the light of Revelation is on the whole a growing light, I am unable to perceive ; nor, admitting the truth of this principle, can I realize the possibility that either the prophets themselves or their cotemporaries should have possessed advantages equal to ours for mastering the scope of the inspired predictions.

But, secondly, there is a “ strange sound in my ears,” made by the words that follow :—“ To say that we may now understand better than they did the *things* or *occurrences* which they predicted, is saying nothing to the present purpose.” Why not ? What is the present purpose ? Is it not to make good the position, that later generations have no superior advantages for understanding the prophecies over the cotemporaries of the prophets ? If then it be granted that the *things* or *occurrences* predicted are actually *witnessed* and recognized as the fulfilment of given prophecies, is it nothing to the present purpose to insist upon this fact as proving that the lapse of time confers advantages for the understanding of the divine predictions ; or, in other words, that the knowledge of prophecy is progressive ? Would you say that Samson’s riddle to the Philistines was just as intelligible before the solution as after it ? Does not the accomplishment throw light in any way or in any degree upon a prediction ? It would seem from the general tenor of your language that it did not ; and yet, what shall we make of the concession in the following sentence ?—“ Subsequent knowledge, acquired by readers at the time when events predicted are or have been developed, *although it may greatly aid them in readily understanding the predictions*, can never be the rule

of exegesis. Any writing means that, and only that, which the author designed it should mean. If the author of any prophecy, then, had a meaning, (and who will deny this ?) we cannot help believing that he designed to impart that meaning, and nothing more." It is surely somewhat of a strange principle in hermeneutics, that that which affords essential aid in the understanding of a document, should at the same time be regarded as having no assignable influence in the matter of interpretation. May I be permitted to inquire a little more particularly as to your exact meaning in the sentence above quoted ? You speak of a *knowledge* acquired from events in regard to the true meaning of inspired predictions, and yet say that this knowledge can never be the rule of exegesis. Now *exegesis* is *explanation*, and if the *explanation* of a document is but another name for *giving its sense*, then I should certainly say, that whatever gave us a *knowledge* of this sense was a *rule of the explanation*, or in other words, that by which the explanation was governed. I will suppose that I have before me the written constitution of a state or society, some of the articles of which are not perfectly clear in their import. With a view to satisfy myself on the doubtful points, I turn to the *actual usages* of the body or community adopting them and acting under them, and see at once how the articles are to be understood. Is not the knowledge thus obtained a 'rule of exegesis' in regard to the document before me ? Does it not necessarily govern my construction of the written letter ? Or, to take your own illustration, which by the way strangely acts the *felo de se* to your main position,—“ It is beyond all doubt true that the man who visits London can better understand a description of that metropolis, than one who never saw it.” Shall not his knowledge then serve as a 'rule of exegesis' to any verbal description that may fall into his hands ? Why then is not the case the same in prophecy ? Why should not a knowledge of the *facts* control the interpretation of the *language* ? From the tenor of the whole paragraph I should infer that you would strenuously deny, that a prophecy *could* mean any thing more than was embraced in the personal and private design of the several writers respectively ; and whether this is not a fallacy too obvious to need refutation, let the judicious judge.

But you add :—“ And, if for the sake of parrying the conclusion that would follow in this case, any one should aver, that *God is the real author of the Scriptures*, still this will make no important difference.” Indeed, it makes all the difference in the world ; for we should of course infer that the Omniscient Spirit, before whom the immeasurable future is perfectly laid open, would use language with a greater plethora of meaning, than might be expected to come within the purpose of a short-sighted mortal acting as a mere scribe of inspiration. Of no great importance, then, can I deem the reason which you assign for this solecistic sentence :

“ God cannot impart all his knowledge to his creatures, i. e. he cannot make them omniscient, because their imperfect nature renders this impossible. He imparts so much, and only so much, as the nature and circumstances of any case require; so much as he judges to be beneficial to those who are addressed, or to the discipline of his church?” Very well; agreed—but how much is this? So much, on your theory, and only so much, as the prophets themselves understood and intended; but so much, on mine, as the *actual facts* necessarily involve, and this undoubtedly was an amount vastly transcending the conscious design of the writers.

But I conclude with your conclusion, which, unless I am deceived, will be at once perceived to embody a far greater ‘mistake’—to use a very soft term—than that which you attribute to the opposite view:

“ Is it not then a great mistake to suppose, after the Gospel has been in existence for eighteen centuries, and Christianity been developing itself during all that period, that the more definite and extensive knowledge which we now have, or which is now attainable, is to be attributed to the ancient prophets, or is to be regarded as being comprised in an occult way in their predictions? And yet this mistake is every day coming before us. We are constantly meeting with books and sermons and pamphlets, which are attributing to ancient prophecies a pregnant sense that has been occult for some three thousand years, and assigning to them all the knowledge that we may now acquire, or have acquired. And all this, because Scripture must be made to mean all that it can mean, and dark prophecy must be illuminated, and can be explained, only by the occurrence of events predicted.”

But, my dear sir, this ‘more definite and extensive knowledge’ which ‘we’ now possess we do not attribute to the ancient prophets, notwithstanding we regard it as ‘comprised in an occult way in their predictions.’ The paragraph is constructed on a false assumption of your own, that it is necessary to assign to the prophets themselves all the knowledge that we may subsequently have acquired. We do no such thing. We simply affirm that they acted as amanuenses in describing, under divine dictation, in figurative and symbolical terms, a grand series of events of which they were not personally cognizant, and which we, from their having passed, for the most part, into accomplishment, are better qualified to understand and interpret than either the prophets themselves or their cotemporaries. How this theory is a fit subject of that tone of sarcastic disparagement which breathes through the above extract, I am unable to divine. Nor do I see any more ground for the following degrading comparison of the inspired seers to the heathen *μάντις*, on the asserted principle, that prophecy was often obscure to the prophets themselves.

“ Many of the ancient Christian Fathers made it a prominent ground of distinction between heathen oracles and real prophecies, that the latter were uttered by men conscious and cognizant of what they were uttering, while the former were announced by *μάντις*, whose own declara-

tions were often unintelligible to themselves. Is not this, now, a suggestion of good common sense? Why should we suppose, that the prophets were bereft of consciousness and reason, at the very time when they were the subjects of inspiration and *possessed a knowledge elevated above all which they had known before?* I cannot well conceive how any honor is to be done to revelation, by this way of explaining the inspiration of its authors. What can be the advantage which any one expects to be gained? Prediction must be intelligible, or else it does not concern those to whom it is addressed. The alleged obscurity in prophecy never could have originally existed. It is then, and only then, that we can be led to suppose that it exists, viz., when we attribute to ancient times and disclosures all the views which the gospel-day has disclosed to us."

Who supposes that the prophets were 'bereft of consciousness and reason' *at the time that they penned their predictions?* They were indeed, in many cases, rapt into a state of ecstasy, like Paul when caught up to the third heaven, while the prophetic visions were accorded to their spiritual eye; but who ever imagined from this that their predictions were actually indited during the continuance of this entranced condition of their faculties? It was after their recovery from this preternatural state that they assumed the pen and recorded what they beheld while the Spirit's illapse was upon them. How irrelevant and baseless then the arguments drawn from this source in respect to the necessarily *unintelligible* character of those predictions which are assumed to be *unintelligent?* The alleged obscurity of prophecy does not rest where you would place it, if it exists at all, upon the unconscious or insensate state of the prophets—for they were perfectly masters of themselves when they wrote—but upon the sovereign pleasure of the Most High, limiting and stinting the actual measure of what we may term the prophetic *clairvoyance* of his servants. I was for a long time baffled in the attempt to discover the real ultimate grounds of your rejection of the easy, natural, and eminently rational theory of Hengstenberg in regard to the mental condition of the prophets while under the divine afflatus—(not while writing) but the clew to the problem is afforded by what I now perceive to be your grand paralogism on the subject. Taking it for granted that the holy seers must have described their visions while in the very act of beholding them, and carrying continually along with you the postulate, that they must have distinctly *understood* and intended all that they uttered, and that *their* meaning was the absolute measure of the meaning of the Holy Ghost, it was indeed a very natural inference, that they could not be very intelligent organs of expressing such a meaning, when brought into a state in which the use of their faculties was in a degree suspended. And certainly, if that which is now intelligible to us, must necessarily have been intelligible to them, it would not be easy to gainsay your conclusion. But here, you perceive, is the very point on which the leading averments of your book are at issue with the scope of these letters, and I may say with the long established sentiments of the Christian world. The

great mass of serious reflecting minds will, I am confident, utterly refuse to grant what you have so complacently assumed as the basis of your whole reasoning on this theme, viz. that as the inspired prophets have uttered nothing which they did not themselves understand, and as speaking to men they must speak in intelligible language, therefore there is no obscurity in their predictions; none at least which the fulfilment will have any tendency to dispel; and of consequence all assertions to this effect are to be resolved into "the love of mystery, of something recondite and strange, or reluctance at the labor of acquiring sufficient knowledge to explain prophecies!" The logic and the charity of this conclusion I now leave to the verdict of the Christian community, simply remarking, that if that verdict shall leave your views unimpeached of any thing more than a harmless error of opinion, it will in my judgment evince a signal stretch of forbearance.

With much consideration,

Your friend and brother,

GEORGE BUSH.

THE JUDGMENT OF THE BEAST AND THE LITTLE HORN, SUCCEEDED BY THE EVERLASTING KINGDOM OF THE SAINTS.

EXPOSITION OF DANIEL VII. 9—23.

[CONTINUED.]

THE investigation thus far prosecuted has assured us, if we mistake not, of the true date of the *commencement* of that universal and eternal kingdom, which the Son of man received from the Ancient of days. Whatever else may be deemed uncertain in regard to the purport of the prophet's vision, we think there is no presumption in assuming, that the Saviour's ascension in the clouds of heaven was the primary and palmary event so strikingly shadowed forth in the imagery before us. It was then that he entered into his glory, then that he received the government upon his shoulders,—that government of the increase of which there should be no end. The '*coming* to the Ancient of days,' which the entranced seer beheld in vision, the witnesses of the ascension beheld in fact, so far at least as their limited ken could follow him.

Still the question remains, whether the prevailing doctrine of Christ and the apostles does not exhibit the term '*coming*' as conveying another sense, of which the evidence is equally decisive with the former. Does not the obvious import of language show that our Lord spake of the destruction of Jerusalem as his '*coming*,' and does not the sequel of the angel's exposition to Daniel inform us also of a '*coming*' at the close of the fourth empire

whose catastrophe is here depicted? To these questions we must answer in the affirmative, and the just demands of our theme will not be satisfied with any thing short of an accurate determination of the true sense of the term in these connexions. Let it be remarked, however, that the admission we have now made does not at all vacate the truth of the construction we have already put upon the term as pointing, in the first instance, to the Saviour's ascension to glory. Although the phrase may properly be applied to express what was, in fact, relative to the earth from which he took his departure, a *going to* the Father, yet nothing forbids the use of the same term in reference to a *coming*, in some sense, *from* the Father, provided the evidence of such a use of it be incontrovertibly made out. No necessary *conflict* can, in this case, be affirmed on this ground, between the usage in the one case and in the other. The fact of the usage is obviously the first thing to be presented to the reader, and here we are directed at once to the following passages: Mat. 16: 28: "Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man *coming* in his kingdom." In the parallel texts, Mark 9: 1, and Luke 9: 27, this 'coming' is predicated of the kingdom, instead of the *person of the king*. Mat. 26: 64, "Hereafter (*αὐτὸν ἄρτι* = *ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν* (Luke) i. e. immediately or shortly after this) ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and *coming* in the clouds of heaven." Luke 21: 27, "And then shall they see the Son of man *coming* in a cloud, with power and great glory," adding in the same connexion, verse 32, "this generation shall not pass away till all be fulfilled." There can be no question that the 'comings' mentioned in the two last cited texts refer to the same period, and indicate some kind of an advent which was to occur in the life-time of some of that generation. The expressions do not necessarily denote the *commencement* of the kingdom spoken of; for if Christ was to be seen *sitting at* the right hand of power, it implies that he had previously taken his seat; but denote rather a certain illustrious display and demonstration of his power and glory as already established. The inference is, we think, irresistible, that the phrase, 'coming' of the Son of man, is employed in these passages to designate an event which was to occur not long subsequent to his resurrection, and that the language points directly to the vision of Daniel, which was receiving at least an incipient accomplishment in this event.

The grand question in debate evidently concerns the *nature* of the 'coming' which was still future when announced by our Lord and his apostles. Was it to be *real* or *figurative*; or rather, was it to be *personal* or *spiritual*—a coming in *bodily presence*, or in *providential act*? On this head all doubt is of course precluded by the facts of history. The 'coming' of Christ in the visitation of Judea was not *personal* but *providential*. It was a

'coming' in *punitive power*, and the usage of the sacred writers in respect to this word evinces clearly, that no unwonted sense is ascribed to it in such an application. Thus, Ps. 101: 2, "When wilt thou *come* unto me?" i. e. appear for my deliverance. Isaiah 35: 4, "Behold, your God will *come* with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will *come* and save you." Isaiah 19: 1, "Behold, the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall *come* unto Egypt; and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence. Isaiah 26: 21, "Behold, the Lord *cometh* out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth." Psalms 96: 13, "The Lord *cometh* to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness." In these and multitudes of similar cases it is obvious that 'coming' is used to denote the *signal acts of Providence*. Such a 'coming' was that which took place at the destruction of Jerusalem. And we may advert in this connexion to a remarkable passage in Josephus, (J. W. Lib. 5. ch. 6,) where in the account of the siege of that city by the Romans, he informs us that whenever a stone was discharged against the walls from a peculiar kind of engine, the watchman on the walls gave the alarm, and cried out, 'Ὦ υἱὸς ἐρχέται, THE SON COMETH! The origin and import of this exclamation have baffled all the commentators. Whiston says, "What should be the meaning of this signal or watchword, or what mistake there is in the reading, I cannot tell. The MSS., both Greek and Latin, all agree in this reading, and I cannot approve of any groundless conjectural alteration of the text." For ourselves, we strongly incline to the opinion that God so ordered it in his providence, that the prediction of our Saviour, grounded upon the vision of Daniel, should have become current in the lips of that generation, they scarcely knew how, and thus have formed itself into a testimony which they were made to utter against themselves. History affords us numerous instances where, upon the eve of the fulfilment of signal prophecies of Scripture, similar vague and floating impressions to that effect have strangely become rife among those who were to witness it. Whether this, however, be the true solution of the fact or not, still the fact itself is palpable, and remains in some way to be accounted for.

We have thus, as we trust, established the position, that the phrase 'coming of Christ,' or 'coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven,' was used in the popular parlance of that age to signify that stupendous demonstration of the power and providence of the Messiah which was witnessed in the destruction of Jerusalem. We see, moreover, no room to question that this phraseology is to be traced back to the vision of Daniel, which we are now considering.

This was in fact a 'coming' which came to be considered as *characteristic* of the ascended and enthroned Messiah; and therefore in this view of the matter John says, Rev. 1: 7, "Behold, he

cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth (or land) shall wail because of him." If this book, as there is ample reason to believe, was written prior to the destruction of Jerusalem, we see no difficulty in applying this language to that, a long since past event. It is the mere echo of the numerous declarations of our Lord himself, that he would *come* during the life-time of that generation, and that the unbelieving Jews should both *see* his coming, not in person but in power, and should wail on account of it. Matt. 24: 30, "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth (the land) mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." This, it will be recollected, is the very event of which he says, that "this generation shall not pass away till all these things be fulfilled," and "there be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." With the burden of this awful and sublime intimation John's mind is full as he enters upon the inspired apocalypse of his glory, and therefore he bursts forth in the outset with a repetition of it, as if it were yet sounding in his ears from the utterance of the Lord's own lips. A recurrence to the passage in its connexions will evince that it comes abruptly forth from a spirit labouring under the apprehension of the transcendent dignity and majesty of the Personage of whom he writes, and of whom he could say nothing so worthy as to re-utter the announcement familiar to the ears of that generation: "Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him!" But as the 'coming' was not personal, so the 'seeing' could only be by the *mental* eye recognizing the indubitable signs and tokens of his stupendous operations. The very accompaniment of *clouds* by which this coming was to be distinguished, indicates a degree or species of *obscurity* contradistinguished from an open and visible apparition. A *clouded* coming is a *shrouded* coming, as far as the *person* of the comer is alluded to. If then the prophet of Patmos points us in these words to the very 'coming' which the Saviour himself announced as to occur not long subsequent to his resurrection, and if that assurance was actually verified to the men of that generation, then, as the 'seeing' in both cases must have been an *inward conviction—a realizing sense*—of the truth announced, so the remorseful 'wailing' in the once case must answer to the bitter 'mourning' in the other. And perhaps we are to recognize an *incipient* fulfilment of this oracle at a somewhat earlier date, although still subsequent to the Saviour's assumption of his glory, when it is said, Acts 2: 37, "Now when they heard this they were *pricked in their hearts*, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" But the prediction received a complete accomplishment in the wailings of unavailing

anguish, when the threatened wrath came upon them to the uttermost in the ruin of their city and polity.

And here we may inquire whether it is not to this same period that our Lord alludes, Matt. 23 : 38, 39, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." The common mode of interpretation regards these words as prophetically ascribed to the Jews at the future period of their conversion to Christianity. This is a very possible meaning, although we recollect no other passage in the Scriptures containing any thing of equivalent import, contrary to what seems to be the intimation of Isaiah 34 : 16, respecting important predictions, that "no one shall want its mate," i. e. its counterpart. If that be the sense, however, it must point to an epoch not far removed from the destruction of the fourth empire; for as the kingdom of Christ is then to become speedily universal, the conversion of the Jews must be anticipated of course. But the coming which will then be hailed in these words will be a *spiritual* and not a personal coming, as we shall hope to evince in the sequel. But may it not be spoken in reference to the judicial coming at the destruction of Jerusalem? It is doubtless an objection to this that the burden of the exclamation seems to be joyous and not grievous, and therefore less compatible with the nature and purposes of that event. We can suggest but one mode of obviating this objection, and it is very doubtful whether that is adequate to the exigency. The words themselves are a quotation from the 118th Psalm, the drift of which is to set forth the exaltation and power conferred upon Christ as the Stone which the builders rejected, but which was made the head of the corner. It is evidently a song of triumph, and our Lord undoubtedly appropriates it to its true-meant occasion by putting it into the lips of those who should acknowledge his entrance upon his predicted glory at his resurrection, and upon that as the day which the Lord had made, and in which they were to rejoice and be glad. Accordingly in the "Save now" (הוֹשִׁיָּעָנוּ ה' הוֹשִׁיָּעָנוּ *hoshiah nah*) we read the *hosannah* which a short time before had greeted his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, Mat. 21 : 9; when the multitudes strewed branches in the way, and cried out, "Hosannah to the Son of David; blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." He here teaches that that language should be still more appropriately used of another event shortly to occur; and though it were true that to many of the nation that would not be a joyful event, yet to many even of those that were now unbelieving it would, and therefore without discrimination he applies it to the whole. On the whole, we think its application to the figurative coming of the destruction of Jerusalem is the true application.

As the result then of our investigations thus far, we have reached, if we mistake not, the fair and unimpeachable conclusion, that

the phrase 'coming of Christ,' or 'coming of the Son of man,' is used in a large class of passages in reference to the judicial visitation of the Jewish people, and the destruction of their city and their economy.

A question of the gravest moment now arises, whether this phraseology is employed to denote still *another* and a personal coming of Christ at some period yet future, and synchronical with the end of the world and the final judgment, as these events have been and still are popularly apprehended by the greater portion of Christians. It is, we believe, very generally admitted, that the catastrophe of the Jewish nation is actually expressed by the term 'coming,' in the predictions already quoted of our Saviour relative to that event. But it is held, for the most part, that in addition to this primary and more obvious meaning of the oracle, there is also involved a secondary and ultimate prediction of the events of the last day, or what is usually termed the *final consummation*. It is supposed that the first event is a species of type of the second, and that the language uttered by our Lord has a kind of swelling fulness of import by which it imperceptibly flows over, as it were, from the one fulfilment to the other; just as it is held, by the same class of interpreters, that the predictions relative to the return of captive Israel from Babylon point typically forward to a future similar restoration from a long continued exile over the face of the earth. We are not prepared to deny the truth of the *principle* assumed in this interpretation, and yet we believe it leaves the subject encompassed with great difficulties. No one has yet succeeded in clearly showing the line of demarcation between the expressions that relate to the one and the other of these events. So inextricably is the one class of predictions blended and complicated with the other, that we are prompted to invoke the aid of some Daniel—some 'shewer of hard sentences and dissolver of doubts,' to enucleate the intractable enigmas which continue to baffle our most rigid scrutiny. With respect to many portions of the announcements we have no difficulty, because the contemporaneous history of Josephus assures us that they were actually fulfilled in the siege and the sack of Jerusalem; but when the catalogue of omens and ills is completed, many of which *appear* to be by far too stupendous to have been realized on that occasion, we are suddenly confronted by the declaration, "Verily I say unto you, *This generation* shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled." These words constitute the heart of the mystery which it is so difficult to solve; and yet unless it be solved, and made to harmonize with the general tenor of the oracle, we feel that we have not mastered its true import as a whole. Upon this question we propose to enter at length in the course of the present exposition, but as it comes in more suitably under a subsequent verse, we defer the consideration of it till we reach its appropriate place.

His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. As in the former clause we have the announced *universality* of the Messiah's kingdom, so here we have the assurance of its *perpetuity*. Unlike the transient dominions which preceded it, this is to be a sovereignty which shall never cease. In other words, its duration is *indefinite*. The Most High has not seen fit to limit its period by any express revelation. He has simply declared, that, in marked contrast with the worldly empires which it supplants, it shall be beyond the reach of all those causes which weakened, wasted, and destroyed its predecessors. No conquest from without, no revolution from within, shall ever disturb its immovable permanence. At the same time, it is to be remarked, that inasmuch as the kingdom here spoken of is a kingdom established *among mortal men on the earth*, it is reasonable to infer, that its ulterior destinies are to be governed by the destinies of the race and the globe which form its theatre. If the terrestrial scene of its first establishment is eventually to be done away, or the race of men on earth to come to an end, it is certain that this kingdom will undergo a vast change in its form and administration, although it does not necessarily follow that such a change should involve its termination. It may still be eternal, though transferred to some other region of the universe. But as the general scope of revelation has respect for the most part to a glorious consummation of Christ's kingdom on earth, to which no end is expressly announced, we think it the sounder interpretation to understand '*everlasting*' in this connexion as equivalent to *indefinitely enduring*. As to any limitation founded upon the Apostle's words, 1 Cor. 15: 24, in respect to Christ's 'delivering up the kingdom to the Father,' we shall endeavour to show in the sequel that the sense usually put upon that passage is not only in direct antagonism with the drift of Paul's reasoning, and with the whole scope of revelation in regard to the Messiah's kingship, but that it is unsustained by a fair grammatical construction of the words themselves. We simply remark farther on the present passage, that the duplication of its leading sentiment under the terms שֹׁלְטָן *sultany*, the appropriate designation of supreme power in the East, and מְלִכּוּת the more familiar word for the same idea as prevalent in the West, may be intended to convey, in latent form, the intimation, that this predicted spiritual sovereignty should be perpetual as embracing both those grand divisions of the globe. The usage in respect to the verbs here employed, will exhibit the designed contrast between the *transitory* nature of the former worldly kingdoms and the unassailable *stability* of the Messiah's here predicted. Dan. 2: 21, "And he changeth the times and the seasons; he removeth (מְהַדְּרֵהוּ) kings, and setteth up kings." Dan. 4: 31, "O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken: The kingdom is departed (נִטְרָה) from thee." Dan. 8: 12, "According to the

law of the Medes and Persians which *altereth* (אֲחַדָּה) not;” i. e. which passeth not away. The leading idea will be seen to be that of *translation of imperial power*, and that as the result of *foreign aggression*. The other term rendered ‘destroy’ is הִחָבֵל which in the Ithpael form, here occurring, has the import of *corrupting, spoiling, going to decay* by a self-acting process. The corresponding Greek term *διαφθορήσεται* has the same sense. The twofold idea, therefore, of security from harm by *foreign assault*, and by *intestine dissolution*, is clearly conveyed by the words of the text.

Ver. 15, 16.

CHAL.

אֲחַפְּרִית רִחוּי אֲנִי דְנִיָּאֵל בְּגוּי
 מִדְּבַר וְחֻזִּי רֵאשִׁי יִבְהַלְפְּנִי :
 קָרִיבַת עַל־יָד מִן־קְאֻמְיָא וְיִצִּיבָא
 אֲבֵעָא מִיָּחָא עַל־פְּלִדְנָה וְיִאֲמַרְלִי
 וְיַפְשֵׁר מִלִּפְּיָא יְחֻד־עֲבָרִי :

ENG. VERB.

I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of *my* body, and the visions of my head troubled me.

I came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things.

GR. OF THEOD.

Ἐφριξε τὸ πνεῦμά μου ἐγὼ Δα-
 νιήλ ἐν τῇ ἔξει μου, καὶ αἱ ὁράσεις
 τῆς κεφαλῆς μου ἐτάρασσόν με.

Καὶ προσῆλθον ἐνὶ τῶν ἐσηκό-
 των, καὶ τὴν ἀκριβείαν ἐζήτησαν
 παρ’ αὐτοῦ μαθεῖν περὶ πάντων
 τούτων· καὶ ἐπέ μοι τὴν ἀκρι-
 βείαν, καὶ τὴν σύγκρισιν τῶν λόγων
 ἐγνώρισέ μοι.

LAT. VULG.

Horruit spiritus meus, ego Daniel
 territus sum in his, et visiones capi-
 tis mei conturbaverunt me.

Accessi ad unum de assistantibus,
 et veritatem quærebam ab eo de
 omnibus his. Qui dixit mihi inter-
 pretationem sermonum, et docuit
 me.

I Daniel was grieved in my spirit. The original word for ‘grieved’ (אֲחַפְּרִית) comes from a root פָּרַח, of which the sense in Ithpael is to affect with violent grief. It is a term of more than usual intensity of import, expressing a high degree of mental perturbation and distress. Its primitive sense is that of *shortening the breath*, equivalent to the Heb. קָצַר which is applied to vehement emotions of mind from their effect upon the respiration, as in Num. 24: 4, 5, (comp. Syr. 1 Sam. 1: 6. Job 6: 27. Mat. 14 9. Rom. 9: 2. 2 Cor. 2: 4, 5.) The Greek of the LXX. renders it by ἀκηδιάσας, which is defined by the Latin *ingenti mærore affici, gravissime angī, to be affected by extreme grief*. Hesychius however makes ἀκηδία synonymous with ἀλογί and ἀδημονία, implying *deep depression of spirit*, and this is perhaps the sense most appropriate to the present connexion, implying a degree of mental dejection, which sensibly affected his body, as is to be inferred from what follows in the ensuing clause. The spirit of the prophet was troubled and oppressed by the character of the objects exhibited in

the vision, particularly the terrific actings of the fourth Beast and the Little Horn, which portended a scene of exquisite suffering to the people of God ; and he was moreover wearied and vexed in mind from his abortive attempts to unriddle the mystic scenery and comprehend the true burden of the symbols. Upon a subsequent occasion, ch. 8 : 27, he informs us that the revelations vouchsafed to him had such an effect upon his physical system, that he “ fainted and was sick certain days ;” and again, chap. 10 : 8, “ I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me ; for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength.” John also, in the Apocalypse, ch. 5 : 8, betrays a similar corroding anxiety, by which he was even moved to tears, when no one was found worthy to loose the seals of the mystic book. Indeed it would seem that the prophetic spirit wrought usually with such energy as to produce the most marked effects upon the bodily frame. Thus, Jer. 23 : 9, “ Mine heart within me is broken because of the prophets ; all my bones shake ; I am like a drunken man, and like a man whom wine hath overcome, because of the Lord, and because of the word of his holiness.”

The prophet was indeed still in the state of ecstasy or trance, and the perturbation was as much a part of the vision as the cause of it. This is evident from his applying himself to one of the imaginary actors in the scene, which of course is inconsistent with the idea of his being awake. Yet the described effect produced upon his mind and his body seems to intimate the weight and importance of the subject matter of the *visa* of the dream, and should tend to beget a profound reverence in us of the mysteries thus sublimely shadowed forth.

In the midst [of my body, Chal. בְּנוֹ נִרְיָהּ in the midst of my sheath, a figurative expression for the body, from its being to the soul what the sheath is to the sword. See note on Gen. 6 : 3, where this phraseology is fully illustrated. Gesenius compares Job 27 : 8, “ When God taketh away his soul (וַיִּשָׁל נַפְשׁוֹ),” i. e. as a man draws a sword out of its sheath, implying a sudden and violent kind of death. In the Rabbinical work entitled Sanhedrim, fol. 108, 1, we meet with a similar expression, חָזַק נִשְׁמַח הַזּוֹרֵחַ לְנִרְיָהּ, *turn not back their breath to their sheath.* The LXX. render it as if by a wrong reading *ἐν τοῖς, in or by these things,* which is followed by the Vulg. ‘territus in his.’ Theodotion has *ἐν τῇ ἔξει μου, in my habitude.*

The visions of my head troubled me. The original word implies, in its primitive physical sense, that peculiar kind of *tumultuous agitation* which would be a very suitable term by which to express the high-wrought mental excitement naturally produced by the visionary scenery which the prophet describes. Accompanied as it was with the inward persuasion, that realities of the most momentous import were shrouded under these mystic *simulacra*, the vision could not but throw the mind of the seer into a tempest of emo-

tion, which could only be calmed by a satisfactory solution of the mysteries exhibited. How does our own heedless and dispassionate survey of these prophetic intimations stand rebuked by the earnest and corroding anxiety of the prophet to grasp the burden of their solemn significance! How little sympathy do we evince with his laboring spirit in view of these symbolic revelations! How seldom are we 'troubled' with him in the effort to penetrate the central purport of disclosures which are actually being realized in the daily transpiring events of Providence—events to which it would seem that we could only be insensible by closing the eyes of our understanding!

I came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. That is, the meaning, significance, purport of the visionary scene which he had been contemplating. The original *מַצִּיבָה* from a root signifying to *stand firmly*, and thence to *fix, establish, make sure in its place*, denotes something of *established certainty and truth*, something which may be *relied upon as veritable, substantial, and real*, and is therefore well applied to denote the *essential and realized truth and substance* of a prophetic mystery. As Daniel's own thoughts, however anxiously exercised upon the subject, had failed to satisfy him as to the hidden import of these symbolical transactions, he has recourse to one of the unnumbered throng of angelic attendants standing near the throne, to act the hierophant and give him the information which he so earnestly coveted. We find the prophets in other instances resorting to hierophantic interpreters to obtain a solution of mystic phenomena. Thus, Zech. 4 : 4, "So I answered and spake to the angel that talked with me, saying, What are these, my lord?" Ezek. 37 : 3, "And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord God, thou knowest." Rev. 7 : 13, 14, "And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are those which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest; and he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation," &c. If, as Daubuz suggests, the prophets in the reception of their symbolic revelations sustain typically the persons of the saints, the mass of the church, to whom these shrouded events are imparted, then we may read in this incident the duty of those whose spirits labor to comprehend the burdens of prophecy to have recourse to official teachers, those 'angels of the churches,' to unfold to them the latent import of those obscure predictions which may tend to subserve their edification, if not to direct their efforts. On the same grounds we recognize a corresponding duty on the part of the ministers of the word to inform themselves on these mysteries, that they may be able duly to unfold their drift to anxious inquirers.

So he told me, and made me to know the interpretation of the things, Chal. *וְנָתַתְּ לִי וְיַשֵּׁר מִלִּי וְרוּחְ עֲנִי*, and he spake with me and

made me to know the interpretation of the things. According to the rendering of our version it is scarcely possible to perceive a distinction in the phrases 'told me' and 'made me to know.' But the distinction is sufficiently obvious in the original, where the import of *אָמַר לִי* seems to be justly expressed by Luther, *Er redet mit mir, he spake with me*; i. e. instead of rudely repelling him, as if urging with indecorous importunity an irrelevant inquiry, he kindly listened to his suit, and vouchsafed a full reply. As the prophet evinced a humble and docile mind, he was met by a corresponding urbanity of response, and an adequate solution of the enigmas with which his spirit laboured. The ministering servants of Christ, the appointed stewards of the mysteries of the kingdom, can scarcely fail to read in this incident a lesson of condescending regard to the mental cravings of those who would fain be instructed in the arcana of revelation.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

THE EXEGETE, NO. II.

JOSH. iii, 11: *Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth passeth on before you into Jordan.*

It is a fact not a little remarkable and but little known, that the rendering of this passage in the original edition of our English Bible, published by authority of King James in 1611, differs materially from that given above. It there reads thus:—"Behold, the ark of the covenant, *even* the Lord of all the earth, passeth on before you into Jordan." This reading continued through a number of successive editions till somewhere between 1630 and 1650, when it entirely disappeared; having been displaced by the present version. To whose instance or authority the alteration was owing, it is now impossible to determine. It probably came into the established text under some general and thoroughgoing revision, which appears to have been instituted about twenty-five or thirty years after the date of King James's translation, the traces of which are abundantly evident to any who undertakes, as we did a few years since, a close collation of the series of editions. Which of the two is the most correct reading of the original Hebrew, it is not easy to affirm. According to the accents, which have great authority with the Jewish critics, the latter is nearer the truth;—"The ark of the covenant, *even* the Lord of all the earth." This is doubtless confirmed by other passages in which the divine titles are conferred upon certain representative symbols, and particularly upon the ark of the covenant, as 2 Sam. 6: 2, "And David arose, and went with all the people that were with him from Baale of Judah, to bring up from thence the ark of God, *whose name is called by the name of the Lord of hosts* that dwelleth between the cherubims." The question however has mainly to be determined by determining the authority of

the Hebrew accents as the criteria of the sense; and this is a point which the results of Biblical philology have not yet definitively settled.

B.

NOTICES OF NEW PUBLICATIONS.

In Jobi Locum Celeberrimum Cap. XIX. 25—27. de Goële Commentatio Philologico-Historica. Auctore JOANNE GUSTAVO STICHEL, Jenæ, 1833.

THIS is the title of a small volume which we have lately received from Germany, devoted to the examination of the well known passage in Job in which he asserts his conviction that his Redeemer liveth, and that he will stand in the latter day upon the earth. The writer goes, in the first instance, into a most elaborate review of all the ancient versions, Greek, Chaldaic, and Arabic, and thus presents the reader with a connected history of the interpretation of the passage. The result of the investigation is a decided balance of testimony from this source *against* the construction which makes this a prophecy of the Messiah, or an avowal of the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. The same view, according to Mr. Noyes in his translation of Job, has been taken of the passage by about one half of the most esteemed commentators of the last three hundred years. He then enters upon a most minute critical examination of the words and phrases of the original, from which he comes to the same conclusion, viz., that the scope of the writer's words is to affirm his confident assurance of a *temporal* deliverance from his present multiform calamities, and a triumphant vindication of his character and conduct by a Divine Goel or Redeemer. The event more especially alluded to he supposes to be announced ch. 42 : 5, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee."

The work, though coming from a source which evangelical Christians feel constrained to eye somewhat suspiciously, is yet distinguished by a vein of candid and truth-loving research, far removed from the one-sided plausibility of a mere special pleader. The treatise well deserves a translation into English, which we should be much disposed to undertake did the pressure of other engagements allow.

B.

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