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ARTICLE V.

EXPOSITION OF ZECHARIAH XIV.

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FROM the earliest ages of the church, commentators have widely differed on the question, whether a literal or a spiritual interpretation is to be given to those prophecies which relate to the establishment, perpetuity, and glory of the Messiah's kingdom on earth. It has been maintained by many, that the victory of Christ over his enemies, and his enthronement as King in Jerusalem, the burden of so many predictions, are to be regarded as literal verities, essential to the glory of his reign and the restoration of this earth to its true primeval blessedness. To explain these prophecies as referring to the spiritual dominion of Christ, and the enlargement and prosperity of the church, is, in their estimation, to detract from the honor of the Redeemer, and deprive the church of her chief and crowning glory.

We must not suppose that this literal interpretation of prophecy is confined to those only, whose distempered fancy delights to dwell on the regal splendors of the Messianic reign on earth. Some of the ablest writers, from the times of Irenaeus and Lactantius, have advocated the personal reign of Christ at Jerusalem, into which city, as the seat of his court and the metropolis of the world, kings are to bring their tribute, and the pious of all lands their votive offerings. Not a few have supposed that the earth itself, now cursed with comparative sterility, will be so renovated as even to surpass its fertility before the fall of man. Thus Irenaeus, in order to show that the promises and predictions of both the Old and New Testaments have respect to this glorious consummation, appeals to what certain presbyters related as having themselves heard from the apostle John, that Christ

himself, when speaking of his earthly and visible reign, said to his apostles: "The days will come when vines will grow, each bearing ten thousand branches, and on each branch there will be ten thousand twigs, and on each twig ten thousand clusters of grapes, and in each cluster ten thousand grapes, and each grape, when expressed, will yield twenty-five *μετρήται* of wine [*i. e.*, about two hundred and nine gallons]. And when any one of the saints shall take hold of a cluster of grapes, another [cluster] will cry out: 'I am a better cluster; take me, and on my account give thanks unto the Lord'" (Iren. cont. Hæc. Lib. v. 33). According to this prediction, each grape-vine will produce wine to the amount of one hundred and eighty thousand billions of gallons. Irenæus also, to the same point, cites a passage from Papias, who flourished A. D. 100, and who wrote a work entitled *Λογίων κυριακῶν Ἐξεγήσεις*, the purport of which is this: "In like manner a grain of wheat will produce ten thousand heads, and each head will bear ten thousand grains, and each grain will yield ten pounds of clear white flour; and other fruits will yield seeds and herbage in the same proportion."¹ Such was to be the fertility of the earth during this *chiliasm* of Christ's terrestrial reign.

In proof of Christ's personal reign at Jerusalem, no prediction is cited with more confidence than the fourteenth chapter of Zechariah. It is maintained that the battle between Jehovah and his enemies, with which the prophecy opens, will be as real and visible to the eye as that of Austerlitz or Solferino, and a thousand times more desperate and sanguinary. In this great conflict which is to take place at Jerusalem, according to the terms of the prophecy, the enemies of truth are to be at first successful. The city is to be taken, the houses plundered, the women ravished, and the captives, gathered in bands, to be led into hopeless exile and servitude. At this crisis, Messiah is to be revealed from heaven in great pomp and majesty (vs. 3, 4), and, placing himself at the head of his people, is to rout with tre-

¹ For both these citations the writer is indebted to Professor Stuart.

mendous slaughter the hosts of the enemy, fighting against them in person, "as when he fought in the day of battle," that is, in the battle of Joshua with the five kings, when Jehovah cast down great stones from heaven, so that more died with hailstones than were slain by the children of Israel with the sword (Josh. 10 : 10, 11). While the battle is thus raging, and the sword of Messiah is bathed in the blood of his enemies, mighty convulsions are to shake the land, rending asunder the Mount of Olives, on which the feet of Christ were first planted in his descent from the skies; before which dread phenomena the saints themselves, while flushed with so unexpected a victory, are to flee in dismay (ver. 5), as the people fled before the earthquake, in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah. At the time of this visible advent of Christ, and these convulsions of nature, the most eminent of the pious dead, the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, and confessors of the past, are to come forth from their graves (ver. 5, end) and live again on earth, constituting the court and nobility of the Messianic empire then to commence at Jerusalem. Perennial streams (ver. 8) are to flow forth from the city in a twofold direction, the one stream eastward, into the "former sea" (*i. e.*, the Dead Sea); the other westward, into the "hinder sea" (*i. e.*, the Mediterranean); thus by navigable waters connecting Jerusalem, on the one hand, with Europe and America, and on the other with the great and opulent East, making it the commercial emporium of the world, into which as the royal city of the Messianic reign, kings are to bring their wealth, and all the families of the earth resort to keep the yearly feast of tabernacles (vs. 16—19).

To the eye of sense this is a beautiful and impressive picture. Few persons will acknowledge themselves to be wholly insensible to a theory of interpretation which enthrones Jesus of Nazareth, as monarch of the world, in the very city where he was rejected and put to a cruel and ignominious death. It is surely no ungrateful exposition of scripture which restores this earth to more than its primeval beauty and fruitfulness, making it almost spontaneously to yield,

in overflowing abundance, what has now, in stinted measure, to be obtained by patient and unremitted toil.

There are, however, insuperable difficulties in the way of this literal interpretation of the prophecy. Let it be granted that a physical convulsion of the kind here spoken of is to take place, and that Jerusalem is to become the imperial city of the Messianic empire and the commercial metropolis of the world, how is the prediction in verses sixteenth and seventeenth to be literally fulfilled? What must be the area of a city, within which all the families of the earth are to meet in yearly convocation, to keep a feast, which, of all the Jewish festivals, required space for its due observance, namely, the *feast of tabernacles* or *booths*, during which the people dwelt in booths of green boughs, erected upon the roofs and in the streets, in commemoration of the wanderings of the tribes in the wilderness? Palestine itself would not suffice for the resting-place of such countless numbers. Equally impossible would it be for the whole human family, from regions remote as well as near, to make a yearly pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and yet attend to the vocations from which they obtained their livelihood. The navies of the earth, increased a thousand-fold, would prove insufficient to transport such masses to Palestine; and even if the means of conveyance were adequate, confusion and disorder would necessarily result from the assemblage of such large and heterogeneous numbers, destructive of all orderly and intelligent worship.

Dr. Henderson seeks to avoid this objection to the literal fulfilment of the prediction, by making it a representative gathering of the families of the earth at Jerusalem. This, so far as the language of the prophecy is concerned, would be admissible. But a feature would thereby be introduced into this prophetic festival, for which no license can be drawn from any of the Mosaic festivals. We find no instance in which the national feasts were kept by representatives from various parts of the land, nor any provision in the Mosaic code for such an arrangement. As an additional objection to such an interpretation, it may be argued that the feast of tabernacles, of all others, would be least suited to

a representative celebration. Like our thanksgiving festival, between which and the feast of tabernacles there are striking points of resemblance, it was admirably adapted to bring whole families together before the Lord at Jerusalem; and although it was, perhaps, not so universally attended as the passover, especially in times of national declension from the worship of Jehovah, yet those who resorted to Jerusalem for its observance, went up in families (see John 7: 10), and not by representatives. Unless we find, therefore, as we surely do not, some divine intimation to the contrary, this feature of the Mosaic feast of tabernacles must be retained in the prophetic festival of Zechariah.

But a physical impossibility is not the only objection to this annual convocation of all the families of the earth at Jerusalem. Any interpretation which makes Jerusalem, or any other city or place, the chief and indispensable centre of worship, is plainly antagonistic to our Lord's declaration to the woman of Samaria, that in the Messianic times, worship was not to be exclusively confined to Mount Gerizim or Jerusalem, inasmuch as the worship of God was to be spiritual and universal, and not ceremonial and local. This utterance of Christ is the more pertinent to the question as to the ecclesiastical supremacy of Jerusalem in the time of the church's prosperity, from the fact that it was his manifest purpose to pronounce a general dispensation from all obligation, both then and thereafter, to resort to Jerusalem to render acceptable worship to God. Forms and ceremonies, apart from such as are required for orderly religious worship, were no longer to be substituted for that true spiritual devotion which has its seat in the renewed and sanctified heart. The Mount Zion of Judea, at the fiat of its King, from that moment, ceased to tower above other eminences as the sacred hill of God (Ps. 68: 15); and the mountain of the Lord's house, which was to be established in the tops of the mountains, and exalted above the hills, and into which all nations were to flow (Isa. 2: 2; Mic. 4: 1), was to be henceforth the spiritual Zion, the church of the living God, gathered from among men, according to the terms and promise of the new covenant (Heb. 12: 22—24).

Our Lord avowed to Pilate that his kingdom was not of this world (John 18 : 36) ; that is, it was not of human origin, had its seat in no regal city of the earth, was not supported by standing armies, nor graced with the appendages and ornaments of earthly royalty. It was spiritual and not temporal, heavenly and not earthly. This declaration of our Lord is at utter variance with his enthronement as a temporal sovereign at Jerusalem, and the personal homage to be annually rendered him by all the families of the earth in the city of his royal abode. The point upon which he insisted most strongly, in the days of his incarnation, was the spiritual nature of his mission, in opposition to the Jewish notion of a temporal Messiah. Paul, in express terms (Rom. 14 : 17), rebukes this erroneous conception, which, to some extent, was then prevalent in the church. He declares that "the kingdom of God is not meat and drink [that is, it does not consist in external forms, or the material objects of sense], but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost," that is, its dominion is in the hearts of men.

It seems then incontrovertible, that a spiritual interpretation must be affixed to this yearly gathering of the families of the earth at Jerusalem. This furnishes conclusive proof that a spiritual significancy is to be attached to the rest of the prophecy, unless we mingle the symbolical and literal, the figurative and plain, the spiritual and temporal, in defiance of all sound hermeneutical principles.

Another objection to the literal interpretation of this prophecy, so far at least as it is supposed to pertain to the personal advent of Christ to reign at Jerusalem, arises from what is called the *analogy of faith*. Ernesti well remarks, that "the analogy of scripture doctrine should be always before our eyes, so that the interpretation may be guided by it ; *i. e.*, that it may be so far guided by it, as that no explanation contrary to it should be adopted ; and in obscure phrases, when the meaning may be doubtful, the sense may be accommodated to the analogy of scripture sentiment." Now, we venture to assert that a personal advent of Jesus Christ, such as is claimed to be taught in the prediction

before us, is not only revealed nowhere else in the Bible, but by implication, at least, is denied in various passages where his future coming is referred to. It is thought by some able scholars, that our Lord will revisit this earth prior to the day of final judgment—which Olshausen, Stier, Alford, and some other recent commentators, refer to *πάντα τὰ ἔθνη* as distinguished from the elect (*ἐκλεκτοί*), or covenanted servants of Christ, who, according to their eschatology, have been previously raised and judged, and are already in glory, and judging the world with him—and, surrounded by his chosen people, will celebrate the *marriage supper of the Lamb*, and confirm to his elect their promised inheritance. But the scriptures seem to us to furnish no evidence whatever, that there will be two future comings of Christ. One great and final Parousia is spoken of, and that is all. In a subordinate sense, he was to come for the destruction of Jerusalem, that event being symbolical of the final destruction of his enemies at the judgment of the last day. He is also said to come to his people at the hour of their death: “Be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh.” And again: “If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am there ye may be also.” His spiritual presence is also promised to his people: “I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you” (John 14:18). That this is the coming of Christ by his Spirit, is not only evident from the preceding context, but also from v. 23, where the promised coming of the Father and Son, in the nature of the case, must be a spiritual one. But no personal, visible advent is anywhere spoken of other than the great Parousia, when “He shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thess. 1:7, 8).

Numerous texts might be cited in proof that this is the sole as well as final coming of Christ. A reference to one passage will suffice for our present purpose. In Peter’s address to the people in Solomon’s porch, he speaks of Jesus

Christ in this wise: "Whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." It is strange that a text, which bears such unequivocal testimony to but one future coming of Christ, should have been seized upon by millenarians in proof of their views. Yet so it has been. By referring the "restitution of all things" to the millennium, or thousand years of Satan's confinement in the abyss, they make the commencement of this period the time of the *parousia* here spoken of. But this *restitution of all things* occupies a position in the history of human redemption far beyond the epoch designated as the millennium. It is the closing up of the series of providential economies and remedial agencies, which began with the disarrangement of the moral universe by sin. When, at the judgment of the great day — to which Jude says that the angels who kept not their first estate are reserved — Death and Hades shall have been cast into the lake of fire, and when Christ has reigned until he has put all enemies under his feet, he shall then deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father (1 Cor. 15: 24, 25). The redemptive work, for which he became incarnate, will have been completed; the breach which sin made upon the happiness of the moral universe, will have been repaired; the redeemed of the Lord will all have been gathered in, the holy angels confirmed in their obedience, and the wicked and fallen spirits consigned to their own place and to the full measure of their punishment. All things will be restored to their order and stability. The moral government of God will be vindicated, and no inroad of sin will ever again disturb the happiness of the blessed. To this final consummation the declaration of Peter refers. The heavens must receive and retain Christ until this time of final readjustment of things; that is, until the judgment of the great day. This great text, therefore, when properly interpreted, is decidedly opposed to any future advent of Christ prior to his appearance as Judge of mankind.

Equally silent, if not as directly antagonistic, are the scriptures in regard to the concomitants of Christ's advent to

reign at Jerusalem, such as the resurrection of the eminent dead, to live and reign with him during this millennium of his earthly glory. Aside from Zech. 14:5, "And the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee" (to which we shall refer more fully in the sequel), there is, so far as we know, but a single passage where the slightest allusion seems to be had to any such resurrection of the pious dead. They are uniformly represented as reposing in the grave, undisturbed by any of the events which affect the living, and awaiting their last change. Martha gave utterance to the common sentiment of the pious Jew, when, in reply to our Lord's declaration that her brother should rise again, she said, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection, at the last day." Paul speaks more fully in his first epistle to the Thessalonians, than anywhere else, of the second coming of Christ, and of the final resurrection, yet makes not the slightest allusion to any such resurrection and reappearance of the saints on earth as is claimed by the Second Adventists. Indeed, the terms in which he speaks of the advent of Christ and its attending circumstances, are decidedly adverse to any such view.

The single passage to which allusion has been made as seeming to favor the reappearance of Christ and his saints on earth, is Rev. 20:4, "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them; and I saw the souls of them who were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." It cannot be denied that this is a clear prediction of the resurrection of a part, if not all, of the pious dead to an exalted station of glory with Jesus Christ; but it appears, when carefully examined, to refer to a very different state of things from that which millenarians profess to find in it.

Where is the locality of this martyr-reign? Not on earth, assuredly; for the subjects of this first resurrection (*ἡ ἀνάστασις ἡ πρώτη*, ver. 5) live and reign with Christ, not he with them. But where is Christ at this time? Has John

informed us, anywhere, that his dwelling is with men? No; but, on the contrary, throughout the whole apocalyptic vision, his abode is in heaven. Not the slightest intimation is given that he has descended to dwell again in visible form on earth. He appears (19: 11—21) as the great Captain of salvation, the Faithful and True, to make war upon the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies; but to assume that this is a literal battle on earth between Christ and his enemies, is taking for granted the very question in dispute, and is at variance with the language of the passage, which is manifestly symbolical. No one would think of affixing a literal interpretation to the sword which proceeds from the mouth of the warrior upon the white horse, or to the iron rod with which he is to rule the nations, or to the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God, which he is to tread in this day of vengeance and recompense. Why, then, interpret literally his encounter with the beast and the kings of the earth? It seems to be a clear departure from the soundest principles of interpretation, in the midst of so much that is purely symbolical, to refer this to a literal descent of Messiah from heaven, to fight in person the great battle which is to end in the discomfiture of his enemies. It is in heaven, then, where Christ is, that this martyr-enthronement is to take place. How can this text, then, be advanced in proof that the re-appearance of Christ on earth, surrounded by the martyrs and confessors whom he has restored to life, is that which is predicted in this prophecy of Zechariah?

We are not unaware that many respectable commentators, who have no affinities with millenarianism, make this earth the seat of the martyr-reign, which they refer to the martyr-spirit that shall pervade and animate the church during the period of her millennial glory. The presence of Christ they also interpret as spiritual. But this hardly satisfies the demands of the passage, which seems, beyond all question, to refer to the actual vision and enjoyment of Christ, vouchsafed previous to the general resurrection to the most eminent of the pious dead.

In the consideration of Rev. 20: 4, we have thus far

proceeded on the assumption, that the thousand years of the martyr-reign synchronize with the thousand years in which Satan is bound and shut up in the abyss. But it seems to be susceptible of satisfactory proof, that the thousand years of Satan's confinement and the thousand years of the martyr-reign are by no means contemporaneous. This might be inferred from the order of the events and grammatical construction of the passage, apart from the light thrown upon this martyr-resurrection from other portions of scripture. The clauses are progressive. The binding, confinement, and loosing of the arch-enemy, and the enthronement of the martyrs, are all presented in natural order. There is no blending of events, no confusion in the vision, no retrogradation of the prophetic path once travelled over. The eye of the apocalypticist, purified by the Spirit of inspiration, gazes upon the far distant future, until his vision is overpowered with the dazzling glories of the heavenly world. His rapt spirit does not permit him to pause upon the events, which lie between these great mountain-ranges of prophecy. It is not until v. 7, that we find an expansion and more particular description of the great epochs, which are made to pass so rapidly before the eye of the reader.

We are further confirmed in our belief that two epochs are referred to, by the absence of the article in the *χίλια ἔτη* of v. 4. Had this *χίλια ἔτη* been identical with the *χίλια ἔτη* of v. 2, according to Greek usage, the article would have been prefixed, as it is in v. 3, and afterwards in vs. 5, 7. The *χίλια ἔτη* in v. 2, is introduced without the article; but when repeated, as it is in vs. 3, 7, it takes the article. In like manner, the *χίλια ἔτη* of v. 4, being a new and distinct era, rejects the article, but when repeated in v. 5, takes it, according to general usage. In v. 6, *χίλια ἔτη*, although referring to the *χίλια ἔτη* of v. 4, is without the article, being, as Bengel says, "quasi elogio seorsum posito," *as though a separate enunciation*. The absence of the article in v. 4, authorizes us, therefore, to regard the *χίλια ἔτη* there spoken of as a distinct epoch from the thousand years of Satan's confinement in the bottomless abyss. We are aware that

in some editions the article is prefixed to *χίλια ἔτη* in v. 4 ; but the authorities, so far as we have been able to consult them, greatly preponderate in favor of its omission.

What, then, is the order of events here spoken of? In the foreground are the binding of Satan and the spiritual renovation of the earth. This state of things is to continue a thousand years, at the expiration of which period, an awful and wide-spread apostasy takes place, the devil being “loosed for a little season.” This epoch of iniquity is, however, to be brought to a speedy and final close, by the total overthrow of the enemies of truth, who, under the appellation of Gog and Magog, at the instigation of Satan, are to go up in countless numbers on the breadth of the earth, and compass the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city, and fire is to come down from God out of heaven and devour them (vs. 8, 9). In immediate sequence with this overthrow of the hosts of evil, follows the epoch of the martyr-reign, referred to in v. 5, as *the first resurrection*. There appears not the slightest reason for making this epoch synchronous with the one in which Satan is bound, except that they stand in such close proximity on the sacred page, and have each the duration of a thousand years.

What may be the nature of this martyr-resurrection and reign, must be with us little else than mere conjecture. It has an awful mystery, which should check all presumptuous speculation. As a portion of God’s word, we have a right to approach it, however, in humble inquiry after truth. We will venture to suggest that it may refer to the preliminary or opening scenes of judgment, when the dead in Christ, as Paul declares (1 Thess. 4 : 16), shall rise first, and, together with the saints then alive upon the earth, be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, to sit on thrones with him, and thus to enjoy a kind of anticipatory triumph and foretaste of blessedness, which will be more fully and openly confirmed to them, when the Judge shall say : “ Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”

Whether all the pious dead will have part in this first resur-

rection, this antepast of glory and blessedness, we have no means of determining. The classes of saints referred to in this thousand years of the martyr-reign, without any violence of language, may be made to embrace the whole of the righteous dead. Nor can we readily believe that our Lord, to whom the most obscure of his saints are inexpressibly dear, will permit any of his people to remain in the grave with his enemies who are reserved to the second death. At the same time, when Paul (Phil. 3 : 11) speaks of his great desire to "attain unto the resurrection of the dead,"—by which expression he undoubtedly means this first resurrection, in reference to which John pronounces those to be blessed who have part in it (Rev. 20 : 6),—he cannot be supposed to mean that he is striving to be merely a Christian, but rather one of such eminent attainments and usefulness, that he may hope to share in a resurrection to glory and blessedness, appointed for them only whose love for Christ has been manifested by great labor and self-denial in his service.

But, however this may be, and whatever may be the nature of this triumphal enthronement of the martyrs and other eminent saints, one thing seems to be certain, that no valid argument can be drawn from it in favor of the theory of a personal reign of Christ on earth, and the resurrection of a portion of the pious dead to live and reign with him. It does not synchronize with the first millennium, for that precedes, while this follows the apostasy which ensues upon the loosing of Satan. It has characteristics which do not belong to the thousand years of Satan's confinement in the bottomless pit. That is a period of rest from the active opposition of the adversary; this, one of jubilant triumph and glory. That is to be followed by a wide-spread and awful apostasy and another encounter with the enemies of truth; this immediately precedes the general resurrection and the final judgment.

We claim, then, to have made no rash or unfounded assertion, that no scripture can be found, which justifies the literal interpretation of this prediction in Zechariah, that our Lord is to come and all the saints with him (ver. 5). On the con-

trary, we find that the scriptures are unanimous in making heaven the fixed abode of Christ, until he shall come to judge mankind at the last day. We must then adopt an exposition of this passage more harmonious with the teachings elsewhere of God's word. Scripture does not contradict itself; nor is a truth (especially one of such prominence as the personal advent of Christ to reign at Jerusalem) often left to the utterance of a single passage unsupported by other scriptures. Such an event might have been expected to have constituted one of the great burdens of prophecy, and not have been restricted to the one text we are now considering.

But what is true of this clause in v. 5, is true also of the whole prediction. The description of Jehovah's coming to take vengeance upon the enemies of his people, is indeed very remarkable. There is a particularity of incident and detail, which may well challenge from the reader the inquiry, whether the things predicted will not in reality take place in the latter days. But the language is not more minutely descriptive of Jehovah's advent, than that employed in Psalm xviii., to symbolize his appearance for the deliverance and protection of David in times of peril; or the wonders in heaven and in earth, predicted by Joel (2: 30, 31) as ushering in the great and terrible day of the Lord, which, according to Peter (Acts 2: 16—20), found their accomplishment on the day of Pentecost. The scriptures are full of metaphor and symbol, especially the great predictions which refer to the Messianic times; and it argues a very impaired spiritual vision in one who cannot, in general, discern the great truths which underlie these figurative utterances.

A literal exposition of this chapter in Zechariah being therefore out of the question, it would seem that no interpretation would be sought for other than one purely spiritual and symbolical. But, strange as it may appear, evangelical commentators, with scarcely an exception, have occupied a middle ground, giving to some portions of the chapter a spiritual, and to other portions a literal, interpretation. This is especially true of the more recent English expositors.

“The day of the Lord,” in the first verse, they refer to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. The latter clause, “thy spoil is divided in the midst of thee,” relates to the booty which fell to the invading army at the sack of the city, which, apart from what had been wasted, secreted, and destroyed by fire, was so great, that throughout Syria gold fell to half its real value. Verse second, according to this method of interpretation, refers to the assembling of the Roman armies, at the divine appointment, to beleague Jerusalem. Every clause of the verse contains a literal verity. The taking of the city, the plundering of the houses, the ravishment of the women—all are referred, by these expositors, to what actually took place at Jerusalem. The prediction that “half of the city should go forth into captivity,” was fulfilled in the able-bodied men led away by Titus and sold as slaves; while the next clause, “the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city,” found its fulfilment in the poorer and feebler classes, who were suffered to remain after the city had been taken and sacked. In v. 3, the prophecy passes over a chasm of centuries, to the period, when the Roman power in like manner was to be broken by Jehovah.

Thus far the prophecy is regarded by these interpreters as of literal fulfilment. But in v. 4, it changes to metaphor and symbol, having reference, however, still to the events connected with the downfall of Jerusalem. The rending asunder of the Mount of Olives, denotes the removal of obstacles in the way of the safety of God’s people at the time when, in obedience to our Saviour’s direction (Matt. 24 : 16), they were leaving the city on its first investment by Titus. As in the days of Uzziah the people fled before the earthquake, so would the followers of Christ flee, in order to shun the calamities which were impending over Jerusalem. In v. 6, under the imagery of a murky day, is predicted the political debasement of the Jewish nation from their final subjugation and dispersion by the Romans. This, according to v. 7, is however to terminate in a bright and cloudless sun, at a time when the political renovation of

the tribes was least expected, "at evening time." Then will they return to the land of their fathers; Jerusalem will be rebuilt, and restored to more than its former magnificence. As a compensation for her wrongs during the centuries in which she lay "trodden down of the Gentiles," the nations shall pour their wealth into her; and within her walls, as the spiritual metropolis of the earth, shall be heaped up the votive offerings of a glad and grateful world. From the city, restored to more than its original splendor, living waters shall flow forth to refresh the nations, and thus shall be verified the declaration of Paul (Rom. 11 : 12): "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?"

Such is the common explanation of this prophecy. That its true meaning is here evolved in part, we will not deny; but the principle of interpretation adopted in reaching these results is radically defective. The literal and spiritual, the plain and figurative, are mingled and blended, as seems best to suit the verbal demands of any passage, with but little regard to the general scope of the prophecy, or its harmony with other portions of God's word. We do not believe that the prediction refers to the downfall of Jerusalem and the dispersion and restoration of the Jews, only as these events are a part of God's providential economy in the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom and the subjugation of the world to his sceptre. We do not believe that the language of the prophecy is at one time literal, and at another symbolical; or that it fluctuates between events temporal and spiritual, without regard to a well-defined and orderly connection of thought. The prophecy is not made up of detached and disconnected predictions, but is one of singular unity, not only in its general scope, but also in the symbols employed to set it forth.

The great central truth, towards which all the minor and subordinate parts of the prophecy converge, is the universal extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, and the peace, happiness, and prosperity attendant thereon. A reference to the preceding chapters will show that the vision is of times far

more remote than those of the early days of the church, or the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. The prediction opens with the startling announcement: "Behold! the day of the Lord cometh." What is this day of Jehovah? Is it a day of vengeance, or of salvation? a day of judgment and fiery indignation, or one of merciful visitation to his people? Who, in solving this question, does not recur at once to "the great and terrible day of the Lord," spoken of by Joel, and interpreted by Peter as beginning to receive its fulfilment on the day of Pentecost? Are we wrong, with our eye on such a parallel scripture, in referring this "day of the Lord" spoken of by Zechariah, to the abundant outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which in the latter days shall bless the church and the world? Is not that interpretation frigid and unwarranted, which, failing to discern this great key to the prediction, refers the "day of the Lord" to the capture of Jerusalem by Titus and the Roman army?

The day of the Lord cometh. The church is to triumph, but not without a desperate struggle. We hear the trumpet of war mustering her foes to battle. It is Jehovah himself (ver. 2) who gathers them together, that the question of supremacy between him and them may be fully and forever settled. The earth groans beneath their tread, as they march against the chosen of the Lord. Their onset upon the spiritual Jerusalem is fierce and terrible. The tide of battle, at first, turns in their favor. The city is taken, and the brutal soldiery indulge in every excess. Long lines of captives stand ready to take up their mournful march from the city, and the church seems on the very brink of ruin. But JEHOVAH (that is, the MESSIAH of the New Testament, whose glory John avers that Isaiah saw in his vision of Jehovah of Hosts) suddenly reveals himself as the Saviour and Avenger of his people. With his feet upon the Mount of Olives, in full view of Jerusalem, now almost reduced to a heap of ruins, he fights against those nations, "as in the day when he fought—the day of battle" (ver. 3). His presence is denoted by the usual convulsions and dread phenomena of nature, the earthquake, the darkness, and the storm. An awful plague (ver.

12) thins the ranks of his enemies, and a panic (ver. 13) from Jehovah falls upon them, under the influence of which, as when the Midianites fled before Gideon (Judges 7 : 22), and as when the hosts of Moab, Ammon, and Mount Seir melted away before Jehoshaphat and his army (2 Chron. 20 : 23), their hands are turned upon one another, and their power is completely broken and destroyed.

But God has designs of love and mercy, as well as of retribution and judgment. He spares a remnant of his enemies, and having caused streams of living waters to flow forth from the spiritual Jerusalem for their moral cleansing, numbers them among his own people, and ordains for them a part in the ordinances of his house. In this "day of the Lord," the whole earth is to be filled with the glory of his name ; the spiritual Jerusalem is to be enriched and adorned with the votive offerings of her sons and daughters ; "*holiness to the Lord*" is to be inscribed even upon the bells of the horses, and the most common utensils of labor are to be consecrated to the service of God.

Such is the brief outline of this great prophecy. It remains for us to consider, more in detail, the nature of the figurative costume in which it is clothed.

The word "Jerusalem," is employed in the scripture in a two-fold signification. It literally designates the capital city of Palestine, but is often used metaphorically for the church of God, both in the old and new dispensations. In several instances (Gal. 4 : 26 ; Heb. 12 : 22 ; Rev. 21 : 2) it denotes the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. So frequently was Jerusalem employed, by the sacred writers, to designate the spiritual seat of God's worship, and so interwoven was it with all the aspirations of the pious Jew, that it became synonymous with the spiritual blessings and ordinances with which the devout man now invests the worship and services of the sanctuary. It was the chosen and honored abode of God's spiritual presence. There his people gained new strength and comfort, as they went up, from year to year, to lay their offerings upon the altar. As a place of sacred enjoyment, it was always uppermost in their

thought and affliction. It was this spiritual enshrinement of Jerusalem in their souls, rather than mere local attachment and remembrance, which made the Hebrew captives, as they reclined beneath the willows which overhung the streams of Babylonia, exclaim : " If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning ; if I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth ; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy."

There is, then, no violence done to language or to scripture analogy, in assuming that Jerusalem, in the prophecy before us, signifies the spiritual Jerusalem, the centre and seat of Christ's kingdom on earth. From this point of view let us examine the prediction in detail. The physical convulsion by which a mountain barrier is removed (ver. 4), and living waters caused to flow forth from Jerusalem to the stagnant waters of Lake Asphaltites, and to the western or Mediterranean sea, is symbolical of a great moral awakening of the church of Christ, whence shall issue streams of salvation to refresh and bless a dying world. The standing of our Lord with his feet upon the Mount of Olives, denotes his spiritual presence and power in effecting this moral renovation. It is not a literal but a spiritual theophany. The clause in ver. 5, " and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints (literally, *the holy ones*) with thee," may be regarded as an interjected reference—suggested by the spiritual manifestation of Christ and the great moral changes and overturnings effected thereby—to his actual and final Parousia at the day of judgment ; or the clause may be nothing more than an emphatic reiteration of the spiritual theophany spoken of in ver. 4. If the reference is to the coming of Christ to judgment, the *saints* or *holy ones* are the retinue spoken of in Jude ver. 14. If Christ's spiritual advent is that only which is meant, the presence and ministration of this convoy of "holy ones" must also be spiritual (Heb. 1 : 14). The nations assembled against Jerusalem symbolize the enemies of truth, whose united and persistent efforts to destroy the holy city, indicate the great opposition of an ungodly world to the kingdom of Christ, which oppo-

sition, aroused to the highest pitch by the tokens of Christ's presence in his church, and probably rendered rampant and presumptuous by the previous coldness and inactivity of God's people, is to be crushed out and followed by an acknowledgment of Jesus Christ as the rightful Lord of the earth.

With this interpretation the imagery of other portions of the prediction beautifully harmonizes. The annual visitation of all the families of the earth to this spiritual Jerusalem, is a figurative representation of the love and communion of the churches throughout the world, and their public acknowledgment of Jesus Christ as their Great Head. Nothing so tended to preserve the nationality of the tribes of Israel, as their presence at Jerusalem to celebrate the prescribed festivals. The distinction of tribe was, for the time, merged in the more general and highly prized appellation of "the Israel of God." Local prejudices and jealousies disappeared, as with united voice the priests and Levites, standing on the steps of the inner court, sang the songs of degrees; or the whole people, with shouts of joy and praise, brought water in a golden vessel from the fountain of Siloam, into the temple of their God. They were all sinners, obnoxious alike to divine justice, when the high-priest, having offered sacrifice for his own sins and the sins of the people, entered the holy of holies with burning incense and the blood of victims, to make atonement for the sins of the people. The feast of the passover reminded them of a national deliverance. Indeed, these feasts served as an indissoluble bond of union among the tribes, and made them feel and act as one people, having common religious ordinances and worship.

We should then naturally expect, that some such aid and incitement to union would be found in the worship and ordinances of the spiritual Israel. And thus it is. The feast of tabernacles is instituted in this spiritual Jerusalem, and a divine enactment makes it obligatory upon all the families of the earth, to present themselves before the Lord once a year for its observance. If any one should ask why this feast

alone is retained in the new dispensation, while all the other Jewish festivals have been superseded, the answer may be found in its great elemental idea of thanksgiving for past deliverances and mercies. But we must guard against affixing to the celebration of this feast any other than a spiritual signification. We have shown already the utter impossibility of an actual yearly gathering of all the families of the earth at Jerusalem. We now see how incompatible this would be with the spiritual features of this prediction. It would mar the whole picture, and introduce a most incongruous element, where everything is symmetrical and homogeneous. But as a spiritual feature, essential to the full and perfect development of the church in the days of her future triumph, the feast of tabernacles, as we have remarked (*Comm. on John 7:2*), in a form suited to the spirituality of Christian worship, will continue to be observed by God's people in all coming time. The thanksgiving festival, which has now become with us a national religious institution, is an exemplification of what, under modifications to suit the habits of different people, may become prevalent throughout the earth.

But the awful judgments which are to befall those families of the earth who come not up to this feast, compel us to seek in it some deeper and more spiritual significance than the mere institution of a national festival, even though suited to the spirituality of Christian worship, and adopted by all the nations of the earth. Something may be learned of its true import by its position in the prediction. It stands evidently in antithesis with the mustering of the hosts of evil against Jerusalem to destroy it. As this, according to our principle of interpretation, denotes the malignant and persistent opposition of the world to the kingdom of Christ, and the organized forms of evil which are arrayed against truth, we must seek for a corresponding spiritual sense, in the convocation of all the families of the earth at Jerusalem to keep the feast of tabernacles. The holy city is still to be the central object of regard; but not, as before, for the purpose of destruction, but of enlargement. From

all quarters of the world they are to come up to her sacred precincts, not in the spirit of enmity, but of fealty and love. They will seek as earnestly her welfare and peace, as before they sought to raze her to the ground. In every heart the spiritual Jerusalem will be enthroned as the city of the Great King. Thitherward will every pious aspiration be breathed forth. There shall praise wait for God and the vow be performed. Pilgrimages, not literal as in the days of monkish superstition, but in the spirit of purest self-consecration, shall be made to her shrines, and thus to all the members of Christ's family on earth, will "her walls become salvation and her gates praise."

This subordination of everything to the welfare of Zion, is still further set forth in the closing verses of the prediction. "Holiness to the Lord," is to be affixed to the "bells of the horses," and "upon every pot in Jerusalem and Judah." "The pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar." Every ornament and utensil of labor shall be consecrated to Christ, and there shall be no greater degree of holiness attached to one vessel employed in the service of the sanctuary than to another. All this shows that a spiritual sense is to be given to the celebration of the feast of tabernacles, of which idea these closing verses are but the expansion and emphatic reiteration.

As collateral proof that we are right in attaching a spiritual significancy to this prediction of Zechariah, let us refer to the mystic city of Ezekiel. This city, which is but the reproduction, on a grander and more imposing scale, of the Jerusalem of David and Solomon, has its temple, from under the threshold of which eastward, waters are said (47:1—5) to issue forth, increasing gradually in depth, until they become a great river which cannot be forded. These waters flow eastward into the desert and into the sea (*i. e.*, the Dead sea), and possess the power of healing the waters of the sea, so that there shall be abundance of fish, as the fish of the great (*i. e.*, Mediterranean) sea (vers. 8—10). How close the resemblance of this feature of Ezekiel's city to the streams of living water which issue forth from the

spiritual Jerusalem in Zechariah! With what graphic force and beauty does this indicate the outgoings of life from the church to save and bless a lost world!

Turn we now for a moment to the New Jerusalem of the apocalyptic vision. This city is a symbolical representation of heaven, but not strictly heaven itself; for it is expressly said, that "John saw the holy city, the New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven [the Greek *ἐκ* denoting internal separation from], prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." A great voice was also heard out of heaven proclaiming: "The tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his people" (Rev. 21:2, 3). This city, before whose gorgeous splendors the most glorious creations of the human imagination fade away, has also its river of life; but, with a beautiful diversity of imagery and yet remarkable unity of sentiment, the healing property which belongs to the waters of Ezekiel and Zechariah, is here placed in the leaves of the "tree of life," which grows on either side of the river. These leaves are "for the healing of the nations." The inference from this is that the nations are yet diseased. Sin and death are still in the world. But such medicinal virtue resides in these leaves, that they cure of every spiritual malady. Can any one doubt that the healing leaves of John's tree of life, as well as the living waters of Ezekiel and Zechariah, refer to the spiritual influence which the church, in the days of her future prosperity, shall exert upon the world? If so, does it not follow, as a plain and incontrovertible inference, that the imagery in other parts of these predictions is expressive of spiritual truths, and not of literal verities?

But that we have not erred in our exposition of the living waters which are to flow forth from Jerusalem, we have still higher evidence. In the last great day of the feast — the same feast of tabernacles, for the observance of which all the families of the earth, according to Zechariah, are to come up to Jerusalem — our Lord proclaimed, in the hearing of the people: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink; he that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said,

out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7:37, 38). The general sentiment of this great utterance is too plain to be mistaken. Transferred from figurative to plain language the averment is, that from him who comes to Christ, and partakes of the grace which he freely bestows, shall issue refreshing and life-giving influences, so that his fellow-men shall also be benefited by the gift within him. This abundant supply of the water of life, its free and unobstructed intercommunication among those who have drunk of it, and its outflowings for the salvation of the world, are declared by our Lord to be what *the scripture hath said*; that is, what has been predicted in the Old Testament scriptures of the Messianic times. In what scriptures do we find this prediction, if not in Zechariah, Ezekiel, and in such passages as Isa. 44:3; 58:11; where floods of waters are promised to him who is thirsty, making him "like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not;" or, as Zechariah expresses it, "which are to flow alike in summer and in winter," that is, in perennial streams. To the same import is the prediction in Joel 3:18, where abundance of milk and refreshing streams of water, are promised blessings to the church in the latter days under the Messianic reign. This latter prophecy is the more remarkable, from the resemblance of language in the clause (ver. 18), "and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the Lord, and shall water the vale of Shittim," to that employed by Zechariah. By the "vale of Shittim" is meant, as most interpreters suppose, the valley through which the Kidron flows to the Dead sea. This was the course of the waters of Zechariah, which flowed eastward toward the former (*i. e.*, Dead) sea. In both prophecies, the restoration of an arid and unproductive soil to a well-watered and fruitful region, is the great elemental idea.

In the light, then, of this great declaration of our Lord, and of the scriptures of the Old Testament to which it unquestionably refers, can we hesitate to attach a spiritual significance to these prophetic waters of Zechariah? Is not this one of the scriptures which predict that rivers shall flow

from the belly of each believer? The explanation which John adds, to prevent any misapprehension of the import of our Lord's words, is very significant: "This spake he of the Spirit." It was the Spirit's influence which, under the imagery of living waters, was promised to all such as came to Jesus. Not simply the office work of the Spirit, drawing the soul to Christ from a state of impenitence and unbelief, but the permanent indwelling of the Spirit, transforming the inner man into the image of God, and filling the soul to overflowing with all the graces and fruits of holiness. The vigorous growth of these spiritual graces is set forth in the rapid increase of the prophetic waters of Ezekiel, which, in the short distance of four thousand cubits, from a small rivulet, were swollen to a large river which could not be forded.

How frigid and unscriptural, then, is the exposition which refers these living waters of Zechariah to natural rivers, which are to burst forth from the sides of Mount Zion at the rending of the Mount of Olives, beneath the feet of the Messiah! What a descent from the table-land of vision, where the eye gazes with unobstructed view upon the future glory and prosperity of the church, to the dense and murky atmosphere of the vale below, to make Jerusalem "the mother of us all," she "which is above and free," a commercial emporium of Judea, differing in no essential respect from any of the large and flourishing cities of our globe! What more derogatory to the true dignity and glory of our Redeemer than for him to leave his mediatorial throne at his Father's right hand, descend to earth, and fight his way to the crown of an earthly potentate at Jerusalem? There is something revolting in the bare enunciation of such a stoop from the heavenly to the earthly, from the spiritual to the material, which of itself should cause us to distrust any interpretation of God's word leading to such a visionary theory. It were a violence to our ideas of the calm repose of the pious dead, to make them revisit this earth, and take part again in its distracting cares and anxieties; but, in addition to this, to bring Christ down again from his heav-

enly throne, to tread the streets of Jerusalem as a temporal prince, is too gross a conception to be for a moment entertained. An earthly crown has encircled the brow of a Nero and a Domitian, but a spiritual diadem is only his to wear, "on whose vesture and thigh is written the name KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS."

ARTICLE VI.

THE SALVATION OF INFANTS.

BY REV. ALVAN TOBEY, DURHAM, NEW HAMPSHIRE.

THE controversies through which Christianity has been carried, were in many instances greatly useful in the development and application of the Christian doctrines, and especially in the correction of those errors which had become intertwined with them. The false philosophy which has often corrupted, and still oftener encumbered, the teachings of the scriptures, could not be so effectually removed in any other way as by the thorough sifting of discussion. It is indeed a process that shakes up truth and error in such confusion as may perplex observers not well skilled in distinguishing one from the other. The advocates of truth may be found defending some erroneous appendage, that should be thrown off as an excrescence, or mistaking some matter of fact supposed to be important, though really not material. But, in the result, truth comes out of the confusion, more beautiful and stronger for being freed from the incrustations of antiquated error, the monstrosities, contradictions, absurdities, which false philosophies have bound around it.

It is nearly a third of a century since a controversy arose, of not a little interest at the time, on the question, whether "the damnation of infants is a doctrine of the Calvinists." The parties were men of high standing and influence in their different spheres: Dr. Lyman Beecher, of Boston, and Prof.