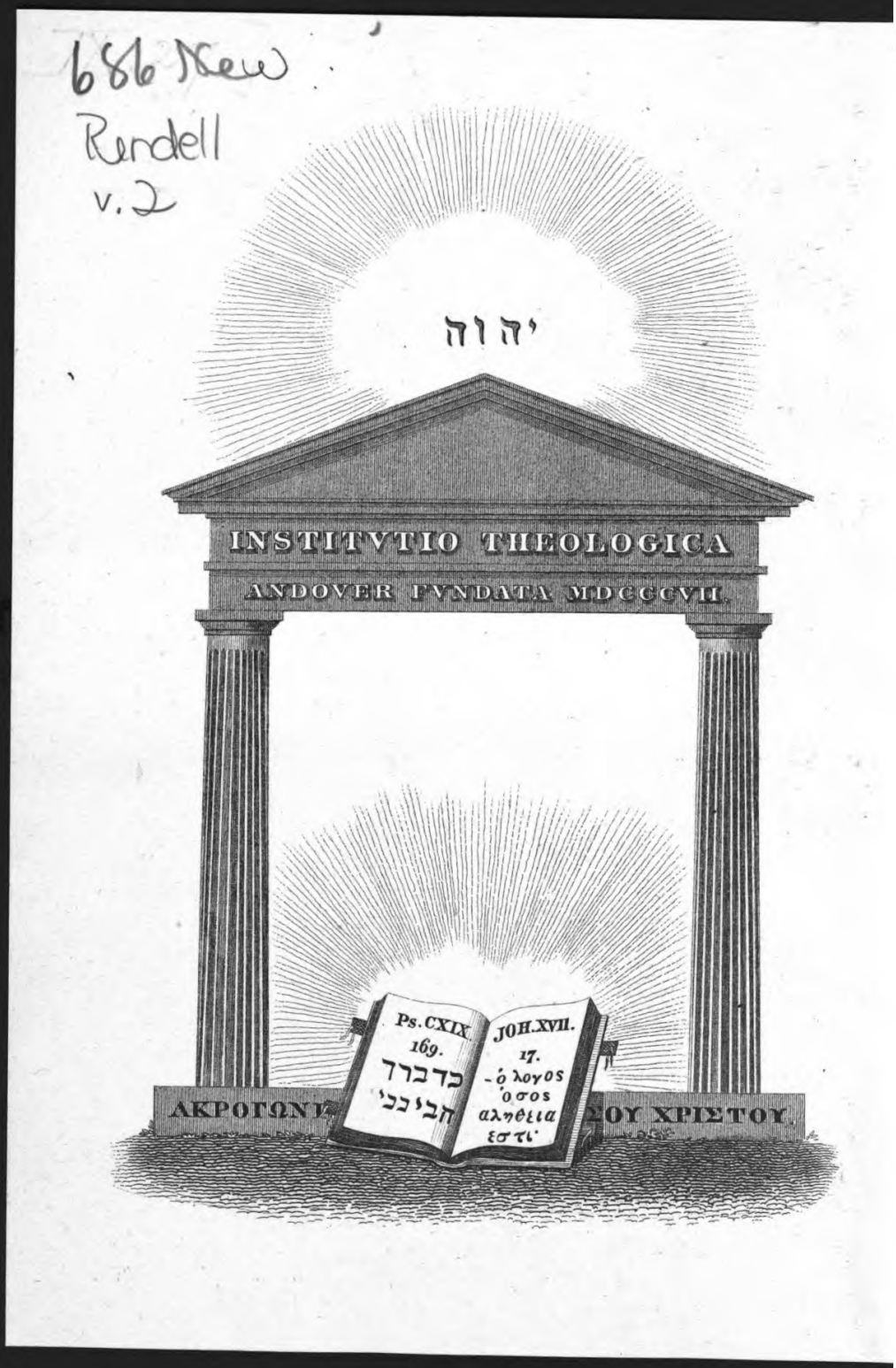

THE WORD

AND ITS

INSPIRATION

ORIGINALLY WRITTEN AND PUBLISHED IN ENGLAND IN THE YEAR 1855,
BY THE LATE

REV'D E. D. RENDELL,

UNDER THE TITLE OF "THE POSTDILUVIAN HISTORY."

BEING A NARRATIVE FROM THE FLOOD TO THE CALL OF ABRAM,
AS SET FORTH IN THE EARLY PORTIONS OF THE

BOOK OF GENESIS,

CRITICALLY EXAMINED AS TO ITS LITERAL SENSE AND
EXPLAINED AS TO ITS SPIRITUAL TEACHING

BY THE

SCIENCE OF CORRESPONDENCES,

AS REVEALED BY EMANUEL SWEDENBORG IN HIS GREAT WORK
"THE ARCANA CŒLESTIA."

APPENDIX

FROM THE WRITINGS OF EMANUEL SWEDENBORG ON THE DIFFERENT PHASES OF FAITH
AS REVEALED IN HIS GREAT WORK OF THE APOCALYPSE
EXPLAINED, VOLUME 5, NO. 790.

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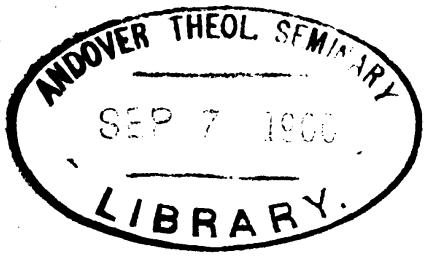

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PREFACE.

When the "*Antediluvian History and Narrative of the Flood*" was about to be presented to the public, in 1850, it was considered that the examination and exposition of those chapters of Genesis which immediately followed, down to the "call of Abram," were required to complete the view which had been taken of the structure and meaning of those early portions of the Mosaic records; and, therefore, in concluding the Preface to that work, it was stated, that if it proved acceptable, the Author would feel encouraged to undertake the elucidation of the *Postdiluvian History* in a similar volume. That work appears to have been satisfactorily received: it was respectfully noticed by several branches of the press devoted to the purposes of review; the whole of the edition was exhausted in a comparatively short time; it was reprinted in America; and, we are informed, that it is now translated into French, with a view to publication in that language. The present volume is the result of the encouragement held out by those considerations.

Some of the materials for the work existed in the form of Seven Lectures, when the above intimation was given. These had been delivered at Preston with some use to the cause of revealed religion; and selections from them were subsequently heard with approbation, by congregations in other parts of the kingdom; and desires were expressed, which have been frequently renewed, to see them in a more permanent form.

These circumstances lead me to hope that this work may prove an acceptable sequel to the *Antediluvian History.* On entering on the preparation of it for the press, it was found necessary to relinquish the form and style of lectures; to increase the materials; to alter the arrangement; to append notes, and, in short, to write the whole *de novo.* These particulars are stated for the information of those who so indulgently heard the lectures, and to put them in possession of the reasons why so little of their form and characteristics have been retained in the following volume. A few references to the *Antediluvian History of Moses,* and some repetitions of the exposition given in my work on that subject, will be observed in two or three of the early chapters of this volume. These things could not have been usefully avoided: they seemed necessary to connect the characteristics of the two histories together, to show the unity of design which had presided over the production of both, and how each contributes to throw an interesting light upon the other.

The principles upon which the exposition of the following pages has been constructed, are precisely the same as those which were adopted for the explanation of the *Antediluvian History:* these are set forth in the preface to that volume: they are also alluded to in the introductory chapter to the present work, and occasionally discussed in other parts of it. It is, therefore, only necessary here to say, that the first eleven chapters of Genesis, down to the time of Eber, are not considered, by us, to mean those literal things which they are commonly regarded to express; but that we view them as the symbolic history of the first two churches which it pleased the Divine Providence to plant among mankind. There can be no good reason to doubt, from all the information now extant respecting the structure of the most ancient writings, that such was the style in which the early (specially the religious) history

of all nations was first recorded. And it would be difficult to show any good reason why the earliest history, furnished by Moses, should be regarded as a deviation from that rule; on the contrary, when it is seen by a careful and candid examination, that the literal sense of what he has there written is, in many instances, not in conformity with the established principles of science,—to say nothing of other difficulties which reason and criticism have so long been accumulating and encountering respecting it,—it must be acknowledged, either that the narratives were written to express something different from what is apparent in the letter, or, that they are beyond the reach of the human understanding. The latter alternative will scarcely be adopted, because that involves the notion of God's having provided a revelation for His people which was not capable of promoting their instruction; for how can they be instructed by that which they cannot understand? As, then, the former position avoids these difficulties, it is entitled to a candid consideration by all who will venture to reason upon the subject.

In departing from the ordinary explanations (?), we believe that we have thereby been enabled to make an entrance into the regions of spiritual truth, which much more than compensates for the loss of common popularity. Truth, in every department of knowledge, before it has been enabled to procure for itself a liberal and enlightened consideration, has always had to encounter opposition arising from popular opinions, engendered by the influence of times less capable of knowing its value. Christianity itself was not established without a struggle of this kind; the principles of the reformation sustained a similar experience; and we see no reason to expect that the view put forth in this volume, as a small contribution towards effecting the reformation of the common opinions respecting the subjects of it, should be exempt from a similar resistance.

Nevertheless, if it is true,—of which we have no doubt,—it must ultimately prevail.

How few carefully examine the structure and meaning of the early chapters of Genesis! How many have really satisfied themselves that the literal sense is the true meaning of those documents! Is it not notorious that such an opinion is adopted more as a matter of course than as the result of careful examination? The general opinion respecting them rests more upon tradition than upon diligently acquired knowledge. The multitude believe in the letter, because celebrated authorities are supposed to have done so; and this, upon investigation, will be found to be a belief in authors rather than a belief in the thing. The fashion of one period to receive the opinions which were held by its predecessor, has been substituted for the duty of personal investigation: but it may be fairly questioned, whether this politeness is favorable to truth; it is certainly no friend to progress: and this we hold to be one of the essentials of Christianity; for its Founder has declared, that "Every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, is like unto a householder, which bringeth out of his treasure things new and old" (Matt. xiii. 52). And we are expressly taught to serve Him "in the newness of the spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter" (Rom. vii. 6). Now we profess to have examined the subjects of the present volume afresh, and apart from all traditional interpretation. The long-beaten track appeared so devious and uncertain, and it required so many sacrifices from reason, and such a continued abandonment of probabilities and science, without conducting to any intelligent result, that we felt ourselves compelled to relinquish it. But in doing this, our belief in the Divine origin of those documents has been most scrupulously maintained: we have turned aside from nothing but what we believe to be a *mistaken interpretation of them;* and the course which has been pursued for obtaining

what we regard as the actual signification, has served to deepen our veneration for their sanctity and perfection. What that course is, how far it is reasonable, supported by the Scriptures, and conducive to the advancement of an intelligent appreciation of those Mosaic narratives, the reader may judge, after consulting the volume now before him.

In the *Antediluvian History* it was shown, that the subjects treated of by Moses in that portion of his Genesis, were, the rise, progress, establishment, successive fall, and final termination of the *Adamic or Celestial Church.* The present work is designed to show, that Moses, in what follows his relation of the Flood to the Call of Abram, intended to inform us of the rise, progress, establishment, successive fall, and final cessation of the *Noachic or Spiritual Church.* The respective characteristics and distinctions of these two dispensations are frequently adverted to, illustrated, and explained. It is contended, that the history of those two churches is written in a purely symbolical language; and that this style, as the true vehicle of revelation, was discontinued only because those interior characteristics were thrown into desuetude by the transgression of the people. It is also argued that, mankind having, in the time of Abram, sensualized the principles of religion, and thereby having lost the genius requisite for the due appreciation of its interior and intellectual things, the Divine Providence was then pleased to commence the formation of a *natural church*, by means of a revelation, having for its basis *a selection* of facts from the literal history of a peculiar people. It is attempted to be shown that this style of revelation was begun by some brief intimation respecting Eber, but fully developed in what is written of the call of Abram; and that this history is also written with a view to represent and signify, and thus to be the *revelation* of, *spiritual* things, as well as the *relation* of natural events. Under these considerations, we learn that the Old Testament contains the

history of three distinct dispensations, respectively called celestial, spiritual, and natural; and that the Divine revelation vouchsafed to each, was prepared for, and adapted to, the special appreciation of those three corresponding principles in the human mind; each of those principles having, in each successive period, been the most manifest and influential in the formation of character and the evolution of delights. When the last of these churches, and, consequently, the last of those corresponding principles, fell into absolute ruin in respect to heavenly things, as had been the case with its two predecessors, then the Lord was pleased to come into the world by the assumption of humanity, and thereupon to found the Christian dispensation, as the medium for restoring to mankind some knowledge of those essential things which had been lost. So that genuine Christianity is a dispensation in which the celestial, the spiritual, and the natural principles of men, in reference to religion, are to be redeveloped into order, plenitude, and beauty.

From the spiritual view which we have taken of the moral history of the first two dispensations, it may be easy for the superficial to represent us as saying, that the Scriptures do not mean what they assert, and, thus to rouse a prejudice against it among those who have not sufficient industry to think and examine for themselves. But with the candid and reflecting, such an objection will have but little weight. They know that there are numerous cases in the Scriptures, where, in order to understand them, the student is compelled to have recourse to the very principle which this objection expresses. For instance, the Lord said, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke xiv. 26). He likewise said, "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee—and if thy right hand offend thee cut it off, and cast it from thee" (Matt. v. 29, 30).

Every one sees that that which is literally asserted in those passages is not that which is really meant; and so it is with the early portions of the Mosaic history: for, as it is seen from the requirements of morality, that those precepts of the Lord were not intended by Him to be understood in their ordinary sense, so it may be perceived, from the demonstrations of science, that the first few chapters of Genesis were not designed to be interpreted of mundane affairs. To the numerous illustrations of this fact exhibited in the *Antediluvian History*, a variety of others is added in the present volume.

Objections are sometimes taken to the figurative interpretation of the Word, not so much from any intellectual opposition to the principle, considered in itself, as from a knowledge of the absurdities which have been perpetrated under the designation of a spiritual sense. But no sensible and generous mind will argue against the value and necessity of such a principle of interpretation, on the ground that it has been misdirected or misused. In those cases fancy has been consulted and law neglected; and it seems not to have occurred to the objectors under contemplation, that a figurative interpretation may be adopted which is wholly free from such a charge, or that there is such a thing as a genuine spiritual sense in the Word; than which it is not easy to conceive a greater oversight.

Again, spiritual interpretations are sometimes resisted on the supposition that they are obscure and arbitrary; and the literal meaning is insisted upon, because it is presumed to be more natural and easy to take the words in their common acceptation. But we submit that these are not correct views of the case; for, in reference to the subject of this volume, nothing can be more evident than the difficulties and obscurities which result from taking the terms of the Mosaic narrative in their literal acceptation. The most determined literal expositors are compelled to

depart from the rule to which they professedly adhere: they are found to attach new natural meanings to the terms of the history; to supply imagined deficiencies with conjectural facts; to remove unquestionable difficulties with the supposition of miracle or mystery; and, with all these efforts and liberties, "more light" is felt to be a desideratum.

Another cause for the rejection of the spiritual sense of the Scriptures is, the notion that its objects are merely imaginary—that they have no real entity. This objection may be urged with some force against a spurious, but certainly it is not applicable to a genuine spiritual sense. Is there not a spiritual world? Is it not distinguished by spiritual existences? Are not the souls of men, together with their conceptions, their loves of God, of virtue, of intelligence and religion, realities? Most certainly they are: it is, therefore, plain that a spiritual sense of the Scriptures, which has its entity in these things, cannot be open to the materialistic objection above referred to.

O, but such interpretations are novel! It is true that the church, in its ecclesiastic capacity, has never conceded that the Scriptures contain a spiritual sense; still it is well known that learned and pious men in all ages have contended for its existence, and therefore such an objection can possess but little value. Besides, if the novelty of a thing were to be admitted as an argument against the truth of it, the Jews might have urged it against the adoption of Christianity, and derived from it a justification for their conduct in its rejection. Moreover, if mankind had acted upon this objection, it is certain that civilization would not have advanced; that religion would not have progressed; that science could not have been developed; and, in short, that the world, long since, must have been brought to a stand-still. It is therefore plain that there is no validity in such an objection.

Revelation, properly, does not consist in making known the occurrences which transpire with men and nature in the physical world, but in the vouchsafement of disclosures concerning the spiritual states of men in reference to the Lord's church and kingdom. These spiritual phenomena could not have been discovered, as they have been, in the internal sense of the Word, but by means of supernatural interposition for the purpose: and to express these it became requisite to employ the language significant of natural things, in a representative sense. To indicate spiritual things to men, it is necessary to employ the terms significant of natural things in the way of symbol. No information respecting the things of the inner world, can be expressed, but by pointing to their representative images in the outer world. The latter are the effects of the former, and both exist in correspondence with each other. Of this we think there cannot be any reasonable doubt. As then these correspondences are known to the *Supreme*, and as the true ideas of spiritual things can be indicated only by terms significant of their natural representations, it follows that the Scriptures, because they are the Word of God, making known spiritual things to mankind, are constructed upon this principle. That the production of revelation has been conducted upon some definite law, will hardly be disputed, and that that law is such as we have indicated, seems to be clearly expressed by the apostle when he said, "The invisible things of Him (God) from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead" (Rom. i. 20). It is, then, upon this principle, illustrating the spiritual signification, which we have attached to the natural terms, by analogies, and confirming it from other portions of the Scriptures, that we have conducted the exposition contained in the present and former volumes; and, therefore, the grounds upon which figurative interpretations are commonly objected to are not applicable in this case.

But, surely, those who reject the idea of a spiritual sense in the early portions of the Mosaic records, and specially profess to abide by their literal sense, ought to be able to show that such a sense is in harmony with the laws of creation, and the demonstration of science—that it is in consistency with itself, without discrepancy, and so in unison with the Divine wisdom. These, however, are results which have never been obtained: indeed, it is impossible with such premises to obtain them; and hence it is that great diversities of opinion prevail concerning many points which those records are supposed to relate; so that the presumed advantages of adhering only to the letter, partake more of assertion than of fact. It has not led to any uniform expositions, and it has given rise to conjectures quite as wild and uncertain as any that have been indulged by the most fanciful expounders.

The idea of the early chapters of Genesis being literal history, was originally derived from the Jews, a most unspiritually-minded race—a people whom the Lord pronounced to be "blind guides"—said they "had taken away the key of knowledge," and accused them of having "rendered the Word of God of none effect by their traditions." Certainly then no great value is to be attached to their opinions upon this subject; and as such a view of the documents themselves cannot be intelligently maintained, it becomes pretty evident that the truth respecting them must lie in some other direction.

It is, of course, humiliating to be obliged to give up an opinion which has been so long and so extensively embraced; but, if such humiliation is conducive to the advancement of intelligence, the wise will not hesitate to endure it. "Where truth is the victor, it is an honor to be vanquished." It is remarkable that many of the intimations contained in the classical writings of antiquity concerning the rise of nations, and which

for ages have been commonly regarded by European scholars, as veritable history, are now in the process of being discovered to have no such meaning. This is the result of the application of natural philosophy to the legends of antiquity. It is argued that there is no reason why such intimations should be received as literal facts, without subjecting them to the same rules for testing their credibility as is done for ascertaining the truth of modern history. The legends respecting the origin and early history of Greece and Rome, have recently been investigated upon this principle; and because they are found to be incapable of sustaining such a test, the popular notion respecting them is refuted, and no longer conceded by the scholar.* That which has long been acknowledged to be history, is discovered to be fable; and although the signification of it may be obscure, there cannot be any reasonable doubt that it meant something striking and intelligible among the people by whom it was originally constructed. Something similar to this may be predicated of the early documents of Genesis. Investigations conducted upon this rational principle, have led many to regard several of its leading features in the light of symbol, rather than of history; and the reason why this result has not been generally acknowledged, is, not so much the want of fair evidence to establish that conclusion, as from the interposition of ecclesiastical corporations, who seem to regard themselves as the conservators of those explanations (?) which antiquity has adopted; nevertheless, a time is coming,—perhaps it is not so far distant as some imagine,—when it will be seen to be wise to withdraw this patronage, and to pursue an inquiry more resembling that which is marked out in the following work.

* See Mr. Grote's *History of Greece*, The Right Hon. Sir George Cornwall Lewis's *Inquiries into the Credibility of Early Roman History;* and particularly Neibuhr's *History of Rome*, which took the lead in those investigations of secular history.

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to exist in that perfection which God intended for it, so long as mankind do not intelligently comprehend the Divine teachings. Any defect in this particular must obviously be a blemish in the escutcheon of perfect Christianity: in that case the argent will not be pure; its fine gold will be proportionally dim; or, rather, its proper lustre cannot be displayed. The servant cannot be expected to perform his master's will satisfactorily if he is in doubt respecting the meaning of the language in which it has been expressed to him. The education of the mathematician is not completed so long as there are any problems in Euclid which he cannot solve; and, therefore, it seems both reasonable and just to conclude that Christianity cannot be perfectly evolved, if there prevails within its pale any doubt as to the meaning of some portions of its documents. The Church must be defective in proportion to the nature and extent of such uncertainty.

Now there is some reason to believe that there are various statements in the Scriptures, of which the Church has not yet had an intelligent apprehension. It must be confessed that there are many things in the dogmatic teachings of popular Christianity which shew that some portions of the Word have been interpreted more under the influence of shade than in the brightness of sunshine.* This is peculiarly evident of its prophetical records. It is admitted that there is much uncertainty about the right meaning of several portions of those writings. So many conjectures have been adopted in this department of Biblical literature —the complete absence of any philosophical rule by which the student could guide his interpretation, and the consequent mistakes which have been made, have led some grave and sensible

* This is the source of most of the differences which have divided Christians into sects, and introduced the spirit of intolerance to most of them. There are, however, multitudes of devout and serious persons who are anxious to be better informed upon the dogmatic teachings of the Church; and a feeling prevails that there is a large amount of really comprehensible truth in the Christian doctrines, which, if better understood, would infuse into all religious studies a new intellectual splendour. The Rev. Mr. Maurice, A.M., late Professor of Theology at King's College, London, says "There are tens of thousands of clergymen and laymen who crave for satisfaction as to the true ideas of many subjects of Christian doctrine."—*See his Correspondence with Dr. Jelf.*

men to think that it is hardly judicious to attempt an explanation of the prophecies.* Lord Bacon, however, desired a book to be called *The History of Prophecy*, and thought it would contribute to "the better illumination of the Church." † Many works have been produced, distinguished by historical erudition, for the purpose of shewing the fulfilment of some of the predictions of the Word; and the *general* resemblances which have been traced between the *letter of prophecy* and the *facts of history*, afford colourable evidence that the former may fairly be regarded as pointing to the latter. Still the proof, in many instances, scarcely rises above the testimony of coincidence: a probability may be established but not a certainty. Hence differences of opinion have arisen among learned interpreters of this class. The views of history which they have applied to those purposes are different, and, consequently, their explanations of prophecy are not the same. Nor can it ever be otherwise so long as figurative statements are considered to refer, in the first place, to civil, political, or ecclesiastical affairs. If such were the primary purposes of prophecy, why were they figuratively described? There could be no absolute necessity for the adoption of such a style. It does not seem satisfactory to say that God intended by such obscurity to try our faith, confirm our patience, and encourage our hopes. Doubtless these are graces desirable to be possessed; but how they can be produced by unintelligible narratives, does not admit of an easy explanation. Certainly such results could be much better brought about by a plain relation: the necessity of them is expressly taught in the clear and preceptory portions of the Word; and, therefore, we do not think that such graces were intended to be developed by obscurely-written prophecy.

* Scaliger said that Calvin was wise in not having written upon the Revelation. Dr. Whitby says that he declined to do so because he had not the "judgment to discern the intendment contained in this book."—*Preface to his Treatise on the Millenium.* Lowman says, "I conceive the obscurity of this book is not so much owing to anything in the book itself, as to the methods taken by several to explain it, and that nothing has really so much darkened it as the common attempts made to interpret it." And that many "account it lost labour to read or study what they can never hope to understand."—*Preface to the Revelation.*

† *Advancement of Learning*, Book 2nd.

There were other reasons for adopting such a style of composition.

We may, and do admit that the fortunes of the *Church* are foretold in prophecy, and, also, that those fortunes will affect the political conditions of the nations in which they are experienced. The Church, and the things relating thereto, are the principal topics of Revelation. The Church is a Divine institution, formed among mankind by their reception of genuine truth and goodness from the Lord, through the Word. It is designed to contain within it information concerning the invisible worlds and spiritual things. But such knowledge cannot be indicated to man in any other than a figurative language. The Word, therefore, employs the terms by which physical objects are expressed to communicate ideas respecting metaphysical existences. And it is because many have lost sight of this fact, and, consequently, of the spiritual things intended to be expressed by the figurative language of prophecy, that those parts of the Scriptures have come to be regarded as exceedingly obscure, and as treating, chiefly, of external circumstances, which are not to be understood until the events to which they relate have transpired. The Scriptures, however, are not to be considered in the light of rhetorical compositions: their chief object in the employment of one class of natural things is not to signify another class of natural things; but objects from the outer world are selected to represent objects in the inner world: the latter cannot be indicated but by means of the former; and it is only so far as we view the Scriptures in this light that we are enabled to reach the first principles to which they point, and so to comprehend their real significancy and drift.

Nothing, as it has been said, is more certain than that many of the prophecies have been interpreted more under the influence of obscurity than of light. The explanations of one age have had to be corrected by the superior learning of another; so that sentiments, long cherished as true, have had to be abandoned as false. For instance; when Adam was placed in the garden it was said to him "Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."* This for ages was inter-

* Genesis ii. 17.

preted to mean that natural death was the penal consequence of sin:—that if man had not transgressed, death would not have come into the world. But it has been conclusively proved, by geological discovery, that death existed in the world for ages before this sentence could have been delivered! Science has also satisfactorily shewn that all natural bodies, organized for the reception of life, are necessarily connected with the laws of dissolution, that is, of death; and, consequently, that the prediction ought not to be understood of natural death at all, but only of the spiritual results of disobedience. Thus the explosion of a long standing theological mistake has, certainly, been effected; and many other cases could easily be named. This, however, is not a fate peculiar to opinions respecting the contents of revelation: notions considered as pertaining to science have experienced a similar revolution. The Copernican astronomy exploded the Ptolemaic. The circumnavigation of the world, in, comparatively, our own times, upset the geography of the middle ages. The chemistry of modern school analyses what were elements among the ancients. The discovery of the circulation of the blood, made by Harvey, extinguished the doctrine of the vital spirit being generated in the left ventricle, which had long been one of the traditional fancies of physiologists. The experiments of Torricelli on the laws which regulate the motion of fluids, annihilated the scientific dogma respecting nature's abhorrence of a vacuum. A multitude of other cases could be named;* but these are sufficient to shew that the philosophers of one age have misread the book of nature, and that those of subsequent periods have corrected their mistakes. Philosophy has also had its sects. In these particulars, the history of science has not much advantage over the history of Biblical interpretation.

Moreover, criticism has contributed largely to the improvement of our historical knowledge.† It has discovered many sources of error, and thrown much light upon some obscure and doubtful passages of the Word. By this means it has been ascertained that documents, long considered as the productions

* See *History of the Inductive Sciences.* By the Rev. W. Whewell, M.A., Fellow and Tutor of Trinity College, Cambridge, &c.

† See *Niebuhr's Lectures on Ancient History.* Translated by Dr. L. Schmitz.

of a single hand, contained narratives which were not his own. Of this there are several examples in the book of Genesis. Some of the most learned critics regard that performance, in its present shape, as a compilation formed from more than one ancient document, and that Moses, for the most part, arranged and connected those memorials under the Divine direction.* These opinions have been arrived at from a consideration of the difference of style and peculiarity of matter. These, in some cases, are very obvious. The style and matter of the first eleven chapters of Genesis are very different from the subsequent portions of the book. These chapters are the unquestionable productions of another hand than that which wrote the history of Abraham and his descendants. And no one can rationally consider the extraordinary matter of those compositions, without seeing that they must have been produced and cherished among a people in the possession of a remarkable genius. Although those documents appear to us in the form of history, we cannot, from that circumstance, be certain that they are the history of what is literally expressed; because it is well known that all the principal documents of antiquity are written in a figurative style: they contain a variety of things, which, if literally understood, affect us as at once prodigious and improbable! The beginning of history is, everywhere, industriously involved in fable. Of this, the earliest documents respecting India, Egypt, Phœnicia, Greece, and Rome, afford unquestionable evidence. What testimony, then, can be produced to shew that the early portions of Genesis are exceptions to this rule?

*See *Bauer's Theology of the Old Testament*, p. 11, English translation, 1838. Also Dr. Pye Smith's *Scripture and Geology*, 2nd edit., p. 202. The facts above stated are admitted upon all hands: they have, however, given origin to two hypotheses, that of Vater called the "fragment-hypothesis," and that of Eichorn, called the "document-hypothesis." The former considers Genesis to consist of many small distinct fragments written by various authors at different times: this view, however, is now pretty generally abandoned, and the document-hypothesis of Eichorn most commonly received: this considers Genesis to have been composed and arranged from two documents only, respectively characterized by the two names *Jehovah* and *Elohim*. Without committing ourselves to the criticism with which this hypothesis is attempted to be sustained, we think there can be no rational doubt that in the preparation of the book, especially the early portions of it, some ancient memorials were consulted.

Their contents are not less marvellous; though a greater familiarity with them, and the impression induced by a belief in their sacred character, may have led mankind to overlook the fact. Still it is to be observed, and the progress of science has shown, that the obviously literal interpretation of those records cannot be sustained. Those opinions which were once considered as their orthodox meaning, have in some cases been extensively remodelled, and in others they have been entirely abandoned; so that the views taken of the drift and significancy of those peculiar writings, are now very various, as may be easily ascertained by those who have access to the modern literature which has been produced upon the subject. While it has been conceded that the church has not, for many centuries,* been in possession of correct information concerning the precise meaning of some portions of those documents, no conclusions respecting their right interpretation have been established on sufficient authority to obtain the general consent and advocacy of learned men. In the absence of these desiderata the populace are found to adhere to the old explanations! and timid theologians cling to this ancient orthodoxy! † and both concur in surmounting the difficulties raised by criticism and science by appeals to Omnipotence and miracles. We do not question the duty of faith in the existence of these things, though we may doubt the propriety of applying them to the phenomena indicated in the narratives before us. With such a mode of arguing, the literal sense of any mythology may be sustained. We, therefore,

* Dr. Burton, in his *Deluge and the World after the Flood*, p. 15, admits that an erroneous opinion respecting the phenomena produced by the flood, and thus of the flood itself, has been entertained by all believers in the Christian Revelation for eighteen centuries. He, however, makes this additional remark, namely, "that it would have been of no vital consequence, in a moral and spiritual point of view, if such a theory had remained without correction;" as if the moral and spiritual welfare of society could sustain no injury from a misunderstanding of this portion of God's Word!

† "There is a class of philosophers (or rather of divines who have but a smattering of philosophical science) whose zeal for the *letter* of Holy Scripture is not according to knowledge—who still adhere to the exploded opinion, that 6000 years are a term for all geological changes; and that the flood of Noah is the only diluvial action to which the disturbances now manifest throughout the earth's crust, are to be ascribed."—*Dr. Burton's Deluge, &c.* pp. 16, 17.

have no sympathy with that kind of reasoning. Omnipotence and miracles have their laws of action; but sound criticism does not call in their aid to remove difficulties which philosophy can otherwise explain. The age in which we live wants to be informed, not to be silenced. It is submitting itself to rational instruction in spiritual things, but ceasing to endure the commands of irrational dogmata.

In a former work we have urged some of the most conspicuous difficulties connected with the *Antediluvian History and Narrative of the Flood*, and at the same time indicated and applied a mental philosophy by which those documents could be explained, without violence to history or science, and in conformity with the use and purposes of Divine teaching. Those early portions of the Scripture are contemplated as parts of an Ancient Word which was extant before the time of Moses; and he is considered to have cited them under Divine direction, as he has done from other books on subsequent occasions, in order that the revelation which he was engaged to communicate for the use of future ages, might contain information respecting the rise, eminence, decline, and fall, of the first Church, as it was planted among primeval men. The records relating to Noah, and from the flood to the call of Abram, treat of the establishment of a second church, together with its progress, decay, and dispersion. When this took place we read of the commencement of a third church, with Abram and his descendants. These three dispensations may be respectively characterized as celestial, spiritual, and natural. And it is of the last of these, which includes the history of his own race, that Moses is the literal historian. The interior states of affection and intellect, in reference to spiritual things which distinguished the Adamic and Noetic Churches, are described in the form of factitious history; but the laws and proceedings of the Israelitish Church, because the people among whom it was planted had become so peculiarly natural, are related in the form of actual history: yet they also are so written as to become the orderly continent of spiritual truth for the edification of a spiritual church.

The difficulties which science and criticism discover in the documents which relate the history of the two former dispensations, arise, chiefly, from a misunderstanding of the nature of

those writings, and the kind of information they were intended to perpetuate. To teach posterity something concerning the state of original religion with primitive men, was the chief design for which those documents were preserved. God's Revelation regards man as an immortal being, to whom He is solicitous of conveying spiritual information concerning Himself and His kingdom; and some of this he has been pleased to express by means of an apparent history of mundane things, and personal biography. The people, however, to whom those remarkable writings were originally committed, did not understand them in a literal sense. The world before, and immediately after the flood, was not so prosaic in its religious enunciations as it became at the time of Moses. Those portions of Genesis with which he has introduced the history of Abram and his descendants, partake more of poetry than of history—still a Divine Poetry presented in an historical form.

There are many acknowledged instances in which Jesus Christ has presented spiritual things to the consideration of His disciples under the character of factitious history. His parables are remarkable instances of this fact. It, therefore, does not require any great stretch of the imagination, or much extent of illustration, to enable us to see that truth of a religious character may be conveyed to the Church under the form of allegorical history. Indeed, the apostle informs us that real history has also been employed for this purpose*: and this is the view, which, by a preceding volume and by the present work, we are solicitous of shewing ought to be taken of those portions of Genesis which precede the history of Abram. There are, certainly, no historical or monumental evidences by which to corroborate the literal sense of those documents; and every one knows that they appear exceedingly irrelevant and confused when freely compared with the discoveries and requirements of learning. View them as allegories, and you not only place them beyond the reach of such objections, but at the same time bring them more directly within the purpose of revelation; which is to communicate spiritual information. Thus they are true in essence though factitious in form; still Divine in both.

It is said that there were traditions extant among many of

* See Galatians iv. 24.

the nations of antiquity respecting the deluge.* This may have been the case; though it must be very evident to those who have examined what such traditions say, that the imagination has to be tolerably strained in order to establish an identity between them and the Mosaic narrative: but admitting that narrative to have been their source, they do not prove the occurrence of such a physical catastrophe as seems to be related. Their use can be accounted for on other grounds. It is conceded that those traditions sprung from one common source; and why may not that source have been the factitious history of the event†? It is easy to see that they might as well have arisen from the relation and spread of a factitious history, as from a real event. For this history, among the people for whom it was originally produced, was understood to treat only of spiritual things; and it was not until information upon those subjects gradually passed away, that mankind began to regard the form, in which those traditions had originated, as expressing a literal sense.

It is well known that the ancients continued for a long time to write in a figurative manner: it was peculiar to the genius which distinguished them; and some traces are still observable in the compositions of those oriental nations that have descended from them. The ancient monuments and some of the fragmentary writings which have been preserved, shew that the inhabitants of those countries were once accustomed to express some of their religious sentiments by means of signs and symbols. Religion was an esoteric thing among them: they wrote and spoke of it in a manner different from that in which they wrote and spoke of their ordinary concerns. What remarkable examples of this are presented in the speeches of the two Lamechs‡! Commentators have always experienced great diffi-

* "The Gentoo Shasters, or Scriptures, composed before or about the era of the flood, never once mention so remarkable a calamity; and the Brahmins assert that it never took place in Hindoostan."—*Halhed's Preface to Gentoo Laws*, p. 38.

† See *Antediluvian History*, pp. 26, 325–326.

‡ Genesis iv. 23, 24; v. 29. Concerning the first of these references Dr. A. Clarke says, "This speech is very dark and has given rise to a great variety of strange conjectures" (*Commentary*): and though he thinks the latter more intelligible, he only intimates what he considers to be its *most likely* meaning.

culties with those passages; nor have they agreed much further concerning them than that which is involved in calling them *Poetry*. But they appear unintelligible only because they are thought to express some external historical events, whereas their true object is to indicate some spiritual facts. Ideas that were considered sacred were indicated by a corresponding style; thereby those ideas were preserved from vulgar association, and so kept as it were in a sanctuary peculiar to themselves. The revolutions which have subsequently been effected in those nations have produced among them considerable changes. The people have become more prosaic in their cast of thought; still, the tendency to indicate sentiments of a religious nature in an allegorical language has not been destroyed; it is still extant among them; and in this respect oriental people possess a character singularly different from most other nations of the world. Although the nations north and west may have been first colonized by immigration from the east, yet we find among them only faint traces of that peculiar genius which distinguished their oriental progenitors. The mythological history of the beginning of those nations, together with expressions, and even sentences, to be found in all their languages, shew very decidedly that they must have sprung out of an eastern cast of thought: still the genius which originally dictated them seems to have departed. Doubtless the frequent wars and manifold revolutions to which those nations have been subject, will account for this. The genius of a truly intellectual religion is not likely to be preserved amidst the pursuits of arms, civil commotions, or the overthrow of governments. It delights to dwell with the good and peaceful. Still, under less favourable circumstances, it will long struggle to maintain its sceptre and diffuse its light.

The migration of that eastern cast of thought to which we are adverting, can be most clearly traced into various portions of the world, though it is equally evident that it suffered corruption and decay as time and distance separated it from the locality in which it was originally born and nursed. It travelled into Egypt, and has there left conspicuous evidence of its existence, in those hieroglyphical writings which are still extant upon some of the gigantic monumental and antediluvian remains

of that country. It took up its residence in India, and there originated a mythology and the *Vedas*. The former was sculptured on an immense rock, in comparison with which the pyramids of Egypt seem young. The latter are the sacred books of that country, written in Sanscrit, a language as dead to the people as Hebrew is to us. In these, various branches of learning are treated of, but theology is exhibited in a mythic form.* Persia, also, became its dwelling place; and under its influence, more or less directly, *fire* and *light* became objects of worship, and the *Zend Avesta* was produced. This is the Sacred Book of the Parsees; and in it is found the history of beginning, in the form of fable.† China, also, indicates evidence of its presence. The *Kings*, or sacred books of that country, answer to what we call theology; and these are reported to be written in a mythic style, which some who have studied their contents, think relate "the origin of all being, the principles of natural history, and the harmony of the universe." ‡ This resembles the interpretation which has been given to the early portions of our own Genesis. The mental genius of which we are speaking, passed, in some degenerated form (as indeed was the case in preceding and other instances), into Scandinavia, and there contributed to the writing of the *Eddas* which contain the mythology of Odin and his companions. § It also proceeded into Greece, as is evident of the fabulous history of the early periods of the Hellenic race; and it continued for a considerable time to influence the speculative philosophy of that people. Their oracles arose out of it. And although it seems that those institutions in later times were connected with much imposture, there can be no

* *Popular Encyclopædia*, Art. *Indian Literature.*

† See Dr. Hyde's *Historia Veterum Persarum:* also the fourth book of the first part of Dr. Prideaux's *Connection of the Old and New Testaments.*

‡ Butler's *Horæ Biblicæ*, vol. 2, p. 186.

§ Butler's *Horæ Biblicæ*, vol. 2, p. 190. "The title *Samundic Edda* is thought to mean the *Mother of Poetry;* and we think it is highly probable that poetry had its origin in the indication of moral and spiritual sentiments, by means of expressions which originally signified physical and common things. Three portions of the Old Edda have been published, namely, the *Begthamgsnida*, *Voluspæ* (prophecies), *Havamaal* (elevated conversation), and *Runa Capitule*, or the Runic Chapter."—*Conversations Lexicon*, Art. *Edda.*

doubt that they had a superior pedigree. Without this admission, it would be difficult to see how so many of the wisest men of that refined nation could have regarded their responses with respect. They must have seen, that, under the veil of figure and ambiguity, there were concealed some ideas intended for esoteric instruction. Hermes Trismegistus is reputed to have taught this maxim, namely, that all things which exist in the spiritual world, exist also in the natural world in a natural manner: and that all things which exist in the natural world, exist also in the spiritual world in a spiritual manner. * The doctrine of ideas taught in the Platonic schools, Aristotle says, was derived from Heraclitean opinions †; and the tenets respecting numbers, inculcated by the Pythagoreans, were but mythic fragments of a philosophy which originally belonged to a superior age. The early history of Rome, together with the peculiar character and authority of the Sibylline books, ‡ may also be adduced as further illustration of the fact of the ancient existence and long continuation of a genius which delighted to express itself in figurative language, and which also did, in numerous cases, give to mental things and moral processes, an historical form. Of this there can be no doubt. And this circumstance long since suggested to critical inquirers the idea of explaining some portions of the commencement of Genesis in the way of apologue. § It was seen to be difficult to claim for those narratives an exemption from the operation of a rule so obvious in the case of all other most ancient writings; and

* "Omnia quæ in cœlis, sunt in terris terrestri modo; omnia quæ in terris, sunt in cœlis cœlesti modo," is given as the Latin translation of the original Greek, to which I have not access.

† *Arist. Metaph.* i. 6. Heraclitus flourished about 100 years before Plato.

‡ See Livy's *Rome* by Baker, chap. i. In Lempriere's *Classical Dictionary*, Art. *Sibyllæ*, it is said, "It was usual in the Sibyl to write her prophecies on leaves which she placed at the entrance of her cave; and it required particular care in such as consulted her, to take up these leaves before they were dispersed by the wind, as their meaning then became incomprehensible." This is an evident allusion to the order and peculiarity which distinguished ancient writings, together with the care and discrimination which were required to prevent mistaking the form in which they might be found for the essence they were designed to indicate.

§ See Dr. Middleton's *Allegorical and Literal Interpretation.*

more particularly so as the Mosaic narratives, viewed in their literal sense, were found to be so difficult to reconcile with certain known principles of science, and what appeared to be reasonable views of God's dealings with men and mundane things.

The force of this argument was felt in the Church nearly a century and a half ago; and Dr. Shuckford put forth the following statement as a reply:—"The relating mythologically, physical or moral truths, concerning the origin and nature of things, was not, *perhaps*, as modern writers too hastily imagine, the customary practice in the age of Moses, but rather began after his time." * But surely there are no historical data for this opinion; and it will be observed that it was put forth with diffidence, since it is qualified with a "perhaps." It is afterwards said that "Mythology began in Egypt; where it was new and recent in the time of Sanchoniathon." Doubtless, Egypt was one of the early corruptors of the principles on which symbolic writing was primarily founded, and it seems plain that it very much tended that way in the time of Moses; but to say that mythology began after his time is not supported by history. Sanchoniathon is said to have flourished about 217 years after the death of Moses, and, consequently, not more than about 150 years after he went from Egypt. The writings which are left of this Phœnician historian are few and fragmentary, preserved in citations by Eusebius and Theodoret †; but surely they do not contain any precise evidence to warrant the opinion that mythology "was new and recent" in his time. On the contrary, there is found in them a mythological account of the first mortals, together with that of the Gods of Phœnicia and Egypt, the beginnings of whom were, in his time, buried in deep antiquity. Moreover, it is evident from the entire corruption of all true

* *Sacred and Profane History of the World connected.* Vol. iv. p. 8.

† The works of Sanchoniathon were originally written in Phœnician, and have long been lost; though some critics doubt whether they ever existed. A Greek translation is said to have been made by Philo of Byblos, who lived towards the close of the first century of our era. This translation was also lost; though in 1835 a MS. was discovered in a convent in Portugal, and said to be the books of Sanchoniathon which Philo had translated: a controversy was raised among competent scholars respecting its genuineness; and the result has been that all critics regard it to be spurious.—See *Penny Cyclo.*, Art. *Sanchoniathon.*

religion in Egypt at the time of Moses, that mythology was not then a recent thing; it was a losing sight of the true meaning of ancient symbols, and beginning to reverence the sign instead of the thing signified, which contributed to that result. This also was the source of all idolatry. Besides, the antiquities of Egypt, collected by Manetho, the Egyptian, and the Chaldean history of Berosus,* together with many Indian memorials which could be pressed into the service of this argument, plainly shew that mythological writing was extant long before the Mosaic era. It would be nearer the truth to say, that at that time the true design of such production was entirely lost. Indeed, Moses himself openly refers to antique books, and cites passages from them which bear unquestionable marks of a symbolical style.† And, therefore, it cannot be rationally pretended that the early portions of Genesis ought to be excluded from the class of figurative writing, on the ground that the mythological relation of moral truth was not introduced until the age of Moses; because, as we have seen, this ground cannot be maintained.

There can be no doubt that at the Mosaic period mankind had lost all knowledge of genuine religion. The circumstance of Moses having been raised up to receive special instruction upon that subject, may be taken as a proof of this conclusion. Idolatry had become general, and its influence was so strong, that no sense of its moral enormity seems to have been entertained ‡; and Egypt was one of its most conspicuous seats. It was there that the descendants of Jacob in less than three hundred years §

* Manetho and Berosus are said to have flourished in the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus, 283 years before the Christian era.

† Numbers xxi. 14. 27.

‡ No nation ever took the name of idolaters. The word is not found in the religion of the Gentiles; and Voltaire says, that if we had demanded of the Senate of the Areopagus of Athens, or at the court of the Kings of Persia, "Are you idolaters?" they would scarcely have understood the question.—*Phil. Dict.*, Art. *Idol.*

§ It is said, Exodus xii. 40, 41, That, "the sojourning of the children of Israel who dwelt in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years." It is, however, evident from an examination of the chronology of this sojourning, that it was but little more than half that period. Dr. Kennicott asserts that the

were led to forget the God of their progenitors, Abraham and Isaac * ; and became impressed with that idolatrous inclination, against the indulgence of which they were so frequently cautioned in many parts of their subsequent history. During their bondage they had, doubtless, frequently witnessed the festivals of Apis and Mnevis, at Memphis and Heliopolis † ; and it is highly probable that it was the impression thence received which led them, so suddenly after their liberation, to make the golden calf and proclaim it to be the God who brought them out. ‡ The influence exercised upon the Israelites, by the remarkable ceremonies which accompanied these and some other of the religious festivals of Egypt, together with the characteristics which were peculiar to their own moral nature, contributed largely towards fitting them to become the depositories of a ceremonial religion. § For, surely, it must be very evident that

descendants of Israel did not dwell so long in Egypt, that it may be easily proved and has often been demonstrated. The reason for this discrepancy is discussed and shewn in the author's *Treatise on the Peculiarities of the Bible*, pp. 410 and 414.

* See Exodus iii. 13 to 17.

† *Apis* was a *cow* peculiarly marked and considered sacred to the moon, as *Mnevis* was a *bull* sacred to the sun. For some particulars respecting the veneration paid to Apis, see *Herodotus*, *Thalia:* and for others concerning Mnevis, see *Plut.*, *de Isid and Diod.* 1.

‡ Exodus. xxxii. 1 to 4.

§ *Herodotus* (*Euterpe*, 38 to 41) relates the following particulars concerning the Egyptian sacrifices. "They esteem bulls as sacred to Epaphus, which, previous to sacrifice, are thus carefully examined : if they can but discover a single black hair in his body, he is deemed impure ; for this purpose a priest is particularly appointed, who examines the animal as it stands, &c., and he observes whether it is free from those blemishes which are specified in their sacred books. If the bull appears to be without blemish, the priest fastens the byblus round his horns ; he then applies a preparation of earth which receives the impression of his seal, and the animal is then led away to the altar and a fire is kindled ; a libation of wine is poured upon the altar ; the God is solemnly invoked, and the victim is then slain. They imprecate the head by wishing that whatever evil menaces those who sacrifice, or Egypt in general, it may fall upon the head. In consequence of this, no Egyptian will on any account eat the head of a beast. They sacrifice an ox to the principal of all their deities, after the previous ceremony of prayers : they then strip off the skin, and take out the intestines, leaving the fat and the

the religious observances indicated in the Levitical law, could not have been instituted among them, if they had not, in some measure, been previously accustomed to behold, and also been strongly impressed with respect for a sacraficial ritual. This, then, may be taken as another proof that mythology did not arise after the Mosaic era; for, doubtless, the ceremonies of Egyptian worship were mythology in act. Whether any recondite significations were at that time attached to these ceremonies by the priests or the people, cannot now be easily determined. It is, however, eminently reasonable to conclude that they must originally have had some such meaning. Customs are preserved for ages after the circumstances which produced them have been entirely forgotten*; and this, we think to have been the fate of most of those ceremonials with which was celebrated the idolatrous worship of the period to which we are referring. They could not always have been those repulsive things which they appear to be in the histories of them which have come down to our time. They must, at some period, have been regarded as the suitable form of some intelligible sentiments; and they seem extravagances to us, only because, in the course of revolutions, we have lost the key which was introductory to the knowledge.

Moreover, mythology must have originated in some common principle. We cannot reasonably suppose that a system of symbolic acting and writing, as this must have been, could have become so universal among all nations to whose early history we have access, if there had not been some fundamental truth to give it being and direct its utterances.† It could not

paunch; they afterwards cut off the legs, the shoulders, the neck, and the extremities of the loins; the rest of the body is stuffed with fine bread, honey, raisins, figs, frankincense, myrrh, and various aromatics. After this process they burn it, pouring upon the flames a large quantity of oil." Surely the witness of such things by the Israelitish people for many generations must have contributed very much to fit them for the reception of the Levitical law.

* See *Doctrine of the Deluge*, by the Rev. L. V. Harcourt. Vol. i. Chap. iii.

† "To Adam sight was knowledge. He could read at a glance that book of creation, the very alphabet of which we have not yet spelt. Very glorious was this intellectual perfection of the human soul. It was this which enabled the first man to enjoy the kingdom over which he ruled. He gov-

have resulted from a mere vagary of the imagination; that never could have succeeded in fixing itself so firmly, and for so long a period, upon the respect and habits of the people. The parents of this must have been spiritual and mental facts. Fancy might, in the process of time, have contributed towards the corruption of its primeval forms; but the perception of some great law must have been the influential cause of its original existence.

Mankind, for ages, seem to have lost sight of this idea; and the disgust which has arisen among Christians from a contemplation of the idolatrous rites, and undecipherable history of the gentile nations, has indisposed them to reflect upon the subject. But a time has now arrived in which it has become necessary to direct attention to such a fact. It is requisite to vindicate the character and pretensions of those portions of Genesis which precede the call of Abram. Science having proved that their meaning is not what it has been long supposed to be, their influence upon our faith must be weakened, unless their authority can be sustained by the introduction of some other principle of interpretation, more philosophical in its nature, and not less adapted to fulfil the purposes of communicating a revelation to the world.

Is there such a principle? We think there is. We feel convinced that the natural world is but the outbirth of the spiritual world; and, consequently, that all natural objects are the representations of corresponding spiritual things. The apostle recognized this truth when he said, "The invisible things of God from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made." * The idea, when once suggested, seems so true in itself, that any reasoning in proof of it appears to obscure or take away its force. Still, an argument or two in the way of illustration may be useful.

How easy is it for any one capable of a little elevated reflection to see that creation, when viewed in its vast complexity,

erned by instinctive knowledge; no painful research, no hours of weary study, preceded his attainment of truth. An unerring judgment guided him."—*The Protoplast* [*a Series of Papers in* 2 *vols.*, *Anonymous.*] *London, Wertheim and Macintosh.*

* Romans i. 20.

must be a type of those activities of the Divine mind by which it was produced; and, consequently, that every individual object in it is the proper resemblance of some distinct idea and affection in the Divine, out of which it sprung.* It appears, indeed, as if the sun of nature, by means of its heat and light, produced what we behold in the vegetable world; and, also, that they bring forth worms from their eggs, and cause the beasts to be prolific, and men to live; these, however, are but the secondary causes of such results; the final causes are the Divine Love and Wisdom; but these have their representatives in the heat and light of the sun of nature. And this circumstance beautifully illustrates the mode of the Divine Presence in all things. Omnipresence does not mean the extension of God's person through space; that is a Pantheistic notion, which implies that a mountain has more of God than a man! but it consists in the reception of his attributes by those things which He has created to live in space. We do not perceive the *person* of God in every object in the universe; but we may behold in all of them the impress of His *mind.* Every particular object which exists in universal nature is the image of some particular activity of the Divine Love, Wisdom, and Power; and in each object those attributes are present in all the fulness which is requisite to make that object what it is. Thus God is *wholly* present, in every thing, by means of those attributes which have *completely* made and given to all things the identity which they possess. He is wholly present in an insect by means of those attributes which have been requisite to its constitution as an insect: He is wholly present in a blade of grass with all those attributes which are necessary to its formation and existence as such; and so on in every other thing. Thus the Omnipresence of God is in all orders of existence, but in each according to its order: His Pres-

* "One of the principal pleasures and employments of the paradisiacal state was, probably, the study of the various works of creation. Before the fall the book of nature was the Bible of man, in which he could read the perfections and attributes of the invisible Godhead (Rom. i. 18), and in it, as in a mirror, behold an image of the things of the spiritual world. . . . . The book (of nature) to whatever page we turn, is written by the finger of Him who created us; and in it, provided our minds be rightly disposed, we may read His eternal verities."—*Introduction to Entomology, by Kirby and Spence.* Vol. i., pp. 22, 25.

ence is alike in all things: it is the same in the smallest as in the greatest: the differences which are observable are not in the Divine which is present, but in the organization which the Divine has created for its presence.

Under this view of the subject it may be seen how it is, that every created object is a type of some distinct activity of the Divine principles which were exerted in its creation. And, so far as we become acquainted with the uses of those objects, we learn a Divine idea and purpose respecting their existence. Why, then, may not all the Divine ideas and purposes which the Lord is solicitous to communicate to the world, be indicated by the selection of corresponding objects suitably arranged in a written composition? As God, by His revelation, designed to bring mankind acquainted with Himself; and as it is conceded upon all hands, that nature was His first book, surely the mode for doing this which is here expressed, when a written composition became requisite for the purpose, is one eminently calculated to effect it. It is a mode which any mind, a little elevated above a coarse sensuality, must see includes the first principles of all spiritual philosophy; it is one which can never become obsolete; it must always possess the freshness and universality of nature; and it will conduct the minds of those who wisely read it, to a knowledge of Him who wisely planned it for such instruction. When a wise man contemplates the works of God, he is enabled in the form of every work to recognize the presence of some wise principle; and in every use of that work to see the activity of some benevolent design.* Certainly then such objects may be employed in a written communication to indicate such wisdom and benevolence. If conceptions of this nature can be raised up in the mind by an enlightened contemplation of the objects which God has made; why may they not be suggested by the names of those objects when introduced into a written composition which He designed to be a special revelation to the world? That which is known to exist in the one case cannot be impossible in the other; and as we see a beautiful instruction in the former, it cannot be denied that

* For large and satisfactory illustrations of this, the *Bridgewater Treatises*, Paley's *Natural Theology*, the Works of Ray, Derham, &c., may be usefully consulted.

there is a philosophical suitability to its purpose in the latter.

But while these conclusions respecting the objects of nature as being derivatives from God, and thus as images of something in Him, must be admitted, we may descend a little lower, and there, also, see that the material world contains multitudes of objects which are striking effigies of something pertaining to man. This follows from the reasonings adduced when connected with the fact of man having been created in the image of God. If mundane things are primarily types of the Divine Principles belonging to their Maker, they must, in the second place, be symbols of some interior characteristics pertaining to man who was created in His image.* Without this, the assertion that He was created such an image would want its relative. But there are numerous instances in which the correspondence, subsisting between objects of the natural world and states of spiritual life with man, are obvious. Among the most striking evidences of such correspondence, and of the absolute connection which exists between natural forms and their spiritual essence, may be instanced the human face. Every one has observed that the forms of the countenance are influenced by the condition of the mind. Sadness depicts itself in one form, and joyfulness in another. Wit brightens the eye; anger compresses the lips; fear opens the mouth; humility bends the body; austerity lifts the head; love softens the expression; hate hardens it; and so on with every variety of affection and thought of which humanity is capable. All this is very plain; and hence it is that the face has come to be regarded as an index of the mind—a physical form in which a mental essence is naturally represented.

This fact is very evident in consequence of the visible prox-

* Bishop Brown says, "In reading the Scriptures you cannot proceed immediately to any direct perception, or simple apprehension or (interior) consciousness, or purely spiritual ideas of things divine and supernatural. Look for them in things natural and human. Observe here below how our little system is an epitome of the universe, and man a remote image and picture in miniature of the Divine Being Himself. It is by looking into this world, and more particularly into ourselves, that we can have any conception at all of the divine and supernatural; which are then alone to be discerned, and that by reflection only and similitude."—*Analogy*, p. 205.

imity of mind to matter; in other cases it may not be so plain; still, something similar must, more or less remotely, prevail throughout creation. Those who attribute the existence and perpetuity of all things to the Creator, will easily perceive the consistency of this conclusion. They see that every object is from Him as their final cause; and, therefore, they are, by a logical sequence, compelled to acknowledge that those objects have a correspondence, primarily, to something in the Supreme, and secondly, to something in man, who was created in his image.

Primitive men are represented to have had frequent communications from on high; doubtless, the ground of this advantage was excellence of character. "Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God."* It is reasonable to believe that, being so circumstanced, they were enabled to perceive some particulars respecting the connection between spiritual causes and natural effects; and thus, that such correspondence was regarded by them as one of the most eminent of sciences; but when the men of aftertime fell into sensual delights, this perception ceased, and the cultivation of such knowledge passed away; so that little but analogies have been left to arrest the attention of subsequent times. Correspondence was the interior philosophy of spiritual men; analogy is the visible resemblance which exists between physical objects and mental things, which natural men are capable of appreciating.

And how abundant is this under the eye of an intelligent observer! Every one sees that darkness and light have some relation to ignorance and wisdom, and that cold and heat are in some way connected with indifference and love. Does not time, with its progression, resemble the state induced upon the will by love and its succession? and is not space with its extension, analogous to the state induced upon the understanding by knowledge and its increase? Is it not evident that the clear heaven above us is a type of the pure affection which may exist within us? Who does not perceive that the bounteous earth beneath is an emblem of the instructing Church below? Are not the sun, the moon, and the stars beautiful representations of spiritual love, faith, and knowledge? Surely the wind is a

* Matt. v. 8.

type of spiritual influence; the storm, of a dangerous temptation; and the flood, of the overthrow of heavenly religion.* The Scriptures are full of similitudes of this kind. And because they are the Word of God, those similitudes must have been chosen upon some principle; for it cannot be reasonably supposed that the images, in the written documents of the Supreme, are fanciful or arbitrary selections. That principle we conceive must have taken its rise from the fact, that man was the end for which creation was effected; and, consequently, that it is what it is for the sake of him. Hence all things of nature mentioned in the Word are the appropriate representations, grounded in the laws of creation, of certain conditions of affection and thought pertaining to the human subject. Creation being the primary revelation of God to man, all its objects must be the physical resemblance of things belonging to his moral, intellectual, and spiritual nature. When man was in order there prevailed a perception of this fact; and hence it was that he came to be regarded as a microcosm,—a little universe.† All things of the macrocosm, or great universe, were considered to have their antitypes in him; and it was seen in multitudes of cases (their number decreased as purity of character declined), by what things the diversified principles of mind were represented in the world of nature; and spiritual things were spoken of by means of appropriate natural images, much in the same way that poets, in aftertimes, have written one thing in order to fix the idea of another more firmly upon the imagination of him who reads.‡ It was not until man fell away from this intelligence that a written Word was provided; and we have no doubt that the writing of its documents was conducted upon the principle above

* The Scriptures furnish evidence of the above analogies in great abundance, of which the reader, by the help of a Concordance, may be easily satisfied.

† Some think that astrology originated the idea respecting man being an epitome of the universe; and others suppose that he was so called because he was sustained, as to his body, by means of the three kingdoms of nature; and also because he lived from the heat of the universe, saw by its light, and breathed by its atmosphere; but the idea existed before astrology and the other notions adverted to. The fact in which it originated was a perception of the analogies above alluded to.

‡ Of this *The Pilgrim's Progress* is an example.

adverted to. It is to that principle that we must look for the harmony subsisting between Scripture and nature: it is the harmony of type and antitype, and not of the letter and science; though frequent agreements may be observable between them. When the knowledge of this principle was lost by man—when he could no longer read in nature those spiritual lessons which it was designed to teach him;—and thus, when a written communication became requisite for his instruction, God, in providing this means of edification, did not abandon the principle upon which his primary revelation had been conducted, but caused it to be transferred to the construction of His Word. None but He knew the nature of the correspondence subsisting between natural and spiritual things; and, therefore, none but He could direct a Word to be written upon that principle. Hence it is that the Scriptures derive their peculiar structure; and, being the orderly channels of graces from on high are so inimitable by man.

Here, then, we discover some glimpses of the law, the traditional reminiscences of which must, as we have said, have exerted a considerable influence over the origination of all figurative writing. As the knowledge of this law passed into obscurity, there arose, for the natural man, poetry with its charms, fable with its morals, and mythology with its mysteries: and in the periods of the latter all correct information respecting the nature of the former seems to have disappeared. A written revelation, however, existed long anterior to the time of Moses; and there can be no doubt, from the fragments which he has cited from it, that it was eminently figurative, and thus suited to a genius of mind very superior to that which distinguished the Israelitish nation. Moses and others professedly cite passages from those ancient books*; and there is much reason for concluding that all those portions of Genesis which precede the time of Abram were derived from the same source.

The locality in which those ancient revelations were produced was, probably, Palestine or its neighbourhood; and traditions respecting their existence were carried thence, east and south, as the more distant nations of Asia, and some of those on the northern coast of Africa, were formed. Those writings have

*See Num. xxi. 14, 15, 27 to 30; 2 Sam. i. 17, 18; Josh. x. 12, 13.

long been lost to Europe; still it is not unreasonable to suppose, judging from discoveries which have recently taken place,* that, as the literary possessions of the eastern world become more accessible to western scholars, some information may be procured respecting their preservation. It was some vague remembrance of the existence of such documents that gave origin to those writings which, from time immemorial, have existed in those countries, and been called their sacred books. The genuine books fell into desuetude, and were forgotten, because that spiritual genius for which they were prepared, and which was alone capable of appreciating their contents, had passed away. There are incidental notices of acts and institutions in our own Bible, which can be accounted for only by considering them as shattered remnants of a spiritual church to which those ancient notices peculiarly belonged.

The enchantments of the Egyptian magi, the divinations of Balaam, the directions of the Philistine priests in the affair of

* The Book of Enoch, cited from by Jude, after having been lost to Christian Europe for more than a thousand years, was discovered by Bruce towards the middle of the last century, during his travels in Abyssinia. On his return he consigned one copy of it to the library at Paris, and another was presented to the Bodleian Library at Oxford, by Dr. Douglas, the Bishop of Carlisle. This Book is apocryphal, and generally thought to have been produced between the time of Daniel and the coming of the Lord.

The more ancient books above adverted to, were certainly extant in the time of Moses; and while his writings have been preserved in one direction, why may not their safety have been provided for in another? Dr. Rœhrig, who for many years has been assiduously studying the languages of Central Asia, has, for a considerable time, been prosecuting interesting inquiries with a view to ascertain this fact. In a letter in the Anglo-American Repository, for 1853, p. 466, he says, "Now, as to the Primitive Bible in Tartary, you will find in *Malte Brun's Geography*, (the edition in twelve volumes in 8vo., the ninth volume, Asia, Tartary), that the Jews are watching a very old Temple in ruins in Great Tartary (the name is mentioned). In this building nothing is to be seen but the most ancient kind of Bible. In the Talmud the Primitive Bible is alluded to as preserved in Tartary. A Rabbi said to me, independently from all this, that the lost ancient Word is preserved in Tartary by Jews. It is written with letters of a round appearance, like crotchets or hooks. The language in which it is written is of a Shemitish nature, an older kind of Hebrew. The people (Jews) who preserve the book by hereditary duty and obligation from father to son,—possess by tradition the key to the characters, language, and understanding of that most ancient Holy Word."

the ark and the emerods, and the soothsaying of the Chaldeans,* were doubtless the perverted remains of a revealed religion. Those practices never could have procured the authority which they possessed, if they had not been associated with a tradition teaching such a pedigree. The reason why those who presented gifts to the infant Jesus were called "wise men from the east," † is, because a few particulars concerning the representatives of the ancient Church still lingered among some of the inhabitants of Arabia, whence they were. They knew that their presents of "gold, frankincense, and myrrh" were types of charity, faith, and duty, and that it was the combination of these virtues which rendered worship acceptable to God.

And, with regard to institutions, there are the Nazarites and the Rechabites. The first intimation given of the former is in the book of Numbers vi. 1 to 21; and there it is recognized as an institution already existing; not as having been formed by the Mosaic teachings, but as having sprung from some other source. It seems to have been in a degenerate condition; and certain inklings towards its adoption by some ascetics among the Israelitish people appear to have been one of the causes which led to the enunciation of the Mosaic law for its observance. It was, however, attended to only in a very few instances. The rites by which it was to be observed were eminently representative of a state of entire separation from the world and devotedness to heaven, which was not the genius of the Israelitish nation. Such, however, had been the inheritance of a more ancient people; a revelation must have contributed to its development; but their descendants in the time of Moses only retained some perverted knowledge of its nature and vitality; and, therefore, he was directed to write its representative laws. The institution sprung out of, and originally belonged to, a more ancient Church.‡

* For some particulars respecting these, see Exodus vii. 12, 22; Numbers xxii. xxiii.; 1 Sam. v. vi.; Daniel ii. v. vi.

† Matthew ii. 1.

‡ "The manner," says Dr. Beard, "in which Moses speaks on the subject of the Nazarite, would seem to imply that he was not introducing a new law, but regulating an old custom; for his words take for granted, that the subject was generally and well known, and that all that was needed was such direc-

Something similar may be said of the Rechabites. The earliest notice which we find respecting them, under this name, is in Jeremiah xxxv. The prophet introduces them as a people that had long been remarkably faithful to their institutional laws; and they tell him that those laws came to them from "Jonadab the son of Rechab." The circumstance of their being called Rechabites proves that Jonadab was not considered to have been the founder of their peculiar observances: he seems to have been a zealous instrument for their propagation, but to have received them from his father: yet Rechab did not invent them; he merely gave to them a sectarian character, but the laws themselves were eminently ancient. He was a descendant of Hemath, a Kenite; the Kenites besides being a semi-nomadic people, were a religious community, in Midian; and in the time of Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, who was a priest in that country, they certainly possessed some knowledge respecting the true God, which must have come to them from a source altogether apart from the Mosaic communications. Thus, it is easy to see that the Rechabites were a sect that had descended from the Kenites, and that their laws were founded on some traditional reminiscences of a more ancient revelation than that of Moses. It was this impression which induced the solemn obedience of the people; and because the laws were spiritually good, the observance of them is declared to have been blessed.* Every one must see that the Rechabite laws, like the ritual of the Nazarites, were types of better things. That those people drank no wine, built no houses, sowed no seed, possessed no vineyards, and always dwelt in tents, were not virtues considered in themselves; nevertheless they were the representatives of spiritual graces, by which men are to be lifted above any love for the blandishments of the world, and enabled to feel the profoundest confidence in the providence of God.

There is, then, a large amount of unquestionable testimony, from various sources, shewing that the earliest history of all the ancient nations which has come down to our times, is

tions as should bring existing observances into accordance with the Mosaic ritual."—*Kitto's Bib. Cyc.* Art. *Nazarite.*

* Jeremiah xxxv. 18, 19.

written in a figurative manner; and, likewise, that there existed a written revelation before the Mosaic era, which was distinguished by a similarity of style. Why, then, may not those documents of the Bible, which precede the history of Abram, be considered as parts of that figuratively-written revelation? It is admitted upon all hands that they were not the original compositions of Moses. Indeed, we find in them a distinct reference to "the Book of the generations of Adam."* Moses, then, must, under the Divine direction, have compiled them from the Sacred Writings then extant; not for the purpose of furnishing the absolute history of mundane affairs before the call of Abram, but to relate, in the representative manner common in the period when they were originally produced, certain particulars respecting the rise and fall of the two Churches which preceded the commencement of the Israelitish dispensation. This dispensation was adapted to the requirements of a sensual people; and, therefore, the writings, which are peculiarly its own, and commencing with the call of Abram, are literal history. But the people among whom the two preceding churches were established were of a more exalted character: celestial and spiritual things were, in their best times, the principal subjects of their contemplation; while the objects and phenomena of nature were regarded by them as appropriate analogues; and a genius of this character would certainly relate its religious history, not in a literal but in a figurative style. We believe the first eleven chapters of Genesis, or rather to the time of Eber, mentioned at the fourteenth verse of the eleventh chapter, to have been entirely constructed upon this principle; and we feel the strongest assurance that it is only by viewing those documents in this light, that a truly religious and rational meaning can be evolved from them.

Proceeding upon this principle, we attempted, in a former volume, to shew that the history before the flood treats of the establishment, rise, progress, divisions, and decline of a *celestial church;* and that the narrative of the flood itself was a typical description of the temptation by which it was destroyed. It will be the purpose of the present work to follow up those explanations by shewing that the Postdiluvian History, to the

* Genesis v. 1.

call of Abram, treats of the establishment, corruption, and dispersion of a *spiritual church;* the former church having had its commencement with Adam, and the latter with Noah.

If the narrative of the flood, and of the disasters it is stated to have occasioned, is to be received as the figurative history of those direful temptations by which a religious dispensation was brought to its end, then it will necessarily follow that the circumstances related of Noah are not to be interpreted as a literal, but as a representative history. The premises on which this conclusion rests, have been arrived at from various considerations to which the reader is referred.* The law which directed the interpretation of that narrative is that which has been adverted to in this chapter; and by the application of the same principle to the succeeding portions of the record, we shall be enabled to open out a field, vastly superior in religious information to any thing that is commonly educed from its literal sense, and at the same time avoid the difficulties suggested by reason, and the objections urged by science, against such an acceptance of the history.

* See *Antediluvian History*, chapter xxii.

CHAPTER II.

THAT NOAH AND HIS SONS WERE A PEOPLE, AMONG WHOM WERE PRESERVED THE LAST REMNANTS OF THE PRIMEVAL CHURCH, FOR THE PURPOSE OF ESTABLISHING AMONG THEM ANOTHER DISPENSATION.

"If we would condescend to take notice of obvious facts, we should soon see that religious truths, even of the most important kind, are very frequently wrapped up in obscurity; we should see that the Lord of the universe does not obtrude Himself upon our view, but expects that we should trace out His being and perfections by slow, and cautious, and patient steps."—*Dr. T. Balguy's Discourse "On the Difficulties which Attend the Study of Religion."*

When the church before the flood, by numerous divisions and repulsive corruptions, was about to be extinguished, the Lord was pleased to make provision for the formation of another dispensation, as the medium for keeping up the communication between Himself and man. A man would cease to be a man if he were entirely separated from this source of spiritual life. The apostle tells us that it is "in God we live, and move, and have our being*;" and the Lord has said, "Because I live, ye shall live also." † In proportion as men put aside the requirements of intelligent religion, they become ignorant and savage; so far as they know it, and submit themselves to its instruction and guidance, they become wise and virtuous. Hence the necessity for the existence of a church. The church is like the heart in the natural body; so long as that lives the neighbouring viscera and members continue to receive animation; but when that ceases to beat every portion of the body is found to die. The church performs, for man's spiritual part, a similar function: without this, the medium for communication with the Lord would be destroyed; this medium he has ever been solici-

* Acts xvii. 28. The Greek poets, Aratus, in his *Phenomena*, and Cleanthus, in his *Hymn to Jupiter*, had recorded this saying before the apostle; so also had some others. There can be no doubt but that the idea had been derived from the ancient church.

† John xiv. 19.

tous of preserving; and therefore it is, that since the creation of man there has always been a church. All that mankind, at any time, have ever known of intelligence and virtue, has come to them, more or less directly, from the influences and statutes of such an institution.

The church of God, considered as to its *essential* nature, has always been the same, though it has varied in its external form and character with the changing circumstances and conditions of mankind. It is from this merciful accommodation to human wants that several churches, at successive periods, have existed in the world, and that each has taught, for the observance of the people, certain principles by which their happiness was to be promoted. We find, however, upon consulting the history of those churches, that mankind, in the process of time, have ceased to appreciate the excellency of their teachings, and that thereby the peculiar characteristics of the churches have been brought to their end. But God has never left Himself without a witness to be among them. It has been the evident course of the Divine Providence that, when one church had sunk into decay, and, by the profligacy of the people, was about to be dissolved, arrangements have been made to supply its place by the institution of another, and at the same time to commence its establishment among a few of the most orderly and sincere of those who had lived in the closing periods of its predecessor. Thus, when the Jewish Church failed in the execution of those purposes for which it was vouchsafed, the propagation of Christianity was begun among the twelve apostles. When the church after the deluge ceased to exercise those salutary influences upon mankind for which it was instituted, we find that Abram was called, and the Israelitish dispensation was produced among his descendants, to supply its place; and when the church before the flood fell into those abandoned courses which were the occasion of that catastrophe, provision was made for the establishment of another among Noah and his posterity. And it is concerning this church that we are about to enquire.

The biography of Noah is begun before the flood; it is carried through the diluvian period, and constitutes the beginning of the Postdiluvian History: it is requisite, therefore, before entering upon the records of this latter era, that we should clearly

understand the idea which ought to be attached to the name of him who is popularly regarded to have been the second father of the human race.*

It is usual to consider Noah to have been the name of an individual man: this, however, when we remember the characteristic of ancient writings, is no necessary inference from the narrative. We may be told that his name is so referred to by the prophet, the evangelist, and apostle†; but this is simply asserting what is not evident. It is true that the name is mentioned by those parties, but certainly not for the purpose of settling the question of his individuality. It is cited in all these cases as it appears in the literal sense of Genesis; and it is done in each with a different design, but in none of them for the purpose of affording an explanation of the point before us. The idea of its being the name of a people, will suit the narratives in which it is employed equally as well as the notion which supposes it to be the designation of an individual. Ezekiel cited it simply because it afforded him the exponent of a character suitable for his argument. Being written by inspiration, it must have been used with the same meaning as it bears in Genesis; and, therefore, as we conceive, in the sense of a collective man, rather than of an individual. It is very plain that when the Lord spoke of the days of Noe, and of the profligacy of society at that period, He did not necessarily refer to one person. The idea of a community being signified by Noe is more consistent with the general design of the narrative, than that of an individual would be. It is certain that He was treating of the condition of one church which had fallen away, and of another which was afterwards raised up to supply its place. The former is described as continuing in its worldliness "until the day that Noe entered into the ark:" where it is evi-

* Dr. Robertson observes, "that the arts and sciences known to Noah and his sons would have been diffused equally throughout the earth, *if all nations had been naturally descended from those patriarchs.* For instance: if ever the use of iron had been known to the savages of America, or to their progenitors; if ever they had employed a plough, a loom, or a forge, the utility of those inventions would have preserved them; and it is impossible that they should have been abandoned or forgotten."

† Ezekiel xiv. 14; Matthew xxiv. 37, 38; Luke iii. 36; 1 Peter iii. 20.

dent that *Noe is the collective name* for all those who were rescued from the flood. Luke mentions the name of Noe in recording what is generally considered as the genealogy of the Lord: the true reason for this can only be appreciated when the meaning of that narrative is correctly understood. To go into this point now would lead us beyond our present object.* And it may be sufficient here to observe that the idea of Noah being the designation of a race, need not come into collision with the statement of the genealogy, when it is recollected that the tracing of that genealogy through an individual of his race would necessarily come under the same denomination, because in the case of a church the parts are as the whole. The other reference above alluded to is made by Peter. In treating of the instruction imparted to the spirits in prison, by Christ preaching to them after His resurrection, he says, "the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noe, while the ark was preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water." This of course was written in conformity with the literal appearance of the original narrative. The subject of which he was treating required only such a reference to it, not an explanation of it; and, therefore, no elucidation is attempted. Nevertheless, it is evident that the apostle viewed that history as conveying, in a symbolical way, some spiritual truth, for he immediately adds that the water by which they were saved was a figure of baptism: this being the case, it necessarily follows that all the details of the narrative in connection with it must have been designed for a similar purpose. So that, as it was said, those references do not prove that the Noah of Genesis ought to be regarded as the name of an individual man. † Moreover, when God commanded Noah to build the ark, and when it is said

* The reader who is disposed to examine this subject, is referred to the author's *Treatise on the Peculiarities of the Bible*, in which it is examined at considerable length with a view to the removal of its difficulties, and the elucidation of its meaning, pp. 416 to 425. If those genealogies are read with attention, it will immediately be seen that they are rather the genealogies of Joseph, the husband of Mary, than of Jesus Christ; moreover, when it is remembered that Jesus Christ was conceived of the Holy Ghost, it must be evident that He could not have had a genealogy from a human father.

† Noah was a name given to one of the *daughters* of Zelophehad. Numbers xxv. 33.

that he did according to all that God commanded him, it is evident that Noah could not have been contemplated merely as a single person; for, in whatever sense the ark and its furniture be regarded, it is plain that they could not have been produced by the efforts of an individual. Noah, then, must be considered as the cognomen of a people.

In the Word, especially in the ancient style of it, names are employed to signify the qualities of things; and because the things there treated of are such as belonged to the church, the names are employed to denote the qualities of those things, and, consequently, the quality of the people by whom they are received. It is well known that the Hebrew names are expressive of some idea, act, condition, or circumstance, independently of their being sometimes used as personal appellatives; and, therefore, it is the qualities of the things which they express which are the chief subjects of regard. It is because those qualities may become the possessions of many, as well as of an individual, that the names, in those ancient documents, are employed to express a community of persons. And such a community are spoken of as one, because of the unity which exists among them. There is a natural tendency in the mind to think of a collected body of persons as one; and, consequently, to speak of them as such. The members that constitute the church are distinctly spoken of as "one body."* Viewed by the Divine mind they are as a grand man. The form of the church in the aggregate is the same as in the individual. The whole is as the parts and the parts are as the whole. The configuration of crystals of the same species is the same in their minutest particles as they are in their greatest forms; and so it is with the church; the only difference being like that which exists between things of greater and less magnitude. Hence it is that a church is contemplated as a one, and is spoken of as an individual. It was customary in those ancient times to express the idea of a community by a single name. The name was then well understood to be what grammarians now call a collective noun. The name Noah would have suggested an idea to the ancients, similar to that which the word public does to us, though a peculiar public. Several instances of this are plainly

* Romans xii. 5; 1 Cor. x. 17, &c.

indicated in the Scriptures. Adam is usually considered as the name of a single person; but it is written that the Lord "called *their* name Adam, in the day when *they* were created*;" thus plainly informing us that more than one person was included in that designation. It is the generic name for the race. How frequently do the Scriptures mention the names of the Patriarchs in a collective sense. When the Psalmist said "Jacob shall rejoice and Israel be glad," † he was not speaking of individual men, but of the characteristics of a religious community. When the Lord was spoken of as leading Joseph like a flock, ‡ Joseph was considered as the name of a multitude, and not of one. Judah is declared to be a congregation. § And how common is it in our own times, to speak of religious bodies by individual names? Luther and Calvin are names frequently employed to signify the sects that have adopted their sentiments. And so it is in reference to Noah. It is the name of a people with whom there remained certain principles of the primeval church. Those principles were to be the source of consolation and repose amidst the dangers which surrounded them; and this is the idea which the name Noah, when translated, properly expresses.|| In the abstract, it denotes the principles; in the concrete, the persons in whom they were extant.

So long as Adam, which was the name of the people who constituted the primeval church, remained in their integrity, we do not read of any descendants; but after that event we are informed of several generations. Now, why is it that there are no offsprings recorded before the fall? Because heresies could not commence until transgression had begun. And all the names by which those offsprings are expressed are but the appellations of sects that had descended from an erratic Church.¶ Heresies have always been prolific, and like weeds they grow apace. Hence it was that the corruption of the primeval church

* Genesis v. 2. † Psalm xiv. 7. ‡ Psalm lxxx. 1.

§ 2 Chronicles xxx. 25.

|| See Gen. v. 29, where he is said to have been so called to express this idea. Noah is the first who is said to have been born after Adam's death.

¶ Under this view, the longevity attributed to those who lived before the time of Abram ceases to be a difficulty. Opinions continue longer than individuals. See *Antediluvian History*, Chap. xviii.

increased from bad to worse, until the period came in which their professors were overwhelmed by the iniquity they had produced. But before the consummation of that catastrophe, provision was made for keeping up a spiritual influence from heaven on man, by the commencement of another dispensation among the Noetic people. On this fact there are several points of importance to be observed.

In the fifth chapter of Genesis we read that Noah was the son of Lamech,—not of that Lamech who was a descendant of Cain,* but of him who was of the line of Seth.† These two genealogies are distinctly marked; and there is a point in the tracings of each, of peculiar interest. It will be observed, on reference to the fourth chapter, that the descendants of Cain are chiefly traced through the maternal side: whereas, by consulting the following chapter, which treats of the line of Seth, it will be found that the paternal side alone is mentioned. It is important also to remark that Seth was "appointed as another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew ‡;" and also, that the fifth chapter, which formally opens by saying, "This is the book of the generations of Adam," leaves out Cain and Abel, and commences with Seth, who is said to have been "in his own likeness, after his image." § It is thus evident that the two lines are carefully distinguished from each other. The reasons for these particulars require consideration; and this will throw some further light on our subject.

By Cain and Abel were represented the two great principles of the primeval church, charity and faith; charity was represented by Abel, and faith by Cain. So long as the church remained in its integrity, these principles did not appear as separate things; they were the essentials *in* it, and were not born into the condition of distinct existences, until the fall began. When faith and charity, as spiritual brothers, came to be viewed as divided things in the work of man's salvation, it also came to pass that each was regarded to possess an efficacy in this work superior to the other, and so the unity of the church was broken; one class of persons claiming preëminence for faith, and another demanding superiority for charity. Disagreements

* Gen. iv. 18.
† Gen. v. 28.
‡ Gen. iv. 25.
§ Gen. v. 3.

upon those points arose; and the consequence was, the death of charity;—Cain slew Abel,—which frequent experience has shown to be the common result of religious disputations.

Now, here began a most decided heresy, not simply of the intellect but of the heart. The Cainites, who adopted faith only for their religion, carried out its teachings. It became a subject of their affection; they were wedded to it; and by virtue of this marriage other heresies were born. When a man embraces one false principle from the love of it, a progeny of others will certainly ensue. It is the necessary consequence of attempting to discover spiritual things by means of sensual knowledge; and therefore it is, that the genealogy of Cain is, for the most part, traced through the *maternal* side; for the wives who are named were representatives of the perverted loves through which those heresies were begotten. Those heresies increased, and the generality of society became more and more infected with the enormities to which they were conducive, until "the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." * Hereupon the flood came,—temptations to enormous evils set in upon them,—they yielded to them, and by this they were swept away. Thus it was the heresies of Cain and of those who succeeded him, as the chief corrupters of the primeval church, that became the victims of this catastrophe. It was only that branch of the perverted church which was entirely overwhelmed. Some of those who descended from the line of Seth were rescued from the danger. Let us try to find the reason for this.

Abel was slain at the very outset of those divisions. Is it not evident that the living charity of the primeval church must have been destroyed, when the professors of that church determined to divide? Genuine charity is a principle which unites those who love it in the bonds of spiritual brotherhood; and it is only when some violence is done to it that this unity is broken. But although genuine charity had been destroyed, means were taken to preserve the *doctrines* by which its duties were to be inculcated. Now, the circumstance of those *doctrines* having been preserved and substituted for the charity which was dead, is that which is represented by Seth's having been "appointed another

* Gen. vi. 5.

seed, instead of Abel whom Cain slew." It cannot be difficult to see the practical bearing of this elucidation. Does it not frequently happen that men who have no charity in their hearts, speak of it with their tongues, and thus that Seth is substituted for the Abel who is dead? Seth denotes in the place of another; and he is said to have possessed the likeness after the image of Adam; now as Adam was created in the image and likeness of God, it follows very plainly from this description of Seth, that he represented those with whom some of the excellences of the primeval church still remained: but the order of their existence was now changed; for it will be observed that the terms of the description are reversed. The purpose of this fact is to shew us, that the church, in the process of its decline, lost sight of the true order in which its principles were originally vouchsafed; and that in the course of time it comes to regard the perception of truth as the primary thing, calling it a *likeness*, and the love of goodness as a secondary thing, calling it an *image;* whereas, in the Adamic church before the fall, it was the image which had relation to truth and the likeness to love. And every one, if he is so disposed, may see that love is the first principle, and that truth is the second; because love is that which moves a man to think, and know, and do. But the inversion of regard adverted to, respecting the right order in which the internal things of the church should exist, was consequent on the cessation of genuine charity; nevertheless it was appointed in its place,—eminently useful in its way, and the people who adopted it were denominated Seth.

The doctrines of charity which they perceived to be true were purer than their practice; they knew better than they did. This was the necessary result of the inverted order of spiritual regard for heavenly things: still some practical charity—some living religion, was immediately begotten; and to represent this circumstance, we are informed that Enos was born; that is, that men came into being who were duly sensible of their fallen condition; for this is what the birth of Enos means; and therefore it is added, "*then* men began to call upon the name of Lord";* they now began to worship him from a sense of their

* Genesis iv. 26. Difficulties have long been experienced with this passage, because it is conceived that men could not then have *first* begun to call

own deficiencies, and a strong belief that he was able and willing to make them participate in his mercies. These things, and a life according to the doctrines of charity, are plainly involved in this idea of calling upon the name of the Lord. It is said that they began to do these things *then*. Doubtless the worship of the Lord had been observed before; but, in those cases, its quality was different from that which then came into existence: before the time of Enos it arose from the promptings of love; but *then* it began to be educed from the perceptions of truth. The former was more internal than the latter; and, consequently, more exalted in its nature.

But the perceptions respecting charity which now prevailed, together with the virtues which they had been instrumental in educing, gradually declined from soundness and purity; and every stage in the process of descending was attended by the birth of some other perception on the subject of charity less profound in its nature; and, consequently, to the formation of a people less holy in their character. As the practice of virtue fell into decay, the laws of virtue began to lose their brightness, and doctrines were invented by society which would favor its decline. Many instances of this sort could be selected from the history of the Christian Church. One will sufficiently illustrate our meaning. The Lord said, "If thou wilt enter into life keep the commandments"; * but men in after times, who have professedly followed His religion, have asserted that this obedience is not necessary to such a result. † The lamp of spiritual truth

upon the name of the Lord; and hence it has been thought that allusion is made to the origin of idolatry, and that men then began to call their idols by the name of the Lord. The Septuagint renders the passage, *hoped or aspired* to the name of the Lord. Dr. Geddes proposes to render it "This man (Enos) aspired to be called by the name of the Lord." We, however, have no doubt about the accuracy of the authorized version; and we feel assured that the above view of the history is the only one by which the seeming obscurity of the passage can be satisfactorily removed.

* Matt. xix. 17.

† "The *Antinomian* derives his name from the Greek words *Anti*, against, and *Nomos*, a law, his favorite tenet being, that the law is not a rule of life to believers."—*Evan's Sketch.* This sect sprung up in England during the Protectorate of Cromwell, and its origination is commonly ascribed to John Agricola, a disciple of Luther. His master also taught that "unless faith

begins to flicker, when the oil of spiritual love fails to be supplied; and the light goes out when there is no oil in the lamp. It was a degeneracy tending to this consequence which was represented by Enos begetting Cainan, and Cainan begetting Mahalaleel, and so on, till we arrive at the time of Noah, the tenth generation from Adam.* The superior things which belong to the first Church were constantly diminished in their excellence by those churches which succeeded it; and the last was removed, so far as it was possible, from the purity of the first, and at the same time to preserve decided evidences of an orderly origin. This decline may be compared, in some respects, with that of fruits and their seeds. In the seed there lies concealed the essence of the fruit; and from that essence, the several parts of the fruit which succeed each other, receive their vegetative life: nevertheless, those parts which are removed the farthest from their essence, partake less of that life than those which are the nearest; and the last, which is the skin, is the terminatory effort of the seed; it can go no further; but within that covering means are provided for the production of another crop. Now it was a condition somewhat similar to this, to which the essentials of the primeval church had descended when the Noachic church began. The character of the Noachic church at this time retained some evidences of its superior origin; still, like the covering of the fruit, it was somewhat removed from the sweetness of the pulp, but contained within it those intellectual materials out of which a new dispensation could be raised.

The decline, however, which is here particularly treated of, is that which relates to perceptions concerning the laws of charity. The charity of genuine love had been destroyed in the death of Abel: and so the charity which was to arise from the teaching of truth was substituted in its place, by the birth of Seth.

be without the least good work it does not justify; it is not faith."—*De Servo Arbit*, tom i. fol. 361.

* "It was customary with the most ancient people to give names, by which they represented events, and thus framed a genealogy; for whatever has relation to the Church may be considered in this light, since one faith is conceived and born of another, like an ordinary generation. Hence it is common in the Word to name various circumstances relating to the Church, conceptions, births, &c. The prophetical parts of the Word abound with such expressions."—*Arcana Cœlestia*, 338.

Now, it is because a decline in the purity of *perception* respecting charity, is the subject represented by the successive births in the line of Seth, that they are traced only through the *paternal* side. The woman, the wife, the mother, are the symbols of affection. The female is love by nature. But the man, the husband, the father, are the representatives of understanding. The male is intelligence by nature. Perception belongs to the understanding, and this is the faculty, when the heart is wrong, that invents opinions which attenuate the truth. The heart of the people got worse with every succeeding generation, and, therefore, the head gave birth to perceptions in correspondence with that decline. This continued to the time of Noah, when the doctrines of charity were reduced to their narrowest limits, and their perpetuation became endangered.

The Noachic people, with each of their predecessors, retained, as we have said, something of the excellence which had belonged to their original progenitors; much in the same way as all the sects of Christianity may be said to hold fast some of the true teachings of apostolic times; yet it is easy to see that the division of sects may be carried to a point in which all the excellence of Christianity may be lost. Every separation which is effected is not only a blow aimed at practical charity, but also, an evidence that a correct knowledge of its doctrines is declining. Separatists always invent arguments to defend the course they have pursued, and so the doctrines of charity in those arguments stray, with every division, more widely from the truth. But this degeneracy has its limits; and when these have been attained, we find that means have been adopted for bringing about another dispensation.

The degeneracy of the primeval church could go no farther than that which it had reached in the time of Noah; and, therefore, the Lord graciously interposed to raise up among that people another dispensation of His truth and love. They were selected in preference to others, because among them was stored up all that *remained* of the excellence of its ancient predecessors. Hence they are described to have "found grace in the eyes of the Lord." * They enjoyed this favor because they possessed those *remains*. The Scriptures frequently refer to remains, and

* Genesis vi. 8.

to their importance in promoting the regeneration of society. Sometimes they are spoken of as a *remnant* and the *remainder;* and at others, as the *left* and the *escaped.** In the case before us they did not consist in those things of religion which were actually known and outwardly professed; for although the Noachic people might be considered as superior to the rest of mankind in these respects, yet it cannot be reasonably supposed that they were entirely free from the false persuasions and evil influences by which they were surrounded. There can be no doubt but what the religion which they professed, received from such impurities a taint and impress: but those *corruptions* did not form any part of the *remains* of the primeval church, because they had never constituted any of its parts. The remains of which we speak are of a different nature. They consisted in the actual remains of good impressions made upon the interiors of the mind by heavenly principles, but which had been driven into quiescence by the force of unfavorable influences from without. They may be regarded as an internal dictate—a sense—a conscientious impression—that there existed something holier and truer, than that which society has consented to recognize as the right religion. States of this kind have always existed in dilapidated churches. They are experienced by numerous individuals in all the sects of Christianity. Those persons, from education and habit, profess the creed of some community, and comply with the regulations which have been adopted for its government; but still they have an impression that something exists superior to that which is presented to their intellectual acceptance—they feel that there is a brighter light, and that there must be a holier love, than that inculcated by their church: some of its externals perplex them, and they would rejoice to see the development of a greater glory.† Now, whence

* See Isaiah vi. 34; x. 20, 21; l. 20: Micah v. 7.

† A very interesting case of this kind is afforded by Dr. Isaac Watts, in his *Solemn Address to the Great and Blessed God;* prefixed to his *Faithful Enquiry after the Ancient and Original Doctrine of the Trinity.* In that address he indicates a series of embarrassments with which the ordinary doctrines upon that subject oppressed his conscience, and at the same time evinces a strong moral assurance that there must be some purer and clearer truth upon the subject, than that which was then in the possession of the churches. How touching is the following extract:—"Dear and Blessed God, hadst thou been pleased,

came these feelings and convictions? Doubtless they must have arisen, more or less remotely, from the influences of spiritual truth and goodness. They are indications to sincere men that the church is in the process of decay, and are among the means by which a merciful Providence intends to evolve another dispensation. They are the final impressions which a genuine church makes of itself on men, when they are in the process of leaving it.

Such were the remains of the primeval church among the Noachic people. They were sincerely impressed with the conviction that there were better things in religion, than those which were taught and practised by the church amongst them. Nor was this simply an intellectual persuasion; it was associated with a character superior to that which commonly abounded. Hence it was that they "found grace in the eyes of the Lord." Doubtless they had been unfavorably influenced by the degradation of the times: nor can it be reasonably supposed that they entirely escaped from all participation in its guilt. Still they were not so deeply infected with the enormities extant as those who had descended from the line of Cain. Certain impressions respecting religious intelligence and virtue clung to them: and by these they were influenced to yearn and hope for their development. These characteristics constituted the spiritual plane on which was raised the superstructure of that church which was subsequently established among them. Their virtues, though considerably inferior to those which were extant in the primeval days of the Antediluvian world, were nevertheless sufficiently exalted to keep open a channel in the mind through which the protecting influences of the Divine graces could descend. Still the quality of the church which was raised up among them, was different from that which had prevailed in the best times of its ancient predecessor. This difference arose from the distinctive qualities of the people: the one was *innocent*, when the primeval church was vouchsafed, the other had par-

in any one plain Scripture, to have informed me which of the different opinions, about the Holy Trinity, among the contending parties of Christians, had been true, Thou knowest well with how much zeal, satisfaction, and joy, my unbiased heart would have opened itself to receive and embrace the Divine discovery."—p. 3.

taken of *guilt*, when the Noachic dispensation was began; consequently, the quality of the religious things communicated to each was somewhat different. Those things which were adapted to the perception and delight of unperverted minds, were more interior than those which could be properly appreciated by mankind when guilt had drawn a veil before their eyes. These two opposite states required different treatment at the Divine hand. The mind in health had communicated to it the requisite food, but the mind diseased had to be treated with the necessary medicine. In the former case the Lord acted as a bountiful Father; but in the latter He also acted as the wise Physician. The church planted with the Adamic people was to supply them directly with the genuine bread of heaven; but the church raised up among the Noachians, besides the provision of an inferior food, had also to administer the physic. Nor are these the only differences by which those two dispensations were distinguished.

In the Adamic church there was a direct influence of good into the wills of the people, and this procured for them an instantaneous perception of what was true. But their interior faculties for the reception of that influence, were so disarranged by the fall, and so effectually damaged by the guilt of succeeding generations, that they became the recipients of evil. Their wills and understandings acted as one; so that when they loved an evil they were thereby compelled to think a falsehood. But in the time of Noah their mental constitution had undergone a change. The will and the understanding were detached from each other, so that men should not necessarily think what is false, when they are in the pursuit of something that is evil. This separate condition of those faculties has been continued to the present day. It was effected in order that men may be instructed in the principles of truth, notwithstanding the natural inclinations of their will to an evil course. The design of such an education is to bring them back to the love of goodness; and, so far as this is accomplished, those two faculties will again act in unison for the security of virtue, when the interior impulses to good must be again experienced. Thus the people of the primeval church were enabled to know truth by a perception arising from the influences of goodness operating from within. But the people of the Noachic dispensation could only know

what goodness is by the instruction of truth communicated from without. The order for the implantation of religious things was changed, because the state of man was altered by the fall; and a time had come for the establishment of another church adapted to the necessities of that condition, into which he had descended. The Adamic dispensation was celestial, in which *goodness and thereby truth* were inseminated into the affections of the people by an internal influence: but the Noachic was a spiritual church, in which *truth and thereby goodness* were introduced into the intellect by means of external teachings. When the divine influence could no longer descend by an internal way into the affections of the people, the Lord was pleased to make an effort to reach their minds by the external teachings of truth, and so to raise up a spiritual church as a means for their preservation. Attention to the teachings of religious truth, together with its admission into the intellect and reason, are what constitute a spiritual man. Such a one acknowledges truth and goodness to originate with God, and to come down from Him for the edification of mankind. But then this acknowledgment arises more from a principle of faith than from the sentiments of love: his life and conduct also spring out of the same lower ground. We call it a lower ground, because faith is an inferior principle to love. Love was the peculiar property of the primeval church, and faith grounded in truth was the essential quality of the Noachic; so that the antediluvian history of Moses relates to the rise, fall, division, corruption, and extinction of the *celestial* or Adamic church; while his postdiluvian history before the time of Abram, treats of the establishment, progress, decline, and dispersion, of the *spiritual* or Noachic dispensation.

CHAPTER III.

THE RISE OF THE NOACHIC CHURCH; ITS DILUVIAN PERIOD; THE ASSUAGING OF THE WATERS, AND THE RESTING OF THE ARK UPON THE MOUNTAINS OF ARARAT.

"The disadvantage attending the use of *analogical* expressions is, that men are sometimes apt to understand them too literally, and to interpret what is said more strictly than was intended.—There might be a danger that by the long and familiar use of such figurative expressions we should at length come to forget that they are figurative."—*Essay on Apparent Contradictions in Scripture, by Richard Whateley, D.D., Archbishop of Dublin.*

Immediately after the statement that "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord," it is written, "These *are* the generations of Noah: Noah was a JUST man, and PERFECT in his generations, and Noah walked with God. And Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth." * The original (תְּמִים *thaumiym*) here translated PERFECT, would have been more accurately rendered by the word *upright;* and this, it may be observed, is the marginal reading. To the casual reader of this passage it may appear as if the generations treated of referred only to the three sons, and that the description of the Noachic character, by which the statement of their birth is preceded, had no connection with the nativities referred to. But they who arrive at such a conclusion, must read that description in parenthesis, for which there is no warrant; and also regard the declaration that Noah was upright in his generation, as simply indicating the superiority of his character to that by which society was commonly distinguished. This, however, cannot be its meaning. That society were his contemporaries, but not his generations; and, in the case before us, the term is clearly employed to express the idea of something descending from him; to relate these is the object for which the narrative professedly opens; and that which first follows is a description of the spiritual nativities of *justice, uprightness, and walking, or obedience;* and they are called generations, to indicate that such virtues were to result from the

* Gen. vi. 9, 10.

regeneration of the Noachic people. It will be observed that each of those three graces is mentioned in the order to which its eminence peculiarly belongs. *Justice* is placed first, because it is the inmost thing of the church, and consists in the good of charity. *Uprightness* follows, because this is next in order, and relates to the laws or truths by which the offices of charity are to be administered. And *walking with God* is the last, because by this is signified the external obedience which charity and its laws endeavour to establish; so that those three graces are contemplated as engaging all the faculties of the man of the church: the feeling of charity animating the will; the knowledge of its laws enlightening the understanding, and obedience to their combined influences distinguishing the conduct. Those excellences, however, were not in full activity among the people at the time it was said of Noah, that he "found grace in the eyes of the Lord." At that period they were in possession of the capabilities requisite for their evolution, but their actuality belonged to subsequent development; and therefore it is that they are described as generations—as spiritual births which were afterwards effected; as also were those who are described as his three sons. The Noachic people were all the descendants of a corrupted race; and, partaking of their depravity, they could not be delivered from its influence but by means of reformation and regeneration, which are gradual processes, and described in the Gospel as a birth of the spirit.

Concerning Shem, Ham, and Japheth it is interesting to remark, that they were the same in number as were the graces by which their father was to be distinguished. But as by Noah is signified a community, it follows, that those sons are not to be understood in the sense of individuals. This circumstance may not seem very evident to those who have always accustomed themselves to regard those names as the designation of personal descendants; nevertheless, the fact follows from the series of things treated of; and there are many instances in the Scriptures in which it is certain that seemingly personal names are employed in a collective sense. That of Adam is a conspicuous illustration of this: "God called their name Adam." The Noachic history contains several other unquestionable evidences of the same truth. The tenth chapter of Genesis appears to the

ordinary reader as the description of the *personal* descendants of Japheth, Ham, and Shem; but a critical attention to that narrative proves that many of the names therein recorded, are not the names of *individuals*, but of families or tribes. Thus *Mizraim*, mentioned in the sixth verse, is said to be a son of Ham; but Mizraim is the plural of *Mezer*, *trouble*, and never could have been the designation of an individual. The same may be said of Kitt*im*, Dodan*im*, Lud*im*, Anan*im*, Lehab*im*, Naphtuh*im*, Pathrus*im*, Casluh*im*, Philest*im* *; for all these, ending in *im*, are *plurals*. But if there should be any doubt about the accuracy of this conclusion, which, however, cannot be reasonably entertained, there is another fact which plainly shews that the purpose of the chapter, was not to record personal genealogies. Thus the posterity of Canaan are not described as individuals but as nations, namely, the *Jebusite*, *Amorite*, *Girgasite*, *Hivite*, *Arkite*, *Sinite*, *Arvadite*, *Zemarite*, *and Hamathite.* †

Another circumstance bearing upon this argument is, that all Scripture names are significant of things,—things which belong to or represent mental qualities, not simply fitted for the reception or rejection of one individual, but of a society; and although most of such names, from the time of Eber downwards, are applied to single persons, yet from the character of the narratives which precede that period, all the names which occur therein are expressive of things pertaining to the church, and to communities by whom they were embraced. Thus, Noah denotes *consolation*, a principle peculiarly required by the condition of the fallen church when he is stated to have been born; but, doubtless, this was not provided simply for the comfort of one of its members, but for the enjoyment of all. So, also, in reference to Shem, Ham, and Japheth; these names denote respectively *renown*, as arising from the activity of charity ‡;

* See verses 4, 6, 13, 14. Dr. Geddes observes, "It is not always certain that the names mentioned in this chapter are the names of individuals. In the Hebrew idiom, the terms *father*, *son*, *begat*, *was born*, imply not always immediate parentage or filiation."

† See verses 16—18. More, however, will be said upon this subject in chapter xi. of this work.

‡ "Shem is a term which relates to the heavens, and the sun. Many places of reputed sanctity, such as *Same*, *Samos*, *Samothrace*, *Samorna*, were

black, which represents a state of faith separate from charity; and *persuasion*, as being the result of obedience: and these principles were not the exclusive inheritance of three individuals, but the possessions of so many distinct classes of persons, whose dispositions were respectively different.

The apostle speaks of Noah as "a preacher of righteousness*;" this, doubtless, was one of the uses performed by the Noachic people; and Shem, Ham, and Japheth, are names by which are represented three classes of persons on whom that preaching had exercised a favorable influence; so that they were begotten as children, much in the same way that the church in subsequent ages has procured converts, and called them sons. In this sense, Paul called the Corinthians "his beloved sons." † The reason why the sons now begotten, are the representatives of *adherents*, while the descendants of Cain and Seth, until the time of Noah, were significant of *divisions* ‡, is because in those latter cases the decay of the church is the subject treated of, whereas in the former the purpose contemplated, as the sequel shows, is the building up of another dispensation to supply the place of that which was about to pass away.

Justice, uprightness, and obedience, as before observed, were to be the characteristics of the Noachic church, and Shem, Ham, and Japheth, were begotten as sons through the teachings of those principles; not that each of those three classes of persons embraced all those principles, but that each selected from among them such things as were most in conformity with the leading inclinations of their genius and character.

The dispositions of men must needs be various: every one has his own individuality: creation has many colors and a multitude of forms; and some persons are arrested by the beauty of one class of them, and some by the magnificence of another: each object has not the same attraction for all; and so it is with the teachings of the church. Its unity does not arise from the adoption of uniformity, but from the harmonious action of

denominated from it,—the word Σεμνος was a contraction of Semanos, Sema-on; and properly signified divine and celestial."—*Bryant's Analysis of Ancient Mythology*, vol. i. p. 65.

* 2 Peter ii. 5. † Corinthians iv. 14.

‡ See *Antediluvian History*, p. 286.

variety. All its members cannot belong to the head; there must be some to constitute the body, with the lower and other extremities of their spiritual man. It is well known that all persons are not brought into the church by the promulgation of the same class of truths. That which is interesting to one is not so attractive to all: some are led into the acknowledgment of religion through one consideration, and some by the influence of another; and they who become earnest in any thing which is taught, are so from the suitability of that thing to the idiosyncracy of their character. It was thus with those who are described as the three sons of Noah. Each of the three graces ascribed to the Noachic people, was the source of a peculiar attraction, to differently constituted minds. Their principles of *justice* excited the admiration and brought in those who are called *Shem:* their sentiments of *uprightness* stimulated the regard and drew in those who are denominated *Ham;* while their teachings of *obedience* awakened the respect and attracted those who are designated *Japheth.*

These three things are the universals of the church; there are many other particulars belonging to it, but they are all resolvable into one or the other of these; and there are some persons who are more inclined to adopt one than another; but they who embrace one of those principles do not necessarily possess the rest. Each may exist, and it frequently does so in some characters, without any very intimate connection with the others.

For instance, some men, from the nature of their genius, are found to love goodness as the primary thing. They regard the first law of *justice* to include within it the acknowledgment and worship of the Lord; but they do not particularly study those doctrinal truths by which it ought to be enlightened and directed. Their affections will be more engaged in the devotional things of religion, than in the intellectual. Aspirations towards God and His goodness, are more delightful to them than any other subject. In these things they possess the essentials of religion; and, knowing this, its doctrinal formalities occupy but little of their attention. They *feel* well towards the vital things of the church; but content their intellect with the idea that spiritual truths are not within the reach of the natural understanding. Now it was a people of this general character

who are called *Shem;* and this is the reason why the acknowledgment of one supreme God, with some other sentiments of revealed religion, were preserved among the really Shemetic nations so much longer than with those who adopted the sentiments represented by Ham and Japheth. Being the most interior principle of religion, it would admit of longer perpetuation, because it was more intimately connected with the Supreme from whom it comes.

Other men, from the genius of their minds, are known to be more interested with the discovery of truth. The cultivation of their understandings through the spiritual teachings of religion, seems to be esteemed by them as the most desirable pursuit. They regard the intellectual discernment and discrimination of truth as the principal thing. *Uprightness* of thought concerns them more than the justice of affection. Truth is preferred to love; or faith is set before charity. The splendor of religious light is seized upon with more avidity than the graces of spiritual heat; so that they are led to the espousal of truth mainly by the influence of its brightness and its beauty. Such were the characteristics of those persons who are designated *Ham.* And hence it was that the nations commonly supposed to have derived their religion from them * became so thoroughly corrupted in reference to all spiritual knowledge. How could the light be maintained without the heat requisite for the purpose. The flame must certainly go out when there is no oil in the lamp. As the love of goodness diminishes in society, the light of truth decreases, because that closes up the mediums through which it can be preserved. God and his requisitions must cease to be known, so far as they are discontinued to be loved.

Again, there are others whose genius peculiarly distinguishes them from the two former. They feel but little interest in the aspirations of spiritual love, or in the sentiments of intellectual faith, and consider the simple *obedience* to the utilities of life is

* Cush, Mizraim, Phut, and Canaan, the four sons of Ham (Gen. x. 6), are generally thought to have given their religions to the inhabitants of Ethiopia, Egypt, and some other of the North African nations, together with Palestine; and history is full of information respecting the early and great corruptions which correct religious information experienced in all those countries.

the essential requisite of all religion, and that by this they "walk with God." They do not reject interior truth, but because they do not see any other light therein, than that which seems to be ingenious probabilities and speculations, they do not affectionately embrace it. Neither do they deny the advantages of spiritual love to God, but because the object of it seems to them more like a vague abstraction than a real impersonation, they do not enter upon its cultivation. It is the outer virtues and moralities of religion, and not its interior sentiments and aspirations, to which they most devotedly attach themselves, and they become sons of the church, by the adoption of those practical realities. Such were the characteristics of those who are called *Japheth*, and, therefore, it is that those nations, whose ancient religion has descended from them, are generally found to have been somewhat active and practical.* By Noah's wife, and the wives of his sons, who are mentioned only upon the occasions of their entrance into, and egression from, the ark, are represented the affections with which the characteristics peculiar to each principle had been espoused. Hence Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, viewed in their complex, constituted the people among whom it pleased the Divine Providence to raise up a new dispensation when the primeval church had reached its end. The formation of this new dispensation was signified by the building of the ark: the living things which are described to have been preserved within it, were types of the spiritual principles which it was to be the means of keeping in vitality. The deluge was a figure of the awful temptation which set in upon a wicked race; they who yielded to its influence perished; whereas they who were in the church—the inhabitants of the ark,—were enabled to rise above them, and so were saved. †

The men of the Noachic dispensation being the descendants of those who had so thoroughly corrupted the most ancient church, were, consequently, tainted with the evils, and had participated

* These are commonly considered to be the nations of Europe, and the North of Asia; the practical character of the former and the docility of the latter are well known.

† For the arguments, evidence, and illustration of the facts noticed in this summary, the reader is referred to the two last chapters of the *Antediluvian History and Narrative of the Flood.*

in the guilt which prevailed in its latter days. The reason why they were preserved is, because they saw and revolted from the enormities then extant. But in the performance of this duty, they necessarily experienced temptations of a great and painful character. This is the ordinary accompaniment of turning away from evil to embrace the good. Evil influences will not suddenly relinquish the hold which they may have taken upon our fallen nature. They struggle long and fearfully to maintain the position and mastery which they may have gained: nor can they be driven away but by a determined and continual resistance. This is man's experience now: it was the experience of the Noachic people; who, by persevering combat against the evil influences of their times, were led into the enjoyment of a victory which they finally secured. Every one knows something of the powerful sway which temptations exercise over degenerate minds; and it is easy to see that those who fall under them must, like the antediluvians, perish. This is the plain and practical lesson which the deluge was intended to teach us. But those who wisely observe the divine instruction to build the ark as a means for their preservation—that is, to construct the principle of a spiritual church in their intellect and lives as a means of their salvation—prepare themselves against the dangers attending upon such a suffocating inundation; and although they do not prevent its approach, they avert its perils, and are carried into security and rest. Such were the Noachic people, and such is the general idea which the ark and their safety were intended to communicate to all succeeding generations.

And this brings us to the diluvian period during which it is said that "God remembered Noah, and every living thing and all the cattle that were with him in the ark." * This remem-

* Genesis viii. 1. "The word *God* is here used, and not *Jehovah*, because as yet the man of this new dispensation was in a state antecedent to that of regeneration; but when he became regenerate, then mention is made of Jehovah, as at the end of this chapter, verses 20, 21. The reason of this is, because faith was not yet conjoined with charity. In charity Jehovah is present, but not so in faith prior to its conjunction with charity. Charity is the very *esse* and life of man—and as it is Jehovah, who is *esse* itself, and life itself, so before man is, and lives, *Jehovah* cannot be said to be with him, but *God*." —*Arcana Cœlestia*, 840. When the things of truth or faith are the subjects

brance is not to be interpreted as the mere recollection of those things, and which might have been forgotten during the calamities which were occurring. Nothing can escape from the Divine memory, nor can His watchfulness be abated or withdrawn. Recollection, in the usual sense of that expression, cannot be predicated of God: because He knows all things at all times, sees them, cares for them and provides accordingly. But He is said to have remembered, to indicate that the goodness of His Providence was present; much in the same way that we are said to remember our friends when we make an effort to serve them; or in presenting to them tokens of our friendship. It is because the remembrance of God is predicated of His goodness, that He is said to "remember His covenant;" for that covenant is effected by man's reception of those heavenly things by which God can become conjoined with them. Moreover, it is easy to see that the Divine remembrance includes the idea of the Divine presence with those who are said to be remembered, because every one knows that those things which are remembered, are thereby mentally present.

God, then, is described to have remembered Noah, because the divine mercies which were to become manifest when the temptations were abated—when the waters were assuaged,—were then to be effectively perceived. "Every living thing, and all cattle that were with him in the ark," are also said to have been the subjects of this remembrance, to denote that the Divine mercy was about to be experienced by all the spiritual sentiments, and all the natural affections which were alive with the man of the Church at this time. "Every living thing," signifies all man's spiritual sentiments; and "all cattle," denotes the whole complex of his natural affection. Animated nature

treated of, the Divine title *God* is used: when the things of love or goodness are the subjects treated of, the Divine title *Jehovah* is employed: and when the conjunction of these graces is treated of, then both of those Divine names are used. Dr. Havernick shows that both names are used by Moses discriminately, in strict conformity with the theological idea he wished to express in the immediate context; and perusing the Pentateuch nearly line by line, it is astonishing to see that Moses never uses any of the Divine names at mere random, or arbitrarily, but is throughout consistent in the application of the respective terms.—See *Kitto's Bib. Cycl.*, Art. *God.*

affords the symbols of these interior things*; this is the reason why they are said to have been with Noah in the ark: they were with him in those animated things of the human mind; and they were rescued from death because they afforded mediums for the Divine remembrance. So long as the waters were unabated, *i. e.*, so long as temptations were continued,—the Noachic people were in peril; for temptation is a state which not only grieves the heart, but obscures the intellect. Evils are infused and falsities are suggested, and the mental disquietudes, which these occasion, cause doubts to arise respecting the goodness of God, and the wisdom of His providences. In temptation man seems, to himself, to be in a state of condemnation, because he feels mostly the distresses which are present in his external man, and does not, at the same time, perceive that the Lord is active in the internal man, assisting him to resist and conquer; which, nevertheless, every one must see to have been the case with all those who are victorious; and consequently, that they have been the subjects of the Divine remembrance, notwithstanding the fearful appearances and the dangers by which they were surrounded.

The result of this was to cause the influences of truth to become more evident, and the infestations of falsehood to disperse. These are the general ideas intended to be conveyed by the declaration that "God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters were assuaged." It is carefully to be remembered that spiritual things are the subjects treated of. It is indeed true in physics, that a wind in passing over the earth will cause a decrease of the waters by evaporation; but this would be utterly inadequate to the removal of that immense deep which the literal sense naturally supposes. The air, which is calculated to rise above the earth, though with a decreasing density, about forty-five miles, will not maintain in vapor at any one time, more water than would diminish the depth six or seven inches; and when so far saturated it will descend again as rain. The wind, also, when it assumes the shape of the tornado, or the hurricane, will cause the waters on the shores over which it

*See *Antediluvian History*, chap. viii., "Adam naming the creatures;" and chap. xxi., that portion of it which relates to the beasts preserved in the ark.

passes, to be considerably displaced, but then they are raised by the same means to a corresponding depth in some other situation. Local changes in the depth are produced, but the absolute quantity cannot by these means be diminished to that extent which the common idea on the subject demands. This, indeed, is well known to the scientific student of such phenomena. Hence the assuaging of the waters has been referred to supernatural interposition. "The wind," it is said, "came not in the ordinary course of events, 'God *made* it to pass over the earth.' The effect was miraculous." * If such were the nature of the effect, such also must have been the character of the cause; and they who place it in the catalogue of miracles exclude it from the province of rational comprehension. That course may silence the pious, but it will not satisfy the inquiring. † The narrative, however, does not so describe it; the notion is a mere inference, adopted to account for a supposed meaning in the history which it was never constructed to express. It refers the effect to a natural cause—to the wind which God made to pass over the earth. Surely there is nothing in the statement that God *made* this, to indicate that we ought to understand it as describing a miraculous occurrence. The word *made* cannot, and does not, as it is pretended, imply a supernatural action. All the ordinary phenomena of nature, are truly referable to the fact that God *made* them; and no other meaning is properly attachable to the word in the clause before us. When it is said of Him, that "He *maketh* His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust;" ‡ no sound criticism will infer that *maketh* and *sendeth*,

* *The Deluge and the World after the Flood. By the Rev. Charles Burton, LL.D., F.L.S., &c.*, p. 74.

† Sir Thomas Brown says, "I confess there are, in Scripture, stories that do exceed the fables of the poets, and to a captious reader, sound like Garagantua, or Bevis. Search all the legends of times past, and the fabulous conceits of these present, and 'twill be hard to find one that deserves to carry the buckler unto Sampson; yet is all this an easy possibility, if we conceive a Divine concourse, or an influence, but from the little finger of the Almighty."—*Religio Medici.* Sec. xxi. Of course any difficulty may be surmounted when this aid is called in, but ought this aid to be called in to explain difficulties which mainly arise from our own misunderstanding of the narratives?

‡ Matthew v. 45.

imply miraculous interposition. Why then should such an idea be fastened upon the statement, that God made the wind to pass over the earth? All the winds which so pass are of His making, and they all produce evaporation, and a consequent decrease of the waters, but none much greater than that above referred to; which circumstance surrounds the narrative, when it is considered as describing natural phenomena, with inexplicable difficulties; but when we view it as describing,—by means of representatives furnished by such physical occurrences,—the decrease of temptation,—the assuaging of the waters, through the influences of spiritual truth,—the wind which God makes; the whole of those embarrassments are at once dispersed.

The wind, it is said, passed over the *earth:* it is however to be observed that the literal sense regards the whole *earth to have been covered with water*, and, therefore, in strictness the term *earth* should not have been employed; nor would it have been employed if it had not been intended to subserve a representative purpose. By the earth is signified the external or natural mind. It is this part of man's fallen nature which the apostle describes as being of the *earth, earthy,** and which also, in other portions of the Word, is admonished to hear the Word of the Lord. † The reason why the natural mind is so called is, because it, like the earth, requires cultivation; and, also, to be sown with the seeds of instruction, in order that it may produce, in this life, the fruits of intelligence and virtue. The natural mind is the plane in which temptations are endured; the spiritual mind has been, to some extent, preserved as the medium of receiving the necessary powers for restraining their seductions. And it was this natural mind of the Noachic people, now in a state of peril from surrounding dangers, over which God made a wind to pass; that is, the refreshing activity of superior truth, by which their religious renovation and safety were to be secured. Truth, like wind evaporating waters from the earth, causes the dispersion of fallacies from the mind, and so restores it to order, healthiness, and vigor. Winds are mentioned in the Word to signify the impulses to falsehood as well as the influences of truth: the subject treated of will determine for which they stand; when the winds spoken of are to be destructive in their effects, then

*1 Corinthians xv. 47, 48, 49. † Isaiah xxii. 29, &c.

they are the emblem of the former; but when, as in the case before us, they are employed in the sense of blessing, then they are the types of the latter. A great number of instances could be selected to illustrate these positions, but we can only notice a few bearing upon the point in hand.

The Psalmist says of the Lord that "He bringeth the wind out of His treasuries." * The treasuries of the Lord are the heavens; for there it is where he preserves those who have become rich in His grace, and the wind from thence is that heavenly influence which the inhabitants of His kingdom, as ministering spirits confer upon men as the heirs of salvation. And it is important to remark that in the original tongues of the Scriptures, both spirit and wind are expressed in the same term; the Hebrew being רוּחַ *ruach*, and the Greek πνευμα, *pneuma*. *Ruach* is the original of the word translated *wind* in the passage before us; but in other places it is rendered *spirit;* as in Amos, "He formeth the mountains and createth the *spirit;*" † marginal reading. So also in the New Testament; "The πνευμα, *wind*, bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the spirit," πνευμα. ‡ Whence it must be evident that the term *wind*, is employed in the Word to signify a spiritual influence; and, consequently, whensoever it is spoken of as being attended with advantages and blessings, it is representative of the inflowing of heavenly graces to deliver and protect. Thus the wind which God made to pass over the earth, as a means for removing the waters of the deluge, denoted the spiritual influence which interior truth exercised upon the natural mind of the Noachic people, with a view to deliver them from those dangers of temptation by which they were still surrounded.

Something similar was represented by the *wind* which divided the waters of the Red Sea, in order that the sons of Israel might be rescued from the enemies who pursued them; for that, besides being an historical event, had also a spiritual significancy. The circumstances which attended the destruction of Pharaoh and his army in the sea, are very analogous to those which

* Psalm cxxxv. 7. † Amos iv. 13. ‡ John iii. 8.

accompanied the extinction of the antediluvians by the flood; and those providences by which the sons of Israel were preserved from the danger of the waters, correspond, in several particulars, to those by which the Noachic people were delivered from the perils of the deluge; in both cases the wicked are said to have perished through an inundation of the waters, and the obedient to have been preserved by the interposition of the wind. By the wind Jehovah caused the Red Sea to go back, and the people of Israel were delivered thereby from impending ruin; and by the wind passing over the earth, the waters of the deluge were assuaged, and the Noachic people were rescued from surrounding perils. Whence it is plain that the wind is an emblem of those renovating influences by which temptations are reduced in their malignity and depth, and the mind thereby disposed to order and obedience. So that the narrative treats of those religious experiences of the people which all may understand, and not of physical occurrences which are incapable of being explained.

The reception of spiritual truth among that ancient people, was the medium through which a new dispensation of religious things was to be established. From that truth they learned the fearful degradation into which they had descended; and from the same instructive source they were enabled to perceive the duties of charity and the sentiments of faith presented to their rational acceptance. The truth, when embraced for practical purposes, imparts moral and intellectual power upon its recipient, and so shuts up those avenues down which temptations come. This is the general idea intended to be expressed by these words;—"The fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained." * These three sources of the deluge,—that is, of spiritual temptation,—had their activity arrested.

The experience of temptation may be taken as a proof that those who have it, are inclined towards the evils which are urged; but for this tendency no one could be tempted: it is that which affords the groundwork for its existence and display; and this it is requisite for man to know, in order that he may successfully resist and overcome it. Temptations are of various

* Genesis viii. 2.

kinds, but they all arise from one or the other of three depraved mental sources. *First*, from the evil inclinations of the will; *second*, from the false persuasions of the understanding; and *third*, from the general disorder which prevails in the disposition and character of the natural man. Now these three sources of temptations are represented by "the fountains of the deep, the windows of heaven, and the rain;" and their cessation is taught us by its being said that they were "stopped" and "restrained;" but a brief illustration of these particulars may be useful.

The *will* is the inmost principle of man, and thence it is called "the deep." He is said to be deep when his intentions are interior; and because all his affections and delights arise from thence, they are spoken of as the "fountains of the deep." When the will loves evil pleasures and pursuits, wicked influences obtain admission to the mind, and threaten to inundate all its spiritual life. But when the will begins to value truth, those influences receive a check; and when the truth is really loved, freedom is experienced, because the fountains of the deep are "stopped."

So the perceptions of the *understanding* are the channels through which we receive our knowledge, and call it light; on this account they are described as "windows,"—yea, as the "windows of heaven," because they were specially designed for the admission of spiritual light from thence. What other windows of heaven can there be, and where else can they exist? The terms are plainly figurative; and to what other intelligible reality can they by possibility refer? But these windows, in times of temptation, are beset with fallacies and falsehood; and these were the things which our history tells us were "stopped." The sentence is one of the metonymies of Scripture, in which the windows are put for the things which they admitted; in like manner as the cup was named for the wine which it contained. The inflowing of the fallacies and falsehoods was arrested by the reception of that renovating and light-dispensing truth of which we have seen the wind to be significant. This detects them, and imparts the strength which is requisite to stop them.

And again, the general disorders which prevailed in the disposition and character of the natural man, constituted the

ground of those more external temptations represented by the "rain" which was "restrained." This signification of the rain is evident from the circumstance of the flood, which is nearly the same as the rain in this place, being the emblem of temptations which destroyed even the natural lives of men. Rain, indeed, like most other expressions in the Word, has a twofold meaning, each determinable by the subject which is treated of. Thus when it is said "The Lord shall open unto thee his good treasures, the heavens to give *rain* unto thy land in his season,"* it is plain that blessings are intended to be represented by the rain; but when it is spoken of as a source of calamity, which is the case in the point of the history before us, then it has an opposite signification, which includes spiritual dangers of an ultimate kind. This rain—temptation—is said to come "from heaven," to indicate the perverting thoughts of corrupted men. To such the Lord said, "My thoughts are not as your thoughts,"† and, therefore, they were not true. Temptations do not come from heaven; heaven is the source of safety and protection; but to the darkened thoughts of tempted men it appears to come from thence. To the wicked, heaven has seemed to be the source of brimstone and fire;‡ and to the froward God shews himself froward;§ but these appearances are not realities; they are the mistaken imaginings of perverted minds! and such were the dangerous infestations which had to be "restrained" by the wind which God made to pass over the earth,—that spiritual influence which the Divine Providence caused to be active upon the natural disposition of mankind. Hence we learn that the temptations which set in upon the antediluvian world were of three kinds, namely, those which operated upon the voluntary, the intellectual, and the natural principles of men; and also, that the two former were "stopped," and the latter "restrained" from exercising their malignity upon the Noachic people.||

* Deuteronomy xxviii. 12.

† Isaiah lv. 8. ‡ Genesis xix. 24. § Psalm xviii. 26.

|| It may be interesting to remark that the temptations which assailed the voluntary and intellectual principles were "stopped"; whereas those which attacked the natural principle were only "restrained." The reason why

But while the new outpouring of religious truth was instrumental in arresting this progress of temptation, it is to be remembered that a certain amount of evil loves and false persuasions had descended. Although the fountains of the deep were stopped, and the rain was restrained, a large quantity of the dangerous waters yet prevailed; and these it was necessary to assuage before mental tranquillity, or a true sense of spiritual safety, could be enjoyed. To stay their increase was an important point, but to contend against the seductive persuasions which had procured admission to the people, was the next duty which had to be attended to; and this is taught us by these words, "The waters receded from off the earth in going and returning;" * which plainly describes the recession to have been attended with efforts and hesitations.

By the waters, as it has been shewn, were signified those direful temptations by which most of the antediluvians perished; but they did not retire in gentleness and quiet from the Noachic people who had happily resisted them. They were, indeed, finally removed ; but in the process there was a "going and returning." Fluctuations of sentiment and feeling respecting them were experienced. It was not possible that it should have been otherwise with minds about to be rescued from the wicked influences which had destroyed so many, and seemed so dangerous to themselves. Sometimes they would be driven back, and at others they would return; and this again and again; so that the people became successively the subjects of obscurity

the former are said to have been "stopped" is, because when a dispensation has reached its end, as was the case with the Adamic Church by the catastrophe of the flood, the *peculiar* evils by which it is brought about are arraigned for judgment in the spirits of those by whom they have been cherished, and so prevented from sending forth their *peculiar* malignity upon their survivors in the world. The spirits of the antediluvians who perished, are surely not permitted to infest the affections and thoughts of their successors in the world ; their career in that respect was *stopped ;* and thereby the temptations consequent on the natural disposition of the fallen mind were satisfactorily *restrained.* Hence it is that since the flood, the temptations of men have not been so *interiorly* atrocious, nor their guilt so *generally* enormous, as they were at that disastrous period.

* Amended translation of the original Hebrew, and recognized in the marginal readings of the Authorized Version.

and light, as truth or falsehoods fluctuated and procured a position in their minds.

And is not this in conformity with religious experience? False persuasions and evil loves, which have once been cherished, cling to our humanity; and although by superior instruction we may be enabled to detect their enormity, and so cause them to retire, yet it is found that they will stalk back again the moment we cease to be vigilant and watchful. Every one has, more or less, felt something of such fluctuations. And what is thus evident of individual experience is equally true of religious bodies. Such are the declarations of history upon this subject. Notions which have been put away as errors at one time through the exposure and condemnation of some powerful intellects, have been revived at some subsequent period, and again urged upon the acceptance of mankind. That which has been regarded as false doctrine in one age has been respected as true in another. Several of the errors which the Reformation caused to recede, are now in the process of vigorously attempting to return to the church ;* so that falsehood fluctuates in the process of its recession. And thus it was with the community before us. Although they earnestly desired to expel the infestations under which so many of their contemporaries had fallen, yet they could not be suddenly abated. The waters in retiring from the earth were felt by them as "going and returning"; nor were they sufficiently abated for the security of rest, until "after the end of the hundred and fifty days;" † that is, not before the successive activities of light had induced the state requisite for the purpose; for days of time are significant of states of intellect, derived from light or truth; and their number was intended to indicate the assurance of safety to which they had been brought.

And now it is that the ark rested upon the mountains of

* "Puseyism" is what is here referred to.

† Numbers in this portion of the Scriptures, are to be understood altogether abstractedly from the sense of the letter, they being inserted chiefly to carry on what externally appears to be an historical series. That they are employed in some other sense than their numerical value may be seen proved at considerable length in the Author's work on the *Peculiarities of the Bible*, pp. 412 onward.

Ararat. The ark, as it has been said, represented the church about to be established; that is, the minds of the people in whom the living things of the church are protected and preserved. The date of this occurrence, namely, the *seventeenth* day of the *seventh* month, is introduced, not for chronological purposes, but to express the sanctity of the new state to which they had arrived. That seven has a sacred signification is well known, because it is the same with rest and Sabbath.* The rest which is here recorded, was not of a permanent nature, as is evident from the series of things treated of. It was indeed such as was capable of assuring the people of their spiritual safety; but still there was a large amount of water yet remaining to be assuaged, and therefore other measures were resorted to to mark the process of their diminution. When men are laboring under the influence of temptation, they are occasionally gifted by the Lord with states of tranquillity, in order that they may be encouraged in the work of their resistance, and refreshed for the pursuit of wisdom; and it was a respite of this description which was signified by the ark resting on the mountains of Ararat. Nor are those mountains to be understood as expressing a geograpical locality, which will be evident from other considerations besides the requirements of the exposition which has preceded.

It is true there are mountains in Armenia so denominated, and these are generally considered to have been the spot on which the ark was stayed. But "that Noah landed on the top of such mountains is very improbable. All the text says is, that the ark rested upon the mountains of Ararat; but it nowhere tells us where Ararat was; and consequently learned men have conceived themselves at liberty to seek for it wherever

* It is interesting to remark that in the relation treating of the formation of the Adamic church, that God is said to have rested on the *seventh day*, Gen. ii. 2.; and that in the narrative recording the establishment of the Noachic church, the ark is said to have rested on the *seventh month*. It is because of the distinction between these two dispensations, the former being celestial, and the latter spiritual, that, in the one case, God is said to have rested on the seventh day, and in the other the ark is said to have rested on the seventh month; the one in Eden, the delight of love, the other on Ararat, the light of truth.

their fancy might lead them."* Moreover that name was not given to those mountains, until men, in after ages, began to suppose the narrative a description of physical events, and when they endeavored to find a geographical locality for the occurrence.† One of the circumstances which might originally have suggested the locality adverted to, is the singular fact, that a certain mountain which the inhabitants call *Massis*, when seen from a distance and in a certain position, seems to have the resemblance of a ship ! ‡ A tradition respecting this locality has long existed. Josephus mentions it as being extant in his time; and he refers to "Berosus the Chaldean," and "Nicholaus of Damascus," by whom it had been previously recorded.§ But tradition respecting it can be of no value, when it is known that among most of the eastern nations there are traditions which connect the resting place of the great vessel (?) with some conspicuous eminence in their own neighborhood; and something similar is said to be extant even among the aborigines of America.|| The Affghans say it was Lufued Koh, and Noorgill, two mountains which lie on each side of the road to Peshawar and Cabul.¶ The inhabitants of Ceylon have a tradition that the real locality was "Adam's Peak," a considerable mountain in that island; which some have thought to receive corroboration from the circumstance of the Ararat before us being translated, in the Samaritan Pentateuch, by the word "Serandib," which is the Arabic name of Ceylon. The Sibyl-

* *Ency. Brit.*, Art. *Ararat.*

† "We possess no historical data for fixing on any one mountain in that country as the resting place of the ark." According to a tradition preserved by Moses of Chorene, the name Ararat was derived from *Arai*, the eighth of the native princes, who was killed in battle with the Babylonians, about B. C. 1750 ; in memory of which the whole province was called *Aray-iarat*, *i. e.*, the ruins of Arai.—*Rev. N. Morren, M.A. Kitto's Bib. Cyc.*, Art. *Ararat.*

‡ See *Penny Cyc.*, Art. *Ararat.*

§ *Antiquities of the Jews*, B. i. Chap. iii. Sec. 6.

|| See *Dr. Macgilivray's Abridgment of Humboldt's Travels*, 4th ed. Chap. xvii.

¶ *Sir A. Burns' Travels to Bokhara*, Vol. i. p. 117.

line verses place it in Phrygia.* Sir Walter Raleigh thought that the mountains of Ararat were the chain of Taurus and Caucasus ; † which view is adopted by Bishop Patrick in his Commentary. Dr. Shuckford says there is reason for receding from the opinion that the ark rested on one of the Gordyæn mountains, which separate Armenia from Mesopotamia; and seems to favor the argument of others whom he names, as determining Ararat to be one of the mountains north of India. ‡ Kirby observes that perhaps the Indian was more central and convenient than the Armenian one. § Another writer has urged very strong geographical and historical reasons against the supposition that the Ararat usually so called, was the resting place of the ark. || And Dr. Pye Smith contends that it must have been in some less elevated part of the great mountain range to which that name was anciently given. ¶ Dr. Burton says, that the placing of Ararat in Armenia is not consistent with the statement of the people having *journeyed from the east to Shinar;* because a party coming "from the east to Shinar," must have travelled in almost the opposite direction; and to avoid the difficulty, he suggests that Thibet (*Thebet* being the Hebrew word which Moses uses for the ark) might have been the district in which the ark rested.** Dr. Hales, however, affirms that the Scripture Ararat is a mountain which stands by itself, in the form of a sugar loaf in the midst of one of the greatest of the Armenian plains, †† and seems to think nothing of the danger of being fixed to live for months on such a height, or the difficulties which must certainly have attended the

* These verses were written in Greek, and consisted of supposed prophecies, which were in high repute for several ages, among both the Greek and the Roman people.—*Popular Cyc.*, Art. *Sibyl.*

† *History of the World.* Folio edition, 1736.

‡ *Sacred and Profane History of the World Connected.* Vol. i., pp. 86, 87.

§ *Rev. W. Kirby, M.A., F.R.S. Seventh Bridgewater Treatise.*

|| See *Congregational Magazine.* May, 1840.

¶ *Scripture and Geology.* Second edition, pp. 302, 506.

** *Deluge and the World after the Flood.* Appendix, iii.

†† *New Analysis of Chronology.* Vol. i., p. 340. It is placed in north latitude 39° 30′, and east longitude 44° 30′, on the authority of a map of Persia, by Major Rennel, in his work on the *Geography of Herodotus.*

descent from such a summit;* both of which will appear to have been very formidable, when it is remembered that this mountain is considerably more lofty than Etna or Teneriffe, and exceeds Mont Blanc by 1528 feet.†

There is, however, no history, science, or relic,‡ to shew us where the Ararat spoken of by Moses was. The circumstance of it being rendered *Armenia* by the Syriac and Vulgate versions, is no proof of the truth of that being the place.§ The same word occurs in the original on three other occasions, and in two of them, in our own English version, it is similarly translated;|| but this proves nothing respecting the point at issue; it only shews what translators, who lived fifteen hundred, nearly two thousand, and upwards of three thousand years after Moses, thought was the locality to which he referred; and in this respect they are rather commentators than translators: but it is remarkable that Ararat does not mean a mountain in any of the four instances in which it is employed; and the "mountains of

* Rev. N. Morren, M.A., says, their safe descent from such a mountain along with all the living creatures committed to their care, would have been a greater miracle than their deliverance from the flood.—*Kitto's Bib. Cyc.*, Art. *Ararat.*

† This is stated by Humboldt, on the authority of Dr. Parrot, a German traveller in the employment of Russia.—*Pen. Cyc.*, Art. *Ararat.*

‡ It is true Josephus says (Ant. Book i. Chap. iii. Sec. 5) that the Armenians showed the remains of the ark in his time; and that in the next section, he quotes Berosus as asserting that it is said there is still some part of this ship in Armenia, which the people take away and use as amulets for the averting of mischief; but these statements, which are repeated by Abydenus, in *Eusebius Præp. Evang.* ix. 4., and subsequently by monks, are not the evidences of witnesses who had ascertained the fact; they merely retail assertions which they did not verify. Peter the Great, in 1720, sent some Armenians and Russians to investigate the truth of a tradition respecting some pretended relics, and they reported that to their amazement nothing of the kind was to be seen. The relic sought for was a plank of the ark, which an angel was said to have handed to a monk for the purpose of being converted into a cross!!

§ Jeremiah li., 27. 2 Kings xix., 37. Isaiah xxxvii., 38.

|| The Syriac version was made somewhere about the *first century* of Christianity; the Latin vulgate, by Jerome, in the *fourth century;* and the authorized English version, in the reign of James, a little more than three hundred years ago.

Ararat," in the case immediately before us, even if they had a geographical sense, could only signify mountains situated in a country so called. The circumstance then of fixing upon some individual mountain to which that name had been given, sufficiently shews an oversight of this particular, and that conjecture has been guided by mistake. It is, however, admitted upon all hands, that the physical locality of the Mosaic Ararat is by no means certain. Some authorities, as we have seen, placing it in one direction, and some in another; and this uncertainty, added to the acknowledged difficulty of the inquiry, has led a recent scholar to suggest that the original, rendered "and the ark rested," does not necessarily mean that the ark *grounded* on the top of a mountain, but that after having been tossed to and fro upon the waters, it was at length enabled to float in comparative repose *over* the mountains of Ararat, at which period the waters began to assuage.* But the narrative distinctly says "the ark rested—upon the mountains of Ararat."

There are, however, two facts of scientific character which surround the whole of these speculations with a haze through which it is difficult to see. The mountains commonly selected, among other reasons, for their enormous height, are not only well known to be the regions of perpetual snow, but it is acknowledged that the atmosphere at such an elevation is too much attenuated for the long sustenance of life.† If, then, the ark floated *above* those mountains, its inhabitants would have been placed for nearly three months ‡ in a much more dangerous situation in this respect. Moreover the earth having its equatorial diameter extended, and consequently its bulk increased to the extent which was required to enable the ark to float above the highest mountains, would necessarily have tended to disturb the equilibrium of the universe.§ Surely

* The Rev. N. Morren, M. A.—*Kitto, Bib. Cyc.* Art. *Ararat.*

† In 1788, Saussure, with several guides, ascended Mont Blanc, where he remained making observations for five hours. The pulses of the party beat with great quickness, and they all complained of extreme exhaustion, thirst, and want of appetite.

‡ From the seventeenth day of the seventh month, to the first day of the tenth month is seventy-four days, at the rate of thirty days per month.

§ "When we know that it would take for the supply, an amount of water

these are points in the inquiry of no mean significance; nor can the objections which they suggest to the common view of the subject be removed, but by the supposition of a miracle, about which, however, it must be remembered, the history is silent. And it is important to observe that it is written throughout with a simplicity which never once hints at the supposition of the difficulties which science has discovered, or at the necessity of calling in the aid of miracles for their solution; which would hardly have been the case if physical phenomena had been the subjects of the narration. There are cases, infinitely less difficult, which we are carefully informed were of a miraculous character; and it is reasonable to suppose that we should have had some intimation of the fact, if the early portions of Genesis were really intended to describe that series of stupendous miracles, which the literal interpreter is compelled to imagine, in the absence of all warrant for this purpose from the documents themselves.

Now all the difficulties which attend the determination of the locality supposed to be referred to by the letter of the narrative, ought to lessen the reluctance to admit the position for which we are contending, namely, that it is a figurative history, and that the mountains of Ararat are mentioned to denote not natural things, but spiritual; thus some of those elevated states of spiritual love which arose out of a more extended possession of intellectual light. For, surely, the narrative has been written to convey to us some information respecting the progress of spiritual things among a people with whom a new dispensation was certainly in the process of being raised, rather than to indicate physical events in which no religion is observable, and which no sagacity can reasonably explain.

By *Ararat* is properly signified light, which, in a spiritual

above the ordinary level of the sea, that it would increase the equatorial diameter of the earth eleven or twelve miles; that the earth's gravity would be increased, and the causes of its previous precision and mutation disarranged, and that these circumstances must have propagated their effects throughout the whole solar system; we say when these astounding facts are known to be the consequences of water having covered all the high hills of the earth fifteen cubits, the theological view popularly received must needs give way to some more modified interpretation of the narrative."—*Antediluvian History*, p. 317.

sense, is *truth*, and in the case before us such truth as is felt and valued by those who are in the process of being regenerated, that is, having the church established among them. This light does not arise so much from the absolute knowledge of religious things, as from an interior conviction respecting their sanctity and importance: it is experienced as a kind of haze in the intellect, but as a reality in the will; and thus it is light in obscurity, rather than in brightness, which is signified by Ararat; for it is to be observed, that, as yet, it is said to have been felt and not to have been seen.

And the mountains of Ararat denote the love and charity which arise out of this state with those who are regenerating. They are eminent principles which bear a similar relation to the mind that natural elevations do to the earth. It is, surely, ideas of this character which are intended to be expressed to us by such phrases as "the mountain of the Lord,"* and "the mountain of His holiness;"† hence, also, it is said that His "righteousness is like the great mountain."‡ Every one knows that mountains are frequently mentioned in the Scriptures with a figurative meaning; and it is easy to see, when they are employed in a good sense, that they are significant of principles pertaining to elevated life. Consequently the mountains of Ararat denote that love and charity which the endurance of temptation, and dependence upon the Lord, had been instrumental in educing among the Noachic people. These principles brought them into a state of tranquillity, notwithstanding the waters—the dangers—by which they were still surrounded. They began to *feel* the eminences on which the safety of the church among them so much depended. It was requisite that they should experience a stay from these sources, before they could be assured of the abating of the waters; and it is to express these spiritual truths that the ark is said to have rested upon the mountains of Ararat.

This view of the narrative rescues it entirely from all those physical difficulties with which the common interpretation unquestionably surrounds it, and at the same time presents us

* See Isa. ii. 2, 3. Mic. iv. 1, 2. Zech. viii. 3, &c.

† Psalm xlviii., 1. Jer. xxxi., 23. ‡ Psalm xxxvi., 6.

with an orderly succession of religious ideas, the truths of which are conformable to Christian experience. It unfolds to us the operations of Providence in relation to mind, when laboring under the influence of temptation; and these are the phenomena which required a revelation for our instruction and encouragement. The letter of the narrative is a figurative body; its intellect is the really living soul. The letter is as an ornamented casket; its signification is as the precious jewels; and these are the things which it is the purpose of God and His holy Word to place in our possession.

CHAPTER IV.

THE DECREASING OF THE WATERS; CONSIDERATIONS RESPECTING THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE DILUVIAN PERIOD; NOAH SENDING FORTH THE RAVEN AND THE DOVE, AND UNCOVERING THE ARK.

"That saying of Plato, 'That all knowledge is remembrance, and all ignorance forgetfulness,' is a certain and undoubted truth; if by forgetfulness be meant the loss, and by remembrance the recovery, of those notions and conceptions of things, which the mind of man once had in its pure and primitive state, wherein the understanding was the truest microcosm in which all the beings of the inferior world were faithfully represented according to their true, native, and genuine perfections. God created the soul of man not only capable of finding out the truth of things, but furnished him with a sufficient touchstone to discover truth from falsehood, by a light set up in his understanding, which if he had attended to, he might have secured himself from all impostures and deceits."—*Edward Stillingfleet, D.D., Origines Sacræ*, vol. i. p. 2.

It is to the Christian's experience that we must appeal for evidence to test the truths of Christian documents considered as God's revelation. We must look within ourselves for a corroboration of those teachings which are contained within the letter of the Scriptures. It is there that we shall find those living responses which are capable of illustrating, and thus of shewing us the true meaning of those incidents, which Moses informs us transpired from the time of the ark resting till the close of the diluvian period. They are thus related: "The waters decreased continually until the tenth month: in the tenth *month*, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen. And it came to pass, at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark, which he had made; and he sent forth a raven, which went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth. Also he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground: but the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him into the ark; for the waters were on the face of the whole earth. Then he put forth his hand and took her, and pulled her in unto him into the ark. And he stayed yet other seven days, and again he sent forth the

dove out of the ark; and the dove came in to him in the evening; and lo, in her mouth *was* an olive leaf plucked off. So Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth. And he stayed yet other seven days, and sent forth the dove, which returned not again unto him any more. And it came to pass in the six hundredth and first year, in the first *month* and the first *day* of the month, the waters were dried up from off the earth; and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and behold, the face of the ground was dry."* In this narrative there are several curious particulars, into the meaning of which we shall freely inquire. Truth never lost any of its brightness by being put through the ordeal of a fair and rational investigation.

It has already been intimated that the subject treated of throughout the Noachic narrative is, the rise, progress, and establishment of a church to supply the place of that antediluvian predecessor which had perished. All the particulars related are but representations of those states and sentiments which were experienced by the people during the process of its accomplishment. Of this, some illustrations have already appeared; others are now to follow.

So long as a corrupted church is capable of exercising any of its unfavorable influences upon men, the progress of its successor will be retarded; and the people by whom its principles are espoused will be infested with occasional temptations and doubts. These trials, however, are a means of purification. The apostle tells us to regard them as a source of joy; and says that they work for us an eternal weight of glory.† Every one knows that they humiliate; and it is easy to see that if the good of such humiliation is thoroughly embraced, the evil must be subdued. But the security of religious life, and consequently the formation of the church with men, is not effected by uninterrupted temptation: intervals of rest contribute their quota to the purpose. By occasional deliverances men are encouraged to lay hold of the good by which they have been rescued, and to survey with diminished fear the dangers which may lie before them. The conquest of one evil supplies us with power to

* Genesis viii. 5 to 13.

† James i. 2. 2 Cor. iv. 7.

triumph over others. The tranquillity which is experienced when certain waters have passed away, is followed by the hope of a greater diminution. We must not suppose that all temptations have been subdued, because we may happen to be in the enjoyment of a peace which has resulted from the vanquishing of some. When the sons of Israel escaped from the bondage of Egypt, they had to encounter the privations of the wilderness; and before they could enter into Canaan many conflicts had to be undertaken; and so it is with the process by which the church is established in the minds of men.

In closing the preceding chapter, it was shewn that the dangers of the Noachic people were considerably diminished when the ark rested upon the mountain of Ararat; still it is evident that other perils lay before them, for the waters yet extensively prevailed. But these, we are informed, *decreased continually until the first day of the tenth month, when the tops of the mountains were seen.* Here, by the continual decrease of the waters, is represented the successive diminution of temptations, as is plain from preceding expositions. This is an orderly result with all those whose affections have been arrested in a dangerous drift, by the elevation of that love and charity which truth inculcates. As the darkness which attends temptation is diminished, the *tops* of the mountains will be seen; that is, the uppermost things of love and charity will come to be understood. These uppermost things are the Lord and our neighbor. For as by mountains are denoted the elevated principles of love and charity, so the tops of those mountains are significant of the primary objects towards which such affections ought to be directed. And those objects, it is evident, are the Lord and our neighbor; for they are the summits of all spiritual heights; because they are contemplated as the chief things of the law and the prophets.*

This is said to have occurred upon the *first day of the tenth month*, to teach us that the people's perceptions of those excellences were concurrent with the state of their spiritual remains. Remains are the sentiments of truth and virtue which lie concealed in the memory and life of man: no one is without them;

* Matthew xxii. 40.

and both their nature and extent may be learnt from this, namely, the internal assent, which is sometimes suddenly experienced, to the principles of spiritual teaching which may be brought before us. The primary state of such remains with the Noachic people agreed with the spiritual information which they were now in the process of receiving; and this was represented by the first day of the tenth month. *Days* represent states of intellect in reference to truth, the *months* denote states of the will in respect to good; while *ten* has special reference to the remains of each.

That ten has this signification may appear from the frequent use of that number in the Word. The single case of the decalogue will serve to shew and illustrate this idea. The virtues inculcated, and the evils forbidden in those laws, though they might to some extent have been new to the Jewish people at the period of their promulgation, yet they had been well known to the church in previous times;* and every one who will undertake to enumerate the distinct laws which they contain, will soon discover that their number is not confined to *ten*. Commentators, indeed, have divided them into ten paragraphs, and called each a law for the purpose of making them agree with the statement that they are "ten commandments"; but the Scriptures do not furnish any such arrangement, and different parties have differently divided them;† while those which are commonly desig-

* This was particularly the case with the evils forbidden; for surely, theft, murder, adultery, and covetousness, were known as crimes, and punished as such by the laws of nations which were extant before the promulgation of the Mosaic decalogue.

† Disputes upon this point existed very early in the church. Origen wrote about it in the beginning of the third century (*Opera*, vol. ii. p. 156). So also did Jerome in the fourth century (*Hieronymi Opera*, vol. iv.); and likewise Augustine in the sixth century, who says, "It is enquired how the ten commandments are to be divided? whether there are four which relate to God, ending with the precept concerning the Sabbath—and the other six, commencing with 'Honor thy father and thy mother,' appertaining to man, —or whether the former are *three* only and the latter *seven*" (*Works*, vol. iii. *Questions on Exodus*). The Lutherans use a different division from that adopted by the Greek and all the reformed churches. Philo, in his *De Decalogo*, lib. i., and Josephus in his *Antiquities of the Jews*, also treat of the divisions of the decalogue in a way which seems to intimate that it was not a settled point in their time.—See *Antediluvian History*, pp. 258, 259.

nated the second, fourth, and last, plainly contain more than they are made to stand for. There is, then, an evident discrepancy between that arrangement and the number which actually exists; and from those facts it is evident that the Scriptures do not call them *ten* commandments in a numerical sense, but to signify that those laws contain the complete* *remains* of all those spiritual duties and prohibitions which had been acknowledged in the churches of preceding times.

Many instances occur in the historical portions of the Scriptures as well as in the prophetical, in which numbers are certainly employed in some other than a numerical sense. The numbers three and seven are well known instances of this; and they are frequently regarded as implying some recondite idea in connection with the subject in which they occur; so that what is conceded in those instances cannot be reasonably denied to others. The circumstance of their meaning being abstruse, and the consequent difficulty, which minds unaccustomed to such considerations may experience in laying hold of it, ought not to be cited as any argument against it. We do not doubt that astronomy has its mathematics, because there is much abstruseness in some of the calculations by which its facts have been arrived at. The circumstance of numbers being, among the ancients, understood as the indices of spiritual things seems evident; for some of the remains of such conceptions were certainly included in the Pythagorean doctrine upon that subject. But to dwell upon those points, or even to recur to them upon every occasion that we meet with numbers in the history under consideration, would lead to a prolixity and repetition which we are desirous of avoiding; and, therefore, it may be useful to dispose at once of the chronology of the diluvian period now before us.

And, in the first place, there are discrepancies between some of the numbers employed and the statements recorded. For instance, it is said, that "the waters prevailed upon the earth

* Philo-Judæus seems to have considered that they were called *ten words* (for this is the true translation of what in Deuteronomy iv. 13; x. 4, is rendered, in our version, *ten commandments*); to denote their perfection; ten being considered the most perfect of numbers.—See his *De Decalogo.*

a hundred and fifty days," * that is, for five months of thirty days each; but we are immediately afterwards told that the tops of the mountains were not seen until the first day of the tenth month; † which clearly shews that the waters really prevailed one hundred and twenty-one days *more* than the numbers precisely stated: and this difficulty can only be removed by considering the one "hundred and fifty days" as a number designed to mark the termination of a condition in the religious history of the people treated of.

Again; it is related that forty days *after the tops of the mountains appeared*, Noah sent forth a dove to see if the waters were abated, but *she found no rest for the sole of her foot; for the waters were on the face of the whole earth.* ‡ But this discrepancy disappears when it is known that forty days are mentioned not so much to record a number, as to indicate the endurance of temptation; which, so long as it besets the man, affords no footing for his faith.

So, also, it is said, that the *first day* of the *first month* the waters were dried up from off the earth; and Noah "looked, and behold, the face of the *ground was dry*"; but in the following verse it is added, "And in the *second month*, on the *seven and twentieth day of the month, was the earth dried.*" § Here, within a few lines of each other, we have, apparently, two conflicting dates for the same fact; one telling us that the ground was dry on the first day of the first month; and the other stating that it was on the twenty-seventh day of the second month. Surely these different dates for the same fact would not have been recorded, if they had not been required to represent two distinct particulars in connection with the spiritual series of the things historically related. And in that series, the first of the first month, when the ground was dry, denoted the commencement of a new state in consequence of the disappearance of what was false; while the twenty-seventh day of the second month, represented a condition of sanctity consequent upon the new state so begun.

But apart from the necessity, arising from these discrepancies,

* Gen. vii. 24; viii. 3.

† Gen. viii. 5.

‡ Gen. viii. 5—9.

§ Gen. viii. 13, 14.

of seeking for some other than a numerical sense for the dates and durations mentioned in the narrative, it will readily occur to those who will carefully think upon the points, that there must have been some ground and reason for those events having taken place on the peculiar dates assigned to them. For instance, the rain commenced on the *seventh* day of the second month; the ark rested on the *seventeenth* day of the *seventh* month; and the earth was dried up on the twenty-*seventh* of the second month.* Here, *three* of the principal points connected with the history of Noah's protection, are associated with the number *seven.* We see this number again occurring in the case of the dove which was sent forth *three* times at intervals of *seven* days each.† Surely there must have been some other reason for the frequent recurrence of this number, in so short a history, than that which appears upon the surface. And is it not singular that it should have taken *forty days'* rain to have covered all the high hills; and that it was *forty days* after the tops of the mountains were again seen, before the window of the ark was opened? ‡ The *seventh*, *seventeenth*, and *twenty-seventh* days of the month as the periods at which the flood began, the resting of the ark, and the drying up of the waters, are separated by *tens.* The waters also decreased continually until the first day of the *tenth* month.§ They had prevailed fifteen cubits; and the one hundred and fifty days, during which they covered the earth, is a number resulting from the multiplication of those cubits by *ten.* Moreover, "the waters were dried up" on the new year's day; "the first day of the first month";‖ and their duration, from their commencement to their termination, was exactly a year of 365 days.¶ Now, surely, those numbers and periods in this history were not the results of chance; doubtless they were inserted with deliberation and purpose; and what other purpose can they be supposed to subserve more worthy of the main design of an inspired narrative, than

* See Gen. vii. 11 ; viii. 4, 14.

† Gen. viii. 8 to 12.

‡ Gen. vii. 12 ; viii. 6.

§ Genesis viii. 5.

‖ Genesis viii. 13.

¶ This, together with some of the other particulars adverted to above, will appear from the following tabular statement, founded on the consid-

that of the spiritual sense which we are attempting to educe. Is not this sense the true test of its divinity and inspiration?

Look for a moment at the numbers referred to. Are not *three*, *seven*, and *ten*, cited in the first series in the above list—frequently acknowledged to mean something more than what they literally express? Most persons know that *three* is associated with the idea PERFECTION; hence the *Trinity;* and also that *seven* is connected with something that is HOLY; hence the *Sabbath;* and, from the reasons before adduced, it cannot be difficult to see that *ten* is significant of REMAINS.

That the number *forty*, mentioned in the next citation, has reference to temptations, and that it is employed to indicate their duration, could be made evident from numerous passages in Scripture; but as these facts are abundantly illustrated in a former volume,* they need not be repeated here.

And who does not see that the *first day* of the *first month*, as being the new year's day, was intended to signify the beginning, by the Noachic people, of a new state of spiritual life and excel-

eration of the first six months being 30 days each, and the last six months, 29 days each:

DAYS.	MONTH.	SUMMARY OF DAYS AND EVENTS.
14	2	40 days rain on the earth.—Gen. vii. 12.
26	3	
4	3	110 days after the rain ceased, which, added to the preceding 40, make the 150 when the ark rested.—Gen. viii. 4.
30	4	
30	5	
29	6	
1	6	81 days after the resting of the ark before the tops of the mountains were seen, *i. e.*, the 10th day of the 10th month.—Gen. viii. 5.
17	7	
12	7	
29	8	
29	9	
10	10	
19	10	40 days after the tops of the mountains were seen, the window of the ark was opened, and the raven sent out.—Gen. viii. 6, 7.
21	11	
8	11	21 days, during which the dove was sent out three times.—Gen. viii. 8, 10, 12.
13	12	
16	12	17 days after the third departure of the dove, the waters were dried up from the face of the ground.—Gen. viii. 13.
1	1	
29	1	56 days after the ground was dried, Noah was directed to go forth of the ark.—Gen. viii.
27	2	
365		365

* *Antediluvian History*, p. 345.

lence? Certainly the latter is strikingly represented by the former.

Without, then, dwelling further upon the chronology of the diluvian period, and avoiding the prolixity which would attend the production of detailed evidence to confirm more largely the truth of the positions which have been stated respecting it, we think it must, in some measure, appear that the main design of those dates and durations, was to mark, and so to express, certain conspicuous states which accompanied the rise, progress, and deliverance of the people from the dangers of temptation. We, therefore, now return to the point from which we turned aside to enter upon this digression.

The tops of the mountains appeared—the duty of love to God and charity to man, as the chief things of all religion, became apparent;—but no excellence can be permanently fixed in the affection of fallen man, but by means of trial and endurance; and, therefore, the lofty advantages which were now discovered, were not suddenly appreciated; for it was forty days, —a state in which the truth of those duties experienced trial, after that discovery,—before "Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made."*

If the narrative is to be regarded as a literal history of physical occurrences, then it is important to observe, that from the time when Noah entered the ark, and "the Lord shut him in,"† up to the opening of the window—a period of two hundred and seventy days—the inhabitants of it were entirely cut off from the enjoyment of fresh air; the window was closed, and the ark otherwise covered; ‡ nor does any provision appear to have been made for its ventilation; so that those who were within are contemplated to have survived nine months under circumstances which we now know must have proved fatal to all of them in considerably less than so many days! A command was given to take in such food as was requisite for their sustenance,§ but nothing is said about any regulation for the admission of air, which is equally indispensable for the preservation of life. Indeed the narrative could scarcely have been more carefully con-

* Gen. viii. 6.
† Gen. vii. 16.
‡ Gen. viii. 13.
§ Gen. vi. 21.

structed, if its object had been to relate that the air was carefully excluded from the ark; and, consequently, that a miracle was performed, in order to sustain the lives of the people and the beasts that were within. And some may be disposed to adopt a theory of this sort as the readiest method for surmounting the difficulty suggested.* But why have recourse to a miracle, to supply that which a little mechanical ingenuity, employed in the construction of the vessel, might have easily secured from natural sources; if it could have been obtained at all, at the elevation of five miles above the level of the sea; † at which height they must have been for some time, if they were upon the surface of water fifteen cubits high above all the mountains of the earth? Surely miracles have never been resorted to, to supply that which is procurable by other means.

But, independently of these difficulties respecting air, there is another concerning light, of no inconsiderable amount. There were three stories in the ark, but only one window, the dimensions of which was a "a cubit," that is, less than twenty-two inches square; and this is said to have been "above"; ‡ whence it would appear that it was only the upper story which received any light, and that, by an aperture which could admit it there only in a very small quantity, while the second and lower stories were in complete darkness. A naval architect of our day would have provided against these inconveniencies: he knows that there was no necessity for their existence to any thing like such an extent; and, also, that if he were to build a ship for a

* This is the view taken of the subject by Dr. Burton. He says, the whole work must be chiefly regarded by us as a panorama of miracles. The provision made for the sustenance of the animals was miraculous.—*Deluge and the World after the Flood*, pp. 69, 70.

† The highest known summits are the Hymalaya, in Thibet, particularly the Dholagir, or White Mountain, which has been made, by one measurement, 26,872 feet, and by another, 28,015 feet high. It we take the least of these measurements, and divide them by 5280, the number of feet in a mile, the result will be five miles and 472 feet.

‡ See Gen. vi. 16.—The Bishop of Peterborough says a cubit is equal to 21 inches, 888 decimals. The Jews seem to have considered the window to have been small, since Jonathan ben Uzziel supposes that it was a precious luminous stone which Noah, by Divine command, brought from the river Pison!

living cargo with those deficiencies, it would at once be condemned, as utterly unfitted for such a purpose. Must we then say that the knowledge of naval architecture in our time is superior to that inspiration by which Noah was directed to build the ark? Is it not evident that those who regard the ark to have been a natural ship, must come to the conclusion that the discoveries of science in reference to such an erection, are superior to the dictates of revelation? Does not this dilemma, resulting from a literal interpretation of the narrative, prove the inaccuracy of such a view? This, and the difficulties above suggested, added to those which are urged in a preceding work,* bring us back to the fact of the whole narrative being the history of the mental experiences and processes which attended the establishment of the Noachic church.

And this view enables us to see why no provision is recorded for the admission of air into the ark. The ark, as it has been shewn, was a state of the church with the Noachic people, prepared and so arranged, as to be capable of resisting those temptations in which others fell. This state of the church was, consequently, in the process of being regenerated, and thereby of being brought into a condition of spiritual safety.

Now the air, being wind in a state of gentleness and quiet, is a type of spiritual influences; and those which save, are, during the process of regeneration, continually supplied by the Lord, without man being made openly sensible of the fact; in like manner as he is provided with spiritual life, from moment to moment, without being conscious of its communication; or, similar to his being the subject of angelic ministrations, without any ordinary sensibility of such a fact. It was because those spiritual influences are thus conveyed, that Noah was not instructed to make provision for the airing of the ark: the Lord himself took care of this—not arbitrarily, as a tyrant wills—but wisely, as a father loves; He secretly supplying the regenerate life to man, as man openly obeys his teachings.

Contemplating the narrative from this spiritual ground, there is no difficulty in seeing why, as the window for the light was above, the middle and lower stories were consigned to darkness.

* *Antediluvian History*, chap. xxi.

For when men are in temptation, as Noah was when tossed upon the flood, their lower faculties,—those which pertain to the merely natural and rational man,—are not in the reception of any spiritual light. They are so beset with evil influences and false persuasions, that none of the rays of heavenly truth can procure admission. Is not this a common experience? Who, when they have been infested with doubt, and excited by lusts, have not felt as though the truths of religion had no place in their lower nature? Nevertheless, there has been a window above,—that is, an intellectual faculty within,—through which the light of truth could enter, and from which the interiors of the mind have derived their illumination. If it were not for the light so admitted, every tempted man would fall. Thus the phenomena of temptations furnish an easy explanation of this point in our narrative, and at once dispel the difficulties suggested by the literal interpretation.

The intellectual faculty is the highest of all man's merely mental possessions. It exists from the knowledge of truth being grounded in a love for it. It dwells above science and reason; for these come into activity by its efforts. Every one may see that it is the intellectual faculty which prompts the lower principles in the selection of such information as may be suitable for their orderly exertions, and afterwards enlightens the rational principle so as to enable it to weave their information into argument, and produce conclusions. Hence the ancients described it as a window above. Hitherto this had been shut; for a period came when "Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made." This period was "at the end of forty days" * —the termination of a state of trial. This window is considered to be shut so long as temptations continue; for in all trial there is a fear lest some calamity should occur to the external man: this fear, it is well known, withdraws the mind from spiritual thoughts, and, consequently, it keeps the window closed. But when the peril of temptation has diminished, and man comes to see the evils from which he has been rescued, and also to feel the advantages into which he has been conducted, his interior thoughts are awakened to a sense of the

* Gen. viii. 6.

Divine guidance; so that the window of the ark is opened to let in the light with its brightness, and the air with its refreshing.

And this was the state for sending forth the raven. This is commonly supposed to have been done to ascertain whether the waters were sufficiently decreased to shew the land;* but the narrative does not mention this design, nor was it the intention of the circumstance. That was to be learnt from the liberation of the dove; and, therefore, it is expressedly stated; but, sending out the raven was meant to represent another fact connected with the regeneration of man.

All animated nature, as it is abundantly shewn in the *Antediluvian History*,† is representative of the living things which are peculiar to the nature of man. *Beasts*, in general, are symbolical of the affections belonging to the *will: birds*, in general, are significant of thought pertaining to the *understanding:* and *fishes* are the representation of *sensual delights in the natural man.* Those, belonging to each of these classes, which are noxious and hurtful, denote corresponding noxious and injurious principles in our *fallen nature;* whereas, those which are innocent and useful, denote corresponding principles in our *regenerate nature.* It is, however, only with some birds that we have here to do; and these are of two opposite kinds, namely, the raven and the dove.

By the raven is signified some false principle in the understanding; hence it is pronounced, in the Levitical law, to be an unclean bird.‡ And when the prophet said of the Jewish church, "The owl and the *raven* shall dwell in it,"§ he was figuratively predicting the mental perversities by which that dispensation was brought to its end. It is on account of this signification, that when we are wishful to designate something that is offensive, we say it is *ravenous.* Moreover, the blackness

* Dr. Patrick says, "It was sent forth, no doubt, for the same end that the dove was sent forth; to make discovery whether the earth was dry."—See *Commentary.*

† Chap. viii.—Adam naming the living creatures.

‡ Levit. xi. 13, 16. Deut. xiv. 12, 14.

§ Isaiah xxxiv. 11.

of its color, and the voracity of its character, present evident analogies to the falsity of which it is the symbol.*

Now the raven in the ark denoted the presence of some false persuasion in the Noachic mind or church; but, when the window was opened, the light of truth shone in upon it, and taught the duty of causing it to be removed. Those who cherish a false principle in their mind, thereby sustain a raven; but when they become better instructed in spiritual things, they see the bird in all his blackness, and send him forth. And this is the circumstance intended to be represented by that incident in the Noachic history.

But although it was sent abroad, it did not suddenly disappear: "it went to and fro, until the waters were dried up from the earth." Although the reception of truth enables man to discover the errors he may have loved, and gives him power to turn them out, yet the very circumstance that they had once been cherished, prevents them from being instantly dissevered. They go to and fro in the mind; and continue to do so, just so long as there remains any danger from the prevailing waters. Many who have entered the church with some erroneous persuasion in their mind, have there had the light afforded them wherewith to see it; and so long as they retained any affection for the truths they saw, the raven went away; but when they have gone back to their former association, the old delight has been revived, and then the raven came again. Errors which we have been persuaded to regard with favor will not depart at

* Most that is known of this bird contributes to illustrate this idea. The private haunts of ravens are vast solitudes of rocks and forests. Their ordinary food, and that which they prefer, is putrefying animal matter, which, by the acuteness of their sense of smell, they discover at great distances. When pressed by hunger they will kill small birds and other animals coming within their reach. They have been known to pluck out the eyes of lambs and sick animals unable to defend themselves. These, with the discord of their voice, and some other characteristics, are among the causes of the superstitions with which, in some countries, they have been regarded. In northern mythology, the raven is an ominous bird. In Scandinavia it was the usual emblem of slaughter; and it was figured upon the banners of the Danes and Saxons. The Rev. M. Sibly says, "The word translated raven alludes to all sorts of night birds"; and he asks, "What are these birds of night but all the fallacies of the natural man?"—*Sermon on Elijah fed by Ravens*, pp. 15—18.

once: they will go and come as we incline to good or evil; and this state of fluctuation will continue until the earth is dried; that is, until regeneration is accomplished.

But notwithstanding the raven hovers about the mind; being sometimes visible, and at others disappearing; the circumstance that it is loosened, or no longer a stationary thing, is an indication of spiritual progress. This was the case with Noah; and, therefore, he is next said to have sent forth a dove. But it is of importance to remark, that it was at first sent forth *from himself*.*

That a dove is significant of holy things is well known. It is popularly regarded as the symbol of innocence: there is a gentleness of character, and beauty of form, about this bird, which admirably fit it for this representation: † but we must discriminate; it is the innocence of thought, rather than the innocence of affection, of which it is the type: the latter is represented by the lamb, but the former by the dove. As a bird, it must have reference to intellectual things, and those which it denotes are the truths of faith. Every religious truth which is influential in the promotion of our regeneration, is represented by a dove, from which we may obtain information respecting our spiritual safety. It was in consequence of this signification, that the Holy Spirit, which is also said to be the spirit of truth, and to guide into all truth, was represented by a dove. ‡ The office of the Spirit, so represented, is to teach, enlighten, and inspire. And no other species of birds were permitted to be offered in the sacrifices of the Jewish Church, § because it is the only one which it pleased Providence to select as the symbol of those truths of faith by and with which the Lord can be acknowledged. We are taught to be harmless as doves, || to impress upon us the

* Genesis viii. 8.

† The dove has been a sort of companion to man from the earliest period. They assemble in flocks, and yet are said by naturalists to pair and live in conjugal fidelity for life. In Syria and Phœnicia they were regarded as ensigns and divinities, which, doubtless, arose from their having signified the truths of faith, which are Divine truths, but which had been corrupted among the people of those countries.

‡ John xvi. 13. Matt. iii. 16.

§ Lev. v. 7., xii. 6. יונה, *yoneh*, which is the Hebrew name translated dove, includes the species called pigeons and turtle doves.

|| Matt. x. 16.

duty of becoming as meek and faithful as the truth would make us.

Hence by Noah sending forth a dove is represented the church giving liberty to the truths of faith which it had been enabled to acquire. How many in the world possess such truths, and do not send them forth! Hundreds know what is right, yet do not put it into action; but Noah having turned out the raven, with no desire for his return, the dove could enter on its work with greater freedom. So long as falsities are cherished in the mind, the truths which have been learned, are kept in a condition of restraint; but give up the error, and the release of truth will follow.* But there was a peculiarity attending this first liberation: Noah is said to have sent forth the dove *from himself.* This is written to teach us that at this period of the church's progress it was under the persuasion that the truths of faith were the results of its own mental inquiry and exertions. And this is a circumstance which it will be useful to illustrate. In the early stages of man's regeneration, he regards the truths which he has been enabled to acquire as self-derived possessions, instead of believing, as he ought to do, that they are communicated graces. When men give utterance to the truth, or permit it to influence the formation of their character, they, as it were, send forth a dove, in order that it may be the means of bringing home to their bosoms some intelligence that is desired. But when those duties are performed under the persuasion that such utterances and permission are the results of their own intellectual efforts, then the dove is sent forth from themselves. It was a fact of this nature being attached to the Noachic church, which the statement of Noah having "sent forth a dove from him," was intended to disclose.

But it was sent forth to see if the waters were abated. It was known before this that they had decreased; the ark was on Ararat; and the tops of the mountains had been seen: and yet the dove is said to have found no rest for the sole of her foot, for

*It was to intimate this release, that the narrative at this point is so written as to give the appearance of both birds having been sent forth at the same time. It may be seen, by consulting the 7th and 8th verses, that no interval is stated; and Dr. Patrick mentions this as the opinion of Bochartus.

the waters were on the face of the whole earth. This discrepancy, before averted to, can only be explained by admitting that it is the history of spiritual things, and thereby seeing that the tops of the mountains could not afford a resting place for truth which issued from a selfish principle. The design of the narrative could not have been to relate natural events. If so, certainly, Noah might have adopted a shorter course for ascertaining the abatement of the waters. If he had looked through the window of his ship, he might have ascertained much more satisfactory information on the point of his solicitude, than any which a bird could bring him. Such a course could not have been incompatible with duty. Religious men, who, in afflictions, have been placed in perilous waters, have, no doubt, regarded it as quite consistent with holiness of character, to go upon the deck and look out for land amidst the dangers which surrounded them. They would depend more firmly upon the evidence furnished by their own eyes, than upon any inference which they might draw from the return of a liberated dove. The proceedings of Noah, when viewed as literal history, look more like experiments in augury,* than the earnest and anxious conduct of a man sensible of danger. A divine command may be pleaded as an answer to these considerations: but that cannot be admitted until the text for such a pleading is produced. This being impossible, we are brought back to the narrative as

* Augury became a conspicuous superstition among the Romans. In the later period of their history it was understood to be the ascertainment of the Divine will by observations made upon other phenomena of nature besides those of the flight and chattering of birds; but it is evident from the name,—*avis*, a bird, and, *garrio*, to chatter,—that it was originally intended as a means for discovering the designs of fate by observations made upon birds only. The institution was of great antiquity, and many particulars are related, by Roman writers, respecting it, and the officers connected with it, specially in *Livy's History* and *Cicero's Republic*. Most other pagan nations had some institution of a similar character, and from these it was borrowed by the Romans. There can, however, be no reasonable doubt that this singular practice arose out of literalizing a spiritual idea. A more ancient people knew that birds were the symbols of intellectual principles, and that by carefully noting the *activity* and *dictates* of such principles, much valuable information could be procured. But as this spiritual idea gradually passed away, tradition began to speak of the fact without understanding it; and superstition changed it into a literal idea.

a symbolical history, and led to seek for its interpretation in religious experience.

The dove was sent forth three times. The *first* time she could find no rest, and returned, because the waters were on the face of the whole earth. On the *second* occasion she came back in the evening with an olive leaf in her mouth. But after her *third* flight, it is said that she returned not again unto him any more. These several particulars are written to reveal to us how spiritual truth operates on the man of the church, under three different phases of his regeneration. The object of its mission, in every case, is to enable him to see whether the waters are abated; that is, to assist him in ascertaining how far those things which are the occasion of spiritual dangers, are removed. It has just been seen, that Noah sending forth the dove for the first time *from himself*, denoted, that the church began to speak and act according to the truth, but under the idea that it was the acquisition of its own sagacity. Although, in this state, the truths which may be thought and known, are most true as doctrinal things, yet, because they are associated in the mind with self-derived intelligence, they cannot be conjoined with good: in this case they want the ground on which to place their foot. Every one can see that goodness is the proper eminence for truth to rest upon; and that so long as men are deficient in this interior principle, truth will continue to inform them that danger yet remains. The truth received into the understanding must take root in the life; until this is in some measure accomplished, the dove may indeed be sent forth, but it will be sure to return because of the waters which prevail. The self, whence it proceeds, always brings it back again. Hence it was that the dove which Noah sent forth from himself returned, not with tidings to console, but with evidence to alarm:* the waters were

* This seems to have been the impression which the poet drew from a natural understanding of the narrative, when he wrote—

"Of rest was Noah's dove bereft,
When with impatient wing she left
That safe retreat the ark;
Giving her vain excursion o'er,
The disappointed bird once more
Explored the sacred bark."

—*Cotton's Fire Side.*

yet on the face of the whole earth! "Then Noah put forth his hand and pulled her in unto him into the ark." This statement is intended to inform us of the desire of the church to retain possession of the truth which had been learnt; though it was accomplished with difficulty in that state of the process of regeneration which is treated of. Spiritual truth will escape from the mind which has embraced it from some defective motive, unless exertions are made to *pull it in.*

Nevertheless, the possession of such knowledge, even under such circumstances, is preferable to an entire abandonment. It is better to compel it to remain from some worldly end than permit it entirely to escape. Truth must be in the memory before it can be in the life. The ideas of thought are made secure to us only as we love them. We soon forget what we do not love. We remember with accuracy what we love intensely; but for love, nothing would remain with us. It is love which brings truth near, and makes us feel it. It may, indeed, be loved from various ends, and some of them may be selfish and impure; yet, as it must be loved to be retained at all, the retention may be followed with advantages, though the love by which it is first effected may be low and worldly. Give it time, and it will perform its work. Its light will shew us follies we had not seen before. It will successively exercise its salutary influences, and cause a gradual relinquishment of the pursuits which it condemns. By this means the mind is raised into a superior state; loftier sentiments are developed, and resolutions of a holier kind acquired. These results were represented by Noah's staying *seven* days after hastily pulling in the dove, before he sent her forth again.

This staying is not to be understood as a listless inactivity, but as a patient perseverance in well-doing. The interests of spiritual life are not to be advanced without engagements. To wait upon the Lord is a duty which the Scriptures frequently inculcate; but this waiting does not mean spiritual indolence, but persevering activity. To wait upon the Lord is to do his will; and to stay seven days, as in the case before us, was to represent the efforts which were made to reach a state of sanctity. The seventh day was the type of this state; and then it was that the dove was sent forth the second time.

On this occasion Noah did not send it forth from *himself;* it proceeded from the *ark:* he had ceased to regard spiritual truth as his own, and began to see it as the Lord's; and, therefore, the result of its excursion is said to have been attended with the intimations of safety; for "the dove came in to him in the evening; and, lo, in her mouth was an olive-leaf plucked off." * She did not now, as in the former case, require to be pulled in; she entered of her own accord; to shew us that whensoever, from right principles, we do what truth requires, it is sure to return to us with gentleness and signs of blessing. That the olive leaf is an emblem of peace, and consequently of good, is well known; and that this is to be procured by the right exercise of truth is sufficiently evident. So that the second excursion of the dove represents the truth of faith with regenerating men, procuring for them a possession of the goods of charity. But charity in its beginning does not present itself with all its brightness; it comes in *shade* to the church which is but imperfectly developed; and

* Where could this leaf (or *branch*, as the original might be rendered, and is so translated in the Vulgate) have been obtained? How could it have been preserved green, as it is presumed to have been, after twelve months' submergence, and this, too, amidst all the ruin which the surface of the earth is supposed to have undergone? and how the dove could have plucked it off? are curious questions on which commentators have sometimes exercised their skill. Thus Bochart, assuming Ararat, on which the ark rested, to have been the mountain in Armenia so called, thinks the branch was brought from Assyria, and that the wind at the time blew towards that country from the north!—*Hierozic*, lib. i. cap. vi., p. 2. The Rev. J. Hewlett, B.D., cites Pliny, to show that the olive tree grows in the Red Sea; and states that it would continue green for many months under water.—(See his *Annals.*) And Bishop Patrick says, "All the difficulty is, how the dove could break off a branch from the tree. But it is easily solved, if we allow that it was now summer time, which brought new shoots out of the trees that were easily cropped."—(*Commentary.*) But these answers are mere *conjectures*, and, therefore, they leave the questions as they were. More difficult inquiries than any of the preceding are, How the bird was led to select the olive branch, and to return with it to the ark to afford the very evidence by which "Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth?" and how he knew that it had not been picked up from the surface of the water? and why the bird did not remain away, as the waters were abated from off the earth, as it is stated to have done on the next excursion? The literal sense is full of inexplicable difficulties: the spiritual sense removes them all; and at the same time throws a light upon the narrative of an eminently practical character, such as revelation must always have.

this was its condition with the Noachic people; for although some proofs of safety were procured, some evidences of danger yet remained; and hence it was *evening* when the dove returned with the olive leaf. Blessings appear only in obscurity to those who experience anxiety on account of dangers; still they are encouraged, even by an obscure perception of such excellence; and, therefore, Noah "stayed yet other seven days, and sent forth the dove, which returned not again to him any more." *

By sending forth the dove a third time, upon the third seventh day, was represented that truth with those people now began to perform its use from a principle of charity; and when this took place, then truth passed into a state of perfect liberty; hence the dove is said to have returned no more. Thus the three excursions of the dove were intended to reveal to us the three successive changes which truth produces upon the character of regenerating man. His *first* great effort is to procure some knowledge of spiritual truth; and the attainment of it impresses him with satisfaction and delight. But the *next* step is that of acting according to its dictates; and then he comes to see that truth has been given to point out the way to some superior state. The knowledge of truth is not the end of religion; it is only a means to the securing of something better than itself; and the *third* effort of the regenerating man is to obtain that better thing. He consequently lives with greater propriety, and carefully watches all the emotions of his mind, and the nature of his conduct; and the result of this diligence is, that genuine goodness begins to be developed. This is then felt to be that superior principle to which the knowledge of truth had all along been pointing; and, by and by, this goodness comes to be the conspicuous feature of his character. Then a most important change comes to be effected. The knowledge of truth, which at first was regarded as the primary thing, having by the force of its reasonings and the light of its illuminations, brought goodness

* The literal sense of this statement makes it difficult to reconcile the natural fondness of the dove for home, with the particular attachment which it is known to retain for its mate. Their flying away therefrom implies a departure of these instincts. Moreover its not returning, was no certainty that it had taken up its abode upon the land, since it might have been exhausted by a long excursion, and have perished by falling into the waters.

into life and prominence, now begins to feel its liberty; agreeably to the Divine promise, "ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free";* *i. e.*, truth shall lead you into goodness, and procure your freedom by securing its own. Before a man is regenerated the truths which he may know are held in bondage. His evils retain them in captivity, and throw obstacles in the way which they would otherwise direct. How many valuable truths have been introduced into the minds of men, which are at this moment captives there, because they have not permitted them to perform the work for which they were vouchsafed? The Lord said, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you."† These truths, inculcating points of duty, must have entered into the mind of all professing to be Christians; but every one who does not obey their dictate holds them in captivity. Reduce them into life, and they will soon obtain their freedom. This liberty, which truth procures when its good exists, is the spiritual fact referred to by the final liberation of the dove.

It is said to have returned no more; not to indicate that the regenerated man is dispossessed of truth, but the more effectively to describe its liberty of action, and to show that truth with such had ceased to be the primary thing of their regard. The regenerated man is chiefly influenced in his pursuits by a love of goodness; and, although he knows the truth, it does not recur to him. Being in the end, he does not reflect upon the means by which it has been obtained. Having built the house, he thinks but little of the scaffolding through which it was accomplished. When affection habituates us to a use, we seldom muse upon its laws. Secure the practice of a thing, and the theory by which it is accomplished obtains its liberty and comes back no more. When we are impressed with the love of duty, its rules do not recur to us. Under these circumstances the acts become spontaneous; the laws of action in such acts are in perfect liberty, and we think not of them; they go, and as it were return no more.

How plainly do these experiences illustrate the narrative, and

* John viii. 32. † Matt. v. 44.

furnish us with a meaning at once intelligible and in conformity with the idea that it is a revelation from God? The notion that it was mainly written to inform us of the successive loosing of a dove, and that under favorable circumstances it flew away, can hardly be reconciled with such an opinion of the history. But when we see that it treats of some spiritual particulars which attended the regeneration of the Noachic people, and the consequent provision for the formation of that ancient church, the whole matter becomes bright with information conformable to human wants and to the Divine purpose in its communication. It seems among the greatest difficulties, to read this narrative, with attention to the singularities of its structure, and its statements, and not at the same time to see that it is a symbolical history.

The next and only remaining incident of the period before us which requires attention in this chapter is thus recorded:—"Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and behold the face of the ground was dry." From this it would appear that Noah had not yet seen the state of the earth, and that he had depended for his information respecting it upon inferences deducible from the conduct of the dove. But this conclusion is not easily to be reconciled with the idea of a man anxious to observe a passing away of the dangers which surrounded him. Nor is the notion which the literal interpreter attaches to the "covering" very clear. Dr. Patrick tells us it was "some of the boards on the top"; * but surely the condition of the earth might have been seen with equal advantage from the window which was above, if something more than a literal history had not been designed for our information. The deck of the ark did not stand in the way of Noah's looking abroad, to see the favorable position in which he was placed, as the removal of the covering for this purpose would seem to imply. The covering referred to must be understood in conformity with those spiritual things to which we have been adverting. The preceding exposition has shown, that the people treated of had made considerable progress in the regenerate life; all those advantages were the happy results of their co-operation with the

* See *Commentary*.

Divine assistance and communications; but we must ever remember the law that "upon all the glory there shall be a covering."* It is remarkable that our progress in religious elevation is continually showing us some impediment to the perfection of its pleasures. We may ascend the hill and view the distance, and yet be sure that some haze in the distant landscape will prevent us from seeing clearly the extremest points. Whensoever our minds are expanded by the reception of faith, we are given, at the same time, to see some fallacy by which they have been covered; and this it is requisite to remove before such faith can enjoy its brightness. It is a truth, attested by history and verified by experience, that fallacies attach themselves to superior characters. Certain ideas and persuasions, acquired during the prevalence of inferior states, remain with them for a time, and form as it were a covering which obstructs and dims the lustre of the light which would otherwise shine in brightness and in beauty; and it was a covering of this nature which the Noachic people had to remove. Although they had made eminent progress in the religious character, they had not attained to all the excellencies which regeneration is capable of bestowing; for a covering remained which it was necessary to remove before their egress from the ark. This covering represented the imperfections of the church, which prevented the people from looking and beholding that the face of the ground was dry. To look and to behold, denote the conjoint action of the understanding and the will; the former to perceive, and the latter to appreciate spiritual discoveries: and to see that the face of the ground was dry, signifies to know that the waters of falsehood had disappeared. To describe the attainment of this knowledge the covering is said to have been removed; that is, the remaining fallacies were dispersed. An illustration or two will assist in the better understanding of this fact. The common idea that the sun rises and sets, is not true; yet it is induced upon uneducated minds by the appearances, and the fallacy remains until it is removed by better information. The notion that the body lives of itself is an error, which by some is believed as truth, until religion comes to take

* Isaiah iv. 5.—*Marginal reading.*

away the covering and admit the light. The persuasion that God is angry with the wicked, and that He will withdraw His clemency from them, is a fallacy arising out of their inverted states, in agreement with which the letter of the Word is written; but the genuine truth is that God loves them, which is proved by His doing all He can to save them; nevertheless the fallacy which covers the truth can only be removed by the influences of religion; and thus it was with the covering which Noah removed from the ark; it consisted in the dissipation of some fallacies which yet adhered to the church.

How beautifully, then, does this singular history, viewed in this light, coincide with religious experience. We find its counterpart, and consequent interpretation, in the bosoms of regenerating men. In the spiritual processes which they are undergoing, they are repeating and realizing the spiritual phenomena which the narrative was intended to reveal. It is not merely the mental history of the past, but a revelation of the present, and also of what will be the future experiences of spiritually minded men. Moreover this view of the narrative accords with the Divine character and purpose in its production. We see that it is worthy of God, because it contains absolute disclosures relating to the interior states of men; it being descriptive of those moral and mental processes by which an ancient people were delivered from the danger of an overflowing and terrible temptation, and afterwards raised into a new state by new gifts of religious things.

CHAPTER V.

NOAH'S DEPARTURE FROM THE ARK; THE ALTAR WHICH HE BUILT; HIS OFFERINGS THEREON; AND THE DIVINE PROMISE MADE UPON THAT OCCASION.

"If we adopt that sense only which is plain to the natural man, it is not very improbable that we may adopt the wrong one; 'for the natural man perceiveth not the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned.'"—*Letter to the Archbishop of Dublin by the Rev. A. Clissold, M.A.*, p. 49.

It is remarkable that during the whole of the diluvian period nothing is said of Shem, Ham, Japheth, or their wives. They are mentioned on their entrance into the ark, and also upon their departure from it; but Noah is the only person who is noticed in the interval. If the purpose of the history had been to relate natural occurrences, surely there might have been something to tell respecting the conduct of those whose piety had procured for them safety amidst so many dangers. Yet no such information is afforded. The reason of this is, because they are included in the idea which the collective name, Noah, is intended to express. What is recorded of him, is therefore predicable of them. In the preceding chapter it has been shown that the principles of truth in which they had been instructed, had so contributed to the development of goodness, that the love of it became a chief thing among them. It is, however, to be observed, that this goodness was that which truth had taught them; and thus that it was of a *spiritual nature*, and not like that good which distinguished the people in the best times of their antediluvian predecessors, which was of an impulsive origin, and so of a *celestial nature*. The good of the Adamic church might be designated as love, and that of the Noachic church as charity; the former enabled its professors to perceive the truth; but the latter grew out of its teachings. When truth produces charity in man, and those two principles act as a united influence in all he does, then faith is born. Genuine faith cannot exist apart from truth, but it does not

come into being until good has been produced: hence faith is the result of truth being conjoined with goodness. It begins to exist when men begin to love the virtues to which truth directs; and as this love comes into activity, truth expands into its liberty; for love is the only atmosphere in which truth can enjoy its freedom; and in that freedom faith comes to be experienced.

This was the condition of the Noachic people when the dove departed for the last time. They so loved the things of charity, and were so habituated to their use, that the truths which taught them did not recur in consequence of the faith which existed. Let us illustrate this idea. Are not alms sometimes distributed in secret without any immediate remembrance of the law which says they are not to be done before men?* and is not affectionate relief frequently administered to the afflicted, without any apparent recollection of the parable of the good Samaritan?† With the good these acts are the promptings of faith and conscience; which may be defended by the laws of truth; but still, at the time of doing them, there is no sensible recollection of their laws.

It was a condition of this kind, which at this period of the Mosaic history began to distinguish the Noachic people. The faith impressed by religious truth, and the conscience formed by its regulating agency, are possessions of great value in the Lord's church. They are the results, not of sudden intimation, but of continuous instruction and serious trials. Spiritual things cannot come into fallen man's possession through any other means: hence it was that, after such experiences, by the Noachic people, they entered into the enjoyment of those blessings. But it was requisite that greater liberty should be obtained before the holier uses, to which those principles conduced, could be properly attended to; and, therefore, the people are described to have been liberated from the ark before they could erect the altar, offer up the sweet-smelling savor, and receive the promises: which, with additional particulars, are thus related;—"God spake unto Noah, saying, Go forth of the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee.

* Matt. vi. 1. † Luke x. 30—37.

Bring forth every living thing that is with thee—and be fruitful and multiply upon the earth. And Noah went forth, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him: and Noah builded an altar unto the Lord, and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt-offerings on the altar. And the Lord smelled a sweet savor; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth: neither will I again smite any more every living thing as I have done. While the earth remaineth, seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease." *

Notwithstanding the spiritual attainments of the people to which we have adverted, they were yet confined to the ark; but from this they had now to be delivered because "the waters were abated from off the earth." Still they did not suddenly emerge. They had to wait for the direction of that Providence which had hitherto preserved them. It was by a Divine command that they entered into the ark, and, therefore, they wisely waited for God's directions to depart. Man should not go out from that which has afforded him protection until he is properly assured that it will be safe to do so: he should not put off his armor before the enemy is conquered; he must not leave the ship until it has conveyed him safely to the port; he then may do so; for the certainty of his safety is as a command.

The ark, as it has been said, was a type of the church among the Noachic people; that is to say, of that condition of the mind and character by which they were enabled to rise above those temptations in which others perished, and, finally, to be rescued from all their dangers. The church exists with man during the process of his regeneration under two aspects: as the church militant, when he is compelled to fight against the perils of temptation; but as the church triumphant, when he enjoys the good which his victories may have won. These two features of the church are represented, in the figurative history before us, by the ark and the altar: the ark denoting that by which protection against danger was afforded; and the altar signifying that by

* Gen. viii. 15 to end.

which the possession of a good was to be enjoyed. It was, then, the church in its militant character, or that state of it in man by which he was provided with protection against his spiritual dangers, which was particularly represented by the ark. But this was no longer required when the danger against which it was erected, had passed away. Every man of the church must experience temptations, and conquer them, before he can enjoy all the advantages which religion promises. When temptations assail him, he must adopt those precautionary measures which are necessary to surmount them: he then enters as into an ark, with all the living affections and thoughts by which he is distinguished. But when the dangers have passed away, the same precautions are no longer necessary; he then comes "forth of the ark," and brings with him all those living things for which safety had been provided, *i. e.* all the spiritual sentiments of love and faith—"to breed abundantly in the earth." When "the floods of ungodly men" * arrived in the Noachic times, it became indispensable that those who did not perish should see the evil, and adopt the measures which were requisite to avoid its inundation: this was represented by Noah's building the ark, and entering into it for safety; but, when the peril was removed, the purpose was accomplished for which it was erected, and then they came forth from it. They were delivered from that state of restraint and anxiety which is consequent upon a sense of spiritual danger, and brought into a condition of greater liberty and light; so that in the pleasures of the latter situation the fears of the former entirely passed away; upon the same principle that "as soon as a woman is delivered of her child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world."† After the people left the ark we read no more about it; and it is after that occurrence that we first read any thing about their worship.

And this leads us to notice the silence of the history upon two

* Psalm xviii. 4.

† John xvi. 21. "Every state of spiritual temptation is attended with trouble, but when the temptation is past, the trouble is succeeded by joy, through the manifestation and operation of the Divine truth."—*Rev. J. Clowes' Gospel of John.*

points, concerning which the natural mind may reasonably expect to have had some record.

First, if the ark had been a natural ship, and though constructed for only a twelve months' service, it is rational to suppose that some remains of it would have continued for many ages; that the site on which it settled would have been marked with great precision; that efforts would have been made for its preservation; and that when these failed, subsequent generations would have secured some of its parts and cherished them as relics of the rarest value; and, also, that the people would have spoken of it with frequency, and interwoven the fact of its existence with their history; but none of these reasonable circumstances transpired.* Noah is said to have come out of the ark; and that which had cost him so much time and labor, and in which he had experienced so many anxieties, and by which he had been rescued from so terrible a calamity, seems to have been no longer any object of his attention, for neither he nor any of his posterity ever speak of it again. Moses is silent upon the subject; and so are all the Prophets. This would hardly have been the case if it had been a physical existence; nor, under that idea, can this silence respecting it be easily reconciled with the natural disposition and curiosity of men. Nevertheless, as intimated above, it was the very thing which the spiritual sense required. When men come out of the state in which temptations have been experienced, they have no desire to return to it again; and, in the joy of their deliverance, they no longer remember the anguish they had endured: having reached the shore upon which security is felt, they desire no more to return to the ship around which so many dangers had existed. And this explains to us the silence of the history upon the subject of the ark after the people came forth. It represents an inferior state of the church, which men, in the process of their advancing regeneration, leave behind them. In principle, it is somewhat similar to the declaration in which the Lord, treating of the end of one condition of the church and the commencement of another, said, "Let him which is on the house top not come down to take any thing out of his house:

* The pretended traditions on this point, related by Josephus, and repeated by others, are noticed in a note in the third chapter when treating of Ararat.

neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes."*

There is, however, a *second* point upon which the history is silent, and for a reason somewhat similar. It is remarkable that the people whose superior piety procured for them "grace in the eyes of the Lord," should have been a whole year in the ark, and that there should be no intimation of their having attended to any acts of worship during all that period. They entered the ark without any religious observance; and there is no written evidence of their having given utterance to any pious sentiment during the whole period of their sojourn. It may naturally be supposed, from their character, and from the intimations of the Divine favor which are recorded, that they would not have been negligent of such duties; nevertheless, it is singular that no record should have been given of such an occurrence. And, whatever opinion may be entertained upon the fact, the omission to relate the performance of any worship during the diluvian period, may fairly be understood to teach us that under the pressure of temptation no such duties can be satisfactorily attended to. It is true that in times of trial men betake themselves to prayer; but, it is equally true, that they slacken their hands in the performances of use, and rely for relief on the efficacy of words, prompted by a sense of dangers, rather than upon the efficacy of acts, suggested by an enlightened affection. Moreover, the trouble weakens the judgment, and turns man more to himself than to his God. The prayers which are uttered, during the influence of trials, arise more from a regard to self than from a love to God. The objects of such prayers may be ardently desired; but still, if the quality of that desire is honestly examined, it will be found to spring more from a wish to be delivered from the pains and fears, than from a love of the good and the true by which it is accomplished. Hence the prayers, and consequent worship, which may be offered under such circumstances, are associated with a quality which is not so genuine as some suppose.† It is external and not

* Matthew xxiv. 17, 18.

† "The repentance which takes place in a state of freedom is effectual, but that which is produced in a state of compulsion is not so. A state of compulsion is that arising from sickness or dejection of mind induced by

internal. Internal worship springs from a wise and tranquil love; this, temptation disturbs and puts aside; and any external acts of worship which may then be done, are obscure and feeble. The Lord, indeed, is present with those who, in their spiritual afflictions, pray to him to be delivered. This is abundantly evident from the Scriptures. The Psalmist says, "In my distress I called unto the Lord, and cried unto my God: He heard my voice out of His temple, and my cry came before Him, even into His ears." * Still deliverance from evil is not accomplished by the simple act of prayer; the evil must be resisted, hated, repented of, and shunned as sin against God; without which no prayer or act of worship can remove it. On this account the mere prayers of those who are in temptation are, as it were, but little heard, until the temptation has been conquered. Man, in spiritual sickness, can no more properly perform his duties to God than he can rightly attend upon his obligations to society during the continuance of natural disease. In both cases the principal aim of the mind is recovery, so that the duties of each may be respectively observed. And these are the reasons why there is no information respecting the worship of the Noachic people during the diluvian period. The acts of genuine worship were begun when the sense of danger had departed; and for this purpose God said unto them, "Go forth, of the ark."

By God's speaking we are not to understand oral enunciation. That is the means of communication between man and man, but not between the infinite and the finite. God effects his intercourse with men by means of an internal dictate; and through this He enables them to perceive what is just and right. The Supreme is the essence of all wisdom and the originator of every excellence; and, therefore, when man is in the possession of any true ideas respecting spiritual life and duty, it is plain that they must have come to him from God. It is in this way of internal dictate and perception that He

misfortune, from the expectation of imminent death, and, in short, from any state which takes away the free use of reason. A wicked man, in a state of compulsion, may promise repentance and perform good actions; but, as soon as he regains a state of freedom, he returns to his former life of evil. With a good man the case is otherwise."—*Swedenborg's Heavenly Doctrines*, 168.

*** Psalm xviii. 6.**

speaks to all concerning the things of His church and kingdom; but more audibly; that is to say, with a clearer dictate and perception, to those who have followed him in the regeneration, than to those who have not attended to this duty: the latter hear him, as it were at a vast distance, through murky clouds; but the former hear him, as if in a serene atmosphere and sensibly near. This is involved in the Divine saying: "If a man love Me he will keep My words; and My father will love him, and we will come and make our abode with him."* Those with whom He takes up His abode, are those to whom He speaks: He does not take up such a habitation to be silent in it, but to enlighten it by the intimations of wisdom. The Noachic people, as it has been shown, had attained to some degree of the regenerate life; and, therefore, God would indicate his presence: their good was His good in them; in this He always dwells, and from this He always speaks. It was from a dictate thence that they were taught to quit the ark. The waters having abated, it was no longer necessary to remain within the limits of that condition of the church to which temptations had confined them. While in the ark, their attention was engaged upon the dangers which beset them; but when they were delivered, they were enabled to set their affections more directly upon Him through whose mercies they had been rescued. Hence, Noah is described to have "built an altar unto the Lord, and to have taken of every clean beast, and every clean fowl, and to have offered burnt-offerings thereon."

This is the first altar upon record. Cain and Abel are said to have presented offerings to the Lord; but there is nothing said about an altar on that occasion. Their offerings, and those of Noah, are the only cases mentioned, in the first eleven chapters of Genesis, of any direct acts of worship. Those offerings are commonly supposed to have included the idea of slaying animals for the purpose. But this is a gratuitous assumption. There is no direct statement given respecting the slaughter of beasts for any purpose until after the period of Noah's offering. The term employed in both cases is *offerings;* and this does not necessarily imply the practice of sacrifices by killing. That was

* John xiv. 23.

a proceeding subsequently developed; and from this it has been inferred that the same thing was implied by those primeval offerings. But this is an evident mistake: we ought not to interpret what is said of the worship of a superior people, by that practice which we discover to have been extant some ages afterwards among degenerated nations. When the Jews were called to have instituted among them a ceremonial worship which was peculiarly typical, it is plain that the spiritual sentiment of religion had, for some considerable period, been sensualized among the nations; and those who had forgotten the name of the God of their fathers, cannot be reasonably supposed to have retained any correct notions of the manner in which He had been worshiped by their more eminent predecessors. Hence, the ritual instituted among them represented not only those spiritualities of the church which were to be developed in the fulness of time, but, also, those excellences which had already perished. Not only had the true principles of worship been corrupted, but even the very language in which its spiritualities had been expressed, came to be misunderstood. The influence which opinions and practices exercise upon language, and the changes of signification which they are known to effect upon many of its terms, are sufficient to illustrate this fact.* The sensual will sensualize an expression, to which the spiritually minded only attached a spiritual idea. It is, therefore, evidently wrong to suppose that the idea of animal offerings, which had been developed by degeneracy among the nations when the Jews were called, was the same as that which was extant in the times of Abel or Noah. In their times offerings of animals did not mean killing for sacrifice; †

* See a very learned and interesting "Dissertation on the Influence of Opinions on Language, and Language on Opinions," by Michaelis.

† Outram states that Grotius maintained that Abel did not slay the firstlings of his flock; and that no more is meant than that he brought the choicest *product of his flock*, milk and wool, and offered them as Cain offered the choicest of his fruit.—*De Sac*, lib. 1, cap. § 3. And Dr. Prideaux says, "Till the time of the Ptolemys, the Egyptians never offered any bloody sacrifices to the gods, but worshiped them only with their prayers and frankincense. But the tyranny of the Ptolemys having forced upon them the worship of two foreign gods, that is, Saturn and Serapis, they in their worship first brought in the use of bloody sacrifices among the people."—*Connection*, part ii., book 1, pp. 18, 19.

and, therefore, it is not said so. In the Jewish economy this is stated; and it is fair to expect that it would have been declared of those primeval offerings if such had been their meaning; but it is not so declared, and the reason is, because, when the people of those times spoke of offering clean beasts and fowls unto the Lord, they understood, and meant nothing more than the dedication to Him of their purified affections and thoughts, of which they knew those animals to be the types. And by *burnt-offerings* they did not understand animals that were burnt, but excellences that were loved; for, as clean beasts are the representatives of those excellences, so fire is an emblem of that love. The actual killing, for sacrifice and burning, which was practised in after ages, arose out of the sensualization of those spiritual conceptions. And this view of the subject at once sweeps away all those difficulties which theologians have so long experienced in accounting for the origin of what they confess to look like a most irrational practice.* We see that it took its

* See Abp. Magee on the Atonement, No. lv., *On the Natural unreasonableness of the Sacrificial Rite.*—To others it has appeared in the same light. Hence the opinion, which has been learnedly maintained, that sacrifices were of human origin, but admitted into the law through a condescension to the weakness of the people. The Rev. J. Davidson, in his *Inquiry into the Origin and Intent of Primitive Sacrifice*, adduces the consent of several of the fathers to this opinion; and the Rev. G. S. Faber, in his *Treatise on the Origin of Expiatory Sacrifice*, admits that Justin Martyr and Chrysostom, and two early works of anonymous authors, take the same view of the subject. The argument on the other side is extremely feeble. It rests on the notions that Abel and Noah's offerings were *θυσίαι*, bloody sacrifices, which cannot be proved from the text; but if it could, the question of the Divine origin of sacrifice would not be settled, unless it could also be shown that there was a Divine command for such offerings; of which there is no intimation. But the supporters of this irrational view go further back, and citing the passage "Unto Adam and his wife the Lord made coats of skin and clothed them," Gen. iii., 21, argue, that as animals do not appear to have been used for food until after the deluge; and as there is no statement of any natural death having occurred, at the period to which this passage refers, the skins spoken of must have been those of animals slain for sacrifice. But Geology has proved that natural death had taken place with animals long anterior to the existence of man,—a fact which dissipates the argument; but, if it were not so, the absence of any statement that they were the result of sacrifices, and of all Divine command respecting them, are other facts entirely opposed to the notion of the Divine origin of bloody sacrifices. It is evident that the coats of skin, not *skins*, with which Adam and his wife, after their fall, are stated to have been clothed, do not mean natural clothes, because the Lord

rise with sensual men losing sight of the true meaning of those things by which the spiritualities of religion were primitively expressed. Sacrifices, by the killing of animals, were not of Divine origin; but, having been adopted by degenerated men, God was pleased, when he selected a particular race of them, to institute among them the representative of a true church, to issue directions for the regulation of the sacrificial ritual, which could not be abolished without the employment of force, which is not consistent with God's dealings with his creatures; * and the object of such regulations was to provide that nothing but what was anciently and wisely understood to have been the natural emblems of some pure spiritual affection and thought, should be introduced into such worship.

The structure of the language in which Noah's offerings are described, is such as to preclude the idea of killing for the purpose. Thus it is written, "He took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt-offerings." He took those animals; but it is not said that he killed them: it is also declared that he offered burnt-offerings, but it is not said that those animals were the objects which were burnt. If it were said of a father that he took of all his pious sons, and of all his pious daughters; and offered the sacrifice of thanksgiving; who would rationally infer from the structure of this statement that the sons and daughters were killed for that purpose? Why then draw such a conclusion respecting the animals? Killing is no more apparent in their case than in that of the children.

But it may be asked, Why then did Noah build an altar? Here, again, we have to deal with a misconception respecting the meaning of an altar, which has arisen from the Jewish and pagan use of it. It was not, with primitive men, the same thing as it afterwards became among their degenerate posterity.

is said to have made them: they denoted the instruction with which their transgressions were to be covered; and this the Lord communicated.

* God ever treats man as a free and an accountable being: to employ any force would interfere with his liberty, and take away his responsibility. God influences in many ways, but never overturns the balance of man's freedom: He, also, mercifully makes use, even of the crudest materials which men may have gathered for religious purposes, to promote some spiritual end.

With the former it was a spiritual motive from which worship proceeded; but with the latter it was a natural erection on which victims were slain. Hence the Hebrew word מִזְבֵּחַ *mizbeach*, which is translated altar, has not, in Noah's case, that physical meaning which it afterwards acquired. It is commonly understood to mean a structure for sacrificial purposes; and, therefore, some have supposed that it properly denotes a place on which a victim is slain for some religious rite.* But this is a very questionable conclusion: the Jews certainly could not have understood that to have been its exclusive meaning, since it is used also for the altar of incense, on which no victim ever came.† The table for the shew-bread is also, sometimes, called an altar.‡ The true sense of *mizbeach* appears to be *elevation*—the elevation of spiritual life—such as pertains to the mind in states of worship; and it was from a sensualization of this idea, that, in the process of time, it came to be understood as a raised natural structure. Hence, also, the Septuagint sometimes translates it by βωμός, *bomos*, which denotes a height, an elevation; and in the Vulgate it is translated *altus*, which means the same thing; and these are ideas which every one may see are as applicable to mind as to matter.

As before observed, an altar is first mentioned in connection with Noah's offerings: how did it happen that no such erection is noticed in the case of those of Cain and Abel? The reason of this is to be found in the different characteristics of worship which prevailed during the best periods of the two dispensations referred to. Worship is of two kinds, internal and external. *Internal* worship is that in which the will, from a love of what is good, influences the understanding in the perception of what is true; but *external* worship is that in which the understanding, by means of truth, arouses the will to a sense of what is good. In both cases acceptable worship may be offered; but that which proceeds from the former, is plainly more eminent and interior than that which arises from the latter. Now it was a distinction

* See Dr. Adam Clarke, *Com. on Gen.* viii. 20. Dr. Burton's Lectures, *On the World after the Flood*, p. 103. And *Kitto's Bib. Cyc.*, Art. *Altar*.

† Exodus xxx. 1 to 9.

‡ Exodus xxv. 23 to 30. Mal. i. 7, 12.

of this nature which characterized the worship of the Adamic and Noachic churches. The worship of the former was strictly internal, and, therefore, they are not stated to have used an altar; but worship with the latter having become external, they are stated to have built an altar; which every one may see to have been mentioned as the representative of such worship. Thus the altar, in this case, is not to be understood as a building of stones, but as a term by which to signify the general intellectual characteristics of all the Noachic worship, which may be considered as external, when compared with that which distinguished their ancient predecessors. The actual building of altars belonged to a later period, when the spiritual thing, which the term was originally employed to signify, had passed away. The altar, considered in itself, has nothing that is holy or religious pertaining to it. It is of earth or stone, and the work of men's hands.* All holiness is of a spiritual nature. A spiritual affection, from which the Lord is intelligently worshiped, is the true altar; and the physical representation of this gradually came into being as the spiritual reality successively declined: and then worship lost its intelligence and became corporeal.

The worship of the Adamic dispensation arose from perception,† that of the Noachic from education; and this distinction it may be useful to illustrate. The Adamic people, in primeval times, were, in consequencc of the integrity of their character, gifted with the power by which they could at once discern the use and truth of the things by which they were surrounded. They saw that all the outer things of this world were types, significant of the inner things of Heaven. They could "look through nature up to nature's God," and her meaning as men in aftertimes have read a book. Although we see the writing of the volume, that arrests but little of our attention:

* Under the Israelitish dispensation we read of directions, respecting an altar of earth, and an altar of stone (Exodus xx. 24, 25), because those two altars were intended to represent two different qualities of mind from which worship may be offered: the former denoted the quality of the *will* in which good is present, and, consequently, the worship which thence proceeds; but the latter represented the quality of the *understanding*, in which truth is influential; and, consequently, the worship thereby induced.

† See *Antediluvian History*, p. 95.

we read not to dwell upon the forms of the letters, but to acquire the ideas, and to ascertain the intellectual things which the page was intended to exhibit. We pass by the natural means in order to discover the mind which they are employed to indicate; it is this which gives us pleasure and imparts instruction. Although we see the ink and paper, they are scarcely thought of; our purpose is to look within. Now the most ancient people, in consequence of the eminent wisdom which attended their superior virtue, were enabled to read nature in somewhat of a similar way. They saw the sun, the moon, and stars; the mountains, plains, and rivers; the trees, the rocks, and fountains; together with flocks and herds, and other objects of animated nature; but, at the same time, they perceived that all those things were the representations of divine and spiritual sentiments. When we meet with the letters, m-a-n, of what do we think? Do we reflect upon the letters? No! our mind at once turns to the idea of *man.* So those ancients, when they saw the objects to which we have referred, were enabled, by the superiority of their mind, to perceive the spiritual ideas of which they are all so typical and suggestive. Consequently they were enabled to read some of the magnificency of heaven in the beauties of nature; and they dwelt but little on the means, because they were so eminently delighted by a love of the ends which lay before them. With them the internal was as everything, and the *external* as nothing; and, therefore, we do not read that they possessed an altar.

But it was otherwise with the people of the Noachic period. They could not, like their ancient predecessors, perceive the spiritual sentiments which natural objects were created to suggest; but a remembrance of the general fact, that they were all significant, was still retained; the knowledge of particulars, so continued, was cultivated and became the doctrines of their church; from this, under the Divine auspices, they derived all their education in spiritual things. They could speak of, and rationally see, the spiritual signification of natural objects; they did not perceive it so plainly, nor from the same eminence, as their predecessors. They acquired their internal states by means of external instruction: from this they were enabled to offer unto the Lord an acceptable worship; but, because it ascended

from the *external* means which they cultivated for the purpose, it is described as an altar which they built.

But they came out of the ark before they built their altar. Men must enter upon the enjoyment of intellectual freedom before they can become successful in the study of religious truth: nor can they properly enjoy the advantages of worship so long as they are influenced by a sense of restraint and danger. The departure from the ark, and the erection of the altar, were intended to represent their liberation, and thereby their entrance upon the enjoyment of that freedom.

Worship, to be acceptable, must proceed, not from the compulsion of fear, but from the liberty of love. Constrained worship is corporeal, because it is of the body: it is inanimate, because it has no spiritual life: it is obscure, because there is no understanding in it; and gloomy, because it does not partake of any heavenly delight. But unconstrained worship, when it is genuine, is spiritual, living, lucid, and joyful, because the Lord is in it with His love, and light, and blessing. Moreover, the worship of the Lord is acceptable to him no farther than it is beneficial to us; and He requires that we should worship Him, not because it can add to His satisfaction, but, because it is the means for the promotion of our own happiness. It is in freedom that He loves us: it must be in freedom that we love Him. "Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty;" * and it is only in this liberty that men can really worship. Noah had entered upon this liberty, and began this worship; for he had come out of the ark and built an altar; and thereupon it is said that he "*took of* every clean beast, and of every clean fowl"; to denote that he then came into the *possession of* purified affections and thoughts: it is also written, that he "offered *burnt-offerings* on the altar"; to signify that he presented *loved duties*, from an elevated mind, which duties consisted in the works of charity and faith.

That clean beasts and fowl denote purified affections and thoughts, is evident from what has been previously observed; and that *burnt-offerings* are significant of *loved duties* seems equally plain. Fire is an emblem of love: hence it is some-

* 2 Corinthians iii. 17.

times spoken of as holy fire and heavenly fire. It is also said that the Lord will baptize with fire,* to signify that he will initiate into love. On account of this signification, the Lord said he came to send fire on earth,† and commanded, in the Jewish ritual, that there should be a continual fire upon the altar: ‡ from the same meaning arose the practice of keeping a perpetual fire in the religious ceremonies of the Greeks and Romans, to which the vestal virgins were appointed.§ The Persian magi, and others, began to worship fire, || when they had forgotten that its signification was love. Well, then, what are offerings to the Lord, essentially considered, but the performance of duties agreeably to his directions? and who cannot see that offerings which are burnt, must be the symbols of duties which are loved. This, certainly, is what is meant by all such offerings under the Mosaic law; since we find that, as mere rites, they were of no religious value to those with whom there was no charity nor faith. Hence it is written, the Lord said, "I spake not unto your fathers, *nor commanded them*, in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, *concerning burnt-offerings and sacrifices;* but this thing commanded I them, saying, *Obey my voice.*"¶ David also says, "*Sacrifices and offerings thou didst not desire,—whole burnt-offerings and sin-offerings thou hast not required.*"** "*Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken, than the fat of rams*"; †† "Though ye offer me, saith the Lord, *whole burnt-offerings, and your meat-offerings, I will not accept them.* Let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a

* Matthew iii. 11. † Luke xii. 49. ‡ Exodus xxx. 8.

§ Vesta was the goddess of fire. Eneas, to whom her mysteries were known in Greece, is said to have been the first who introduced them into Italy; where Numa built her a temple, with virgins for its priests. It was taught that if ever the fire was extinguished, which they were appointed to prevent, it would portend a great calamity to the republic: a superstition which doubtless arose from some sentiment of the ancient church, who knew that when love perished, calamity would certainly ensue.

|| This practice is of great antiquity. Mr. Fraser, in his *Historical and Descriptive Account of Persia* (p. 121), says, that Persian writers attribute it to Hoshung the third monarch of the fabulous kings, and that it superseded the Sabean or Chaldean faith.

¶ Jeremiah vii. 21, 23. ** Psalm xl. 6. †† 1 Samuel xv. 22.

mighty stream."* "I desire mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than whole burnt-offerings": † from which it is evident that obedience, judgment, righteousness, mercy, and a knowledge of God, are the things which sacrifices and burnt-offerings were intended to signify, and that without those interior things the outward signs could be of no avail. And this enables us to see why it is said on the occasion of such offerings, that "the Lord smelled a sweet savor." Every one must acknowledge that what is literally expressed in this sentiment, cannot be actually meant. It will not be pretended that burning flesh could become a pleasing odor to the Omnipotent.‡ Smelling, in a natural sense, is not predicable of Him; but it is employed to signify that which He regards with pleasure and acceptance; and, surely, these are among the favors which the genuine worshiper is intended to enjoy. God is mercifully pleased to accept the charity and faith, which the men of the church dedicate to Him from the bright fire of an enlightened love. Virtue and intelligence are spiritual odors: profligacy and vice include a rottenness and emit a stench. Hence the Lord described the wicked Pharisees as whitened sepulchres full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness.§ And it was to describe the change which takes place in man's spiritual sphere, when he passes from obedience to transgression, that the prophet said, "It shall come to pass, that instead of a sweet savor there shall be stink." || It is spiritual excellence and religious virtue which constitute the fragrance of heaven. Genuine holiness induces beauty and produces sweetness. Those who are truly good experience internal joy and blessedness.

* Amos v. 22, 24. † Hosea vi. 6.

‡ "It can never be made out from any natural notions of God, that sacrifices are a reasonable method to obtain or return thanks for the favors of heaven. The result of a true rational inquiry can only be this, that *God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.* And though I cannot say that any of the wise heathens did, by the light of nature, bring themselves to a fixed and clear conviction of this great truth; yet it is remarkable that several of them made great advances towards it; and all the wise part of them saw clearly, that no rational or philosophical account could be given of their sacrifices."—*Sacred and Profane History by Dr. Shuckford*, vol. 1. p. 72.

§ Matthew xxiii. 27. || Isaiah iii. 24.

There is a gentleness and earnestness in all they think and do. The sphere which arises from those principles surrounds them as a delicate perfume,* it is "the odor of sanctity." The altar of incense was a representation of the worship which proceeds from this spiritual state of heart and soul; and it was the Divine recognition of such a state among the Noachic people, which is described by the Lord's having "smelled a sweet savor": † and they were made sensible of this savor by the satisfaction which they were permitted to enjoy. For whensoever man, from an enlightened conscience, is carefully observant of the Divine will, he comes into the experience of peace and blessedness; and these are the mediums through which God indicates His pleasure to the people of His Church. The original, here translated "sweet savor," might, with equal propriety, have been rendered "odor of rest"; and, in that case, it will at once be seen that the Lord's smelling an odor of rest, denotes his acknowledgment of the sweetness of peace.

And this is followed by the declaration, "and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake"; although this may be regarded as a special revelation of the clemency by which the Divine Providence would distinguish itself in all future ages of the world; it is, nevertheless, descriptive of a fact which is rendered more or less evident to every regenerate man. They are permitted to know the utterances of the Divine heart, as may be evident from the following argument.

* That there is a scent of some sort proceeding from every natural object is well known; but that something corresponding to it emanates from man's spiritual nature is not so generally acknowledged; and yet it may be evident from the moral attraction and repulsion which are frequently felt by some parties towards others who are strangers. It is a fact which most have experienced; and very many say they cannot account for it, but so it is. The solution of the difficulty is the harmonious or discordant spiritual sphere which proceeds from every man, and which infuses itself into that which proceeds from his body, and acts thereby. What are called "first impressions," and "love at first sight," arise from this source. The sympathy and antipathy which men feel, and of which they speak, proceed from the same cause. Hence those who are in spiritual congruity with the Divine teachings, are said to emit a sweet savor in the Divine estimation.

† Burnt flesh can hardly be considered as a sweet savor.

God is essential goodness; and good men must be permitted to know something about His wishes and designs respecting them, because the knowledge which is associated with their goodness, is His wisdom implanted in them. When we know a virtuous man, we also know that benevolence is the prevailing sentiment of his heart: we may be certain that such a one is continually thinking how he can do good and best serve his fellow-creatures. As then there can be no difficulty in arriving at a knowledge of those thoughts which arise from the heart of a good man, so there can be no impediment to his learning what are the sentiments always present in the heart of a good God respecting him. The heart is always mentioned in the Scriptures to indicate the living principle of its subject; so that by the heart of God is meant His love, for this is His living principle. And He is said to speak in His heart, to inform us of the yearnings and intentions of His love; and these are, that men should be free and enlightened partakers of His graces. Every dispensation of God in reference to man is fraught with mercy: and, therefore, every blessing which humanity enjoys, reveals to us the speakings of the Divine heart. Of this the Noachic people were sufficiently aware; and the regenerate condition to which they had arrived, fitted them to receive the consoling revelation—"I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every living thing, as I have done."

The general idea involved in these promises is, that the Supreme will show His mercy by preventing a recurrence of those calamities which had befallen the antediluvian world. God is contemplated to have been the author of their misfortunes; but this is said in conformity with the apprehension entertained by those who suffered them. No evil, however, really comes from God: all the misery endured by man is occasioned by his ignorant or his wilful transgressions of the Divine laws, and it is the inevitable result of such misconduct. Those who thrust their hand into the fire, cannot reasonably expect to escape the pain of burning. God does not work miracles to prevent the consequences which follow the violation of His laws. It is man then, and not God, who is the actual cause of

the sufferings he endures. But for sin there would have been no calamity. Men estimate God's dealings with them from the state of mind in which they may be principled. If their mind is light and joyful, from an experimental sense of the Divine goodness, God will appear to it as beneficent and wise; but if the mind is afflicted with gloom and sorrow, arising from the consciousness of evil doing, then God will seem to it to be an austere master, seeking to reap where he had not sown.* Such was the mental aspect under which the wicked antediluvians viewed Him; and it is in conformity with this idea that he is contemplated to have cursed the ground and smitten every living thing: for to curse the ground signifies that the natural man had averted himself from good; and to smite every living thing, denotes the injury which all the spiritual affections of man sustained. That man, and not God, was the source of these evils, must be evident; for it is now said that such calamities should no more occur. That which God would not do in the future, he could not have done in the past: if so we should be compelled to think that He was a changeable Being, and that His mercy has been admissive of enlargement. Besides, so far as is deducible from the merely literal sense, the reason which was the cause of the curse still remained. Before the flood, and as the occasion of it, it is written, that God saw "that every imagination of the thought of man's heart was only evil continually"; but after that event, and as a reason why it should no more occur, it is said, "for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth."† This is commonly and truly acknowledged to be the state of man; but how that could have been a cause for the destruction of the antediluvians, which is afterwards recorded to have been a cause for preserving their postdiluvian posterity, can only be understood by a reference to the different mental constitutions of the two races.

There can be no doubt but that both became what the texts describe them: but with the antediluvians the will and understanding acted as *one* faculty. Whatsoever they desired they also thought; their love of evil became instantly attended by a

* See *Peculiarities of the Bible*, chap. vi., on "genuine and apparent truths in the Bible; specifically those which refer to His Divine character."

† Compare Genesis vi. 5, with Genesis viii. 21.

false persuasion: hence it is said of them, that every imagination of the *thoughts* of their heart was only *evil continually*. But this was not the condition of those who survived the flood. With them the will and the understanding began to act as *two* faculties, as they ever since have done; so that while the will remains in all its corruptions, the understanding, by being separated from it, is preserved in the capacity of seeing and acknowledging this condition: and, therefore, it is not said of them, as it was of the former people, namely, that the imagination of the *thoughts of the heart* was evil continually; but only that it was the imagination of the heart, that was so. If it were not for the separate action of these two faculties of our nature, the evils of the will would still force the understanding to consent to every enormity; we should pursue wickedness without a bridle, and again bring about a flood of ungodly men. This every one may know, if he will but attend to the natural impulses of his will, and observe the evils to which they would conduct him, if it were not for the checks and hindrances which the understanding discovers and places in its way.

This new arrangement of man's mental nature became conspicuous among the Noachic people: it is that which distinguishes the spiritual from the celestial genius of our race: the latter perished in the flood, and the former was mercifully provided by the Lord as the medium by which to prevent men from again bringing upon the world such a calamity as that implies. The understanding, by becoming a separate faculty, could be raised, by education, above the evil influences of the will, and thereby a conscience be formed;* by these a medium was provided through which the two promises are to be realized, namely,

* Conscience arose with the establishment of the Noachic church; and it was designed to supply the place of that perception which had perished with its predecessor. This, indeed, is a species of perception, since to act against it, or in conformity with it, is to act against or in conformity with what is acknowledged to be right. It is not, however, as it is commonly supposed, a connate principle in man; but it is formed in him by means of the religious education which he receives and believes to be true. Hence some men can do things with a full concurrence of their conscience, which could not be done by others without exciting a deep compunction.—See an able tract entitled, *What is Conscience?* by the Rev. W. Mason.

not "to curse the ground any more for man's sake," nor "to smite any more every living thing." Not to curse the ground any more for man's sake, *i. e.*, because of his evil nature, denotes not to destroy the understanding of truth because the *will* had sunk into such corruption. The understanding is as *ground* into which the seed of truth is sown; and the *will* is the man;—for all men are what they are by virtue of the quality of their wills. And not to smite again every living thing as they had been, signifies that the spiritualities of the regenerate life should not be destroyed among the postdiluvian people, as they had been among their antediluvian predecessors. The new mental condition, which had come into being by the regeneration of the Noachic people and for the establishment of a spiritual church among them, would be transmitted to posterity, and always operate to prevent the recurrence of such disasters. The promises do not say that the understanding of truth, and the living things of religion, should not again have their stability endangered; but only that the evil should never more become so malignant and overwhelming. Men might fall; but they should not be so utterly cast down. The fidelity which has hitherto kept those promises will never fail. Society cannot now confederate to deny God, abandon the acknowledgment of His government, and perpetrate the vices consequent thereon, because the common understandings and consciences of men will not consent to favor such atrocities. Savages have some belief in God, and his dealings with the world.* Their ideas about those things may be wrong; but the sentiment with which they are associated, is grounded in something that is right. There are remains among them: these may be in ruins, and for ages they may lie there; but the promises assure us that they cannot so far perish as to close the avenues of spiritual life, and so induce the suffocation of humanity. It is seen, and commonly acknowledged, that the worst of men are not entirely destitute of every virtue. Some pleasing flowers have been observed striving for growth amidst the henbane and the nightshade: there is wheat among the tares, and it is preserved to the end that a plane may always

* "It is a matter of doubt, whether there be any of the human race so absolutely degenerate, as to be void of all sense of religion: that there are any such has not yet been proven."—*Dr. Sherlock: Discourse* xxvii.

exist for the reception of the enlightening and regenerating influences of truth. Truth could not take any hold of our understanding, nor exercise any salutary influence on the formation of our character, if there were not preserved some living sentiment of good to receive and cherish it. It is this good which induces us to listen with advantage to the voice of truth. God has mercifully preserved that living thing for this holy purpose; so that the means for cultivating and storing the natural man with spiritual blessings should no more be stopped; and, therefore, it is written, "While the earth remaineth, seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease."

Although this passage may be taken as a prediction respecting the perpetuation of the Divine government in mundane affairs, yet its principal object is to inform us concerning the viscissitudes of state which men will experience so long as the earth remains; that is, so long as the church continues. The church exists for the purpose of inducing a change upon the characters of men, and, by a continuation of such mutations, to lead them into clearer perceptions of truth and holier conditions of goodness. So long as *this* earth remains, there will be an undeviating effort of the Divine Providence, through its means, to provide for the regeneration of man. This, however, cannot be accomplished without his co-operation; and even then it will be attended by all those mental and spiritual changes of which the above passage is so remarkably descriptive.

It is commonly thought to indicate the seasons which were to distinguish the new world after the flood; but it is no easy matter to ascertain precisely what they were; for, in the literal sense of the passage, *six* are named; whereas only *four* are known to the greatest portion of the world. To meet this difficulty it has been supposed that an additional number may have marked one or more of the postdiluvian years, in and about Armenia, for the convenience of the Noachic family; * but, surely, this notion, which supposes God to have created, at the southeast of the north temperate zone, two extra seasons for a temporary purpose, can hardly be seriously entertained. Besides it is contrary to the text which contemplates what is recorded as a

* See *Dr. A. Clarke's Commentary* on this passage.

universal fact for perpetual duration. There can be no doubt that so long as the earth remains, the changes of the seasons, and the mutations of day and night, natural to its position in the ecliptic, will be continued: the one is a necessary consequence of the other; and of these phenomena it is not the purpose of revelation to inform us. This will appear quite certain to those who remember, that neither of the above enumerations of the seasons is applicable to every portion of the earth. There are some localities, as in the far north and south, where the whole year is divided between summer and winter, and where also the day and night, as determined by the rising and setting of the sun, are not what they are in the torrid and the temperate zones. Surely these facts ought to be a sufficient proof that physical phenomena are not the subjects treated of. The chief design of the declaration, that there shall be in all time, "seed time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, and day and night," is to inform us of the mutations, intellectual and voluntary, which will accompany the regeneration of man in all future ages of the church. This process is attended by two general states: *first*, that in which man is led by truth into the possession of something that is good; and, *second*, that in which he is influenced by the love of such good to direct and govern all the sentiments and affections of his natural life. The first of these states is described as the "seed time and harvest," and "cold and heat"; but the second is represented as "summer and winter, and day and night." Thus, in the former case, seed time and cold are placed before the harvest and the heat; but, in the latter, the summer and the day are placed before the winter and the night. The reason is, because the mutations which are experienced in the former state arise from the unregenerated influences of the external man; whereas those changes which are felt in the latter, arise from the regenerated influence of the internal man.

By "seed time" is represented a state of the understanding for the reception of truth; and by the "harvest" is denoted a condition of the will for the reception of goodness; hence it is written that "the seed is the Word of God," * and that He will "gather His wheat into His garner."† But by "cold" is

* Luke viii. 11. † Matt. iii. 12.

denoted the frigidity with which the will first receives the good which is presented to it; and by "heat" is signified the warmth with which it is afterwards embraced: when these things are accomplished, then the first general state of the regenerate process is obtained; and thereupon the "summer" commences, from which the alternations of the second state begin. These changes of state occur to every one during the process of his regeneration; for such is the condition of man, that spiritual and celestial things cannot abide in what is corporeal and worldly, unless they as it were took their turns. The mind cannot be kept upon a perpetual stretch towards one or the other. Hence man is sometimes in the superior, and sometimes in the inferior condition. But regeneration is intended to keep each to its own order, and to fix the superior things in the first rank.

By "summer" is meant that state of the regenerate man in which his affections are abundant in the fruits of charity; and by "winter" is signified the condition of those affections when they become cold in such productions. But by "day" is denoted that state of the regenerate man in which his understanding is enlightened by spiritual truth; and by "night" is represented the same faculty when brought into a condition of obscurity. Hence we read of the living waters which were to go out from Jerusalem in the "summer and the winter;"* and, also, of being "the children of the light and the children of the day—not of the night nor of darkness."† Every one knows that alternations of state take place with regard to man's charity and faith. Sometimes these principles of his religious character are warm and brilliant; at others they are cool and dark. This is consequent upon our fallen condition; it is one of the laws attending the phenomena of regeneration, and thus requisite for the introduction of man into greater purity and truth, and thereby to give him those enjoyments which arise from his possession of spiritual light and superior virtue.

* Zech. xiv. 8. ‡ 1 Thess. v. 5.

CHAPTER VI.

THE COMMAND RESPECTING MEAT: THE PROHIBITION OF FLESH WITH THE BLOOD; AND THE LAW "WHOSO SHEDDETH MAN'S BLOOD, BY MAN SHALL HIS BLOOD BE SHED."

"He who sits down to examine truth, and search after real knowledge, will equally sift all his opinions; will reject none that he has been long possessed of, without good reason; will admit no new ones without sufficient authority and weight of argument to support them."—*Dr. Sherlock, Bishop of London. Discourse* xxxii.

In preceding chapters it has been attempted to be shown that the narratives relating the diluvian period,—the singular means adopted by Noah to ascertain the abatement of the waters; his departure from the ark; the building of an altar, and the presentation of burnt-offerings thereon; were intended to describe the deliverance of an ancient people from a series of perilous temptations, the progress which they made in the principles and duties of the regenerate life, and thereby the establishment of a spiritual church among them. In the last chapter they were contemplated as enjoying some of the privileges of such a dispensation. Its Adamic predecessor was a celestial church, in which *love* was the most conspicuous principle of action; but the Noachic was a spiritual church, in which *truth* was the most visible director. It is important to a right understanding of the facts related of this latter dispensation, to notice and remember these distinctions; for, if allowance be made for the different action of these two principles upon mankind, we shall find several remarkable parallels in the histories of these two churches.

Passing by the successive creation of the Adamic church, from a state in which "darkness was upon the face of the deep"; and the gradual formation of the Noachic church, from a state in which "the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth";* it may be noticed that what was said to Adam and

* Gen. i. 2; vii. 19.

his wife immediately after their creation, was also repeated to Noah and his family directly after their deliverance from the ark, namely, "Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth." * The "dominion" which Adam was to have "over the fish of the sea, and over the fowls of the air, and over the cattle, and over every creeping thing," was likewise promised to Noah. † And there can be no doubt but that the building of an altar and the worship of the Lord, were to the Noachic people, what the planting of the garden and the possession of paradise were to the Adamic race; namely, a condition of internal joy and blessedness. It is, however, particularly to be noticed, that, at the best periods of those two churches, Divine directions were given to the people respecting what they should eat and what they should avoid, together with a declaration of the fatal consequences which were to result from a transgression of those laws. Thus to Adam it was said, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." ‡ And to Noah it was said, "Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things; but the flesh with the life thereof shall ye not eat. And surely your blood of your lives will I require." § It deserves also to be remarked, that a law respecting eating accompanied the *planting* of both the Israelitish and the Christian dispensations. The Jews, to be delivered from their bondage in Egypt, were commanded to eat "the flesh of the Paschal lamb roast with fire; and unleavened bread and bitter herbs:" || and Jesus said, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if a man eat of this bread he shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." ¶ Surely every one who will carefully reflect upon these facts, must see that they ought not to be regarded as mere coincidences: and the last case referred to, certainly suggests that they have all been written with the view of teaching some spiritual lesson, and not for the purpose of giving instruction concerning

* Gen. i. 28; ix. 1. † Gen. i. 26; ix. 2. ‡ Gen. ii. 16, 17.
§ Gen. ix. 3, 5. || Exodus xii. 8. ¶ John vi. 51.

natural food. This is acknowledged to be the case in reference to the eating of the Lord's flesh: that it is so, in respect to the eating prescribed for the Israelites on the eve of their departure from Egypt, follows from the circumstance of all the ceremonials required of that people being the shadow of better things to come; and that such is the meaning of the law delivered to Adam upon this subject, is made abundantly evident in a preceding work;* so that there is reasonable ground for coming to a similar conclusion respecting the parallel command which was delivered to Noah.

The main design of such revelations never could have been to give information respecting the natural food requisite for our health: if so, it might be reasonably expected that some communications would have been delivered concerning medicine for our use in times of disease. But God does not specially interpose to teach us that which may be learnt by observation and experience. It is true that under the Jewish economy laws upon the subject of food were enacted and obeyed;† but it is equally true that those laws were all representative of spiritual things; and therefore the literal sense of them was not their principal aim. Men who have not fed agreeably to the Jewish regimen, have, to all appearance, been equally well sustained both in health and life. Christians pay little or no attention to its prescriptions, but eat, and consider as delicacies, some things which the Mosaic law declares to be unclean. This is a practical acknowledgment that the literal sense of those laws is not their chief object; which idea is strongly supported by the Lord's declaration "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man." ‡

The law which prescribed food to the primeval men, directed that it should be taken from the vegetable kingdom; they were to eat of the trees of the garden only: but with the Noachic people animal food was added to their vegetable diet,—"Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things." Although there can

* See *Antediluvian Hist.*, chaps. vi. & xi.

† Lev. xi.; Deut. xiv.

‡ Matt. xv. 11.

be no doubt that the primary object of those laws was to indicate some interior lesson for the spiritual sustenance of the soul, yet it is highly probable that they were, in some measure, founded upon the respective characteristics of the people among whom they were enacted; and, therefore, a few observations concerning those laws may here be proper.

It is agreed that men in the primeval times fed wholly upon supplies of food provided by the vegetable kingdom. This opinion well accords with what must have been the docility and simplicity of their character. There is no intimation given before the flood, that animals were slain for food, and therefore it is hardly reasonable to suppose that they were killed for the purposes of worship. The case of Abel's offering does not necessarily imply the act of killing; all that is fairly deducible from that circumstance is, the act of dedicating, that is, of acknowledging, from a faith in the Divine goodness, that the blessings enjoyed were provided by the Lord and were properly His. At that time no instructions had been given for bloody sacrifices: such a mode of worshiping the Divine Being could not have been originally directed by him: nor could it have been invented by the reason of enlightened men; the practice came into existence when passion had perverted reason:* and then the Lord, who does not violently break, but gently bends the human mind,† was pleased to give directions for regulating that carnal mode of worship which had arisen out of a low con-

* Dr. Shuckford says, that it has not been "proved that such a worship could be invented by the reason of man, or that it is agreeable to any notion which we can have of God."—*Sacred and Profane History Connected*, vol. i., pp. 77, 78. And this he considers to be evidence that God must have commanded it. But, surely, this is not good reasoning. Certainly the existence of an institution which enlightened reason could not have originated ought not to be regarded as any proof that God directed it. God does not deal with reasonable creatures in so unreasonable a way. He may turn man's unreasonable inventions to some useful account; but he does not *originate* them. Natural sacrifices were among the unreasonable rites of religion. And the idea that worship, by these means, was permitted by God,—in conformity with the disposition which sprung up with men, when their reason was depraved,—is the proper view of this case, and quite adequate to remove every difficulty by which the subject is supposed to be surrounded.

† Isaiah xlii. 3.

dition of the human intellect. There can be no doubt that those who first killed animals for any purpose, must have blunted the sentiments of pity in themselves; and, also, that reason must have lost a large amount of its enlightenment, before men could imagine that God might be worshiped by such an act. Both of these evils had taken deep root in society before the flood; but still there is no evidence that animals were deliberately killed, either for food or for worship, until after that event. At that time the mental condition of mankind was altered. It had sunk down to a lower plane; and with this it is highly probable that the physical constitution sustained some change; in this inferior condition a dietary came to be adopted which was never contemplated in superior times. Men then began to think that the flesh of animals, which had yielded them milk and butter, might be useful to them in the way of food; and from this, it is reasonable to suppose, the practice arose: it could not have come into being before men began to be carnal.* And as a disposition, more or less inclined towards that principle, had become fixed upon the race, the Lord was pleased to grant to it the use of animal food. It was not a law of *ordination:* men in the primeval times ate bread of grain, fruits, and herbs, and what the animals produced in the way of milk and butter; and it was only when they became carnally minded that they were *permitted* to kill and eat. The law upon this subject was first delivered to the Noachic people; and so long as the state of man, to which it is an accommodation, remains, so long will this law of permission be in force; and, therefore, there is not now any condemnation resulting from the use of such a diet.†

* "God seeing men to be *αφειδεις*, 'contumacious,' conceded to them the enjoyment of all things."—*Greg. Nyss.* vol. i., p. 157.

† The above suggestion, that animal food was permitted only when men had sunk into an inferior condition of rational existence, is not without some historical indications. The Hindoos, one of the most ancient nations of the world, and distinguished for their humanity and gentleness, have retained to the present day, their language, their written characters, their government, customs, and habits of life. The custom of dividing the people into classes is one of the remotest times. The three higher castes are prohibited entirely from the use of flesh; the fourth is allowed to partake only of some kinds; and it is only the lowest who are allowed every sort of food without restric-

But although it seems evident, that, as man departed from simplicity, and became gross in his inclinations, flesh was added to his vegetable food; yet the main drift of what was said to Noah upon that subject, was to represent to us the new spiritual meat which became allowable in that new interior condition of man which then had come into being. This is apparent from the statement which directs that "Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you"; for *every* moving thing that liveth never has been food for men, nor is it fit to be so. Moreover, the original, if strictly rendered, would be every *reptile* which liveth. The letter, then, expresses a greater latitude than it would be wise or safe to embrace: civilized society has never done so; and yet we venture to affirm that the true meaning of this direction will not permit any of its breadth to be diminished.

It was to a regenerated people that this direction was given: it is requisite to notice this; because it was this circumstance which qualified them for the due appreciation of the privilege placed at their disposal. However natural meat may seem to be spoken of, it is spiritual meat which is meant; and the objects which might be eaten represented the affections and consequent pleasures which the man of the spiritual church may enjoy. Every moving thing that liveth, denotes every active pleasure that has good within it. Pleasures are moving things, and goodness is the proper life thereof with all regenerated men. Beasts, as it has been frequently shown, are the symbols of affections; but those affections are perceived only in the pleasures which they occasion; and these are said to be given for meat, to signify that they are permitted to be enjoyed. There are always pleasures attending the internal sensation of goodness, and the intellectual perceptions of truth. Those pleasures are the moving things of which the good affections are the life. It is when men have attained to some degree of spiritual excellence that they begin to know what pleasures are, and what are

tion. It is highly probable that these customs sprang out of the law which originally provided a vegetable diet for man in his superior state, and the permission of animal food when he descended into an inferior condition. The modern vegetarianism, which is advocated by societies of amiable and intelligent men, in our own country and elsewhere, arises out of an instinct in the same direction.

not, lawful to be enjoyed. "Every moving thing," is not to be construed into the idea of there being no exception: it is only every moving thing that *liveth:* thus it is only those pleasures which have *goodness* for their essence and existence, of which the religious man can safely partake. *Life*, in a religious sense, is the love of goodness: this is the life of heaven and the church; all that is opposed to this, because it is sin, is *death.* But it is only the moving things that *have life* of which the man of the spiritual church is permitted to partake,—it is only the pleasures which have goodness for their essence, that can be to them for meat.

Pleasures in general are of two kinds, voluntary and intellectual: but there are varieties in each; and the man of the church is taught to discriminate between those which arise from good for orderly use, and those which do not. Thus there are pleasures arising from the intellectual studies of literature and science; of philosophy and the arts; also from the honors which they promote, the offices which they procure, and the possessions which they gain. There are, also, the voluntary pleasures of friendship, social intercourse, conjugal love, and parental affection. And, besides these, there are pleasures connected with the senses,—such as the agreeableness of music to the ear; the harmony of form and color to the eye; the delicacy of fragrance to the nose; the agreeableness of food and drink to the taste; and the pleasantness of touch in general. These latter are commonly called sensual or corporeal pleasures; still it is evident that they must exist from some interior affection; because nothing can be experienced in the externals of the body, but what is more or less derived from some activity of the soul.* This spiritual activity, however, is scarcely perceptible but to those who will reflect; it is lost, as it were, in the

* "It is generally supposed that man is endued with only the five bodily senses, of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching. But he is also in the enjoyment of an equal number of spiritual senses, perfectly distinct from the former, though united together by correspondence. The sense of *seeing* corresponds to the affection of *understanding* and *becoming wise;* the sense of *hearing* corresponds to the affection of *learning*, and also *obedience;* the sense of *smelling* to the affection of *perceiving;* the sense of *tasting* to the affection of *knowing* or of *science;* and the sense of *touching*, in general, to the affection of what is good."—Rev. R. Hindmarsh's *Letters to Dr. Priestley*, p. 75.

ultimate sense of the pleasures, which, in the representative language of the ancients, are called the *moving things which live.* But those moving things have in them life or death, according to the interior affections whence they spring. They have life in them when order is respected in their enjoyment, and the Lord is regarded in the use of them; but they have death in them when they are pursued with mere selfishness and sensuality. From this we learn that an important revelation was made to the spiritual church; namely, that every pleasure arising from the orderly activity of intellect, affection, and bodily sensation, may be enjoyed by the man of such a church. He can use the world without abusing it. This it is requisite he should know, because mistakes have been made respecting it. It is no uncommon thing for the professors of religion to suppose that personal mortification, renunciation of the world, relinquishment of honors, voluntary poverty, and a sorrowful aspect, were necessary to render the duties of piety, prayer, and devotedness to God, acceptable to him. But this is by no means the case. There is nothing in true religion to affect a man with gloom or to separate him from the world; all its tendencies are the other way; it gives him buoyancy of spirits, cheerfulness of character, and directs him in the performance of uses to the world. A man who is fitted in other respects for honors, offices, possessions, and pleasurable enjoyments, will derive from enlightened religion an additional qualification to perform the duties and obligations which they include. To retire from society, and live in seclusion, is a species of selfishness which religion repudiates. What would become of society if all men were to adopt such a course? The Lord prayed, not that we should be taken out of the world, but that we should be kept from the evil.* We live in the natural world, and we have had a revelation made to us concerning the existence of the spiritual world; and it is reasonable to conclude that the wise enjoyment of the former is conducive to the happy possession of the latter. This is plainly involved in those numerous passages of the Scriptures, which declare that our works do follow us. To live in the internal things of religion, and, at the same

*John xvii. 15.

time, to renounce the pleasures which are consequent on the performances of external use, is entirely to mistake its purpose. True religion cannot exist apart from such pleasures. The communication of religion to man is to induce him to perform the duties and enjoy the pleasures of the world, from the principles of Heaven. The pleasures which arise from the orderly gratification of the senses; from honest wealth; from honorable offices; from elegant residences; from well-deserved reputation; from chaste love; from wise friendships; from social intercourse; from intellectual studies; from business, profession, or employment; are not forbidden by religion or its laws. God knows that such pleasures are *moving things* with men; and, therefore, He is desirous that they should, by being guided by religion, derive a life and animation from Himself. It is then that the moving things become alive, and are for meat to the spiritual man; for the subject really treated of is not of natural food, but of spiritual sustenance for the man of the church. And, as a further evidence of this, it may be remarked, that it is the *moving things which live* that are to be for meat: thus, not animals which are to be slaughtered for the purpose, but moving things, which are to be taken in their *living* state; that is to say, every orderly pleasure may be enjoyed with safety and advantage, when its existence is viewed in connection with the Lord, and a reverence for the principles which he has taught us. Hence, these were to be for meat, "even as the green herb"; for the green herb, like the moving things, denotes pleasures and delights, but of an inferior order; the moving things denoting those which can be enjoyed by the voluntary and intellectual parts of the spiritual man; and the green herb signifying those which can be enjoyed by the sensual and corporeal parts of the natural man.

But we now come to notice an exception, namely, the "flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat."* There can be no doubt that the main design of this

*** The Hebrew doctors generally understood this to be a prohibition to cut off any limb of a living creature, and to eat it while the life, that is the blood, was in it: this opinion has been followed by many Christians. But surely, as Dr. Patrick observes, there needed not to have been a precept given to all mankind to avoid that to which human nature is of itself averse. St.**

prohibition was to prevent some spiritual calamity. This is the grand purpose of all the interdicts of God. We should not have been taught to take no thought what we should eat or what we should drink,* if the common view of this Noachic law had been the true one: and, although it is by no means improbable that the people, at that period, did abstain from naturally eating what seems to be literally forbidden, yet they practically knew that it is not that which goeth into the mouth which defileth the man: to them, therefore, the point before us was a command having a higher significancy, in the violation of which they saw great spiritual danger. The law prohibiting the eating of flesh with the blood, was, to the Noachic dispensation, what the command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, was to the Adamic church; and its chief design was to guard the people against the danger of profanation. For while it had become allowable for spiritually-minded men to participate in the enjoyments of the world, it was important for them to know that heavenly principles were to be their guides therein, and not to be commixed therewith: each had to be kept apart from the other, and carefully dedicated to its own use: they were to "render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God, the things that are God's."†

It may appear that the prohibition before us refers only to the blood, because permission had seemingly been given to partake of the flesh; and, also, because the eating of blood was so distinctly forbidden under the Levitical law;‡ but if the structure of the language in which the prohibition is related, be carefully observed, it will be found to relate not simply to the blood, but to the *flesh having the blood in it:* thus it is eating them in their mixed condition which is forbid-

Chrysostom thinks it refers to animals which were strangled or died of themselves: but this cannot be its meaning, because God directed that such animals might be given to a stranger, or sold to an alien, that they might eat them (Deut. xiv. 2). The simplest meaning is thought to be a mere prohibition of blood, in conformity with a Jewish law; but this is not in strict conformity with the text, which says, it is the *flesh with the blood.* The necessity, therefore, of another sense than that of a material one, becomes apparent.

* Matt. vi. 25. † Matt. xxii. 21. ‡ Lev. xvii. 13, 14.

den;* and the reason is, because thereby the guilt of profanation was represented. Profanation is effected by the commixture of heavenly sentiments with earthly pursuits: thus, when a man knows the principles and requirements of genuine religion, but, instead of applying that knowledge to the purposes of spiritual piety and obedience, employs it only to further the purposes of some worldly and selfish love. It was to guard against this evil that the men of the Noachic church had delivered to them this representative law. They had reached some of the heights of spiritual character, and, being thus prepared, they were permitted to participate in the lower pleasures of the world; but the enjoyment of those pleasures was not to be incorporated into their spiritual life, because that would be like mixing earth with heaven; in which case heaven would cease to be heaven, and earth the earth; and something monstrous would be educed upon the human character.

Flesh, in this prohibition, is put for the moving things mentioned in the preceding passage; and blood is put for the life thereof: thus, *flesh* here represents what is external and worldly with man; but *blood* what is internal and heavenly. That flesh has this signification is evident from numerous passages of the Word. Thus, the Psalmist says, "My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God"; † where the heart is put for the internal longings of man, and *flesh* for his more external desires. John said, "All *flesh* shall see the salvation of God"; ‡ that is, that men in all their external pursuits shall be led to acknowledge the Divine protection and security. So again it is written, that the "spirit quickeneth; the *flesh* profiteth nothing"; § and "that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit"; || where flesh plainly means external pleasures and pursuits. The Apostle employs the term in this sense in a multitude of cases, of which fact any one may satisfy himself

* Bruce mentions that it was a custom with the Abyssinians to eat slices of flesh cut from the living animal. (Vide his *Travels.*) This revolting circumstance is, so far as we are aware, the only one known to history; and the above text can hardly be supposed to have been written to prohibit an action so repulsive to all people acquainted with *revelation.*

† Psalm lxxxiv. 2.

‡ Luke iii. 6.

§ John vi. 63.

|| John iii. 6.

who will consult a Concordance upon the subject; and, therefore, we need not dwell upon the point: what else can he mean where he says, "seeing that many glory after the flesh, I will glory also"? *

But by *blood* is denoted that interior principle of the religious life with which regenerate men are gifted by the Lord: this principle is enlightened charity or love; and because this is a vital thing with the man of the church, it is called blood and said to be the life. Blood is not the spiritual life of man, but a sort of natural soul to his corporeal body, in the motion and circulation of which, the activity of spiritual life has its correspondence; and it is because spiritual life has this image in the blood as a natural soul, that it is employed in the Word with such a signification. It is, indeed, frequently used in an entirely opposite sense; but, in those cases, the context will afford a sufficient intimation of such a meaning. In the case before us it is the type of the spiritual life of regenerated men; or, what is the same thing, charity or love. Hence, also, the Psalmist says of the poor and needy, that their blood shall be precious in the sight of the Lord; † whence it is plain that it is their love or charity, which are to be so regarded. Nor is any thing else meant by the blood of the covenant, spoken of in the Mosaic law; ‡ for by the covenant is denoted the agreement and consequent conjunction which may exist between God and man; and the blood was representative of that living charity by which this is to be accomplished. It is only when men love what God loves, that this result is brought about: and this, as every one may see, cannot be effected by the natural blood of beasts, but by the spiritual charity of men. It is in consequence of this signification that it was sprinkled upon the people, upon Aaron and his sons, and upon the altar; for by this sprinkling was signified the distribution of charity among the members of the church, and the necessity of its presence in all the principles from which they worship. The reason why the sons of Israel were so strictly forbidden to eat blood, § was to

* 2 Cor. xi. 18. † Psalm lxxii. 14.

‡ Exodus xxiv. 6, 8. Lev. i. 5, 11, 15; iv. 6, 7, 17, 18, 25, 30, 34.

§ See Lev. xvii. 10, 11, 14. Deut. xii. 23.

teach the men of the church, that they were not to claim the charity which they possessed, as any thing properly belonging to themselves, but to regard it as a separate and sacred excellence communicated by the Lord. Those who arrogate to themselves any virtue with which they may have been gifted, violate the law which forbids the eating of blood; and of such the Lord said, "I will set my face against that soul and cut him off from among his people." This is said because such a one turns away from the Lord, and separates himself from all the excellences of his church. Charity, because it is superinduced upon man's natural condition, and communicated to him wholly from the Lord, is not to be considered as his own acquirement: those who think so, after such reception, must obviously believe a lie, and, thereupon be guilty of profanation; because the result of that appropriation and belief must be to mix selfishness with holy things. Hence the prohibition to eat blood, in its spiritual sense, is still in force. Of this there is a common perception in the church. Every one who carefully reflects must see that he has nothing meritorious in himself; and, if he is a Christian, he will remember that without the Lord he can do nothing; * that "a man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven";† and, also, that "every good and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of light, with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."‡

Seeing, then, that by *blood*, in this Noachic law, is denoted the principle of spiritual charity; and that by *flesh*, is signified the pleasures of natural life; and seeing, also, that charity is the soul of those pleasures with regenerated men, and that they must never regard it as their own; we may at once easily perceive that the prohibition, to *eat flesh with the blood which is the life thereof*, was intended to teach the church an important lesson; namely, that while regenerate men are permitted to enjoy the orderly pleasures of the world, they are carefully to abstain from supposing that the spiritualities of religion, which impart life and safety to those pleasures, are their own; for, if they do so, the two will become commixed, and thereby the guilt of profanation be incurred. This law, therefore, is one of profound and practical interest to the spiritual church.

* John xv. 5. † John iii. 27. ‡ James i. 17.

The punishment which follows the guilt of profanation, is treated of in the passage immediately succeeding the law to which we have adverted. It is thus written: "Surely your blood of your lives will I require: at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man."* Every one sees that there is considerable obscurity in the literal sense of these passages; nor are critics agreed upon the signification which they ought to bear. It has been supposed that the first sentence "surely your blood of your lives will I require," was intended as a law against suicide; but, for that purpose, it must be construed as saying, surely the violence which you offer to your life, I will punish. There can be no doubt that suicide, unconnected with insanity, is a great crime; it implies a denial of God, of immortality, and another life, and thus it involves a separation from God with its consequent disasters; but it is very questionable whether this subject is really included in the language before us. If such had been its meaning it is reasonable to suppose that so grave a fact would have been more clearly expressed. We shall, however, presently see that it has another meaning. It is likewise said, that "at the hand of every beast will I require it," *i.e.*, the blood; which is thought to mean that every beast which kills a human being shall be put to death: although it may seem proper that an animal which has proved dangerous to human life, should be so despatched, yet this is not declared; and as laws upon both these points are much more plainly expressed in other places,† it is to be fairly presumed that something else is meant by the passages before us. And although the following sentences, "At the hand of man, at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man," are commonly construed into a law demanding the punishment of a murderer; yet there is an ambiguity about the structure of the language, which, we think, would have been avoided if that had been the direct purpose of it; such a law is taught much more clearly in a subsequent portion of the Word.‡ Moreover, the idea of such punishment being inflicted *only* upon the guilty, does not appear in the declaration "at the hand of every

* Genesis ix. 5. † See Exodus xx. 13; xxi. 28; Lev. xxiv. 21.
‡ Numbers xxxv. 30, 31.

man's brother will I require the life of man;" the fraternity of the criminal, irrespective of his guilt, seems to be included; which, however, it is plain, cannot be its meaning. It never could have been intended that the innocent should incur the penalty, and suffer the punishment due to his guilty brother. According to others, this passage teaches the *lex talionis*,—the law of retaliation. "But this view of the text is too restricted," even in the opinion of several authorities.*

While, then, the literal sense of those passages is exceedingly doubtful, and much forced construction is required to make them bear the judicial meaning to which they are commonly applied; let us see whether they will not be more plain and satisfactory when they are viewed as laws declaring the spiritual consequences of profanation among the members of the church.

The *lives* which are treated of, are those which belong to the religion of the man of the church; they are a plurality, and consist of charity and faith; and all violence, *i. e.*, blood, offered to those sacred things, is to be followed by disaster and punishment. As blood, in the preceding verse, denotes spiritual life and charity, so here it signifies spiritual death or enmity; because the subject treated of is concerning the chastisement of transgressors. That the Scriptures employ the term blood in this sense, in a great number of instances, is well known. Hence the declaration, "Surely your blood of your lives will I require," denotes that all the violence offered by men to the religious principles which they have embraced, will certainly be followed by punishment. Those who at any time have possessed the lives of charity and faith, and afterwards have fallen into acts of wickedness, must thereby have done them violence: such atrocity effects their death; in which case it is plain that spiritual punishment must follow. This, also, is said to be required "at the hand of every beast, at the hand of man, and at the hand of every man's brother." The hand is mentioned as the symbol of power; and, in the case before us, it plainly denotes the power of guilt to punish. To require blood "at the hand of every beast," denotes to require punishment from the power of every brutal appetite belonging to the external man. To

* See Dr. Raphall's critical notes to his translation of Genesis.

require it "at the hand of man," denotes to require condemnation from the power of profane loves in the internal man; and to require it "at the hand of every man's brother," denotes to require a similar result from the power of the understandings of both the internal and the external man, when these have consented to such enormities. We cannot stop to show that there is an internal and an external man; that each has its own peculiar will and understanding; and that the latter is represented as the brother of the former; all of which, however, could be abundantly proved: but, from the above exposition, we learn that, no matter from what source a man's transgressions against the lives of charity and faith arise, they will all be surely followed by unhappy consequences. These are the primary significations of those remarkable statements; and they not only remove the obscurities of the letter, but they also illuminate it with a comprehensive idea. They teach men the certainty and justice which attend the internal sense of God's enactments, which are not always the case with their literal sense, when administered by the hands of men.

But, although God has told us that He will surely require the spiritual punishment of those who extinguish the life of religion once kindled in the soul—require it, not as a matter of vengeance—but as the necessary result of a law by which effects follow causes; and, although we regard this as the primary sense of those laws under consideration; yet it is not improbable that they may have some general reference to the subject of violence offered to the bodies of men in the world, because all such violence is contrary to religion and charity. Whosoever injures another in his reputation, his property, or his life, must, in so doing, be influenced by some wicked principle; and this is sure to be followed by some evil consequences. Howsoever such a one may elude the detection of the world's police, and escape from the hands of human justice, he cannot evade the denouncements of the Divine law: these are irrevocable and certain. Not that God is to be regarded as the inflictor of the punishment: He is only the enactor of the law by which it is incurred: man, by his transgressions of this law, brings the consequence upon himself. It is a law that fire burns; if a man thrust his hand into it he is sure to suffer, because a law

has been transgressed; it is his own guilt, and the punishment is inflicted by himself, and not by another. A knowledge of the law must be taken as the instruction and the warning. Retribution is sure to follow the violation of the divine laws: it may be delayed, and it may not always be inflicted by the hands of men; but come it will. God is wise, and His laws are justice. No matter in what particular they are transgressed, the act is sure to be followed, sooner or later, by its just deserts. This is true not only of his physical laws, but, also, of those which are moral and spiritual. The laws of health are good air, wholesome food, necessary clothing, becoming cleanliness, and proper shelter; if these are violated, disease comes on, and death may follow. He who swallows poison dies; because he, thereby, violates the physical laws of life which God has enacted. The consequences are the same, whether these things are done from ignorance or from wilfulness. God does not miraculously interpose to teach the understandings of men, or to turn aside the purposes of their wills. So, the general laws of religion are love to God and charity to man; whosoever lives contrary to these will be sure to bring disaster upon his spiritual state. Here, however, the disaster will be regulated by the degree of wilfulness or ignorance from which the transgression springs. The law upon these points is thus expressed: "That servant which kept not his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to His will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes." * The principle involved in the retributive law which we have been considering, is, the certainty of the spiritual condemnation of the wicked. All the overt acts of wickedness experienced by society, arise out of the perpetrators having first destroyed in themselves the lives of charity and faith. No man can do an injury to another until he has first injured himself in a proportionate degree. He must will and intend the evil before he does it; and thus he is the spiritual subject of it before its natural perpetration is felt by others. It is for this that God has said that he would require a retribution; and this is altogether apart from that which the

* Luke xii. 47, 48.

laws of society may inflict upon those whom it detects in open crime. The latter is no substitute for the former: they are two distinct things. The laws of society require for offences against it the natural punishment of the body: the laws of God require for offences against them the spiritual punishment of the soul. And although the laws of society, in reference to great crimes, may be founded upon the revealed laws of God, yet society takes them in the letter for the body, in this life; God regards them in the spirit, for the soul in the life to come: hence, the Lord has said, "They that have done good shall come forth unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation."*

But although there is a certainty of retribution in the other life, society is not prevented by this circumstance from the punishment of criminals in this. Nations must have laws against guilt; and the wicked must be awed by the certainty of their execution, or society would possess no safety. This fact is agreed to upon all hands. It is, also, generally acknowledged that the Scriptural laws, in reference to the punishment of crime, might, so far as it is practicable upon the new condition which Christianity has introduced into the world, be safely taken as the basis of all criminal jurisprudence. But it is important that, in forming enactments upon this principle, the Scriptural laws should be clearly understood. The point to be aimed at in all human legislation is justice. Society must be protected with justice; the criminal must be punished justly. Justice is equally dignified, whether she condemns the guilty or protects the innocent. Nor can she stay her hand from carrying out the purposes of her perfect law: mercy sanctions what she requires. Such is the principle with which God deals with His people, and by which society should be influenced in their dealings with each other, so far as they comprehend it.

And this prepares us for considering the law, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God made he man." This is commonly understood as a law by which society is divinely authorized to put a murderer to judicial death. Upon this point, however, the

* John v. 29.

original is obscure: it may be rendered, "Whoso sheddeth the blood of man in man, his blood shall be shed." Here, although it is declared that the blood of the guilty shall be shed, it is not clearly said by whom it should be done. Moreover, "to shed the blood of man in man," is a mode of expression adopted to convey some other idea than that of physical murder; so that, under this view, the passage is by no means so clear as some have thought, upon the subject of capital punishment for this highest crime. The interpretation of the passage may, therefore, be contemplated apart from the idea of such a punishment.* We, however, will notice both views of the case.

The laws which God has put forth in His revelation, are for man in his religious character as an immortal being; and they reach him in his social condition as a mortal creature, so far as he first obeys or disobeys them, in his spiritual life. Thus the man whom society condemns, in conformity with the letter of the Divine law, for the transgressions of his hand, has been previously condemned by the spirit of the same law for the iniquity of his heart. A remembrance of this principle will assist in the better understanding of the two questions now before us.

To shed the blood of man in man, denotes to extinguish the charity of the internal man. By blood is signified charity; to shed this blood is to destroy it; and the internal man is the *man* in man. This guilt is inflicted upon ourselves by the love and life of evil; and it is perpetrated upon others in various ways; as for example, by insinuating doubts about the truth of religion; suggesting scandalous objections against it to beget aversion, and so to induce the hearer to turn away from God,

* Arnheim, who with others admits the existence of some obscurity in the passages, contends that the words איש אחיו must be rendered, his kinsmen, or near relative, and thus explains the precept: if האדם, *one stranger* slay another, the kinsmen of the murdered man are the avengers of blood; but if he be slain by איש אחיו, *one of his own kindred*, the other kinsmen must not spare the murderer; for if they do, then Divine Providence will require the blood—that is, avenge it.—*Kitto's Bib. Enc.*, Art. *Punishments.* We mention this simply as an evidence of the straits into which interpreters are driven in their search after a literal sense; and, thereupon, to ask, if the Supreme Being designed to tell us this, whether he would not have done so in plain terms,—terms that would not have been so difficult to comprehend?

and care nothing for His laws. Those who are successful in such diabolical acts shed the spiritual blood of men,—they extinguish their charity and faith, and so murder the Divine image in the human soul. And is it not evident that the perpetrators of such guilt will also have their own charity destroyed? This, their spiritual blood, will be shed, because they have cultivated and cherished hatred against divine and holy things. They fall under the condemnation which such wickedness entails. This is the reasonable and obvious effect of such a cause. Hence we learn, that the passage refers to the inherent vileness and reprobation of those who destroy charity in the internal man. It is said, in the *internal man*, because it is there where true charity resides: and it is only those who are more or less principled in the above detestable evils, who perpetrate physical murder with *malice prepense.* That such persons are thereby cut off from heaven, there can be no doubt. They are every way opposed both to its principles and purposes, and could not live there though they were admitted. "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness"? *

This being the case, we at once come to the questions, What punishment do the Scriptures pronounce for him who, with deliberate intention and private malice, kills one of his fellow-creatures? Is the structure of the passage before us sufficiently plain, decidedly to warrant society in putting him judicially to death? It has been so believed and acted on. And in certain states of society this faith and conduct may have been useful. But taking this view of the case, other questions arise, namely, whether the Scriptural laws upon this matter were intended to be perpetual? and whether society, in some more advanced condition of civilization, will be at liberty to dispense with so terrible a punishment? If we believe that the law before us absolutely declared such a course, and that God really intended it as a point upon which the Noachic society should act, then, we think, we should be compelled to admit that it was an irrevocable decree; because in that case it was delivered for the observance of men who constituted the spiritual church, and

* 2 Cor. vi. 14.

thus of society in a high condition of intellectual information respecting the requirements of truth and justice. But, because we do not consider such a meaning of the law to have been the *primary* object for which it was written, we cannot regard it as a perpetual ordinance; on the contrary, we believe that discoveries will be made as religion progresses into a brighter light, by which society will be enabled safely to dispense with such a view of it.* The letter may be interpreted as a permissive law, and also as a prediction of what *would* be the punishment of such criminals during the prevalence of certain conditions of society; and as such it has been realized—realized in those times when the states of the church have been low and defective among the nations. But this is no proof that it was designed to be a perpetual ordinance, and to be adopted into the criminal code of those nations among whom the best condition of the Lord's church should be developed. Such a law did not exist from the beginning; nor does it appear to have been among those by which God exercised his government in primeval society. Cain, who is commonly regarded to have been the first murderer, though strongly denounced, was not punished with death. On the contrary, it is said that "whosoever slayeth him, vengeance should be taken on him sevenfold."† And, whatever else this sevenfold vengeance might signify, it is plain that it did not mean the putting of such slayer to death. So also Lamech said, "I have killed a man"; ‡ this he declares to have been to his wounding and his hurt; still there is no evidence to show that his punishment consisted in society's depriving him of life. On the contrary, he contemplated protection; and, referring to the case of Cain, he said, "If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold." § Here, then, we have examples furnished by the literal sense of Divine history, treating of the antediluvian churches, in which murder appears to have been committed, and yet the criminals, though

* "If any legislator can devise such modes of punishment and restraint, as shall be equally effectual for the prevention of the horrid crime of murder as the punishment of death, I would by no means affirm that there is any Divine law which compels them to retain the latter."—*Rev. S. Noble on the Divine Law*, p. 170.

† Gen. iv. 15. ‡ Gen. iv. 23. § Gen. iv. 24.

punished, had their lives protected by a law. The reason of this, doubtless was, the superior perception which then existed in society respecting the origin, nature, and sacredness of human life; and the consequent ability which they would thereby possess for devising a less sanguinary and equally efficient punishment for so base a crime.

And although a law granting the permission of such a punishment may have been delivered in the Noachic church, yet there is no evidence that it was ever carried into execution during the enlightened periods of that dispensation; and, therefore, it is more reasonable to regard it as a permissive law, and a *prediction* of what would take place in less gifted times, than as a *command* which should be persevered in after the church has regained that knowledge and those virtues which are proper to its intelligent existence.

True civilization, which is effected by the influence of a genuine church among mankind, will not allow the punishment of crime to be less certain by not permitting ferocity to enter into its laws. The most elevated condition of society will always make provision for the punishment of him who sheds the blood of another. The safety of society requires that such a one should be prevented from repeating his terrible offence. But from this it does not necessarily follow that he should be put to death. The excitement of retaliation may demand it; revenge may insist upon it; but the true church of God knows nothing of those principles. Sanguinary punishments for crime, and great ignorance respecting spiritual duties, have always run parallel to each other. All savageness in a criminal code arises out of a low state of religion. The farther its influences have been removed from men, the less scrupulous have they been about the lives of criminals. Hence the great severity of the laws enacted among the Jewish people. Notwithstanding the great privileges which were placed within their reach, they were an idolatrous race, a stiff-necked and rebellious generation; sons in whom there was no faithfulness. The hardness of their heart was the real cause of the severity of the laws which prevailed among them.* By their laws it was not only the

*** Exodus xxxii. 9. Deut. xxxi. 27. Matt. xix. 8. Hume, very justly remarks, that "the manners and dispositions of a people may be safely in-**

manslayer who was to be put to death ;* the same punishment was extended to man-stealing; to smiting of parents; † to idolatry; ‡ to adultery; § to sons accused of disobedience by their parents; || and to sabbath breaking.¶ But it may be evident that these laws were not intended for the permanent retention of all nations, because the dispensation to which they particularly belonged, was finally abolished; and, also, because all those statutes were chiefly enacted for their representative nature; and, therefore, Christians are no more bound to retain any of the laws which belonged merely to the civil code of the Jews, than they are to keep up the ecclesiastical polity of that people; unless it can be shown that, in effecting the repeal of this dispensation, exemptions were made in favor of some particular enactments. As there does not appear to be any direct evidence in the New Testament, that the manslayer was to be peremptorily put to death, it cannot be argued from statutes which were peculiarly for the Jews, that the infliction of that penalty for such a crime, horrible as it is, should be imperatively enforced : if so, consistency would demand its execution for all the other crimes to which it was attached in the Mosaic law. But for this, we presume, no one will now contend,—not even the Jew himself.

Retaliation,—punishment in kind,—was demanded by the Jewish law. Moses wrote, "If a man cause a blemish to his

ferred from the laws which are prevalent among them." Hence, sanguinary laws are evidence of the barbarity of the people among whom they exist.

* Lev. xxiv. 21. † Exod. xxi. 16, 17. ‡ Deut. xvii. 2, 5.

§ Lev. xx. 10. || Deut. xxi. 18, 21.

¶ Numb. xv. 33, 35; Exodus xxxi. 15. The reason why death is affixed as the penalty to those crimes, is because when the soul is guilty from the love of them, it is thereby plunged into spiritual death. Thus "he that killeth a man," denotes he that destroys in himself the principles which constitute a man : the guilt of "idolatry," represents the rejection of "the true God and eternal life" : the wickedness of adultery, signifies a corruption of the holy things which "God has joined together" : the crime of disobedience to parents, denotes rebellion against the laws vouchsafed by our heavenly Father, and a rejection of the church which he has planted: and the "breaking the sabbath," denoted the profanation of spiritual peace : all of which cases, it is plain, separate the transgressors from heaven, and procure their condemnation.

neighbor, as he hath done, so shall it be done to him; breach for breach" : "life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe."* This has been thought by many as the most natural of all kinds of punishment, and to be the most just of all, if it could be instantaneously and universally inflicted. But this would not be practicable; † and, even if it were, the punishment of criminals could not be safely entrusted to the administration of private hands. Justice is safe only when regulated by a public law, and administered by a public tribunal. All the civil and forensic laws recorded in the Scriptures have a correspondence with the action of spiritual laws upon the minds of men. The reason why those retaliating laws were delivered, is, because they describe what must be, and what ever will be, the spiritual consequences of transgression. They teach us that those who do injury to another, do at the same time thereby bring a corresponding injury upon themselves. It is impossible that any one can perpetrate external mischief upon his neighbor, and at the same time escape from the infliction of a similar internal injury upon himself. Those who destroy the natural lives of others in the way of deliberate murder, will necessarily bring destruction upon the spiritual life of themselves: and something similar must occur in all other cases of minor crime. This is an invariable law; nor does reason see how it could possibly be otherwise. And although the Jews understood those statutes only in a natural sense,

* See Levit. xxiv. 19; Exodus xxi. 23, 25, &c.

† This was proved by the Greeks and Romans, who for a time conducted their criminal punishments by a similar law. Among the former it was called ἀντιπεπονθος, *antipeponthos*, and among the latter, *lex talionis;* it also constituted a part of the twelve tables, so famous in antiquity; those laws, however, did not long continue: and after they were abandoned, pecuniary fines were instituted for physical punishment. *Diodorus Siculus* (xii.) mentions a one-eyed man who complained that if he lost his remaining eye he would then suffer more than his victim, who would still have one eye left. And Phavorinus argues against the law of like for like, on the ground that the same member was more valuable to one man than to another; thus that the right hand of a scribe or a painter could not be so well spared as that of a singer! &c. &c.

it does not follow that Christians are bound to act upon the same views of them.

Jesus Christ, in his sermon upon the mount, referred to some of those laws, and not only condemned the retaliatory spirit with which the whole of them had been administered under the Jewish polity,* but most certainly repealed the literal observance of that which had demanded "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." And it can hardly be supposed that the abolition of this was not intended to weaken the obligation for observing all the rest which involved the same principle. That which demanded "life for life" was not expressly repealed, because the Lord foresaw that, in the dispensation which he was then engaged in planting, mankind would not appreciate the purpose of a less sanguinary punishment for so great a crime; but, still, in repealing the retaliatory principle he weakened the obligation, and left it open to the Christian legislature of a future age, when a higher development of the Christian church should be effected, to devise some other penalty than death. This view, with us, does not arise so much out of our concern for the state of the criminal, as from our high hopes respecting the discoveries which will accompany the progress of true Christianity. We believe that when such Christianity is established, men will see that there is nothing in the Scriptures compelling the legislature to retain a punishment, which has appeared right and just to an inferior condition of society. Not that this superior development of religion, will ever permit its tenderness for the criminal to overlook the demands of useful punishment, or to disregard the safety of society. Justice will take care that he shall be well secured although he may not be capitally punished. Nor will this custody be connected with the most distant hope of restoration to society. No visible penitence, no contrition, however apparent, will ever be regarded as reasons for slackening the bonds into which the murderer's enormity may have led him. True sorrow and repentance are spiritual affections, concerning the genuineness of which no man can judge; and, therefore, they can never form any grounds for legislative action: nevertheless, the life being spared, the opportunity is afforded for

* Matt. v. 21 to end.

penitence and alteration of character, so far as these can be effected in surveillance, and bonds. We do not think that much improvement can take place under such circumstances. It may be reasonably doubted whether any permanent change for the better can be effected in a state of restraint; we feel certain that it is not favorable to such a result: still if it is at all possible, the wisest legislature will not take away the opportunity by cutting off the life.

It has been objected to capital punishment, that it "kills the criminal's possible return to virtue—kills expiation—kills repentance itself."* This seems a showy argument; but its whole weight rests upon doubtful premises, namely, that expiation and repentance can take place in bonds. Now, we hold, that freedom is necessary for this purpose; that the Christian character, and the life which prepares for heaven, must be formed in liberty; and, also, that the penitence of criminals, when experiencing some of the consequences of their crimes, arises more from a sense of suffering than from a hatred of the sins which they have perpetrated.† Hence our objections to the penalty of death for murder, do not arise so much from the expectation of any spiritual good that would accrue to such criminals, by the sparing of their lives; as from the conviction that a punishment equally effective for all its purposes may be devised, and because a high condition of intelligent Christianity cannot but feel that the terrible exhibition of public executions, is incon-

*Speech of Robespierre, on the abolition of the punishment of death, given in *Louis Blanc's History of the French Revolution.*

† Dr. Paley observes, "If there be anything that shakes the soul of a confirmed villain, it is the expectation of approaching death. The horrors of this situation may cause such a wrench in the mental organs, as to give them a holding turn; and, I think it possible, that many of them who are executed, would, if they were delivered at the point of death, retain such a remembrance of their sensations, as might preserve them, unless urged by extreme want, from relapsing into their former crimes. But this is an experiment, that, from its nature, cannot be repeated often."—*Moral and Political Philosophy*, book vi. chap. 9. Here the possible amendment contemplated, from an experiment that would lose its effects after two or three examples, from being associated with some hope of pardon, is only that which would spring from the fear of punishment, and not from the hatred of sin and the love of good, without which no actual amendment of the internal character can be accomplished.

sistent with its superior knowledge and injurious to its rational sensibilities.

Here it may be asked, whether the doctrine for sparing the lives of great criminals does not imply, that he who commits a murder, acquires thereby a title to support at the public expense during the remainder of his life? This, certainly, would be the case; but what of that? it can hardly be pretended that such a circumstance would supply a motive for the perpetration of so base a crime. The question, however, is to be received as one of principle; and, if that is right, no consideration of expense ought to stand in the way of its adoption. If society are convinced that the life of such a criminal may be spared, consistently with the demands of revelation and the safety of the community, why should it not be spared? To do otherwise after this conviction, or to permit any question of expense to have a contrary influence, would be to put a price upon life, and this would be shocking and detestable. Besides, it does not follow that the whole weight of such criminals' subsistence should fall upon society: for it is not to be supposed that they are to be permitted to live in utter idleness and unproductiveness; though to do so would, in all probability, add to the pain and burden of their existence.

Without dwelling longer upon this incidental discussion, we think, from what has been said, it may be fairly concluded, that the apparent literal sense of the Noachic law, by which it was suggested, was not intended to be an irrevocable decree. The letter may be regarded as intimating a permission, and declaring what would take place in the event of such criminalty, when the state of spiritual religion was low, rather than as a statute commanding what should be done in such cases, when the condition of that religion has reached a superior eminence. It has been seen that the literal sense of this law is exceedingly peculiar, and by no means so clear and imperative in its structure as it would have been if it had been intended for judicial action at all times. It was so constructed, because it was the best adapted for expressing its chief purpose, which was to inform the postdiluvian churches, that if they destroyed the principles of charity in themselves or in others, they would thereby be necessarily brought into a state of spiritual con-

demnation. Charity, as it has been observed, is the blood of man in man, that is the spiritual life of religion in the soul: to shed this blood is to destroy this charity, and thus to extinguish the Divine image which regeneration may have produced. The judgment and condemnation of such persons is signified by their blood being shed; and this is effected by the Divine truth itself; and hence it is written, "The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." *

* John xii. 48.

CHAPTER VII.

THE COVENANT ESTABLISHED WITH NOAH, WITH HIS SEED AFTER HIM, AND WITH THE FOWL, THE CATTLE, AND THE BEASTS OF THE EARTH.

"He is the devout man, who lives no longer to his own will, or to the way and spirit of the world, but to the sole will of God; who considers God in every thing, who serves God in every thing, who makes all the parts of his common life parts of piety, by doing every thing in the name of God, and under such rules as are conformable to his glory."—*Rev. W. Law, A.M. Serious Call, &c.*, p. 1.

We now enter upon a consideration of that point in the post-diluvian history, by which Moses has representatively described the best condition of the Noachic people. They had, by overcoming temptations, cultivating the sentiments of charity and faith, and otherwise obeying the Divine instructions, come into the possession of new principles of spiritual love, thought, and action. Hereby they had become a regenerate race. This is the fact intended to be taught by the covenant which God is said to have established with them. It is thus related: "God spake unto Noah and to his sons with him, saying, And I, behold I, establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you; and with every living creature that is with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast with you; from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth. And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth." * The covenant thus recorded is a realization of the promise made to Noah, and related at the 18th verse of the 6th chapter. † This term *covenant* frequently occurs in the Scriptures: it is very commonly employed in theological discourses; and it is of importance that we should rightly understand its meaning. The literal sense of the word is, a coming together; a meeting or agreement of minds; and, practically, it denotes the *mutual consent* of two or

* Gen. ix. 9 to 11. † "With thee will I establish my covenant."

more persons respecting certain things. This consent, in the case of important objects, is commonly reduced to writing; and the *documents so written* are frequently denominated *covenants.* Now in considering God's covenants with men, it is requisite to distinguish between these two senses of the term. We must not confound the mutual consent with the written form of it. The *Word* of God is His covenant in the documentary sense; but *that* is only an essential covenant with men, so far as they agree to its conditions and demands: it cannot be a covenant with those by whom its requirements are rejected. To such it is offered as the medium of an essential covenant; but they must accept the conditions before it can become so. And this acceptance means, not only that men should intelligently assent to the truth and justice of the laws which God proposes in His Word; but, also, that they should obey, from spiritual love, the stipulations which they contain. When men do these things, they agree with the Divine requirements: and thus it is that God establishes His covenant with any of the human race.

Now as this covenant so plainly depends upon man's knowing, loving, obeying, and so assenting to the Divine proposals for his welfare; it follows that those proposals must be presented to him before they can be accepted; and, consequently, that all those with whom a covenant has, at any time, essentially existed, must have been previously put into possession of its legal form: in other words, God must have given them a revelation. When, then, it is said that God established his covenant with Noah and those who were with him; two things are evident; *first*, that God had been pleased to communicate unto them a revelation for their instruction and encouragement; and, *second*, that by the adoption of such revelation they became a spiritually-minded people. And this opens up to us the true idea of God's covenant with men: we see that it properly denotes the existence of a state of mutual love between them. It is not simply a promise on God's part that He will do so and so; but it also implies a duty to be observed on man's part, as the medium for its accomplishment.

Expositors say, that the covenants spoken of in the Scriptures, being only anthropomorphic forms of speech, ought not to be understood in the proper sense which the expression conveys.

The reason assigned for this opinion is, that all the benefits to be conferred must be from God, and all the obligations on the part of man.* The truth of this reason is evident; but it does not follow that the proper idea of a covenant is therefore set aside. If A give B the produce of an estate, on the condition that B keep the land in good cultivation, and that condition be accepted, it is plain that all the favor is from A, and all the obligation on the part of B; but, surely, it cannot be argued from this, that the proper idea of a covenant does not exist between them. Is not the contrary evident? Man must render obedience to God in order to become a recipient of the blessings which He bestows. We must return to Him, in order that we may become sensible of His return to us.† A man must possess or do something as a man, in order that God may communicate and do something as God. God, by His promises, binds Himself to perform them; but as they are all made upon conditions, expressed or understood, men, to partake of those promises, must faithfully obey the conditions. Such covenants, therefore, plainly imply that there must be a mutual purpose and consent between God and man to bring about any results which are proposed.

God cannot agree with, or consent to, any thing in man but that which is in conformity with His own purity and holiness. It is indeed a great fact that God loves man; but not *that* in man which is in opposition to Himself. He cannot love the fallen inheritance of our nature; and therefore, he is in the constant effort to remove it. When, then, it is said that God loves man, it is to be understood in a general sense; and specifically as applying to those two peculiarly human faculties of our nature, which have been created and preserved for the reception of the Divine love and wisdom. God loves man on account of his capacities to become wise and good; and when man employs them for those purposes a conjunction of love takes place between them; and then it is that an agreement or covenant is

* Rev. W. L. Alexander, M.A. Art. *Covenant, Kitto's Bib. Cyclopædia.*

† "Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of Hosts" (Mal. iii. 7). The Lord is said to return, not to intimate that He has been *really* absent, but to express the appearance of His return, to those who return to Him. The Lord is always omnipresent.

established. Hence it is evident that the essential thing in all the Divine covenants with men, is the reciprocation of love. If love ceases, the vitality of the covenant must be dissolved. Where there is mutual love, there will be a mutual consent to the conditions and stipulations by which it is to be maintained. Hence the Lord represents his connection with the church by the marriage covenant*; He also says, "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what you will, and it shall be given unto you." † Those who abide in the Lord, love Him; they are thus in the essentials of the covenant; and when His words abide in men, they also possess the conditions of the covenant. Such will ask for nothing but what is in conformity with that love and those conditions; and when they ask it will be with an endeavor to obtain; in which case who can doubt the realization of the promise? Hence it appears, that God's covenants with men properly denote the conjunction which is effected between them by mutual love; and that the conditions of those covenants are contained in the revelations which God has been pleased, at various times and in divers manners, to make known unto the world. From these considerations we learn that the *essentials* of a Divine covenant can only exist with the *regenerate;* and it was because this state was now entered upon by the Noachic people, that the Lord is said to have established a covenant with them. They loved the Lord, and the Lord vouchsafed unto them revelations of His will. The former was the essential, and the latter were the documents of the covenant.

Covenants are said to have been established between God and Abram, Isaac, and the Israelites.‡ These, it is commonly supposed, had respect to them as particular individuals and a chosen nation. God, however, is no respecter of persons:§ it is the principles of truth and goodness, by which men may be distinguished, which he regards. So far as any of the above named parties were imbued with those spiritual graces, so far they must have personally or nationally enjoyed the covenants said to have been entered into with them. But those covenants

* Jer. iii. 14.

† John xv. 7.

‡ Gen. xvii. 7, 10; Exod. vi. 4.

§ Acts x. 34.

are chiefly spoken of to the intent that they might, under the representative economy with which those persons and that nation were connected, be significant of regeneration and whatsoever relates thereto. This is evident from the circumstance of those covenants being described as *everlasting;* for this they were not in any historical sense of their conditions; nevertheless they are everlasting with the regenerated, because they live and believe and never die. Abram, Isaac, and the Israelites, were the representatives of such; and therefore it is that God is said to have established His everlasting covenant with them. In all regeneration there is something true and good; and these it is to which the Lord conjoins Himself because they are His own.

It is of importance to observe that every Divine covenant is for the sake of spiritual conjunction, that the parties concerned may thereby live in mutual-love and friendship. The conjunction of the Lord with man can be effected only so far as man becomes the recipient of His truth and love. The possession of these is among the first principles of its existence; and wheresoever they are, there the Divine presence is. The Lord, indeed, is present with every one; but in one way with the good, and in another way with the evil. The former perceive Him in the intelligence and satisfactions which they enjoy; the latter do not perceive Him, because they cherish affections which are contrary to His love. He is recognized to be nearer or more remote according to the degree of goodness which constitutes the essence of regenerate life. Thus the Lord's conjunction, and his consequent covenant with man, is effected by means of the internal things of love and faith, prompting and directing the external duties of charity and use. Of such it is written, "My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord"; * for peace is internal tranquillity and joy, arising from the mutual activity of orderly knowledge and affections. These dispose the mind to the reception of heavenly things, and preserve it in a state of spiritual communion with the Lord. The means of this communion are, now, the *Holy Word;* hence those portions of it which were given before the Lord's advent, are called the *old* covenant; and those

* Isaiah liv. 10.

which were provided after His coming are called the *new* covenant: the Ten Commandments, because they are an epitome of the living things of both are also declared to be a covenant.* The same designation is applied to the institutions of the priesthood and the sabbath; also to the day and to the night.† The reason why those things are so called is, not only because they refer to certain conditions which men are required to accept and to obey, in order that they may participate in the advantages proposed, but also because the structure of the documents, in which they are related, is such as to afford the mediums through which the Lord can best promote the interests of his people. To break the covenants, is not merely to transgress the laws which they include, but also to become, thereby, separated from the Lord who gave them. And so, to keep the covenants, is not simply to comply with the requirements of the law, but also from a love of it, to enter into a spiritual association with its Divine propounder. Hence He said, when speaking of the triumphs of the Gospel, "This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be My people." ‡ The "house of Israel," represents those of the church who are in the good of life. The promise had no realization in the "house of Israel" after the flood. "They are not Israel which are of Israel; neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all the children of God." § Thus the covenant which the Lord effects between himself and people, is not to be understood simply of the "Book of the covenant," with its written conditions and promises: it also denotes that actual consociation with Him, into which men enter by their reception of that book with its conditions and promises. It is promoted by the internal principles of religion in the soul, and not by any external acts without them. The external things of religion, such as rites, ceremonies, church-going, pious conversations, reading the Scriptures, oral prayers, and so forth; are only the *tokens* of a

* Exod. xxxiv. 28.

† Numbers xxv. 12; Exod. xxxi. 16; Jer. xxxiii. 20.

‡ Jer. xxxi. 33.

§ Rom. ix. 6, 8.

covenant; and they may be attended to, without the existence of the essential things in those who do so. The hypocrites of old made long prayers, gave alms, and paid tithes, but omitted the weightier matters of the law,—judgment, mercy, and faith.* Nevertheless, those tokens are useful, and they ought to be attended to, because by them, as by representative types, the Lord and the spiritual duties which he has commanded, can be kept in remembrance. Moreover external observances excite internal things, and they may be a means of internal things coming into permanent activity. The sabbath is declared to be a perpetual covenant, because it signifies a state of uninterrupted sanctity and rest. The perpetuity which is spoken of it could not mean that it was a day never to be changed; because it has been changed: Christianity has substituted another; but it is so described for the purpose adverted to; and, therefore, it is expressly said to be a *sign.*† There are other things which are called covenants, such as the blood of the peace-offerings and sacrifices;‡ and circumcision:§ these, also, were signs of the covenants, because they were the representatives of internal things. Thus the *blood* of the sacrifices denoted the *living* principles of spiritual worship; and this is called a covenant, because by such worship man is conjoined to the Lord. Circumcision was a type of separation from spiritual defilements; and because the purification which thence results, effects conjunction with the Lord, it is called a covenant.

We sometimes hear of the covenant of works and the covenant of grace. These, however, are rather theological than Scriptural phrases. By the former is commonly meant the works by which man was to be *saved before he fell:* and by the latter is as generally understood the favor by which he is to be saved, without works, since that catastrophe; and thus the two covenants are placed in contrast. We, however, have no sympathy with these views. Laws were prescribed for man's observance after the fall, as well as before; and, therefore, that calamity could not have set aside the necessity for his obedience. The Scriptures distinctly inform him that he must still *do* if he would

* Matt. xxiii. 23.

† Exodus xxxi. 12; Ezekiel xx. 12, 20.

‡ Exodus xxiv. 5 to 9.

§ Genesis xvii. 10.

live.* Nor was the grace of God less needed by Adam, during the period of his integrity, than it has been by his degenerate descendants in all subsequent ages. Good works are the results of His grace; hence by the covenant of *works* may be understood that consociation with the Lord on man's part, which arises from his love of what is good; and by the covenant of *grace*, we mean that consociation with man on the Lord's part, which is a consequence of His love of goodness. They do not imply opposite things; but they signify co-operative principles, by which are brought about God's great purpose of man's salvation.

Theologians also speak of the covenant of redemption; which they explain to be an "engagement entered into between God the Father and God the Son from all eternity, whereby the former secured to the latter a certain number of ransomed sinners, as His church or elect body, and the latter engaged to become their surety and substitute." † But all Christians do not take this view of the subject; many think that it is a mistaken opinion concerning God and His dealings with mankind. It is certain that the Scriptures do not expressly declare such a doctrine; nor can any just reasoning be disposed to favor it. Besides it does not consort with any clear idea of one God. His unity is regarded as a triumvirate, and each person is considered to possess some different attribute or action in the work of redemption; and, therefore, it is destitute of the first principle required to commend itself to our acceptance. Moreover, it stands in connection with other doctrines, such as election, predestination, and what is called the special love of God, which are not to be reconciled with just views of the Divine character. Redemption is not so represented in the Scriptures. It is therein described as the merciful work of Jehovah alone: ‡ He, by the assumption of human nature, which is called the Son of God,§ fought against man's spiritual enemies,|| and by conquests over them, He put away their preponderating influence; by this means mankind were restored to the capacity of working

* Luke x. 28; Matt. xix. 17, &c., &c.

† *Kitto's Bib. Cyc.*, Art. *Covenant.*

‡ Isaiah xlvii. 4. § Luke i. 35. || John iii. 8.

out their salvation with fear and trembling.* It was the exclusive work of the one personal God: He trod the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with him.† It was by this work that Christianity was introduced to the world; that the invisible God became visible,‡ and opened out a new and living way of salvation to His creatures.§ By becoming manifest in the flesh,|| God took to Himself His great power,¶ and became a Saviour to the uttermost.** Redemption, then, properly consisted in the liberation of men from spiritual bondage, and their restoration to a state which could appreciate the truth which was to make them free.†† By the same acts, through which He delivered men from the hands of their enemies,‡‡ He also glorified His humanity, and provided against the possibility of their spiritual liberty being again endangered; for He came not only that they should have life, but that they should have it more abundantly.§§ Redemption, then, viewed in this light, may be regarded as a covenant, because by its means a closer connection has been established between God and the lower nature of man, than that which had previously existed; still it is not the covenant which saves; it is simply a new power which has placed at our disposal those means by which we may obtain that end.

What else is the covenant implied in the establishment of Christianity? The principles and promises of this dispensation are for the acceptance of man's faith and love: and by that reception the *ultimates* of his nature can become more intimately conjoined to the Lord, than they could have been through any other economy by which it has been preceded; because the regeneration which it is capable of promoting reaches a lower, and so embraces a larger, condition of humanity than had been done by any of its predecessors. Another circumstance to be observed is, that every one has his own particular identity, by which he is internally distinguished from every other. Hence the regeneration of every one will be somewhat different; and,

* Phil. ii. 12.
† Isaiah lxii. 3.
‡ John xiv. 9.
§ Heb. x. 20.
|| 1 Jer. iii. 16.
¶ Rev. xi. 17.
** Heb. vii. 25.
†† John viii. 32.
‡‡ Luke i. 70.
§§ John x. 10.

consequently, there will be some distinction in the quality of the covenant, and the character of the clauses, into which he enters. The same *Divine Word*, indeed, is the great means for effecting this important change: still every one knows that it does not produce the same results on all. The learned and the unlearned, the humble and the haughty, the industrious and the idle, are sure to be differently affected by its teachings; and some portions of it will be felt to be more precious to one class, and some to another, according to the nature and extent of their respective regeneration. There must, therefore, be different degrees of conjunction.

From these considerations it will follow that the covenant said to have been established with Noah and all that were with him, implies, not only that they were a regenerate people, but, also, that there was something peculiar in the regeneration of which they were the subjects. The means for effecting it were different from those which were offered to the acceptance of their antediluvian predecessors; and, therefore, its quality could not have been the same. Different causes must result in different effects. That which is considered to have been the original integrity of mankind was, indeed, the result of regeneration. But *then* it was regeneration in the sense of the *development* of wisdom and virtue among a people *who had not fallen;* and the characteristics of their minds were such, that their thinking and voluntary principles constituted a united impulse. It was in consequence of these peculiarities of their nature that they were enabled to attain that image and likeness of God which they are said to have possessed. It was for the same reason that, when they fell, the results became so terribly disastrous. But the regeneration of the Noachic people was to be the *redevelopment* of wisdom and virtue among a people *who had fallen;* and the nature of this regeneration was to be such as to prevent the recurrence of a similar calamity: for the promise is, "I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood." Thus the regeneration, and the consequent nature of the conjunction with the Lord, thereby to be provided, were to be such as to prevent the recurrence of a similar catastrophe. This, certainly, is the point intended to be revealed. The statement is not to be re-

garded simply as a promise that a flood should no more destroy the earth; it also includes that idea of the regeneration of man through which that promise was to be realized. This is why it is called a covenant: it would not have been so called, if man had no part in the condition by which it was to be fulfilled.

The flood was the suffocation of man's spiritual life, through false persuasions inundating his mind. This, also, was a cause of natural death to many. This could take place with the latest posterity of the antediluvians, because their will and understanding acted as one principle. Whensoever they loved an evil, they, at the same instant, thought a corresponding falsehood; and this was the source of their destruction. But in the Noachic period these two faculties were divided. By this separation men have been preserved in the capacity of understanding something of truth and goodness, notwithstanding the corruptions and defilements which the fall has induced upon the will. Now the covenant, or conjunction, which had existed between the Lord and man before the time of Noah, arose from the state of regeneration in the will; but the covenant, or conjunction, which was established between the Lord and the Noachic people, arose out of the regeneration of the understanding, which thereby became an intellectual principle. The will had become altogether evil: this is the constant teaching of the Scriptures upon the subject; and it is verified by the common experience of mankind. Every one knows how difficult it is to love good for its own sake. Something selfish in all such attempts is sure to insinuate itself, more or less directly; and it requires the earnest efforts of some spiritual philosophy to arrest its progress. This sufficiently proves the depravity of our nature; and hence the Apostle has said, "I find then a law, that, when I would do good evil is present with me." * It was in consequence of this depraved state of the human will, that the Lord mercifully separated it from the understanding; and into the understanding, by means of instruction, He insinuates a new will, which is called a new heart, and described as a new spirit, which he puts within us.† This manifests itself in the form of conscience. This principle is constituted by the instruc-

* Romans vii. 21. † Ezekiel xxxvi. 26, 27.

tion of religious truth; and it was to Noah and his posterity, what perception had been to the most ancient people. Since the Noachic period, conscience has become the peculiar inheritance of our nature. It not only forms the groundwork by which the Lord can enter into a covenant with man, but it also is the medium through which he will realize His promise, no more to destroy the earth with a flood. The antediluvians so perished because their perception ceased: but it is provided that conscience never shall be destroyed. With individuals its force may be weakened and its light may be feeble, but they can never be extinguished in the race. Though men may do evil, they cannot do it with an approving conscience. They may lay it asleep for awhile, but it will again awake and rebuke the guilty. By this principle, therefore, a perpetual bond is preserved between God and man; and through which, as just remarked, His promise, to preserve the earth from the inundation of a flood, is to be fulfilled. For it is to be observed, that the covenant spoken of was not merely for the benefit and satisfaction of Noah and those who were with him; it also included the instruction and future encouragement of all mankind. It was not a covenant which guaranteed men against the inflowing of false principles into their minds; because, since then, these principles have entered into them; but it was such a covenant as would prevent those principles from reproducing a similar calamity. This, surely, is the universal sense of the narrative. Among the Noachic people, conscience was eminently sensitive to what was true and good; and, therefore, the covenant said to have been established with them, denoted their regeneration. They had become recipients of the Divine teachings, so that the Lord could dwell with them, and they with Him.

The *promise*, that there should no more be a flood to destroy the earth, is to be distinguished from this *covenant*, and to be regarded as a blessing which was to result from its existence. A promise is the act of one, which may be made without the consultation or agreement of a second party; but, as we have seen, a real covenant involves the mutual consent of two or more. Moreover, the promise before us must refer to the hindrance of some spiritual catastrophe, and not to the prohibition of any natural occurrence, because disastrous floods have since occurred,

and hundreds of persons have perished in many of those inundations. It is true that they have not been universal; but it is equally true, and is now admitted by the best scholars, that that could not have been the character of the deluge. Besides it could make but little difference to men whether they were universal or not, if they were sufficiently great to prevent any individuals from escaping. To insist, then, that the promises are the covenant, and that they are to be received in their literal sense, is the same thing as to maintain that at least in some instances, God has not been faithful and true.

But it may be said that the promise relates only to the circumstance that *all flesh* shall no more be cut off by the waters of a flood; and that, as *all men* have not since perished, the promise has been kept. There can be no doubt that the perpetual preservation of some good, and the actual prevention of the recurrence of universal evil, are the emphatic points of the history. Still it must be understood to relate to the safety of man's spiritual state, and not to the protection of his body from drowning; because those who interpret these passages to mean that the earth shall no more be overwhelmed with water, are found to hold that it has to be destroyed by fire! Of what real advantage then is such a communication to the world? Its destruction is still supposed; and, therefore, the promise must be understood only as an intimation of a change in the means for effecting it; namely, from drowning to burning! If this is a correct view of the case, upon what principle is a satisfactory idea of the Divine candor to be supported? Doubtless, God intended Noah to understand that a catastrophe so disastrous to the welfare of mankind, should not again occur; but how is this to be reconciled with the design of making the world a subject of conflagration, and yet withholding the information?* If this intention was concealed from Noah, God must be considered to have acted with some reservation towards him; but if it was announced, it could only have afforded him poor consolation, to know that, although the world was not again to be drowned,

* It is related of some infamous general that he promised a garrison, if they would yield, he would spill no blood; they accepted his terms, and he kept his promise; but it was of no advantage to them, because he hanged them all!

it was nevertheless to be burned! Without, however, dwelling upon these points, it seems plain that those portions of the Word from whence such conclusions have been educed, have not been rightly understood.

But while it is evident that the covenant entered into with Noah and his sons, had reference to the regeneration of that people, and their consequent conjunction with the Lord, it is to be observed that it was extended to their "seed after them; with every living creature that was with them, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth." From this it is clear that some other than a literal sense is intended to be expressed. God does not enter into covenants with fowl, and cattle, and beasts.* They have no capacities for understanding the things of religion; they know nothing of God, neither can they distinguish between good and evil; and, therefore, they cannot become the recipients of any of those spiritual things, on the possession of which the existence of a covenant depends. It may be thought that the covenant with them was simply a promise for their preservation; but of what use could such a promise be to them? They could not understand it; and God does not make a revelation to brutes. If it be said that it was only a communication made to Noah respecting their safety; our reply is, that the terms of the text do not say so: they plainly inform us *that a covenant was formed with every living creature that was with them;* and a just view of those statements will show why it was so. But we will notice each particular according to the order in which they are related.

By the "seed" of the Noachic people is not properly meant their natural descendants: it may, indeed, be considered as the literal signification of the term; but still that is not the sense which it was really intended to convey; because there is no evidence of a covenant, the same as that which prevailed with

* "When the Lord says to the prophet, 'Speak unto every feathered fowl [or, to the fowl of every wing] and to every beast of the field;' it is not the fowls and beasts who are addressed (for who could suppose that Jehovah would literally address these? less absurd would be the story of St. Anthony's sermon to the fishes:) but it is man in general who is appealed to, considered as to the general faculties of his mental constitution,—as to all the powers of his mind which are capable of being benefited by divine gifts."—*Noble's Plenary Inspiration of the Scriptures Asserted*, p. 303.

the Noachic people, having existed with any of their posterity. They had the promise, but not the covenant; they had the conditions, but did not keep them. Children do not always become the inheritors of their "father's" virtues: neither can God's covenants be effected by human heirships: they take place only with those who freely and affectionately receive the Divine teachings. "Seed," in the Scriptures, is employed to represent the spiritual truths of the Word; and, consequently, all those in whom there exists a germ of the living excellences of spiritual life. It was upon this fact that the Lord constructed his parable of the sower; and, in giving the explanation of it, He expressly says, "The good seed are the children of the kingdom." * The regenerate are called *seed*, because they are in possession of the internal things of charity and faith, from which are grown all the external virtues and graces of religion. These internal things are, plainly, the seed of the heavenly kingdom, and the Lord is obviously conjoined with all in whom they exist. Hence it is evident that the seed of the Noachic people was those principles of charity and faith which had effected their regeneration. With all those who after that period derive their spiritual existence from this seed, the Lord also establishes his covenant; and this is the meaning of that statement in the history before us. It was in consequence of this signification that it was said to Abraham, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." † It is true that, in an historical sense, by seed here, and in many other instances, is meant posterity; but in a religious sense this is not the case. The Jews, who were his descendants, besides the numerous afflictions which they brought upon their own country by their frequent enormities, did not confer many spiritual benedictions upon the nations with which they have been associated. They were a selfish, stiff-necked, and rebellious people; sons in whom there was no faithfulness. When in power they were the terror of surrounding tribes; and, certainly, the nations of Canaan regarded them as a curse. Hence the promise requires explanation. Every thing said in the Word, of the Patriarchs and their descendants, is representative; and their history must be so regarded by all those who

* Matt. xiii. 38. † Gen. xxii. 18.

would educe from it religious edification, and at the same time surround their idea of its being a revelation with a consistency of thought. Abraham represented the Lord as to the *good of His Divine love;* hence heaven is called Abraham's bosom;* and by his seed are denoted those in whom the *good of charity* exists and it is by this that all the nations of the earth are blessed. We likewise read of the seed of Isaac, and of the seed of Jacob, with that of many others. By Isaac and Jacob are also represented the Lord; as is the case with several other persons mentioned in the Word; but each of them represent Him in reference to something that is peculiar and distinct. By Isaac, He is represented as to the *truth of His Divine wisdom,* and by Jacob, as to *the activities of His Divine use;* and, consequently, by the seed of Isaac are denoted those in whom the *truths of faith* are implanted; and by the seed of Jacob, those in whom the *activity of obedience* is conspicuous. It would be easy to produce a multitude of illustrations of this kind; but on these we cannot dwell. From what has been adduced every one may see, if he is so disposed, that as Noah was a collective name for a regenerate people, so by their seed are denoted all those in whom some of the principles of regeneration have been successfully implanted, and that this is the reason why the Lord is said to establish His covenant with that seed; He cannot be conjoined to any other.

The Lord is also said to establish His covenant with every living creature that was with them, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth, that goeth out of the ark. Animals of all sorts are types of some of the principles belonging to the human mind. It is in consequence of this that the Psalmist said, "Praise the Lord from the earth, ye dragons and all deeps; beasts and all cattle; creeping things and flying fowl." † From the same ground the Lord called his disciples sheep and lambs; the faithless, goats; the cunning, foxes; the selfish, wolves; the hypocrites, serpents and a generation of vipers.‡ Hence by *every living creature that was with the Noachic*

* Luke xvi. 22. † Psalm cxlviii. 7, 10.

‡ John xxi. 15, 17; Matt. xxv. 33; Luke xiii. 32; Matt. x. 16, xxiii. 33. For a larger argument, and a more extensive confirmation of the above principle, the reader is referred to the *Antediluvian History*, chaps. viii. xxi.

people, are denoted all the spiritual principles of regeneration which had been implanted in them. Those principles are called "living creatures," because they are the actual creations of spiritual life from the Lord. This, also, is the reason why the cherubim or angels are called "living creatures," and described as possessing the likeness of a man.*

By *the fowl*, are denoted the intellectual perceptions of *spiritual truth;* and, therefore, when the prophet described the cessation of those excellences in the church, he said, "I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the *birds* of heaven were fled." †

By *the cattle*, are represented the voluntary affections of *spiritual good:* and in treating of the state of those who are thus distinguished, it is said "In that day shall their cattle feed in large pastures." ‡

And *by the beasts of the earth*, are signified all the affection of the external man. By beasts are denoted affections in general, but "of *the earth*," is here added to specify that their quality belonged to the external man. Unless such a distinction were intended, the passage must be considered as a redundancy, because *every* living creature had been previously mentioned.

Thus by the fowl, the cattle, and the beasts of the earth, which came forth out of the ark, are not meant natural animals, but all those spiritual principles which were alive with the men of the church; and this is the reason why the Lord is said to have made a covenant with them; for he is conjoined to all those principles; and He is thus felt to be present with the men of the church by virtue of their states of regeneration: He is, also, in some degree, felt to be present with those who are out of the church, *i. e.*, the gentiles, by means of conscience; and it was to convey this latter idea, that, after speaking of the covenant with all who went out of the ark, it is added, "*to* every beast of the earth." These considerations enable us to attach rational ideas to the narrative; and also to gather from it some practical truth, which nothing but a revelation from God could have disclosed. They assist us likewise in explaining much that is said in the Word about animated nature; and they surround with intelligence the Lord's declaration,

* Ezekiel i. 5. † Jeremiah iv. 25. ‡ Isaiah xxx. 23.

"In that day I will make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground, and will make them to lie down safely." *

The reason why the Lord, during the Noachic economy, revealed to us that he had established his covenant with those spiritual principles, which are represented by the living creatures, is, because at that time he had mercifully provided that new arrangement of the human faculties, to which we have before alluded, out of which conscience had arisen, and from which man's regeneration from evil could be accomplished. Unless He had provided some means by which to keep, as it were, a perpetual hold of men in the world, without an interference with their liberty, posterity would have perished in the same manner as their ancestors had done. But, as this was not to be, it is plain that some new provision must have been made to hinder its occurrence. By the bond of regeneration, or by the bond of conscience, the Lord reaches all, more or less remotely, so that heavenly influences cannot be again so thoroughly destroyed. For the object of this covenant is "that all flesh shall not be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; and that there shall not any more be a flood to destroy the earth." The deluge, as before remarked, consisted in the suffocation of all spiritual life from the Lord; and this occurred in consequence of the antediluvian races at that time being of such a nature, that when their will fell into the love of any evil, their intellectual principle instantly passed into the same corruption. The coherence of these two parts of their mind into one, and their concurrence in iniquity, was so complete, that when they perished it was from causes which cannot occur with any of the Noachic posterity: they indeed, might perish, but it cannot be in that particular way; because from that period the understanding was separated from the will, and thereby the understanding has been preserved in the capacity of seeing truth and knowing goodness, notwithstanding the utter depravation of the will. Men cannot now plunge into all sorts of evils with the concurrence of their understandings; and, therefore, it cannot be so thoroughly inundated with false persuasion; consequently such a flood can no more occur.

* Hosea ii. 18.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BOW IN THE CLOUD AS A TOKEN OF THE COVENANT BETWEEN GOD AND THE EARTH.

"A sign is spoken of in the Word, of things to come, and in this case it is *revelation;* and it is spoken of the truth, and in this case it is *testification;* and it is also spoken of the quality of the state of a thing, and in this case it is *manifestation.*" —*Swedenborg's Apocalypse Revealed.* 532.

It has been seen that God's covenant with men denotes conjunction with the regenerate, and, also, with those who by the possession of conscience are in the capacity of being regenerated; and, consequently, with that which is good and true in all men. It has also appeared that this conjunction is more or less intimate in proportion as men have more or less come into the possession of those blessings. Such being the case, God has been pleased to inform us that He would set his bow in the clouds as a token of those advantages. The meaning of this interesting promise is now to engage our attention. God never leaves Himself without a witness in the world. Those with whom He establishes His covenant, are thereby put into possession of some evidences of its existence.

The regeneration of fallen man is effected from first principles through ultimates; that is to say, from God as the essential, by His Word as the instrumental cause. The world has never been without the Divine Word in some form. By this Word God illustrates the understandings of men; and so far as they are thereby freely disposed to the reception of good, good flows into them from the Lord, and induces them to love truth and justice. The Holy Word, through which those advantages have been procured, will be to them a peculiar treasure. They will perceive a correspondence between some of the things which constitute the interior humanity of that Word, and the state of spiritual life to which they may have risen. Their condition in the world, like the letter of the Divine communications adapted to its requirements, may be attended with occasional

obscurities in reference to the realities of a superior stage of being; nevertheless, some brilliant colors respecting them will always be observable. The sun will be shining upon the cloud, —spiritual light will illuminate the letter of revelation, and enable the good of every degree to behold the tones of truth in some of their soft and beautiful variety, connecting the benedictions of heaven with the requirements of the world. Such a phenomenon will be to them the evidence that God remembers his covenant.

These intimations may afford a slight insight into the meaning of God's declaration to Noah, "This is the token of the covenant which I make between Me and you, and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between Me and the earth. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud. And I will remember my covenant, which is between Me and you, and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth." *

This is a remarkable passage; and we think it evident, from the peculiar structure of it, that something more is intended to be conveyed by it than that which is apparent in the letter. The bow spoken of is understood to be the rainbow; and that phenomenon is considered to have been set in the clouds of the atmosphere, as an evidence to men that the earth shall no more be overwhelmed with water. But this view of the use of the bow is, certainly, attended with great difficulties. Scientific discoveries have proved that the popular interpretation of the narrative of the flood, cannot be maintained: and a critical examination of it, carried on under the influence of the idea that it was written by inspiration for the special uses of the church, must show that the main object of it was to relate, not a natural occurrence, but a spiritual calamity. This being the case, it is plain that the interpretations which have so long prevailed re-

* Genesis ix. 12—16.

specting the bow in the cloud cannot be correct. If the history of the deluge was written to typify a spiritual disaster which had destroyed the most ancient church, then it obviously follows that the bow which was to be set in the cloud as the token that such a calamity should no more occur, ought to be understood as the type of something that should thenceforth prevail with the men of the church, and be to them an indication of their safety from a similar disaster. That this is the true view of the subject will subsequently appear; but, before entering upon this exposition, it will be useful to dispose of the usual interpretation, which might otherwise stand in the way of its reception.

The rainbow is, certainly, a most interesting object: we are constrained to acknowledge that it is very beautiful, and that the hands of the most High have bended it.* Still it is not a miraculous, but a natural phenomenon. Any respectable treatise upon optics will afford a clear and satisfactory explanation of its causes. It is here only necessary to observe that it results from the bright rays of the sun being refracted by the drops of rain which descend from a dark cloud opposite the sun, and the reflection of them by the same drops upon others, causes the appearance of a second bow. They are only to be seen when the spectator has his back to the sun; and no two persons can see precisely the same bows.

Now, as these phenomena result from purely natural causes, it cannot be reasonably supposed that they first came into existence during the Noachic period. Many commentators, however, have entertained this opinion. They insist that it must have been a novel spectacle in the era of the deluge. It is argued, that if it had been known before that period, it could not have been a sign to Noah of his future safety; and that the mere appointment of a well-known phenomenon as the token of that safety, could not have been reasonably regarded as adequate to that purpose. Such persons contend that the signs of the Divine favor, which were subsequently vouchsafed to other individuals, were new things; and it is exultingly asked, "Is it an improbable supposition that God should do something new to convince Noah of his safety in a restored world.† Now,

* Eccl. xliii. 12.

† *Essays* by the Rev. W. B. Winning, M.A., p. 130.

although we are disposed to sympathise with the idea that the history was intended to reveal the existence of new phenomena, yet we cannot admit for a moment that it consisted in the then creation of the natural rainbow. A new state of man had certainly come into being, and a new feature of revelation was as certainly contemplated for his use; and, in these things, new spiritual phenomena were created, of which the old natural rainbow was the type. The notion that the rainbow then first came into existence is utterly untenable. It is certainly not so declared: indeed, it is contemplated as one of the ordinary appearances of nature; for the original of verse 13 may be literally rendered, "I do appoint My bow in the cloud to be a sign of the covenant between Me and the earth." Moreover, the signs above referred to, as new things, which were subsequently vouchsafed to other individuals, were, confessedly, of a miraculous and temporary nature; and, therefore, they are by no means analogous to that of the rainbow. That is a natural phenomenon which is being continually repeated; and, on this ground, it is essentially different in its causes from those which produced the signs given to Gideon and Hezekiah, as evidences that the former should be successful in his war, and the latter in the recovering of his health.* It is unreasonable to argue from such events, for the newness of the rainbow in the diluvian period.

Still, to uphold this opinion, it is supposed that the disposition of the clouds with the nature of the atmosphere, underwent some change at the time of the flood, and that there was no rain before that period.† But there is no ground in reason or philosophy which can favor this imagined alteration; and, surely, it cannot be justly argued that there was no rain before the deluge, simply because the Scriptures do not mention it. The silence of the Word respecting certain facts is no proof that they did not occur. It says nothing about the existence of eclipses, the fluctuation of the tides, the distinction between the stellar and planetary bodies, nor a multitude of other

* See Judges vi. 36 to end, and 2 Kings xx.

† Dr. Jackson *On the Creed*, book i. chap. xvi.; Dr. Burton *On the Deluge and the World after the Flood*, p. 134. See, also, Whiston and Burnet; and Bishop Patrick, *Com.*

physical existences; but who from this would conclude that such things were not? But rain is mentioned in such a way as fairly to permit the inference of its existence before the flood. Moses states that on the sixth day of creation, "The Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth." The fact is noticed as somewhat remarkable up to that time, and left open to the inference that it would soon after be required and vouchsafed; and, therefore, it is immediately added, "There went up a mist from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground;"* which may be understood to mean that vapor ascended from the earth by the action of the atmosphere, and after condensing into clouds again descended in the form of rain.

But the idea of there not having been any rain until the last days of the antediluvian world, is thought to be intimated in the statement made to Adam after his fall, namely, "Cursed is the ground for thy sake."† It is argued that the withholding of rain was one of the ways in which this malediction was executed, because rain is so frequently represented as a blessing, and the shutting of the heavens, described as a calamity.‡ But this argument may be turned to establish the very point which it has been framed to deny! If the curse on the ground was sterility, induced by the withholding of rain, then rain must have existed before the malediction was pronounced. If rain is a blessing to the earth, then that blessing must have been enjoyed by the earth before it became the subject of

* Gen. ii. 5, 6. Some critics have thought that the sixth verse would better cohere with the fifth, by translating it "*nor did there* a mist go up from the earth," &c., taking the negative particle, לא *not*, to the foregoing verse. (See Drusius *On Lev.*, x. 6, and Hottinger *in Hexipl. Paris*, p. 89.) But this is certainly not the meaning of the passage: and Dr. A. Clarke, agreeably to the above suggestions, observes respecting it, "As Moses had said, verse 5, that the Lord had not caused it to rain upon the earth, he probably designed to teach us, in verse 6, how rain is produced, namely, by the condensation of the aqueous vapors; *i. e.*, the small particles of water which ascend as mist, are driven together so as to form larger drops; and then, becoming too heavy to be any longer suspended in the atmosphere, they fall by their own gravity to the earth in the form of rain."

† Gen. iii. 17.

‡ Lev. xxvi.; Deut. xi. 14, xxviii. 12; 1 Kings viii. 35; Dr. Burton in his *World after the Flood*, p. 137.

anathema. Those who would reason against this conclusion must admit that the heavens were closed against the fertility of paradise! and how insupportable is this? There is, then, no ground on which to maintain the hypothesis, that there was no rain before that which effected the deluge; and, consequently, the idea of the bow having first come into existence after that period, must be placed in the same predicament.

There is, however, another opinion upon this point, which admits that there might have been rain before the deluge; but, as the disposition of every rainy cloud is not proper for the production of a rainbow, it is asked, "Who knows, but before the flood, the clouds might be always so disposed as not to form any?"* The answer is, that it is eminently improbable; and that there is no reason to suppose that there was any difference between the physical laws in operation then, and those in action now. Nothing is said upon the subject; and if any change of this kind had been effected, it would hardly have been passed by in silence. There cannot be any well founded doubt, that both the rain and the rainbow had been commonly seen by the inhabitants of the antediluvian world; and this conclusion is supported by many learned authorities in the professing church.†

How then, it is asked, by those who demur to this conclusion, can the rainbow be any evidence that the catastrophe of a deluge shall no more occur? As its appearance before the flood did not insure the safety of Noah's predecessors, how could it guarantee the protection of his posterity? The usual reply is, that, although it existed before the deluge, it was not *appointed* as the token of future safety until after that event; and that this safety is not in the rainbow, considered in itself, but in the circumstance of its being appointed as a sign of the Divine protection. But this does not appear to us as a satisfactory solution of the difficulty. Is it reasonable to suppose that God

* Rev. J. Wood's *Dictionary of the Bible.* Art. *Rainbow.*

† Bishop Warburton; Dr. A. Clarke; The Religious Tract Society's edition of Henry and Scott's *Commentary;* Rev. J. Hewletts, B.A. *Annotations, &c.*; and Sir Thos. Brown in his *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*, says, respecting the contrary opinions, "With equal reason we may infer there was no water before the institution of baptism, nor bread and wine before the holy Eucharist." Art. *No Rainbow before the Flood*, p. 220.

would select that as an evidence of safety for the future, which had not afforded any such evidence in the past? Is it likely that He would call upon men to believe in something as a sign of safety, which they, upon recurring to previous observations, knew to have existed with contrary results? Surely God did not require the Noachic people to have faith in that which had been contrary to their experience! He does not so deal with his rational creatures.

Nor is the question met by saying that the token before us means, that "as surely as the rainbow is a necessary effect of sunshine in rain, and must continue such as long as the sun and atmosphere endure, so surely shall this earth be preserved from destruction by water;"* for in this case there is no more reason for the selection of the rainbow than that of any other natural phenomenon. If the design had been simply to declare that God would keep his promise with the same fidelity that nature observes her laws; then, the regular results of any other natural cause might have been adduced with the same effect. Doubtless the Divine promises are quite as certain in their realization as the activity of nature's laws; but the statement of this does not appear to us to be the object of the narrative: it is not a comparison between the fidelity of God and the integrity of nature; but the declaration—the revelation of a fact, which shall be to men a token, an evidence, and a cause which shall prevent the recurrence of a deluge. When God condescends to point out a specific object as the sign of any particular result, He designs that object to act as a contributary cause; and, therefore, whatever force there may be in the view above suggested, it seems plain that the rainbow must have been declared to be a token of the purpose contemplated, because it is the suitable type of a preventing cause.

The rainbow is no physical guarantee that a deluge shall no more occur. Many extensive floods have taken place since that period. If rain had been the only recorded source of the deluge,† and the universal fall of it, for forty days and nights had been requisite to produce such a calamity, then the appear-

* Dr. A. Clarke's *Commentary*.

† Besides this, "the fountain of the great deep was broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened." Gen. viii. 2.

ance of a rainbow in aftertimes might have afforded some evidence that so long as it was seen, *one* of the preventing causes was in operation. But it should be continually visible to be of value in this respect; for the evidence would disappear when the object had vanished. If the rainbow which we see to-day, indicates our safety now, how does it prove that the rain, which may commence to-morrow, and in which it is not seen, will not overwhelm us? If protection from such a physical calamity were really the subject treated of, and men firmly believed it to be so, then the frequent occurrence of rain without the appearance of the bow, would be the signal for alarm: for it is to be observed, that it was to be the accompaniment of *every* cloud. The text is, "It shall come to pass when I bring a cloud over the earth that the bow shall be seen in the cloud:" it is not described as an occasional phenomenon, but as the constant attendant of the cloud, and it is always to be seen when that appears. This seems to us the plain scope of the narrative; but as these things are not predicable of the natural phenomenon, to which the narrative is supposed to refer, it seems evident that it could not have been written with a view to its being understood in a literal natural sense.

From these considerations we learn that two different views prevail among those who so interpret it: *first*, that which regards the rainbow to have been a new phenomenon in the diluvian period; and that it was then brought into existence as a physical sign respecting the future safety of the world from the recurrence of a deluge: and *second*, that which considers it to have existed before the flood; but that it was afterwards appointed as a token of the Divine promise to preserve mankind from such a calamity. Those who take the first view, regard it as, in some measure, a cause by which the danger is to be prevented; though how it is to act as such cannot be explained, nor is there any ground in reason or philosophy for such a supposition. Those who advocate the latter view, consider it simply as an appointed sign that God will keep His promise, with the same fidelity that nature fulfils her laws; which opinion, certainly, does not harmonize with the scope and meaning of the narrative. Each view of the case is full of difficulties; and both are overturned by the consideration that a natural deluge is not the subject of

the Mosaic history; and, consequently, that the bow in the cloud cannot be mentioned as a sign that a *similar* catastrophe shall no more occur. Another view must be taken of the subject, before we can arrive at a more satisfactory and religious conclusion respecting it. And to this we will now turn our attention.

It is at once conceded that by the bow spoken of is meant the rainbow; but then it is employed, like all the other physical phenomena mentioned in the early portions of Genesis, only in a symbolical sense. This will be evident when it is remembered that the non-recurrence of a spiritual calamity is that of which it is really to be the sign. Of this the deluge was the symbol. Doubtless the occurrence of natural floods furnished materials for the figure; but we must not mistake the sign for the thing signified. The bodies of men are said to have been drowned by a flood, to represent the souls of men having been overwhelmed with wickedness. It was in consequence of this signification of a flood, that the Psalmist prayed, "Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink: let me be delivered from them that hate me, and out of the deep waters. Let not the waterfloods overflow me, neither let the deep swallow me up, and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me." * This being the case, it is plain that some other than a literal view must be taken of the appointed token. The sight of a natural rainbow is a proof of the natural sunshine; but how can its appearance testify to any thing respecting the spiritual state of man? If men are no more to be suffocated by the inundation of false principles; and if they are always to be preserved in the capacity of being regenerated, then the *real* evidence of that condition must be something mental, which they can recognize in themselves; it cannot be any physical object. A natural phenomenon may be employed to point to it in the way of symbol, but not in the way of certainty. To answer that end men must experience something really in themselves, of which the outward token is the type. When, then, the rainbow is said to be the token of the covenant that there should no more be a flood to destroy the earth; it must be understood as the representation of those mental things, by which

* Psalm lxix. 14, 15.

a conjunction, more or less remotely, is to be perpetuated between God and man.

It is only when the rainbow is considered as the symbol of some spiritual excellence, that the history becomes intelligible and instructive. That which reason does not see nor philosophy confirm, cannot add to our information. We must understand the teachings of revelation to be edified by them. Faith cannot be firm so long as intellect queries its grounds and evidences. Belief is sound when enlightened by comprehension. We must see the truths of the Word to acknowledge them. To say that we believe, when we do not in some measure understand, is like a blind man saying that he sees, when the light has never reached his eyes. God may pity ignorance, but he does not esteem it: He has provided His Word as the medium for a different result. We have seen that the literal sense of the history before us cannot be explained in consistency with the supposed natural requirements of the case: how then can it be believed in such a sense? Another view *must* be taken of the subject. God, in making His revelations to man, has caused to be selected from the world of nature such things as were adapted to indicate particulars respecting the world of mind. All that is without man is an emblem of something that is within him. Every one sees that a bright sunshine is the type of a clear mind: that a dark cloud is the emblem of mental obscurity; and that rain is a figure of the fertilizing agency of truth: is it not plain, then, that the rainbow which arises out of the favorable combination of these natural things, must be the symbol of those interior principles of faith and virtue by which man's spiritual safety is to be secured?

The typical character of the rainbow has always been acknowledged, though much uncertainty has generally prevailed respecting its true signification; and some absurdities have been propounded respecting its meaning. Thus the Jews, because the bow bears some resemblance to the Hebrew letter כ, *caph*, by which they expressed the number twenty, considered it as the token of some of those remarkable points in their national history with which that number is connected!

Some Christians have thought that the bow in the cloud was designed to represent the mystery of the sun of righteousness in

the flesh; and that the covenant of which it was the token, ought to be understood as an allusion to the covenant of grace by which Christianity was established. Others, from the colors red and green, by which the bow is distinguished, have thought that the green was intended to remind men of the destruction which once occurred by the waters of a flood; and that the red was designed to inform them of the earth's final destruction by fire. A few have considered that the green might signify the waters of baptism, and the red the blood of Christ.!* It is true that these notions do not now exercise much influence upon the minds of the reflecting: but some of them are occasionally urged upon their consideration; † and we refer to them merely to indicate that the idea of the rainbow being mentioned as a figure, has long been entertained.

It was certainly so regarded among the ancient Greeks, by whom it was called Iris. In their mythology she is described as the daughter of Thaumas and Electra, and said to be the messenger of Juno. Her office was to cut the thread which seemed to detain the soul in the body of those who were expiring. ‡ Now, in this conceit respecting her office may be perceived some remnant of the covenant of which she was the token; she was to set aside that which acted as a hindrance to the conjunction of the soul with God. And there can be no well-founded doubt that this idea, like many others to be observed in Greek mythology, was derived from traditions of the ancient church. Homer, who flourished nearly a thousand years before the Christian era, distinctly speaks of the rainbow, as being placed in the cloud as a *sign* to mankind; § which idea must have been gathered from among that wreck of spiritual knowledge which

* "The rainbow has fiery colors in it—though God will not again drown the world, yet when the mystery of God shall be finished, the world shall be consumed with fire."—See Thomas Brown's *Pseudodoxia Epidemica.* Art. *No Rainbow before the Flood.*

† Dr. Burton's *World after the Flood.* Fifth Lecture.

‡ Lemprierre's *Classical Dictionary.*

§ Εν νεφεϊ σηρξε τερας μεροπων ανθρωπων.—*Iliad*, xi. 21.

Jove's wondrous bow, of three celestial dies,
Placed as a sign to man amidst the skies.—*Pope.*

Virgil, who lived in the century immediately preceding Christianity, also speaks of Iris as a sign.—See *Æn.*, v., ver. 606, and ix., ver. 803.

resulted from the confusion at Babel. Indeed the Greek name *Ιρίς* is supposed by some to be derived from *ειρω*, *eiro*, I tell, and thus to include the idea of a token as its primary meaning—a sign of that in man which is the indication of his spiritual security. Mythology is an evidence that, at some remote and better period of mankind, natural objects must have been understood as the symbols of mental things, in like manner as a spurious coin may be taken as a proof that genuine money has been in circulation.

But the typical nature of the rainbow is attested by the evidence of the Scriptures. It is there spoken of as an appearance which was seen in the spiritual world. Thus Ezekiel says, he saw "the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above it. And I saw as the color of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it; from the appearance of his loins even upwards, and from the appearance of his loins even downwards, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about. *As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord.*"* Here the manifestation of the Divine wisdom is described as a rainbow, because the light of that wisdom is perceived by human minds under different aspects: every perception of it among the regenerate is bright and beautiful; but with some, it will be as of one color, and with others, as of another. A similar vision is repeated in the Apocalypse: † and upon another occasion it is written, "I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud; *and a rainbow was upon his head*:"‡ where it is plain that the rainbow is mentioned to represent the sphere of spiritual glory which resulted from the Divine presence; for it is to be remembered that those appearances were in heaven, where, it is plain, that they must be different from those which are visible in the world. In one the rainbow is from a natural, in the other it is from a spiritual origin. Its appearance in heaven arises from the Lord considered as the Sun of Righteousness.

* Ezekiel i. 26, 27, 28. † Rev. iv. 1 to 3. ‡ Rev. x. 1.

His beams shine in upon the truths present in angelic minds, and produce in them those beautiful varieties of intelligence and wisdom which are described as rainbows. Those appearances are evidences of the Divine presence with the angels, and tokens of their conjunction with the Lord.

All truths are objective things; falsehood has no reality out of the mind of him who thinks and utters it. Every truth is capable of being viewed in a different light, and it is perceived with some distinction by every mind; on this account truths have come to be regarded as possessing a variety of color. That color is significant of the aspect under which truth may be perceived, is an idea recognized in the customary language of mankind: hence, they speak of truths as being highly colored, of their being susceptible of another coloring, and of their being disfigured by the coloring under which they had been represented. Such forms of expression are in common use; nor is any one in any danger of mistaking the literal for the symbolical meaning.* The many-colored stones in Aaron's breast-plate; † which are also described as being the covering of those who have been in Eden the garden of God, ‡ were intended to represent the various aspects under which truth will appear to the men of the church. And something similar was intended to be conveyed to us, by the blue and purple and scarlet which were to be gathered for the tabernacle, § employed in the veil, || and for the hanging of the door of the tent, ¶ and of the gate of the court.** It is acknowledged that the Israelitish church, in general, was the type of spiritual things to come: it follows, therefore, that all the particular objects which were directed to be employed by that people in their worship, must have been intended to represent some particular spiritual things. Those who admit the general fact must concede the particulars on which it rests. And in the case of the colors by which the tabernacle and the

* For some interesting information, in the way of history and evidence upon the symbolism of colors, the reader is referred to a work on the subject, by M. Francis Portal, entitled, *Des Couleurs Symboliques dans l'Antiquité, le Moyen-age, et les Temps Modernes.* Paris: Treuttel et Wurtz.

† Exod. xxv. 7; xxxv. 9.

‡ Ezekiel xxviii. 13.

§ Exodus xxv. 4.

|| Exodus xxvi. 31.

¶ Exodus xxvi. 36.

** Exodus xxvii. 16.

priesthood were to be decorated, it seems plain that different perceptions of truth, by the superior and inferior members of the church, were signified, because color is the result of light. So that the rainbow, as being distinguished by a series of harmonious colors, may readily be seen to be the symbol of spiritual truths in their form and beauty. It represents the modifications of intelligence and wisdom, which are more or less brilliant as the state of regeneration is more or less advanced, in those who are its subjects. Thus the variegations of spiritual truth which the men of the church perceive, are those things of which the rainbow is the figure. Every one who has had any experience in the Christian life, knows how different are the colors in which the beams of religious light appear. Sometimes they are bright and beautiful; at others, they are faint and scarcely to be discerned. It is also known that in every appearing there is a cloud: obscurities attend the most brilliant perceptions which men on earth can have of things in heaven. But wheresoever they do appear it is an evidence of the Divine presence by means of truth, and thus a token of God's covenant with man that He shall no more perish by the inundation of a flood.

From these considerations it may be seen that the rainbow is the type of spiritual truth. It is this truth which is the real *token* of the covenant.

But, in the preceding chapter it was observed that the idea of a covenant is presented under two forms. *First*, as the document containing its conditions; and *second*, in the regeneration of man, to which his acceptance of those conditions conduces. That a revelation was vouchsafed to the Noachic people is evident; and that it was extant among them in a documentary form, can scarcely be doubted. Some proofs of this conclusion have been presented in a preceding portion of this work. It has also appeared that they accepted its conditions and became regenerate. Now the bow in the cloud, as the token of the connection subsisting between God and man, existed then, and still continues to exist in both forms of it. There has, since that period, always been something of the Divine Word in the world; there has, also, always been something of the state of regeneration with men. It is provided that these things should not perish. Some nations may not have the Word, and some

men may not be regenerate; but both are to be extant somewhere in the world. Hence it is written that the bow in the cloud was to be a token "for perpetual generations."

Both the Word and the regenerate have their cloud. The cloud of the Word is the obscurity of the letter: the cloud of regeneration is man's natural state. The bow in the Word, is its spiritual sense; the bow with the regenerate, is their perception of that sense. But it may be useful to illustrate these two points somewhat farther.

It is plain that the natural language in which revelation has been communicated to man, could only express spiritual ideas in the way of figure. Our conceptions of the outer world have been mercifully employed to suggest to us images of the inner; and, therefore, the letter is as a cloud in which is set the bow of spiritual truth. "Upon all the glory there shall be a covering." Every one may see that the clouds are fit symbols of such obscurity. They are not destitute of light, but it is inferior to that which is above them: so the letter of the Word is not without the truth, but it is inferior to that which lies within it. The letter is Divine truth in the shade, the spirit is Divine truth in the sunshine. The Scriptures frequently employ the term clouds with this meaning. For instance, David said of the Lord, "Thy mercy is great unto the heavens, and thy truth unto the clouds;"* where, by the mercy of the Lord in the heavens, is denoted the blessings of the Divine love with the angels; and by His truth unto the clouds, is signified His wisdom in the letter of the Word for the use of men. Again it is written, that He "covereth the heavens with clouds:"† this was not said to inform us of the natural fact, for *revelation* was not necessary to tell us that: its purpose was to teach us that spiritual things are veiled by the natural means employed for their indication to the world. Again we read that "He maketh the clouds his chariot;"‡ which plainly means that it is by the letter of His Word that He comes down to men. It is also said, "His strength is in the clouds,"§ to inform us that the letter of the Word is the power by which He protects the

* Psalm lvii. 10.

† Psalm cxlvii. 8.

‡ Psalm civ. 3.

§ Psalm lxviii. 34.

sanctity of its spiritual sense from the profanation of the wicked, and also promotes the conversion of mankind. The power of the Divine with men is exercised through the ultimate truth of His Word. It was to represent this general idea that God is declared to have spoken to Moses out of the midst of the cloud.* What are called "the clouds of heaven," do not properly mean those vapors of the earth which float in the sky, but the literal sense of the Divine Word; and the Lord is said to come in these clouds,† to instruct mankind that He approaches and communicates with them, by means of the most ultimate things of His revelation. These illustrations could be easily extended, and the analogies completed; but enough is now apparent for our purpose. We see that the letter of God's revelation is a modification of His Divine wisdom, adapted to the apprehension of man in his natural state, and that as such, it is represented by the cloud. It is not only a characteristic of the Word now extant; but it was also a feature of the Word which prevailed in the Noachic times. Their Scriptures were God's covenant with them, in the documentary sense of that expression, in like manner as our Scriptures, in a similar sense, are with us. The letter of those documents constitutes, the cloud which God said He would bring over the earth; and that which he calls His bow, represented the spiritual truths which are set therein. To see the bow in the clouds, denotes to perceive those truths in that letter. It is those which constitute the wonderful things contained in God's law, and for the beholding of which the Psalmist prayed that his eyes might be opened.‡ They can be known only by those who, when contemplating the Divine teachings, are disposed to have their minds raised above the ideas of sensual objects. In the possession of the literal sense of revelation, men have the evidences of God's care, and thereby of His covenant with our race; but it is only when men perceive the spiritual truths of it, that they see its real coloring, the harmony of its tints, the softness of its blendings, and all the rich reflections of the Divine glory. It is when men perceive those things in the cloud which God prepares, that the

* Exodus xxiv. 16. † Daniel vii. 13. Matt. xxiv. 30. Rev. i. 7.

‡ Psalm cxix. 18.

words of His covenant become to them an intellectual reality. This brilliant bow is a sure token to them that God, by his Word, has established a medium of communication between Himself and the world, and by which He has provided against the possibility of false principles producing another inundation. The bow in the cloud which God prepares—the spiritual sense of the letter of the Word which He vouchsafes—is not merely a token that men will be preserved from a recurrence of the calamity referred to; but it is also the means which have been provided for its prevention. Where there is no vision, says the Proverb, the people perish.* Vision, then, in the sense of revelation, is one of the means of continuous preservation. If there were no Divine Word, there could not be any communication between man and heaven; in which case false principles would again prevail and bring about another deluge. But through His Word God has provided for the safety of His people: by the literal sense of it He comes down to man's lowest nature, and furnishes such information respecting superior things as may be suited to its cloudy capacity; and by the spiritual sense of it, He lays hold of man's highest nature, and gives him to see, in the obscurities of the letter, truths of surprising beauty and magnificence.

It is this bow in the cloud, considered as the spiritual sense set in the letter of the Word, together with the perception of this sense by the natural man during the process of his regeneration, which God promised to look upon, and to remember his everlasting covenant; where to "look" and to "remember" do not mean what those terms are commonly employed to do; because they are predicated of God, and not of man. It is written of God, that He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity;† that He will turn away His eyes from beholding vanity;‡ and that He will hide His eyes from the wicked;§ when, then, He is said to look at any thing it must be because it is agreeable to His sight. That the wisdom which constitutes the spiritualities of His Word is of this character must be evident. And as the bow in the cloud is the figure of this wisdom, it is plain that

* Proverbs xxix. 18.

† Hab. i. 13.

‡ Psalm cxix. 37.

§ Isaiah i. 15.

God's promise to look upon it, expresses the Divine sentiment with which it is regarded; and for Him then to remember His everlasting covenant, does not imply that He might otherwise forget! but that it is the medium by which He can become conjoined to man; for that which is remembered is conjoined to the mind of Him who remembers. Thus God is conjoined to His Word, and by His Word to man. Hence for Him to look upon the bow in the cloud denotes the presence of Divine wisdom in the letter of His Word, and, also, in the natural mind of him by whom it is received; and to remember His covenant signifies the conjunction which He effects thereby with man. It is said to be "everlasting," because it is the imperishable instrument of His mercy. God not only loves men with an everlasting love, but, in the spiritual truths contained in the letter of His Word, He has provided the means for the perpetual manifestation of that love; and they are the tokens to men of the church that falsehood can no more destroy it.

As then the Word is really God's covenant with men, in the documentary sense of that expression, we at once see that the promise to set *His bow* in the cloud, as the token of His covenant with man, denotes His design of implanting a spiritual sense in the letter of all those revelations which He would vouchsafe, as the means of preserving his conjunction with our race. That the Divine Word is the means of God's approach to men, and that by it He holds communication with the world, are truths which the people of His church will readily acknowledge. Still their eternal safety lies in their reception of the Word. It is necessary for that purpose not only that He should be conjoined to them, but that they also should be conjoined to Him. It is requisite not only that they should be His people, but that He should be their God. The covenant must be mutual and reciprocal, to bring about a realization of all the advantages which are proposed.

Now those who are conjoined to God are those who know and love Him: and this brings us to notice the meaning of the bow in the cloud in reference to them. Having seen its signification in reference to God's part of the covenant, it is necessary that we should know its import in respect to man's part of it.

Those who know and love God are the regenerate, and that is

the spiritual realization of the verbal teachings of His Word. There are, however, degrees of regeneration, and it is more or less perfect in proportion to the quality of the virtues which are loved, and the quantity of truths which are known; but every degree of it is the living counterpart of something in the Word; and, therefore, whatsoever is true of the Word is also true of regenerated men. The Word has its cloud, and so have they; and they, like it, will also have a bow therein. The cloud which exists with regenerate men consists in the obscure perceptions of spiritual things which sometimes attend their natural condition in the world. The best of men are not always in the sunshine; shade will overtake them; but still in this obscurity the Lord has been pleased to set a bow. There is present, even in the darkest hours of the good, some perception of spiritual things. The sun of righteousness shines in upon the truths which constitute their faith, and gives them that variety and brilliancy of coloring of which the rainbow is so magnificent a type. This is no rhetorical sentiment, but an experimental idea. How frequently does it happen to religious men, when they are in obscurity respecting some spiritual things, that the light suddenly breaks in upon their cloud, and gives them the required illumination, its duskiness being, as it were, changed into a variety of color; and who in this cannot see an antitype of the bow in the cloud? How forcibly does it prove the conjunction of the Lord with men, and so become a token of their being preserved thereby from the inundations of a flood. We thus learn that the bow in the cloud is a magnificent representation of what is spiritual, in that which is natural; that in reference to the Word, it is the spiritual sense in the letter; and that in reference to regenerate men, it is the interior truths which they are enabled to perceive during the prevalence of their natural obscurity; which facts are among the strongest tokens of God's conjunction with mankind, and, consequently, that He has thereby provided the means of safety for perpetual generations.

CHAPTER IX.

THE EMPLOYMENT OF NOAH, HIS VINEYARD, INEBRIATION, AND EXPOSURE.

"There is a correspondence between certain external forms of nature, and certain affections of the mind, that may be felt but cannot always be explained."—*J. Gregory, M.D., F.R.S., Comparative View of the State and Faculties of Man*, p. 225.

It is only by drawing aside the veil of the letter of the Scriptures, that we can have a correct insight into their real spirit and design. The letter is as a beautifully figured curtain, behind which the Divine has chosen to place that wisdom by which He purposes to raise an enduring church. Some portions of the curtain are more transparent than others, and spiritual truths shine through them with a brighter ray. The occasional glimpses of intellectual magnificence which are thus obtained, ought to be received as evidence that other truths of equal eminence and value lie beyond the opaquer parts: nor ought we to be surprised if a little more than the activity of ordinary vision is required to detect them. He who is essential wisdom will obviously speak the wisest things; and men have no reason to expect that the full and entire purpose of those communications will be discerned, without the diligent use of their mental eyes. Spiritual things are placed in a high position, because it would not be well that men should reach them without making exertions of a moral and intellectual nature, superior to those which are employed merely on worldly and terrestrial things. God's words are necessarily interior in their signification: He has spoken that we may understand His speech; and He thereby implants in us the *image* of Himself. We are not to mistake the curtain for the holy things which lie beyond it; we must distinguish between the essence and the form—between the Divine wisdom, in its inner character, and the literal vehicle by which it has been brought down for the uses of a benighted world; and at the same time remember that

even the understandings of the disciples had to be opened that they might understand the Scriptures.*

It has been seen that the subjects mentioned in those portions of the postdiluvian history which have been considered, treat of the rise, progress, and establishment of a spiritual church among a people of whom Noah was the representative. In the two preceding chapters they have been contemplated as enjoying the Divine covenant, and thus as being in the possession of those principles of spiritual knowledge and virtue which are the constituents of such a dispensation. We now come to consider those portions of the Mosaic narrative in which the engagements of that church are spoken of and its fall described. These particulars are thus related :—"And Noah began to be a husbandman, and he planted a vineyard; and he drank of the wine, and was drunken, and was uncovered in his tent."†

This is commonly supposed to describe Noah as commencing the new world with the pursuits of agriculture and vine-dressing; and this is a very natural inference from the language considered as expressing isolated sentiments; but when it is viewed in connection with the narrative of the flood, which has been shown to treat not of physical phenomena, but of spiritual disasters which befell and overwhelmed the most ancient church, then we are compelled to consider it in another light: consistency requires this. Let us then attend to that light, and endeavor to collect some of its rays. The subject treated of in the passage just cited, is, the decline and fall of the Noachic church. This we have no doubt will be sufficiently evident in the sequel.

When it is remembered that the Adamic history before the flood, and the Noachic history after it, treat of two different dispensations of religion, respectively characterized as celestial and spiritual; that is, that the good of love was the chief inheritance of the one; and the truths of faith of the other, it may be readily seen that the narratives in which it is said that Adam was placed in a garden, and Noah in a vineyard, and that each fell therein, the former by disobedient eating, and the latter by improper drinking, must have been designed to communicate

* Luke xxiv. 45. † Gen. ix. 20, 21.

some other facts respecting those people, than those which the letter seemingly suggests. The somewhat similar, though distinctive occupations in which Adam and Noah are said to have been engaged at the period of their fall, cannot but strike the reader as exceedingly remarkable. And if, as it has been proved, the narrative recording Adam's occupation and transgression, is a symbolic history, then there can be no difficulty in conceding that the same general idea belongs to the history which relates Noah's pursuits, his inebriety, and its consequences. The figures adopted in the case of Adam are such as were suited to indicate the condition and transgression of the men of a celestial church and genius; and those which are employed in the case of Noah, are those which are proper to represent the state and lapse of the men of a spiritual church and genius. Thus the garden and eating have respect more to the state and activity of the will and its affections; but the vineyard and drinking have respect more to the condition and exercise of the understanding with its thoughts. The fall of Adam was in the garden of Eden, and consisted in a departure from purity of love; but the fall of Noah was in the vineyard of Ararat, and consisted in a decline from the excellency of truth.

Faith with the Noachic people, was a state of mind and character which arose from an intellectual knowledge of the spiritual things proper to the existence of an intelligent church. It did not consist in obscure dogmas to be believed, but in bright realities which were understood: and such was the condition of their faith up to the point at which we are informed that "Noah began to be a husbandman;" but, by that circumstance, we are presented with an intimation respecting its decline. It is well known that the cultivation of the soil has long been regarded as a figure of the cultivation of the mind: so that the husbandman in the one case furnishes a striking emblem of the husbandman in the other. The Lord Himself is called a Husbandman * on account of His having the chief care of all those things which contribute to sustain the spiritual life of man. Hence, also, the people of His church are called God's husbandry.† It is, how-

* John xv. 1. The word *vine-dresser*, perhaps, more properly expresses the sense of the original; and seems to be required by the immediate context.

† 1 Cor. iii. 9.

ever, to be remarked, that the term in reference to man, is not employed in the Scriptures to suggest to us any very exalted idea of the human character. A very clear example to the contrary is furnished in the parable of the householder who planted a vineyard and let it out to husbandmen; all of whom are represented to have conducted themselves in a very criminal manner.* The Word expresses man's connection with the earth, and is thus significant of one of his most external or ultimate pursuits; and it is to convey the idea of the ancient church declining into a corresponding condition, that Noah is said to have "begun to be a husbandman." This, however, will be more apparent when it is noticed that the original words אִישׁ אֲדָמָה *ish adamah*, translated, husbandman, literally denote *a man of the ground;* † for, by this, the spiritual idea intended to be expressed is more appropriately represented: because by ground is spiritually signified the external man into which the seeds of truth are sown, to grow up and to bring forth fruits worthy of salvation. Hence the Lord in His parable of the sower ‡ spoke of several characteristics of the external man as so many varieties of ground; He, also, described their respective fertility by the manner in which each dealt with the seed of which it had been receptive. That ground denotes man in an external state, may appear from the circumstance of its being said that God formed man from it; that is, He regenerated the external man so that the internal might have an orderly medium for its manifestation: and when man fell, the ground is said to have been cursed, to denote the difficulties which, from that period, would attend the cultivation of the external man in order to render it prolific in the principles of spiritual life. So that Noah is said to have begun to be *a man of the ground*, to inform us that he now began to descend into the external things of the church, and to esteem them in preference to those which were internal. Hereby he began to come down from his superior eminence. The Jews themselves educe this idea from the language. *Arnheim* remarks, that "Noah was the

* Matt. xxi. 33 to 41.

† See *Dr. Raphall's Notes to his Translation of Genesis.*

‡ Matt. xiii. 3 to 9, 18 to 23.

first, after the unfortunate miscarriage and crime of Cain, who is named as devoting himself to agriculture;" and *Rashi* asserts that Noah made himself profane thereby, and supports his opinion by a criticism on the original.* That the Noachic church fell away from its acquired excellence, and subsequently perished, as well known. There must, then, have been a point at which this calamity commenced; and this, Moses has related to us by saying that Noah *began to be a man of the ground.* The people began to incline towards the external things of the church, with a weakened regard for those which were internal. This inclination, like most others which have a fatal termination, might have been feeble in its beginnings, but it gathered strength by culture; and the next stage in its downward progress is represented to us under the figure of planting a vineyard, that is, the establishment of a church—a church partaking more of the external things of truth than goodness—more of the utterable sentiment of faith, than of the living affection of charity—and thus the planting of a church in an external ground which would correspond to the descending condition of the people.

That a vineyard is mentioned in the Scriptures to signify the church is commonly admitted, and, therefore, only a few illustrations will be necessary. The prophet, after a description of some particulars respecting this type, expressly says, "The vineyard of the Lord of Hosts is the house of Israel."† The vine, also, is employed with a similar signification.‡ The Israelites, in the state of disobedience, are spoken of as the vine of Sodom, having grapes of gall and clusters of bitterness:§ but the church, as planted by the Lord, is pronounced to be a choice and noble vine.|| So, likewise, the Lord's parables concerning the laborers and the husbandmen in the vineyard,¶ are plainly intended to represent the various conditions of men's connection with the church. The Lord said, "I am the true Vine, and my Father is the Husbandman; every branch in Me

* See *Dr. Raphall's Notes to his Translation of Genesis.*

† Isaiah v. 7. ‡ Psalms lxxx. 8 to 14.

§ Deut. xxxii. 32. || Jeremiah ii. 21. Gen. xlix. 1.

¶ Matt. xx. 1, 16; xxi. 33, 34; Mark xii. 1, 12; Luke xx. 9, 16.

that beareth not fruit He taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Abide in Me and I in you: as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in Me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without Me ye can do nothing."* In this we are certainly taught by the figure of a vine, what is the condition of the Lord's church from its first principles to its ultimate results. Whence it obviously follows, that by a vineyard is represented a church, which will be more or less noble as the principles of it are more or less exalted.

The first intimation of a vineyard upon record is that which Noah is said to have planted. It is not, however, to be supposed from this that it was before unknown. It is *then* first mentioned in the Scriptures, because the peculiar characteristic of the church of which it was the selected emblem, then first came into external existence. The genius of the preceding church was celestial—that in which the wills and loves of mankind were the foremost principles; but the genius of the Noachic people was spiritual,† that in which their intellect and thought were the most conspicuous things. And it is in consequence of this distinction of interior character that a garden and eating are indicated of the one, but a vineyard and drinking of the other. The condition of the former people was that which regarded *goodness* in the first place, and this is represented by eating of the fruit of the garden; but the condition of the latter was that which regarded *truth* in the first place, and this is signified by drinking the wine of the vineyard. Hunger is a feeling which the Scriptures employ to represent desire on the part

* John xv. 1 to 5.

† From Noah's ability to cultivate the vine, he is regarded as having been in the possession of a respectable amount of superior knowledge. It is said that "it establishes a degree of civilization considerably higher than that of the grower of the common necessaries of life."—*Origines Biblicæ, by C. Tilstone Beke*, vol. i. p. 50. Is it not remarkable that he should be described as cultivating a luxury at first? Is it not likely, if literal facts had been intended, that we should have been informed of his having cultivated something more essentially useful? Do not these circumstances seem to intimate that something else than literal history was intended to be conveyed to us?

of the *will;* but thirst is a sensation which signifies desire on the part of the understanding. The Lord, in reference to a conjunction of those desires, said, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled."* Hence, eating is an act denoting the appropriation made by the affections; and drinking is an act representing the appropriation made by the thoughts. It is on account of these distinctions, and to signify them, that the Lord, when instituting the Holy Supper, commanded eating and drinking; † because the eating of bread denotes the acceptance of good by the will, and the drinking of wine signifies the reception of truth by the understanding. It was to represent the different things and processes by which these two faculties of our nature are to be regenerated, and also that of the different geniuses of men which arise out of the predominence of either of these two faculties, that we read of wine being permitted to some, but forbidden to others. The priests, for instance, were not permitted to drink it during the period of their ministrations; and the Nazarites and the Rechabites were equally prohibited: ‡ the reason is, because they represented men of a celestial genius, who are mainly regenerated by the good of love; but it was allowed to the Israelites,§ because they represented men of a spiritual genius, who are regenerated chiefly by the truths of faith. From which considerations it is evident that by the vine and the vineyard, in an internal sense, are signified the church; and, in the case before us, that condition of it in which the knowledge of its truths engaged more of the attention of mankind than the love of its virtues; or, in other words, that state of it in which faith came to be regarded as the chief principle, and charity only as an inferior. Charity, however, is, in reality, the inmost excellence of the church in order, and faith is as an outer guide: the former is its life, and the latter is its light: and it was the decline of the Noachic people from the things of charity into a preference for the sentiments of faith, which was represented by Noah's becoming a man of the ground and planting a vineyard.

* Matt. v. 6. † Matt. xxvi. 26, 27.

‡ Lev. x. 9; Num. vi. 3, 4; Judges xiii. 14; Jer. xxxv. 6, 10.

§ John ii. 1 to 10.

To some it may seem unnecessary to seek for a recondite sense in passages about the literal meaning of which there is no difficulty. But it is not to be supposed that the spiritual things of revelation necessarily demand for their representative some literal incongruity; nor must it be imagined, that it is only for the solution of obscure portions of the Word that an internal sense is sought. The plainest history, and the most obvious precept of the Scriptures, because they are divine, must contain a deeper meaning than that which is displayed upon their surface. There is a sentiment of spiritual humanity beneath every portion of the Word, in like manner, as there is an activity of human life within every member and fibre of man's visible structure. Although, then, a few sentences of the present narrative seem to indicate external facts of easy apprehension, yet, as we have seen, the connection in which they are recorded plainly shows that such facts are not the actual meaning of the history. We therefore proceed to the next point of which we are informed, namely, that Noah drank of the wine of his vineyard.

It is to be observed that this circumstance is not spoken of in the way of censure: misconduct in this particular was the result of a subsequent excess. The use was in order; the abuse was the evil. By wine of the vineyard is denoted the truths of the church. It was on account of this signification that it was introduced into the representative worship of the Jewish church; * and it was to this idea that the Lord referred when He said, "Ho, every one that thirsteth—come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."† Jesus, also, by his parable respecting putting new wine into old bottles,‡ certainly designed to teach his disciples, that the new truths of Christianity would not be safe in the old principles of the Jewish dispensation. The new truths were to be introduced into corresponding principles, and then both would be preserved. The catechism of the Episcopal Church distinctly teaches that wine, as used in the sacrament, is the sign of some inward spiritual grace; and this idea respecting it is conclusively established by the words

* Lev. xxiii. 13. Numbers xv. 5. † Isaiah lv. 1.

‡ Matt. ix. 17.

with which the institution of that rite was immediately followed, namely, "I will not drink henceforth of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom;" * for here the drinking of material wine is certainly not intended, but rather the mutual participation of the Lord and His disciples in that truth of which it was the representative. The miracle of turning water into wine at the marriage in Cana,† was to show that the natural truths of revelation, signified by water, are by new perceptions in man, from the Lord, changed into spiritual truths, signified by wine, when regeneration has produced that orderly union between the affections and thoughts of which the marriage was the type.

Hence it is easy to see that by Noah's drinking the wine of his vineyard, was denoted, that people's partaking of the instructions which were afforded by the truths of the church. This idea will admit of a familiar illustration. Christianity is considered as a vineyard; and the spiritual truth which it teaches constitutes its wine, and those who belong to this church are found to drink it; that is, to study, comprehend, and intellectually receive it. Without this, Christianity would soon become a vague and shadowy institution. Still, it is important that this duty should always be performed under the influence of enlightened humility; carefully remembering that all our information respecting the spiritual things of the church, is communicated from on high, and that it belongs to God rather than to ourselves. All who forget this duty soon lose a right understanding of the truth: they begin to search into the tenets of faith by means of sensual reasonings; whereas those tenets are, in many instances, beyond the reach of such investigations, and at the same time of such a nature as to require perception for their appreciation; hence, those who neglect the duty to which we have adverted, are sure to fall into errors which will bewilder the judgment, and lead the understanding astray; and this state, in the language of the Scripture, is represented by acts of drunkenness. Here, then, we have a clue to the right understanding of Noah's intoxication, which is the next point in the Mosaic history of that declining church.

* Matt. xxvi. 29. † John ii. 1 to 11.

Some who have considered this statement as referring to an act of natural inebriety, have been very anxious to rescue the patriarch from the disgrace which that circumstance casts upon his reputation.* For this purpose it is asserted that, although the fact of his drunkenness "is unquestionable, the sin was involuntary;" and to support this opinion, it is said that the inebriating qualities of wine were then unknown! But for this there is no historical information, and all probability is against it. It cannot be reasonably supposed that the old world, with all its wickedness, retained the virtue of sobriety. Still to maintain the notion that Noah was "innocent and irreproachable," it is pretended that there is no intimation of displeasure or punishment for the transgression. This, however, is an evident mistake; since it is clear that many of the calamities which befell the Noachic family, took their rise from the perpetration of that guilt. From our view of the case we have no doubt that an act of sin was committed—a condition of spiritual drunkenness induced—and, we believe, that it was this state, as pertaining to the minds of that people, and not natural intoxication as referring to the body of an individual, which is the subject treated of.

Is it not common to indicate certain states of mind by the term intoxication? We speak of the enthusiast being intoxicated with zeal, and of the speculator, with his successes. Poets, both ancient and modern, have applied the word in the same figurative sense. Thus Æschylus writes,

"*Αοινοις εμμανεις θυμωμασι.*"†

*See *Dr. Geddes, Bishop Newton on the Prophecies, Dr. Patrick,* and *Dr. A. Clarke's Commentaries, Dr. Burton on the Deluge and the World after the Flood;* all of whom seem to have adopted the notion from a few of the Jewish "doctors," and some of the "fathers" who had it from the same source. They think he was unacquainted with the strength of the liquor which he had made: and *Epiphanius* suggests that Noah's age might have been the occasion of his yielding to its potency.—*Hæres* lxiii. 3. Dr. A. Clarke thinks his innocence is proved by the circumstance of his having been immediately gifted with the spirit of prophecy; as though the prophetic characters of Balaam, and David, and Jonah, with some others, were intended as any evidence of their innocence, or even of the excellence of their private characters.

† *Eumenes*, 863.

"*Intoxicated* with passion and not with wine." *Spenser* has said, that "Passion is the *drunkenness* of the mind;" and *Pope* has written that

> "A little learning is a dang'rous thing;
> Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring:
> There, shallow draughts *intoxicate* the brain,
> And drinking largely sobers us again." *

Moreover, it is well known that drunkenness is mentioned in the Scriptures to denote something else than natural inebriety. The inhabitants of Ariel are declared to have been "drunken, but not with wine, and to stagger, but not with strong drink:" and to the people of Jerusalem it was said, "Hear now this, thou afflicted and drunken, but not with wine:"† where by being drunken, but not with wine, is plainly meant some infatuation of the mind brought about by the absence of truth. In other cases a similar state is spoken of as being induced by wine and strong drink. Thus it is written, "They have erred through wine, and through strong drink are gone out of the way: the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment; for all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean. Whom shall He teach knowledge? and whom shall He make to understand doctrine? Them that are weaned from the milk and drawn from the breasts." ‡ The state spoken of in this passage, as being induced by wine and strong drink, is plainly not that of natural inebriation, but a condition of mental sottishness resulting from the perverse employment of religious information—using it for the purpose of gratifying some worldly and selfish love.§ The orderly use of

* *Essay on Criticism*, l. 215. † Isaiah xxix. 9; li. 21.

‡ Isaiah xxviii. 7, 9.

§ The actual quality of man is determined by the state of his will, and not by the character of his understanding without it. Men may know what is right, and sometimes, because it suits their worldly purpose, speak of it with apparent sincerity and earnestness, when, nevertheless, they may love the very opposite with a determined will. Such persons are like an adulterer who conceals a harlot in the cellar below, and by turns goes up to the higher apartment of his house where dwell his wife and family, and there discourses

truth is to lead men up to goodness; and those by whom this use is disregarded are contemplated as drunkards who err in vision, stumble in judgment, and understand not doctrine. They so entangle all the reflective powers of their minds, in regard to spiritual things, that nothing but mere drunkenness respecting them remains: nor can they by any clue which reason supplies, retrace their way; they, as it were, stagger at every step.

Now it was a state something similar to this, though not so hideous as the picture we have drawn,* which befell the people of the ancient church; and, therefore, Noah is said to have been drunken. The infatuation thereby intended to be represented, consisted in that people having intellectually received the truths of faith, and afterwards falling into doubts respecting them, they cherished a desire to comprehend them in a sensual way. Herein they overlooked the fact, that religious things belong to a superior region of the mind, and that they were to be discerned by the inner faculties of thought and perception, rather than by outer sensations and physical evidence. Hence they descended from the clear light; they could not walk uprightly; and, like drunkards, they began to "err in vision, and to stumble in judgment."

Science and philosophy are proper to the sensual portion of the mind; but they never yet opened out in man any spiritual perception: on the contrary, many cases could be cited in which they have contributed to its extinction. They may be employed to illustrate the principles and purposes of spiritual religion; but they must be kept apart and regarded as distinct things. To confound the higher with the lower, is like confounding heaven with the world; and those who do so necessarily fall into errors respecting it; because, in sensualizing spiritual knowledge, they drag it down from its pedestal, and

of chastity and virtue; and yet, alternately, withdraws from their society and descends to indulge himself with his paramour below. Is not such a course an act of spiritual insanity—a state of interior drunkenness?—See *Swedenborg's Work on the Intercourse between the Soul and the Body.* Sec. xii.

* "Intoxication comes on gradually, and several stages may be noticed in its progress. Technically it is made up of extraordinary exhilarations, gradually increasing to delirium, with imperfect articulation and inability to regulate voluntary motion generally, which finally passes into unconsciousness and coma."—*Imperial Dict.*

begin to regard it as a thing of common intelligence acquired by themselves; this process and result, the Word describes as drunkenness, because those who are guilty of it conduct themselves as insanely in reference to the things of heaven, as do natural drunkards in reference to their duties in the world.

The *natural* thinking principle of man is formed by the knowledge which he acquires from terrestrial communications and natural objects: it adheres to them; and his ideas are founded on them and terminate in them. Whence it is evident, if he thinks and reasons from this principle and those ideas concerning the Divine and spiritual truths of revelation, that he will be sure to plunge into perverse opinions respecting them. Some such persons there are, who, like some natural drunkards, think themselves more acute than the rest of mankind, and thereby exhibit all the repulsive phenomena of mental intoxication before the eyes of the spiritually sober. It was of such that David said, "They reel to and fro like a drunken man, and all their wisdom is swallowed up:" * and, as it has been said, it was a state somewhat similar to this which had befallen the ancient church, at that period of it when Noah is said to have been drunken.

The fall of the Noachic dispensation took place in consequence of the people giving way to their hereditary inclinations, which they had derived from their antediluvian predecessors. Being their posterity, it is plain that they must have partaken of some of the hereditary characteristics of those who perished. The quality of that hereditary nature, may be described as a disposition to investigate the truth of faith under the sole guidance of sensual and scientific knowledge. This was one of the conspicuous faults of the antediluvian church, the beginning of which was represented by the eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil: and the reason why it resulted in their ruin by a flood was, because with them this necessity sprang from a principle and a genuis more interior than those which were characteristic of the postdiluvian race. These could not repeat the evil with similar enormity, and, therefore, a similar catastrophe could not occur to them. The evil inclinations which

* Psalm cvii. 27; marginal reading.

they hereditarily received, were associated with their interior nature; and although they were enabled to subdue and keep them in abeyance for a time, by the efforts of regeneration, yet they were subsequently developed; and they contributed to bring about that fall of the spiritual church which is represented by the folly and insanity of drunkenness: a disaster which we are informed was immediately followed by the discovery of its nakedness.

It must strike the reader as a remarkable occurrence, and, in some degree, tend to assist him in seeing the accuracy of the spiritual views which we are taking of those early narratives of Moses, when he observes, that the first consequence which followed the transgression of Adam was the discovery of his nakedness; and also, that the first circumstance which is mentioned after the fall of Noah is, that "he was uncovered in his tent." The eyes of Adam, however, are said to have been opened by his guilt, so that he beheld his shame: whereas, the eyes of Noah were closed by his transgression, and his nakedness exposed to others. These, like some other peculiarities, to which we have referred as characterizing the post and the antediluvian narratives, are not to be considered as the accidents of history. There cannot be any reasonable doubt that the true object of those statements is, to point out the respective condition to which transgression has exposed the souls of a somewhat differently constituted people, rather than to relate acts of indecency in reference to their bodies. Nudity is frequently spoken of in the Scriptures to signify the shame to which guilt exposes the soul. Thus, when Aaron made the golden calf, and the people said concerning it, "These be thy Gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt," it is written that "Moses saw that the people were *naked;* for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame;" * where, by nakedness and shame are meant sinfulness and guilt. Ezekiel, also, speaks of the Jewish church being naked and bare,† plainly to represent the disgrace and poverty which resulted from its transgression. The Laodiceans were particularly counseled to be clothed, so that the shame of their naked-

* Exod. xxxii. 25. † Ezekiel xvi. 8 to 16.

ness might not appear.* The nakedness and shame of Adam are certainly mentioned to represent the scandal and repulsiveness of sin; and a somewhat similar idea is designed to be conveyed to us by the uncovering which followed the drunkenness of Noah. It was to portray a corresponding event that the prophet said unto the daughter of Edom in the land of Uz, "The cup shall pass through unto thee; thou shalt be drunken, and shalt make thyself naked."† Whence it is evident that the narrative relating the employment of Noah, his planting a vineyard, his inebriation, and exposure was intended to inform us respecting the decline of the Noachic church,—the fall which succeeded, the stupidity which attended it, and the shame which followed.

* Rev. iii. 18. † Lam. iv. 21.

CHAPTER X.

HAM SEEING THE NAKEDNESS OF HIS FATHER; THE CONDUCT OF HIS TWO BRETHREN; NOAH'S CURSE ON CANAAN; AND HIS BLESSINGS ON SHEM AND JAPHETH.

"Truth under the veil of allegory, carries a more awful and majestic form. And this kind of interpretation is, of all others, the most useful to true theology and piety, and the sure proof of a superior wisdom and understanding."—*Clemens of Alexandria. Stromat.* i. 5.

The narrative by which that of the inebriation of Noah is immediately succeeded, is exceedingly remarkable. It is thus related:—"And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without. And Shem and Japheth took a garment and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backwards, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness. And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him. And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be His servant. God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem, and Canaan shall be his servant." *

This, at first sight, may seem to be the simple relation of a domestic incident which served to unfold the respective characters of Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and to afford occasion for Noah to make a declaration respecting the ill fate of the one, and the different classes of prosperity which were to distinguish the other two. But, if it is looked at a little more narrowly, some difficulty will be found to stand in the way of this supposed simplicity; and, to the eye of criticism, the history will seem to be obscure. This, indeed, is the opinion respecting it which is held by most who have investigated the subject. For instance, Ham is said to be the father of Canaan: this is the

* Genesis ix. 22—27.

first intimation which we have concerning him; but when he was born is by no means certain:* the history leaves this point without decision. If he was born at that time, he must *then* have had three elder brothers.† Why, then, is Ham, in this place, stated to be the father of him and not of them? To say that he is here named because a malediction was presently to be pronounced upon him, is not a sufficient answer to the inquiry; because the narrative affords no clear reason for the utterance of such a doom. There must, then, we think, have been some other cause for this episodial mention of Canaan than that which is apparent in the letter.

Again, it is said, that Noah knew what his younger son had done to him. Now, what had been done to him? the history furnishes no information upon this matter. Did he know what had been done to him by inspiration, experience, or report? The narrative does not answer. But Ham, who is the only one to whom any thing like misbehavior appears to be attached, was his second, and not his "younger" son. Japheth was the younger, according to the letter, and, therefore, this indication of age seems to mark him out as the perpetrator of the wrong. Here, then, are some difficulties which conjecture has attempted to explain; but the very circumstance of being compelled to suppose additional facts, to render the narrative intelligible, is a sufficient proof of its historical obscurity. Surely, the invention of facts to supply the implied omissions of the letter of the Divine Word, is not the right course for its explanation. A correct view of the Scriptures cannot require any such addenda for their exposition. We, who regard the Word as containing an internal sense, do not seek the aid of conjectural history to explain its literal obscurities: we find all that we require for that purpose in the representative character of the letter itself: and it seems impossible to contemplate the minute details respecting the conduct of Shem and Japheth, to prevent them-

* Some have said that Ham embraced his wife in the ark, and that Canaan was born therein and this is adduced as a point against him; for *St. Ambrose* thinks that the expression of Moses seems to intimate that the matrimonial functions were suspended in the ark!—*Bayle's Dict.*, Art. *Cham.*

† Gen. x. 6. "And the sons of Ham; Cush, and Mizraim, and Phut, and Canaan."

selves from seeing the indecency of which Ham had told them, without coming to the conclusion that some more interior truth was intended to be conveyed than that which it literally described.

But the great difficulty to be contended with in this relation, and that which has opened the door to the greatest number of conjectures in order to effect its solution, is the circumstance of Noah's cursing Canaan, when there is no apparent intimation throughout the narrative that Canaan had been guilty of any misconduct: why was this? Some have replied by saying that it was done as a special punishment for Ham, who was the real transgressor;* that is, that he was punished in the idea of one branch of his posterity being reduced to servitude. Such an answer may be allowed to account for the punishment of Ham, if the narrative really declared to us that he was to be the subject of it; but this is not the case; it was Canaan, not Ham,—the son, not the father, who was the subject of the malediction, and what had he done to deserve it? *If* the father had been guilty, why should the son be punished? where is the justice of such a course? The Scripture tells us "That the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father," that the "righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him;" † and, therefore, it seems plain that the above is not a satisfactory answer to the inquiry.

We have said *if* the father had been guilty, because there is no direct evidence of misconduct on the part of Ham; for, surely the mere circumstance of seeing the repulsive consequences of his father's intoxication cannot be reasonably construed into an act of guilt. Are men to be condemned simply because they may have the misfortune of seeing the indecency of others? Is it reasonable to suppose that they are guilty of serious crime, when they relate to their friends the offensive sight? Certainly men have the liberty of speaking, even disapprovingly, of conduct that is known to be improper—to converse with their brethren respecting it, and particularly so, if such conduct should happen to be their father's. And this is all that is related in the letter of the history respecting Ham, in the case of

* See *Dr. Patrick's Comment.* † Ezekiel xviii. 20

Noah. It is not mentioned as a charge; it is simply said that "Ham saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without." For any thing that appears to the contrary the sight might have surprised and pained him; and the circumstance of his informing Shem and Japheth, was a plain and natural occurrence, which might have been accompanied by suggestions of the very conduct which they pursued. In what then consisted his guilt? and why was Canaan cursed? We will notice a few of the answers which conjecture has supplied.

It is supposed from the statement, that Noah knew what his younger son had done to him, and from the omission to relate the nature of his crime, that reference is made to some peculiar wickedness on the part of Ham, who, for the purpose of such criticism, is assumed to be the youngest son.* The nature of his wickedness some have ventured to detail, and most make it infinitely worse than what the Scriptures relate.

It has been reported that Ham was a magician; he having acquired a knowledge of the subject in the antediluvian world, and preserved the records of it in the ark unknown to his father: but that Noah, on becoming acquainted with the circumstance, evinced his displeasure, for which Ham determined to be revenged; and that on discovering the situation of his father he carried out his purpose, in striking him with impotence by the exercise of his art, so that Noah could not become the parent of any more children. It has also been affirmed that this atrocity was executed by emasculation of the patriarch;† while other inventors have declared that the offence was even of a more heinous and unnatural character.‡ From some criticisms upon the Hebrew text, the Jews have concluded that some great sexual sin or incestuous intercourse was committed: to support this view they contend that the original expression אֹהָלָהּ *auhaulouh* properly means *her* tent, and that this contains a direct allusion to some female having been connected with the transaction, although none is actually named.§ In connection

* *Kitto's Bib. Cycl.* Art. *Ham.*

† *Bayle's Dictionary*, Art. *Cham.*

‡ Vide *Talmud*, tran. *Sanhedrim*, and *Rashi* in loco.

§ See *Notes to Dr. Raphall's Translation of Genesis.*

with this view, Von der Hardt* held the opinion that the crime of Ham consisted in committing incest with his father's wife: contending that this is the purport of the Scripture phrase, "to see," or in the *hiphil* conjugation, to make visible, or discover a father's nakedness. To enforce this criticism he urges a series of passages from Leviticus† in which a "father's nakedness" is used in the genitive of possession, not with respect to any part of his own person, but with relation to his wife. And he goes on to intimate, that the reason why Canaan was cursed, is because he was the issue of that repulsive commerce.‡ Now all these notions must be regarded as mere conjectures, proceeding from—not the chastest minds; and as they are easily seen to have no sound warrant in the narrative itself, we need not attempt any further refutation.

Aben Ezra argues, as there is no evidence of Ham's having done Noah any other injury than that of relating what he had seen to his brethren, that it follows, from the curse having been pronounced upon Canaan, that he must have been the actual perpetrator of the wrong: and to maintain this view he says, that "the possessive pronoun ו (vau) *his*, affixed to בֵּן (ben) son, refers not to Noah but to Ham," whose youngest son was Canaan, as appears from the sixth verse of the following chapter. To this exposition it has been replied, that it is "not in accordance with the letter of the text, nor the rules of grammar; and, also that the order in which the names occur in the Scripture, is no proof of that having been the order in which the persons were respectively born.§

Another argument, by which it is attempted to fix the wrong-doing principally on Canaan, and thus to account for the malediction which is pronounced upon him, is derived from the original, which, in our version is rendered *younger son.* This, it is asserted, might be translated, *little one;* and as that phrase could not be descriptive of Ham, because he was neither *little* nor the *younger*, it must be applicable to Canaan since he was

* He was Professor of Oriental Languages in the University of Helmstadt.

† Lev. xviii. 10.

‡ See *Annotations, by the Rev. J. Hewlett, B.D.*, and *Bayle's Dict.* Art. *Cham.*

§ *Dr. Raphall's Critical Notes to his Translation of Genesis.*

both.* This view, however, has not obtained much reputation, nor is it urged with much confidence in its accuracy.

Some Jewish rabbins, who have been mostly followed by Christian commentators, have supposed that it was Canaan who first saw the situation of Noah, and that, calling his father Ham to witness the indecency, they agreed to mock the aged man; † but that Canaan being the most forward in his insults, became the subject of the curse: it so happens, however, that there is nothing about this in the text; and also, that there is no evidence to show that either of those parties became the personal subject of Noah's imprecation.‡

Some have thought that the words "father of," ought to be supplied before the name Canaan, and consequently that the passage should read "cursed be *the father of* Canaan;" thus fixing the malediction plainly upon Ham. The Arabic version is said, by Dr. Clarke, to have those words; but they are not acknowledged by any other, and there they can only be regarded as a gloss. It has also been thought that Canaan was selected, because Noah could not pronounce a curse against Ham, he having been formerly blessed by God Himself: § but, surely, that could be no reason why he should not be menaced, if he subsequently perpetrated a wicked act.

Others have endeavored to find a cause for the malediction upon Canaan, in the circumstance of Ham's "telling his brethren *without*," interpreting *without* to mean that he gave

* Remarks on Lord Bollingbroke's *Letters on the Study of History*, by the Rev. J. Hervey, A.M., in a *Letter to a Lady of Quality*, p. 27. See also Dr. Patrick.

† Theodoret, in his *Fifty-seven Questions on the Book of Genesis*, says that he had learned from a Jew, that Canaan had first seen the nakedness of his grandfather, &c. The *Bereshit Rabba*, a work written long before the time of Theodoret, relates a similar tradition. Henry and Scott, with Dr. Patrick and M. Pool, concur in the above suggestion.

‡ "The curse was so far from being pronounced upon Canaan for his father Ham's transgression, that we do not read that it was pronounced for his own, nor was it executed till several hundred years after his death."—*Dr. Newton's Dissertation on the Prophecies*, p. 8.

§ That is, we suppose, by being preserved with his father in the ark. We are not aware of any other fact respecting him that can be construed into a special blessing.

malicious publicity to the fact, and that Canaan, becoming acquainted with it, was particularly offensive in the matter.* But surely, *without* simply means outside the tent, and not publicity, because it was only told to the *two brethren:* and it is certain that the narrative does not speak of Canaan's being at all concerned in the transaction. Ham is the only party stated to have witnessed the occurrence; and of him only it must naturally and necessarily be understood.

But neither Ham nor Canaan appears to have sustained any injurious consequence from the curse: how then could Ham have been punished in the servitude of his son? Moreover, it does not seem just to mark out the son for the transgression of his father, and to pass over the actual offender. Nothing can be referred to, as being any thing like a fulfilment of the malediction, until some hundreds of years afterwards in the history of the Canaanites, and in that the terms of the imprecation have only a very shadowy realization. Upon this ground it has been argued, that the language of Noah ought not to be regarded as an imprecation upon an individual, but as a prediction concerning the race of which he is supposed to have been the founder. But is this a satisfactory solution of the subject? Is it not rather an invention to meet a difficulty? Does such a conclusion arise naturally out of the structure of the narrative? We think not. Surely the plain drift of the literal sense of it, if it is to be considered as having such a sense, is to show that some wrong had been done to Noah by some individual descendant, and that Noah's malediction was intended to apply to him. Besides, the circumstance of finding events in the subsequent history of the Canaanites, by which to elucidate the difficulty, does not explain why they were so specifically named in connection with the wrong supposed to be complained of; because it appears, from the terms of the narrative, as if Ham was the sole perpetrator of the offence.

In consequence of the unsatisfactory character of these explanations (?), the "Rationalists" have rejected them all as mere glosses; and say, that Moses, writing these histories for

* *Dr. Patrick's Commentary.* He assumes the existence of a town and a population at the period; for neither of which is there any evidence according to the common interpretation.

the sons of Jacob, introduces this curse upon the Canaanites so early into his book, in order to induce them to believe that the Canaanites were a condemned race, and so to encourage them, and justify himself in prosecuting an expedition, of which he was the leader, and by which the inhabitants of Canaan were to be extirpated. Christian commentators have also incorporated this opinion with some of their expositions:* but still it must be confessed that none of these views sufficiently explain the subject. They do not dissipate the cloud which overhangs the narrative. Objections lie against all of them, which none are capable of explaining; and, therefore, to place the subject in a clearer light is an evident desideratum. And this, we think, can only be done by considering the narrative as the figurative description of particular incidents connected with the fall of the Noachic church.

Men should attach higher meanings to names in the Scriptures than those which are supplied by the notion of individuals, and resort to principles rather than to persons, in order to explain them. By this course a more interior prospect of the Divine Word will be presented to their view, and a more worthy conception of its teachings will be opened out, than those which can possibly arise from supposing them to refer mainly to individuals.

In the preceding chapter it was shown that by the drunkenness of Noah was representatively described the fall of the Noachic church into erroneous persuasions; and that by his being uncovered in his tent was denoted the disgrace and shame to which that circumstance exposed the dispensation. It has also been shown that by the three sons of Noah were denoted three classes of principles which entered into the constitution of the ancient church; and consequently of three classes of persons by whom they were respectively espoused.† That by *Shem* was denoted those who regarded the worship of the Lord as the first principle of the church, without, however, attaching much importance to the intelligence by which it ought to be directed; and that by *Japheth* was represented those who

* See Bishop Newton *On the Prophecies*, p. 8; and Henry and Scott's *Commentaries*.

† See chap. iii. p. 46.

regarded simple obedience to the laws which inculcate the utilities of life, as the principal requirement of religion, without carefully connecting those utilities with that supreme goodness and truth, from which all genuine compliances must emanate. And that by *Ham* was represented those who embrace the truths of religion chiefly for the sake of their intellectual light and advantages, but who, nevertheless, have but an indifferent regard for the good from whence they come, or the use they are designed to promote.

Now, if we keep those ideas in view, we shall find that the difficulties of the narrative before us will be easily removed. Those characters in the church to whom we have referred as being represented by Ham, did not long retain the truth which they professedly revered; for as the love of interior good and external obedience were inferior things to them, truth would, in their minds, soon become dissociated from its genuine origin, and cease to be applied to its proper purposes. Interior truth cannot be preserved in the church, if men do not connect it with the Lord, and apply it to their lives. When separated from its spiritual source and natural use, it is turned into speculations, and perversions follow. To describe this fact, Ham is episodially declared to be the father of Caanan; for Caanan, as we shall presently see, was the representative of such perversions. It is, however, the genius of minds of the Hamitish class to observe and seize upon every discrepancy which unfolds itself in the opinion of others. The Noachic church having fallen into error, those who were represented by Ham detected and exposed it—exposed it, not for the purpose of correction, but as affording a means for the propagation of doubt. Something similar to this has transpired during the decline of other churches in later times. By the adoption of false principles they have become uncovered in their tents; but *rationalists** have perceived the nudity thereby disclosed, and embraced the occasion to speak of it to others with derision and contempt. From these considerations we learn, why Ham is said to have seen the nakedness of his father and told his two brethren. We perceive that

* By *Rationalists*, here, we do not simply mean the followers of the German sect of Scriptural interpreters, so called: but all those who think their reason is to be preferred before the Word, and thus *secularists*, or deists, in general.

it is the representative description of an ancient class of sensual thinkers, who discovered and exposed the inconsistency and unseemliness, consequent upon the errors which had been fixed upon a declining church.

But Shem and Japheth are said to have taken a garment, and laid it on their shoulders, and gone backward, and covered their father's nakedness so that they saw it not. Every one, if he is so disposed, may easily see that some lesson of spiritual wisdom is intended to be conveyed to us by this history. By Shem and Japheth, as above remarked, are represented those who were principled in spiritual good and simple obedience; thus two classes of persons, one of whom was in internal, and the other in external charity. Now "charity doth not behave itself unseemly;" it "will cover a multitude of sins." * When those who are principled in this heavenly grace hear that error has effected an entrance into the church, they endeavor either to excuse it or to put upon it some favorable construction: the means which they employ for this purpose are represented by their taking a garment; and the earnestness with which they do it, is denoted by placing it upon their shoulders. The desires and activity of charity are frequently represented in the Word by articles of dress: thus we read of the robe of righteousness, of the *garment* of holiness, salvation, and praise; and likewise of the wedding *garment.* † So also, earnestness or power is plainly signified by the *shoulder;* hence it is written that some shall serve the Lord with *one shoulder*, ‡ and that others refused and pulled away the shoulder. § Whence it is easy to perceive that the efforts which charity employs to cover the miscarriages of others, are symbolized by garments; and also, that the force or ability with which they enter upon the work, is beautifully represented by putting it upon their shoulder. They are said to have gone backward, to signify the disinclination of those who were in charity, to attend to the errors and perverse opinions which were reported to them as pertaining to the parent church. This must be evident from this circumstance, that in going

* 1 Cor. xiii. 5. 1 Peter iv. 8.

† See Isaiah lxi. 3. 10; Matt. xxii. 11.

‡ Zeph. iii. 9. Marginal reading.

§ Zech. vii. 11.

backward the eyes are turned away from the object that is approached, so that they do not see it, a position which forcibly exhibits the unwillingness of the good to attend to the faults and mistaken reasonings of others. The great aim of such persons is to cast a veil over the infirmities of those who fall. They think and speak nothing but what is good respecting them, desiring thereby to encourage and raise them up. Such were the disposition and conduct of those in the ancient church, who are spoken of as Shem and Japheth; but those who are not under the influences of charity, are keen to notice, and forward to report, whatsoever they observe to be unfavorable in others. Such were the character and proceedings of those in the ancient church, who are spoken of as Ham; and hence arose those circumstances which are written respecting him in the narrative before us.

The next point of which we are informed is, that "Noah awoke from his wine;" by which is signified that the parent church now became sensible of the errors into which it had fallen. This follows from the series of things treated of, and the explanations which have been given. As, in the language of correspondence, to become drunk, denotes to be in error; so to awake from the inebriety, necessarily means to become aware of the mistake. Hence it is immediately added that "he knew what his younger son had done unto him." Now what had been done to him? Advantage had been taken of his error to educe a corrupt worship. And how did he know it? By the fact, that people had embraced such worship and made it their religion. These people are represented as Canaan; and they are spoken of as Noah's younger son, because they embraced the corruptions which had last descended from him. The whole history of the Canaanites is a proof of their having been among the most early corrupters of religion. It might indeed have had its beginning in mistake, but it was certainly continued in wilfulness; and hence arose the severe directions which were afterwards given for their extirpation from the land. The name Canaan denotes a *trader;* and this, in reference to religion, must necessarily have resulted in corruption. When an intoxicated church puts forth false doctrines, we may, judging from the natural impurity of the human heart, be sure that adherents

will be found. Theological history assures us that persons have not been wanting to espouse crudities of all sorts, and atrocities of many. And although some parent church may be blamable for their origin, and afterwards become sensible of its aberration, yet it will find that its misdoings have left an injurious impression upon society which will long remind it of its transgression. The Noachic church saw that a corrupted idea of God and worship had arisen from the last errors into which it had descended. Those last errors are spoken as the younger son, and the people who embraced them are designated Caanan; from the existence of those corruptions Noah knew the mischief which had been done unto him. By those corruptions it was proved to be a fallen church.

Canaan is called the son of Noah, with the meaning of a near descendant, and not in the sense of an immediate offspring; for it is expressly said that Ham was his father. It appears from a hasty glance at the literal or historical series, as if Ham were the party called the younger son; but this cannot be the case, because Japheth was younger than he.* Moreover, if Ham had

* That is, taking the dates of their birth to be indicated by the order in which their names are related. A controversy, however, has long existed upon this subject, arising from a supposition that Ham is spoken of as the "younger son," in the above narrative, and that Japheth was the elder, from the 21st verse of the tenth chapter, in which occurs the phrase, "Japheth the elder." It is, however, shown above that it is Canaan, and not Ham, who is referred to as the younger son; and *Rashi* admits that the original, rendered "the brother of Japheth the elder," is exceedingly obscure, and that, according to the idiom of the Hebrew language, it may mean the elder brother of Japheth. Scaliger also took this view of the subject, and has translated the passage to mean, "Shem—the elder brother of Japheth:" and this is the view which we take of the passage.—See *Arcana Cœlestia*, 1217.—*Kitto's Bib. Cyc.*, Art. *Shem;* and Chap. v. of *Mr. C. T. Beke's Origines Biblicæ.* Some, however, maintain, upon other grounds, that Japheth was the eldest son of Noah.—See *Dr. Patrick's Comment.* It is argued, from the history, that Noah was 500 years old before any of those sons were born (Gen. chap. v. 32); and that, as the deluge took place "in the 600th year of Noah's life" (chap. vii. 11), his eldest son must have been 100 years old at that time; but two years after the flood it is expressly said that Shem was 100 years old (chap. xi. 10); consequently Shem could not have been born until Noah was 502 years old, and therefore Japheth must have been his elder brother, he, it is *supposed*, being born when Noah was 500. Now this argument is founded upon the idea that the ages employed

been intended, it does not seem pertinent to mention the order of his birth, but quite fit, as the object of it was to speak of Canaan, and so to speak of him to distinguish him from the rest; and what follows is a sufficient proof of this being the purpose of the sentence. Hence we learn that it was Canaan who is called the younger son; and so called, because under that name was represented the people who took advantage of the last errors of the Noachic church, to educe therefrom a corrupted worship.

The corrupt worship signified by Canaan, descended from Noah through Ham. Ham was the father of Canaan; but Ham ceases to be spoken of almost immediately after this fact was declared. The reason is, because by Ham in this place is represented those of the church by whom the principles of truth had been perverted, and that their perversions were complete when the corruptions of Canaan were begotten. The perversions of the former, which pertained to the internal sentiments of faith, were transferred to the corruptions of the latter, which related to the external duties of worship, and, therefore, it is that Ham is no longer treated of, but Canaan. It was through the latter that the Noachic church received its chief injury; and this was the circumstance referred to by the declaration, he knew what his *youngest son had done unto him.* When a dispensation falls into errors, and many of its people take advantage of the lapse to confirm some other misconceptions of their own, it is plain that such a dispensation, though it may afterwards awake to a sense of its misdoings, will have its influence considerably injured by the activity of those misconceptions, and also be forcibly reminded of its own transgression by the circum-

are intended to indicate an exact chronology, and also that such a chronology has been educed; notions which cannot be sustained. But the passage on which this argument is raised, namely, "Noah was 500 years old; and Noah begat Shem, Ham, and Japheth" (chap. v. 32), does not fix a date for the birth of any; it simply relates in *round numbers* that Noah was of a certain age before they were begotten; it might, therefore, as above remarked, have been ten years afterwards before Shem was born, without affording the slightest proof that Japheth was the elder. We have no doubt that the order in which those three names are invariably related, is the order of their respective births; and their representative sense requires that they should be so considered.—See *Swedenborg's Arcana.* 1091.

stance of their existence. Those who will carry this consideration to that point of the history before us, in which we are informed that Noah knew what his younger son had done unto him, will at once see that the declaration expresses a clear idea, and refers to a practical event. Advantage had been taken of his lapse to bring about a fresh corruption.

And here we approach to the solution of what has so long been regarded as the main difficulty of the history; namely, Noah's saying, "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren." * This is not to be regarded as the imprecation of an angry man, but as the solemn teachings of a penitent church—of a dispensation that had recovered from the abuse of its wine. Nor does it simply relate to the political position in which the Canaanites would be placed, some hundreds of years afterwards; but it is a declaration respecting the religious principles of the people so called, and which were prevailing at that period, and which may be extant at any time. Those principles consisted in the rejection of the internal sentiments of faith and charity, and the mere retention of the formularies of worship. The forms so retained might be similar to those which are proper to a genuine church; but, surely it is easy to see that a worship of this character must be corrupt, because it is as a carcass without its life. External worship, considered in itself, is as nothing; and it can become something, that is to say sacred, only when it is embued with spiritual light and feeling. What is external adoration but mere gesture, unless it partakes of the affection of the heart? What is prayer of the lips but mere muttering, unless the aspirations of the mind are in it? Hence it is evident that external worship without internal sincerity and love, is mere hypocrisy—a whiteened sepulchre full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. Such, however, was the state of worship with those of whom Canaan was the representative; and it is on this account that we describe it as corrupt.

Now the Noachic church, when it awoke from its wine, became sensible of those corruptions; and thereupon it began to

* This is the fourth curse recorded in the Book of Genesis; the *first*, on the serpent; *second*, on the earth; *third*, on Cain; and *fourth*, on Canaan.

teach that such worship was profane, and consequently cursed. By its being cursed, is not to be understood that the Lord was angry and denounced the people who adopted it, because no such sentiment and conduct as those can be predicated of Him who is full of wisdom and mercy, and therefore infinitely above the infirmities which such ideas would suggest. But Canaan is declared to be cursed, because the corrupt worship adopted by this people, turned them away from the Lord, and so prevented them from becoming the recipients of His mercy. All cursing arises from men's departing from the Lord: it is brought about by their own errors and misconduct; and the circumstance of telling them that such is their condition, is an act of mercy, because it conveys to them information which may be serviceable in arresting their attention, and so in effecting their return. God curses no man; but he tells all men what is a cursed state, and he designs thereby to benefit those who will be instructed by the information. If a man does a wicked thing, and a wise one tells him of it, the intention in such a case is not to utter an imprecation, but to direct attention to the fact for the sake of promoting his amendment. So that the Noachic declaration "Cursed be Canaan," is not a denunciation, but a description of the condition of mere external worship and worshipers. It is intended to reveal to the world that such worship and worshipers are unconnected with the Lord; for as all blessings arise from a conjunction with Him, so all cursing must be the result of a separation from Him.

But the nature of the curse presents us with further evidence that it ought to be regarded as an instruction, and not as an anathema. The curse was to consist in Canaan's becoming a "Servant of servants to his brethren." Thus the uses of external worship, of which Canaan was the representative, were not to be entirely renounced; on the contrary, they were to be rendered serviceable to the church, though those services were to be of the lowest kind. The church consists of external worship as well as internal: its external is as a body which serves, and its internal as a soul which gives it life. As external worship without internal, is as a body without a soul, and thus corrupt, so internal worship without external, is as a soul with-

out its body, and thus vapory and unfixed; consequently, both are requisite to the completeness of its being. When, therefore, Noah declared the curse upon Canaan to consist in his being "a servant of servants to his brethren," the intention was to reveal, that mere external worship can only perform the lowest or vilest uses in the church.

The phrase "servant of servants," plainly signifies the lowest of servants; and thus it contemplates some of a superior order. Now all the principles of the church are servants in the sense of their being serviceable to man's spiritual interests; but *mere* external worship, because it is the most remote from all spiritual things, is designated the "servant of servants,"—that is, to the brethren; it is spoken of as a brother, because it belongs to the brotherhood of religious things; nevertheless, the uses of religion which it is capable of performing were to be of the most inferior and defective kind. It may, like an act of idolatry among the heathens, contribute towards the preservation of the lowest sentiments of religion, and thus be serviceable in the vilest state into which religion can descend: and this is what we understand by Canaan's being the servant of servants.

Shem and Japheth are said to have been blessed, because, as it has been seen, the former has reference to those who are principled in the internal things of charity, and thus to men of the internal church; and the latter has reference to those who are principled in the external duties of charity, and thus to men of the external church. All blessings arise from the presence of the Divine; for thereby it is that He dispenses His satisfactions, enjoyments, and delights. The Lord can be present with men of charity of every kind. Still He is perceived more sensibly by those who are in the superior good, than by those who are in the inferior. It is in consequence of this distinction respecting the presence of the Divine with men, that the phrase "Lord God," is associated with the blessing of Shem; whereas the term "God" only, is connected with that of Japheth. The Supreme is, as it were, present in a greater degree with those who are in internal charity, than with those who are in external charity; and hence it is that the Divine titles employed

in those cases are more complete in the one than in the other.*

The terms in which Shem is blessed are, "Blessed be the Lord God of Shem;" because, among the ancients who were interiorly good, this was a form of words by which they recognized that blessings had been given. They blessed the Lord God in order to acknowledge that He had blessed them.

But the blessing of Japheth consists of two parts; *first*, that God would enlarge him; and *second*, that He should dwell in the tents of Shem.† Now to enlarge Japheth, denotes to enlighten those who are of the *external church*. By means of instruction the boundaries of their intelligence are to be increased; thus their minds are to be expanded, and their information respecting religion and its uses is to be enlarged. And by His "dwelling in the tents of Shem" is represented that those who are so enlarged, will come to live in the appreciation of those excellences which distinguish the men of the *internal church*. This is the kind of *enlargement* to which the expression refers, together with the nature of the *dwelling* which is promised, and not the multiplication of a progeny, and the security of habitation, in what is called the Shemitic nations, as is commonly supposed to be the meaning of those statements. And Canaan is declared to be the servant of both, to represent that the mere external

* Philippson, as cited by Dr. Raphall, in his *Notes to his Translation of Genesis*, has remarked that the peculiar name of the Deity, *Jehovah*, (tetragrammaton) is here mentioned in connection with Shem; whereas in the succeeding verse, the name *Elohim*, God only is mentioned in connection with Japheth, to indicate that it is by the descendants of Shem that Jehovah would most purely be worshiped; which agrees with the ideas we have set forth respecting Shem.

† The original of this sentence is said to be ambiguous, and it has been considered to mean that God would dwell in the tents of Shem, and not of Japheth The *Chaldee of Onkelos* paraphrases it so as to express this idea, educing from it at the same time a spiritual sense, namely, that the gentiles should come into the church which was of the family of Shem. The authorized version certainly expresses the most obvious sense of the original, though both the ideas contended for may be included in it; for certainly God would dwell in the tents of Shem—that is, in the good of those who are principled in interior worship; and so, also, must Japheth in the sense referred to, in the paragraph above.

things of worship can be serviceable to superior principles of the church, only in the lowest possible degree.

After the utterance of those blessings we are told no more of Noah, than that he "lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years. And all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years: and he died." By which we are informed of the state and termination of the first ancient and strictly Noachic church.

CHAPTER XI.

THE GENERATIONS OF THE SONS OF NOAH, AND THE PROPAGATION OF THEIR RELIGION AMONG THE NATIONS.

"When families and nations are viewed by the angels, they have not at all the idea of a nation or family, but only the idea of the worship which prevails in that nation or family; for the quality of every one is the object of their attention, and the quality of man, which is the object of attention in heaven, is charity and faith."—*Swedenborg. Arcana Cœlestia,* 1258.

It cannot be too frequently inculcated, that the purpose of revelation is to furnish men with information respecting spiritual things; and it is not easy to conceive how such knowledge could be brought down to human apprehension, but by means of natural images in which it is represented. Heavenly things are presented to the imagination by material excellences. The city of God is described as having foundations of precious stones, gates of pearl, streets of gold, and a river whose water is life.* But it may be said, that very much of the language of Scripture does not evince any very decisive features of a figurative character; and some of its histories may be cited to illustrate the assertion. But it does not follow that spiritual ideas are not involved because the plainness and simplicity of the terms do not seem immediately to present them. The history of a people is the outbirth of mind; and that which has been selected to form portions of the Divine Word, is intended to represent to us peculiarities of mind in connection with the spiritualities of the Lord's church. When men, as was anciently the case, had their chief delight in the contemplation of recondite things, they sometimes devised historical relations purposely to represent them. This style of speaking upon such subjects, was commonly practised among the nations of antiquity, as has been shown in a preceding chapter. But when men began to have their principal pleasure in the contemplation of natural things, they also began to care but little about understanding the spiritual sentiments

* See Rev. xxi., xxii.

contained within the factitious histories of their predecessors. And, in the process of time, the existence of such sentiments has been forgotten by the generality of mankind. Hence those beautiful examples which have been preserved in the early portions of Genesis, have come to be regarded as the veritable history of mundane affairs; so that the doubts suggested by science, and the repugnance evoked by reason, are commonly charged upon men's want of simplicity and faith! How seldom, and with what reluctance do the men of the professing church listen to the demonstrated fact, that it has adopted a mistaken interpretation respecting those histories? The mind having seized upon the literal ideas which they express, is found to display an unwillingness to admit the existence of any other. The twofold nature of man, and the spiritual purpose of revelation, are overlooked in such a proceeding. The natural man, having educed a natural sense from the letter of the Scriptures, supposes that he has come into the possession of the whole intention of it. He forgets the circumstance that he is also a spiritual being; that the Scriptures were given by the Spirit of God; that they are declared to contain a spiritual sense, and consequently designed to convey to him a lesson respecting spiritual things. But his forgetfulness of those facts does not alter or remove them. Some of the plainest histories recorded have been made the vehicles of the plainest spiritual truths: of this, the history of the Jewish ceremonial is a sufficient proof. That is conceded, by all parties, to be typical as well as real. As, then, the history of actual occurrences has been selected to represent spiritual things, so factitious events have been constructed into narratives for a similar purpose. The first nine chapters of Genesis we have seen to contain remarkable evidences of this assertion, and now we reach the tenth.

This is a remarkable document—remarkable because it contains some few glances at actual history; and thereby somewhat departs from the first of the four general styles of Divine composition by which the Scriptures are distinguished.* How it

* These *four styles* are very distinctly marked :—

The FIRST is that in which earthly and worldly things are mentioned in the letter, *solely* for the purpose of representing things of a spiritual and heavenly nature; of which the early portions of Genesis are examples, as

is factitious, and in what particulars it glances at real events, will subsequently appear. We notice, in the first place, that it presents us with three lists of the descendants of Japheth, Ham, and Shem:* from which, it may be asked, how such series of names can possibly signify anything else than that which they literally express, namely, the genealogies which they relate, and the formation of the nations? We reply by observing, that if those names mean nothing more than the cognomina of individuals from whom the various populations of the earth descended, it would be impossible to connect such a view of them with any satisfactory idea of the narratives being an *inspired* revelation, intended to convey to the *church* some *spiritual truth* for its perpetual use; which, we contend, must be its character and purpose, if it were constructed under the direction of God, which we do not doubt. The Scriptures, in several other places, contain similar genealogical tables; and although some of them are to be received in their literal sense, yet that is not the principal design of them. They have a higher object; and that of the one before us, is to record the successive descent and gradual propagation of the spiritual sentiments of the ancient

also are the parables. It is to this style that Hannah referred when she said, "Speak ye what is high, let what is ancient come forth from your mouth" (1 Sam. ii. 3). And by the Psalmist it is called, "Dark sayings of old" (Psalm lxxviii. 2, &c.).

The SECOND *style* is that which belongs to the truly historical portion of the Word, commencing from Abram and running through what are commonly considered as the historical books, and which for the most part relate things as they actually occurred; but which, nevertheless, like the first style, is representative of the spiritual and celestial things concerning heaven and the church.

The THIRD *style* is that which is presented in the prophetical books, which took its rise from that which is peculiar to the *first;* but which is, as it were, broken or disconnected in its literal structure, and scarcely ever intelligible except in the internal sense, which is in a beautiful series, and, like the preceding styles, treats of spiritual things.

The FOURTH *style* consists of an intermediate between the prophetical and ordinary speech. Of this the Psalms are an obvious example.

* It is remarkable that the order in which these generations are given, is the reverse of that in which the names are written on all other occasions. May not this be to inform us that the external things of the ancient church, represented by Japheth, were now beginning to be regarded as the *first*, and the internal *things* of it, represented by Shem, as the last?

church. This conclusion will appear more certain when it is remembered that names, in the original tongues of the Scriptures, are not simply the appellations of persons, but terms for other ideas entirely apart from them. To the wise ones of antiquity names were always the exponents of such ideas; but in less scrupulous times men began to regard them only as the cognomina of individuals. Hence, it has come to pass at the present day, that when parents select Scripture names for their children, they scarcely ever reflect upon the ideas which such names were employed to express. Who now, when directing their son to be named *Jacob*, or their daughter, *Elizabeth*, think that they are directing him to be called a *supplanter*, and her to be denominated *the fulness of God*. Yet such are the ideas which those names were originally employed to convey. It is the same with all Scripture names; and, therefore, the personal genealogy, with which they are for the most part associated, may also be reasonably supposed to represent the succession and relationship of those things of which such names are properly significant. Thus it is easy to see that a series of such names may be employed to indicate a succession of spiritual ideas, without referring, necessarily, to persons.

For instance, if we say, These are the sons of charity; faith, and justice, and virtue, and joy, and satisfaction; and the sons of faith; intelligence, and hope; every one at once recognizes that principles and not persons are the subjects spoken of. Now very similar to this, is the general structure of the passages in which it is said, these are "the sons of Japheth; Gomer, and Magog, and Madai, and Javan, and Tubal, and Meshech, and Tiras. And the sons of Gomer; Ashkenaz, and Riphath, and Togarmah." But why is it that these names have come to be regarded as denoting persons only, while the former are known to be significant of principles only? Simply, because in the one case no ideas are reflected on, apart from *persons* which the names are supposed to specify; whereas, in the other, no ideas separate from the *principles* which the terms are known to express, come into the mind. If the generality of mankind were to lose the signification of the former names, as they have done with respect to the latter, who can say that such a series would not come to be regarded as personal appellatives? That

which has really occurred with the one, may, under similar circumstances, take place with the other; hence it is easy to see how the true meaning of such narratives may be lost. This may serve to indicate, and in some measure to illustrate, the view which we think ought, for the most part, to be taken of the generations mentioned in the chapter before us, and which are commonly understood to treat of individuals, and of the rise of nations from them.

It has been seen that we consider the book of Genesis down to the *death* of Noah, as containing a series of purely figurative narratives; but, as we have intimated, the relations which follow, to the time of Eber, contain some few glances at actual events. The reasons for the adoption of a somewhat different style, are grounded in the peculiar alterations which were taking place in the circumstances of the church. Being in the process of descending into merely *natural* love and a *worldly* condition, it gradually lost sight of the authority of principles, and successively adjoined itself to such influences as arose from national, family, or personal considerations. Hereupon it became useful to employ some *natural* facts which were then in the process of being developed, as the vehicle for the revelation then vouchsafed; by this means that revelation was better adapted to indicate the worldly condition, and thus to arrest the *sensual* career, which was setting in upon the *spiritual* church. The parent was dead; the principles by which it had formerly walked with God, and found grace in the eyes of the Lord, had passed away; consequently the power of its unity was diminished, and thereupon several parties sought to propagate different notions respecting religion and its uses: in some cases, nations were led to accept those notions; and, in others, settlements were formed in sundry places. Diversified notions concerning religion and its uses, and the ascendancy which they obtained in various directions, are the things primarily treated of in the chapter before us; though in a secondary sense it also refers to some nations by whom such notions were acknowledged, and to some colonization to which they led. Thus, although the Divine style of representing spiritual truth by means of natural images, is still continued in all its strictness, yet, some of the representations employed, had been gathered,

by slight selections from actual history; and this, among other things, was intended to show us what was the origin of those different religions which characterized the ancient world, the reminiscences of which are still preserved among so many nations of the earth. We learn that they all arose out of the diverse notions which sprung up among mankind in the declining state of the first ancient or spiritual church.

Shem, Ham, and Japheth, as before observed, are not to be considered as individuals, but as communities,* among each of whom certain principles of the spiritual church were mostly cherished. And therefore, by their sons are not to be understood individual descendants, but the births of new opinions, and the propagation of them in such a way as to induce others to adopt them. Every one knows how one doctrine in the church has begotten another, and that they have stood in the relation of father and son. When the premises are sound, and the logic correct, by which a new doctrine is educed, the son will be distinguished by the excellences of the sire. But when the premises are defective, and the fallen inclinations of the heart interfere with the logic, the doctrine which results will be sure to partake of something that is feeble and false; but which, nevertheless, may be considered as standing in a similar relation. Take Arianism, Tripersonalism, and Socinianism; view each as a parent doctrine, and then contemplate the character of the several sons of which each has been the father: take the parties by whom those parent doctrines have been espoused, and contemplate the peoples whom they have induced to become the recipients of their views, and you will possess a ready illustration of what is primarily meant by the generations of the three sons of Noah. That it is an idea of this character which is referred to by the generations spoken of, is evident from what has been shown respecting Shem, Ham, and Japheth. A community cannot be contemplated as the natural father of an individual; and that individuals are not meant is evident from other considerations.

The number which is recorded to have descended from all three is *seventy*. From JAPHETH, through Gomer and Javan,

* See Chapter iii.

fourteen. From HAM, through Cush, Mizraim, Canaan, and Raamah, *thirty;* and from SHEM, through Amran, Arphaxad, Eber, and Joktan, *twenty-six.* Now if these are to be regarded as complete lists of those who descended from the patriarchs in the way of ordinary generation, then it must be noticed as exceedingly remarkable that no female is named among them. We may be told that females might have been born, but that it was not customary in those times to preserve any records upon the subject. But what is the evidence for this opinion? It is nothing more than an inference from the circumstance that such names are not found in those ancient documents. But can this be admitted to be the true reason for such omissions? We think not. Whence came this imaginary custom? Surely it must have had its ground in something more solid than mere masculine caprice. It was the Jews who, in after-times, made a custom of it; and they drew their custom from the omissions observable in those early records of their leader; but the reasons for those omissions they never understood, because they were not, at any period of their history, a spiritually-minded race.

The probable reason why daughters are not mentioned in those generations is, because the female character is not, suited to represent those *doctrinal* things of the spiritual church,* the derivations and propagations of which, are the subjects here referred to. Woman represents the affections of the will, but man represents the perceptions of the understanding. Opinions may be propagated, affections cannot. You may implant ideas, which your understanding may beget, into the thoughts of others, and so induce them to think as you think respecting them; but affections cannot be communicated to others, so as to make them feel as you feel respecting the object of your love. Knowledge comes to us by an external way, but affection by an internal way. Hence the Psalmist says, "Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven."† It is on this account that female names are omitted from the generations before us. The reason why they appear in

*** It is related of *all* the patriarchs who lived before the flood, that they begat sons and daughters (see Gen. v.), but this idea is only predicated of the descendants of Shem after that event (Gen xi. 10 to 25), and before Abram.**

† Psalm lxxxv. ii.

a similar genealogical chapter before the flood, is because at that period the genius of mankind was different from that which it afterwards became. Male names only are inserted in the lists before us, because, as we have just said, it is the derivation and propagation of the *doctrinal things of the spiritual church* which are the subjects treated of. But the male names recorded are not the exponents of individual men; nineteen of them are distinctly *plural;* that is to say, all those which end in *im* and *ites*, of which there are two of the former in the line of Japheth through Javan, and eight more in the line of Ham through Mizraim; and nine of the latter in the same line through Canaan. Beside these there are several other names which are mentioned upon other occasions, as the designation of countries, which include the idea of their people; among them may be noticed Aram, Ophir, Havilah and Uz. But even the names in those generations which retain the singular form, do not necessarily denote individuals: this will be readily acknowledged when it is remembered that names in the singular, such as Jacob, Judah, and many others, are frequently employed to signify a people. And it is a meaning of this kind, which is intended to be expressed by the names of those who are said to have descended from Shem, Ham, and Japheth; though the primary object of those names, was to indicate a series of diversified doctrines which had been successively evolved from those three branches of the ancient church. So that by sons being born unto them, are signified perceptions concerning religion and worship; which had been generated and produced by each of those communities as a father. The various names of those sons signified the distinctive nature of such religion and worship, and this religion and worship being propagated with those names, within and beyond the land of Canaan, successively became the names of the nations by whom such religion and worship were received. The great topics of revelation are the things of the church; of these it never loses sight; and whensoever it is interpreted under a forgetfulness of this fact, its chief purpose is sure to be mistaken.

The above circumstance may, in some measure, be illustrated by the history of the propagation of Christianity. This was originally planted in Judea, and the persons by whom its doc-

trines were received, begat thereby, as sons, all the nations of western Europe. They were not the first colonizers of those countries, but the converters of their people. From this circumstance those nations have for many ages obtained the general name of Christians; yet it is well known, that in each nation it has always worn some peculiar feature, which historians might have appropriately designated if they had been so disposed. National characteristics have contributed to the evolution of such peculiarities. The mental vessel in each has differed; and this would modify that which it received. From these considerations no difficulty need be experienced in seeing how it was, that the respective espousers of the various doctrines which grew up within the pale of the ancient church, successively separated and propagated their opinions in the world; so that the names of their religious characteristics became fixed upon the nations which received them. Thus it is not the origin of the inhabitants of the nations, but the origin and character of the religious doctrine and ritual which prevailed among them in those ancient times, of which Moses has informed us. The correctness of this view is somewhat evident from the terms in which the propagations are related. After the enumeration of the descendants of Japheth, it is said "By these were the isles of the gentiles divided in their lands:" * thus contemplating the Gentiles as already existing, but that they were "divided in their lands," *i.e.*, distinguished in their lands by the several notions of religion which began to be prevalent among them.†

* Genesis x. 5.

† Some learned criticism by *Gesenius*, *Rosenmuller*, *Mendelssohn*, and others, has been employed to show that the Hebrew of the above passage was designed to express the physical origin and foundation of the nation. This effort arose from the foregone conclusion that such was the general purpose of the whole chapter; but they, perceiving that some doubts upon this point might arise from the structure of the above passage, have endeavored to make it speak what they supposed it ought to do. We however do not think that they have succeeded in showing any sufficient reason for giving to the passage any other or any better translation than that of the authorized version. Dr. Raphall has translated the passage "By these were *separately formed*," &c. The original, however, is נִפְרְדוּ (*nipheredvou*) which literally denotes were separated or divided; thus a *verb* and not an *adverb*. And the italicised manner in which he has printed his translation, is an acknowledg-

And the whole narrative is closed with the declaration, "By these were the nations divided in the earth after the flood;" where, also, nations, considered as the settlements of men, are spoken of as being extant,* but separated by the diversified religion and ritual which the descendants of those who are called Shem, Ham, and Japheth, hath introduced among them. That each of those names was originally expressive of a religious element, seems plain from some indications afforded by learned research. For instance; how have what are called the Shemitic nations been identified? Certainly not by tracing them up to Shem, nor to any of his descendants, as their original progenitors; but by the religious peculiarities of a written, traditional, or living character which have been preserved among them. Again: in Egypt, which is also called Mizraim and the land of Ham, we find that Ham was set up as an object of worship under the name of Hammon or Ammon. This kind of idolatry had its origin in the substitution of persons for principles. That which, as a religious sentiment, had been introduced to Egypt under the name of Ham, was corrupted into the idea of a religious person. The true idea was lost in the sensuality which gave it personation; but in the fact that he came to be regarded as a god, we have proof that a religious element must have underlain the name. The idea of worship was retained, though it was transferred to an imaginary object. And something similar may be said respecting Japheth. Plutarch is considered to have called Egypt χημια *Chemia;* and it is highly probable that the Greeks, who certainly drew much of their presumed antiquity from India, through that country,† also

ment that it was adopted from other considerations than that of a literal rendering of the original.

* Dr. C. Von Rotteck, Professor of Jurisprudence in the University of Frieburgh, rejects every theory of the population of the earth which is confined to the sons of Noah; and maintains that in "the time of those sons or their nearest descendants, according to Moses's representation, already *nations* and *kingdoms* actually existed in Asia and Africa, which therefore originated not from the posterity of Noah." "These may indeed have sent colonies among those nations, perhaps also have occasioned the foundation of some new states, but they were not the only founders of them."—*General History of the World*, vol. i. p. 63. English translation.

† See *Pocock's India in Greece.*

derived their *Japetus* from thence, as well as their Jupiter *Ammon*. Shem, Ham, and Japheth, were, as it has been shown, the names of the three general principles of religion which belonged to the ancient church;* including, as we have said, the respective classes of society by whom they were embraced; and those names only came to be regarded as the designations of individuals, when the principles had perished, to which they originally referred; and a similar view is applicable to the names of all those who are said to have descended from them.†

* See Chapter iii.

† The above exposition does not come into collision with the usually received doctrine respecting the unity of the human race, that is, that mankind have all descended from a single pair; though it may be doubted, without at all calling into question the sanctity or divinity of the Scriptures, whether they really treat of or decide that physiological problem. This, certainly, is not the object of the first chapter of Genesis; and the declaration of the apostles that "God made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth" (Acts xvii. 26), does not necessarily reveal such a fact. The term αίματος, blood, is omitted from the *Coptic*, *Æthiopic*, *Vulgate*, *Itala*, *Clement's*, *Bede's*, and some other versions. (See *Dr. A. Clarke's Com.*) We, however, do not see any reason for doubting that the word was originally employed by the apostle; still it does not appear to us that his object was to declare the unity or origin of nations from a single pair. If so, we think that a word would have been employed not so frequently used in the Scriptures in a figurative sense as is that of blood." "One blood," may here certainly mean *similarity of life*, or *like responsibility*. The declaration of *this* doctrine is, unquestionably one of the great features of the Scriptures; but we do not see that it announces the fact, or settles the philosophy respecting the physical origin of all nations, notwithstanding the great learning and research which have been directed to this subject by Drs. Pritchard, Forrey, and others. The three principal races, namely, the *Caucasian*, *Mongolian*, and *Negro*, have, certainly, not yet been satisfactorily shown to have descended from one common ancestor. The inhabitants of the various planets, of whose existence there can be no well founded rational doubt, notwithstanding Dr. Whewell's theory, have certainly sprung from distinct progenitors, and why may not this have been the case with the three races above adverted to? Is the supposition unreasonable? Is the contrary anywhere plainly declared in the Scriptures? Do not their physical conditions seem to countenance such an opinion? Negroes do not produce Mongolians, nor Mongolians Negroes, nor was it ever known that either of them became the parents of a Caucasian child. The Albinos are not of this nature. Why then shall we not take the different providences by which God is pleased to continue these procreations, as a fair and reasonable intimation of the different providences by which they were commenced?

Doubtless this view will be felt to interfere with long cherished opinions upon the subject; but the age of a notion is no evidence of its truth. Philosophers as well as theologians, have had to relinquish many speculations which time had consecrated, but truth disowned. It is now demonstrated, from various quarters, that incorrect views have, for many centuries, been propagated respecting some of the principal circumstances recorded in the early portions of Genesis; and from this we argue, that the interpretation which has been given to the tenth chapter ought to be revised, because it has been conducted upon the same principle as that which is now discovered to have been a source of error.

That chapter, because it has been *supposed* to contain an account of the peopling of the earth after the deluge, has been declared to be one of the most valuable records of antiquity.* That it is one of such records, we readily admit; yet, certainly not for the reasons assigned; but rather because it is the only document which furnishes us with any information respecting the origin and character of those diversities of religion by which the nations came to be distinguished. The true explanation of the chapter relating to the deluge, does not require the extinction of all nations. The chronology of some claim a higher antiquity than that which has been assigned to the flood.† And the evidence of submersion, which is presented by the earth in all its parts, is plainly not referable to the Noachic period. The best scholars have conceded that it was not universal, and science

* *Dr. Watson's Apology for the Bible*, letter iii. The Bishop contrasts the chapter as showing the origin of nations from a human source, with those mythological statements in which it is said that "one nation had sprung out of the earth they inhabited; another from a cricket or grasshopper; another from an oak; another from a mushroom; another from a dragon's tooth;" and, of course, claims a preference to the former view. Still the argument is not fairly put. He treats those classical legends as if they had been originally constructed to convey the ideas which are literally expressed, and keeps out of sight their mythological nature. They never were intended to be understood in their literal sense. We have no doubt that the objects named in those legends, as the origin of nations, were employed as the emblems of certain human characteristics by which the nations were supposed to have been distinguished.

† See *Antediluvian History*, chap. xxii.

has demonstrated this fact.* This tenth chapter of Genesis, then, cannot reasonably be considered as a history of the repeopling of the earth. That which was wholly destroyed by the flood—the inundation of religious falsehood upon the human mind—was the perception and character of the most ancient church. After that catastrophe we are informed of the establishment of another dispensation, together with the manner in which some of its doctrines and rituals were successively distributed among the nations. How valuable is this view of the subject! and how consistent is it with the idea of the document relating it being a revelation from God! We see from it how it is that all nations are found to know something of religion, which, more or less remotely, has had a pedigree in some ancient, but imperfectly received revelation. The idea concern-

* The chronology of ancient history is commonly admitted to be very vague. The Hebrew Scriptures have been taken as the basis of it: this was Archbishop Usher's plan. Jackson and Hales, however, maintain that the Hebrew text has been violated in the whole department of chronology, and more especially so in the genealogical tables of the antediluvian patriarchs, and the ten generations immediately after the flood: and, therefore, they prefer the Septuagint and Josephus! By this they have made the time which elapsed between the creation and the birth of Abram, upwards of a thousand years more than Usher. The period, from the creation to the Christian era, has been computed with no less than 140 variations; in which controversy the most distinguished minds have been engaged. Usher makes it 4004 years; Playfair, 4007; Hales, 5411; Jackson, 5426; Scaliger, 5722; Riccioli, 5956; Eusebius, 6972; the Alphonsine tables, 8707, &c. The Egyptians, Chaldeans, and Brahmins are said to have made it much more; while geology has demonstrated that the date of the creation is vastly more remote than any of the chronologers have imagined. Discrepancies assail the subject, simply because the symbolic numbers of the early portions of the Scriptures have been mistaken for their literal sense. The early portion of the Scriptures does not include any data from which to draw the age, or the physical or political history of nations. They simply indicate the nature and character of those religious doctrines which the nations received, and from which they acquired the name by which they were subsequently known in history. *Dr. Bunsen* maintains that the history of Egypt may be carried back, with certainty, to a period of more than 2500 years before the building of Solomon's temple; that is, to within 500 years of the chronology commonly set down as the age of the world, and thus to a time considerably anterior to the birth of *Mizraim*, its supposed founder, and the supposed period at which the origin of nations began.—*Egypt's place in Universal History.*

ing a God, which is involved in all of them, could not have come to man through any other medium.

We may be told that this view of the origin of religion among the nations, is not inconsistent with the opinion of those who hold that the repeopling of the earth is the subject of the chapter before us. Certainly, it is not: the two views may be consistent in this point; and yet one of them may be wrong. If the origin of nations had been the subject of the literal sense, we feel assured that their geographical positions would have been, because they could have been much more explicitly expressed; whereas it is admitted upon all hands that, with very few exceptions, they are indicated with great vagueness. The chapter certainly fails to give us that satisfactory information respecting the formation of the nations of which it is supposed to treat; and it is admitted, by the best authorities who take that view of the subject, that insuperable difficulties attend the attempt to determine what nations or tribes arose from many of the supposed persons enumerated. The similarity or identity of the names of some of the nations or tribes which are found in subsequent history, with some of the names which are mentioned, affords the principle upon which the research has been conducted. But this method of investigating the subject is well known to involve great uncertainty. "Many nations and peoples have, doubtless, lost the names by which they were originally called; and many others, of comparatively recent origin, may, by accident, have obtained names with some similarity to those who are considered the first founders of nations." * This, undoubtedly, is very unfavorable to any certainty on the subject still; from among all those sources of error, a few countries can be identified with the names of some of the *seventy* † that are enumerated, because these names are repeated in the sense of nations or tribes in subsequent portions

* See *Pictorial Bible.* Notes on Gen. x.

† It is remarkable that the number of the whole should have been the same as "all the souls that came out of the loins of Jacob" (Exodus i. 5), as the elders of Israel (Exodus xxiv. 1); the age of man (Psalm xc. 10); the duration of the captivity (Jer. xxv. 11), those whom the Lord appointed (Luke x. 1), with several other leading events in Scripture history. The reason however is, because of the significancy of the number. Seventy denotes the fulness or completion of that which is the subject treated of.

of the Scripture. This circumstance, however, does not indicate that such nations or tribes descended in the way of generation from individuals so named; but, rather that as nations and tribes they had adopted the religious doctrine and ritual which those names were originally intended to express. Thus they are designated in the Scriptures from the religions by which they were characterized, and not from the individuals supposed to have been their founders. It is not the physical origin and political action of the nations which are treated of, but the beginning of that peculiar vitiated knowledge of spiritual things, and the condition of the religious principles, which were prevalent among the nations at that time. This must be evident to all those who will carefully consult the histories and prophecies of the Word in which those names occur. Sometimes they are spoken of in the way of favor, and at others in the language of reprobation:* consequences which every one may see to have been the results of the state of religion among them.

It may be asked how so many nations could have had such distinctive characteristics of religion impressed upon them? Those who will reflect upon the circumstance that something similar has been the effect of Christianity upon the nations of Europe, and of Mahomedanism upon various countries of Asia and Africa, will readily be supplied with an answer to that inquiry. Many of the countries whose names originated in the way above suggested, are not now capable of being identified. Religious corruption and political changes have destroyed the means requisite to trace them. Several of those which are capable of being made out with tolerable certainty, do not appear to have attained the character of nations in any large sense of that expression. Those nations whose names are *best* known to have been derived from some of those recorded by Moses in the chapter before us, are among the largest recognized in Biblical geography; among these are Egypt,† Assyria, and Canaan.

* See Ezekiel xxvii., in which are repeated more of the names mentioned in Genesis x., than are to be found in any other chapter, with the exception of 1 Chron. i. which is simply a copy of the Mosaic document.

† Egypt is the same as Mizraim. Josephus says, that those who inhabited the country called it *Mestrem*, and the Egyptians, *Mestrœns* (*Antiq.* i., 6. 2.);

Still there are countries of great antiquity and large extent whose names cannot be traced to any of those adverted to: of these China and America are conspicuous examples. And it is in vain to search the Scriptures for information respecting their founders; which we think would not have been the case, if the object of the narrative had been to make known the personal founders of nations: for why mention the individuals whom commentators suppose to have founded so many inconsiderable nations of which we have now no knowledge, and yet omit to notice the founders of those which have become so great, so populous, and enduring? Surely the Divine who caused the narrative to be written, foresaw these results; and the only reason which can be assigned for such omissions is, that in no case was such the intention of the narrative. We must then return to the idea, that the principal object of those lists of names is, *first*, to express the origin and character of those varieties of religious sentiments which sprang out of those three families of doctrine and worship, which were peculiar to the ancient church, and respectively represented under the designations of Shem, Ham, and Japheth; and, *secondly*, to indicate the propagations of such varieties of religious sentiments among the nations, and that they, embracing the sentiments, adopted the names by which they were expressed; much in the same way that Rome, from its religion, is called Papal, and Turkey, Mahomedan. The apostles, however, did not originate the people of Italy, nor Mahomed the inhabitants of Turkey; but they gave to both nations a religion which they adopted; and in accepting the thing, they acknowledged the name. This may serve to illustrate one view of the document before us: for it must be conceded that all those places, the names of which are known to have sprung out of those which Moses has enumerated, were under the influence of some distinctive characteristics of reli-

and the Arabs to this day call it *Mezr;* in both of these facts there is still visible some remains of its religious name. Champollion in his *Egypt*, i. 77, remarks that the name Egypt is of uncertain origin and signification. Why the Scriptures should have retained a plurality of names for this country, is not very obvious; but the probable reason is, that Egypt was its territorial, and Mizraim and Ham its religious names. Other instances of one region being spoken of under a plurality of names might be referred to, and explained upon the same principle.

gion. It appears, indeed, in those periods when their history became prominent, that their religion was corrupted. It is, however, not the quality of the thing to which we here refer, but the fact of its existence. Now, whence did it come, and how did those differences in it arise, if not from the causes to which we have traced them? A nation, like an individual, when considered from an interior or spiritual point of view, must be regarded as to the quality of its religion; and, therefore, when that quality became the subject of revelation, it was certainly designated by an appropriate or corresponding name.

But we may be asked to point out the distinctive nature of the doctrines which the various names express. This could, in many respects, be done in a very satisfactory way by a consultation of other portions of the Word, where those names again occur in connection with circumstances which would afford materials for the purpose: as for instance, those who are said to have descended from Canaan, and are afterwards recounted as nations in Palestine, and whom the Israelites were commanded to expel. But it would be difficult to do it with no other materials than the chapter before us, because nothing more than names are there recorded.* If we were to read a list of the names by which the numerous sections of Christianity have been distinguished, very imperfect notions would be obtained respecting the nature and quality of each. Their history would have to be consulted, and their documents examined, before any clear and satisfactory information concerning the peculiar doctrines of each could be obtained; and yet, from the denominational differences only, we might be certain that there was something in the nature of each which distinguished it from others. Now these facts are equally applicable to the list of names which Moses has recorded in the chapter we are considering. Still the mere names are not entirely destitute of

* "It is so interesting as well as useful to know the original signification of proper names, that a careful investigation of their nature has many advantages. The chief use, however, which accrues from an accurate knowledge of them is, that we are by their means enabled to attain a more lively apprehension of the truth of ancient history. Without doubt many truths of this subject are very obscure, as proper names are so often only the scattered and decayed ruins of a distant age."—*Dr. Ewald, Professor of Theology in the University of Tubingen. Kitto's Bib. Cycl.*, Art. *Proper Names.*

information upon the point which is inquired after, because, as before observed, they are the exponents of ideas. Take for examples a name from each of the three general lines :—*Elishah*, from Japheth's, which denotes *God that helps; Nimrod*, from Ham's, which signifies *a ruler;* and *Asshur*, from Shem's, which denotes *an observer*. Now beneath each of these names a religious element is obvious; the *first* indicating the acknowledgment of *God as the helper* of mankind; the *second* referring to some principle by which mankind would be *ruled;* and the *third* recognizing some duties which had to be *observed*. And something similar is involved in every other name.

The actual nature of the difference in religious character which all those names express, and, consequently, the distinctions with which they existed among the nations, would, of course, depend upon the amount of truth and goodness which were in them; for it is easy to see, that every distinction in the quality of religion, must be determined according to the accuracy of the idea which is entertained respecting the Lord, and the purity of the adoration with which He is worshiped. All who estimate these things with any veneration are obviously the recipients of religion to some extent; but those who cherish them in the most exalted degree are certainly distinguished from those who treat them with an inferior love. Genuine religion consists in knowing and loving the Lord; in knowing what charity to man is, living according to its laws, and at the same time humbly acknowledging that every good and perfect gift is from the Lord, and that without Him we can do nothing. The more a man is principled in those virtues, the more he is distinguished by spiritual intelligence and happiness; but as these things may engage the love and thoughts of men with various degrees of intensity, it will at once be seen that numerous differences in the quality of doctrine and worship may prevail among them. It is then distinctions of this character which are intended to be expressed by those names which are enumerated as the sons of Shem, Ham, and Japheth; and hence it is that when we find some of those names occurring in subsequent portions of the Word, they are invariably connected with subjects of a religious nature; which certainly must

be the primary things intended to be communicated to us in a revelation from God.

Those who are described as the sons of Japheth, denote the evolution of doctrines from those in the church who had held correct views respecting the duties and obligation of *external worship*, together with those nations and communities that adopted them. These thereby lived in simplicity and friendship; nor would they regard any other doctrine than that which contributed to the security of such results; still there were differences extant concerning the quality of this regard, traceable to the idiosyncracy of individual and national reception. By these doctrines, Moses informs us, "were the isles of the gentiles divided in their lands." By "isles" are denoted particular parts of country, the geographical positions of which are not defined;* but they refer to all those localities whose inhabitants were in states of diversified natural simplicity; for this is what is denoted by the gentiles, and those states are represented by their lands; for land is here employed to signify the moral ground into which were sown the seeds conducive to superior fruit. "Every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nation," denote every one according to his opinion, each after his probity, and all so far as their opinion and probity were conjoined. For *opinion* is represented by the *tongue*, language being the exponent of thought. *Probity* is signified by *their families*, because like a family it implies the consanguinity of affections. And the *conjunction of opinion and probity* is denoted by *their nations*. The people who constituted the *most ancient church* were divided into houses and families, a number of whom, when united, formed a nation. The husband, wife, children,

* By isles here are not meant the usual geographical sense of the term. It is employed by the Scriptures, in a literal sense, to signify all such countries as were divided from the waters by the sea, or such as they could not easily, or did not commonly go to, but by sea. It therefore might be rendered *region*, *province*, *tract*, or *country*. Consult the context and marginal readings of various passages in which the word occurs in Scripture. See also *Mr. Mede's Works*, Book i. disc. 47. The Hebrew גוים *Goyim* which is translated *Gentiles*, literally signifies *the nations;* and in the Hebrew Scriptures it is frequently employed to signify all those which were not considered to be under the divine law.

and servants, constituted a house; several of such houses in proximity with each other, constituted a family; and a number of such families in conjunction formed a nation. Hence it is that nations signify, in one complex, all the families together; and on this account the word is employed in the Scriptures, as a general term, to signify what relates to both the will and the understanding,—to affection and thought, consequently, as above remarked, to the conjunction of opinion and probity. It is the religious quality of nations to which the Scriptures principally refer; and it is from this that they are regarded by the Lord, who from that quality has caused them to be spoken of as a united body. Every one who attends to what is passing in his own mind will find, when he is contemplating a nation, that he thinks and speaks of it as a one. Germany and Spain; Italy, France, Holland, and England, have each a national character; and this modifies and gives an idiocratic quality to the religion which is prevalent among them. If its outward teachings were the same in all these nations, its inward quality would be rendered different by the different reception which each would give it. In every nation, the same as in every individual, the inward quality of its religion becomes a peculiarity; the differences of which need not oppose, but may be in harmony with, each other. Hence also it is easy to see why nations, from the religious opinion and probity by which they are distinguished, are spoken of in the Word as one man.

Those who are denominated the sons of Ham, denote doctrines which were derived from those in the ancient church, among whom there had prevailed a corrupt *internal worship;* and, also, the families and nations by whom *the knowledge of* such doctrines were received. Internal worship is corrupted, when, as before observed, faith is separated from charity, and a sentiment of the understanding respecting spiritual things is considered to be superior to a principle of the life. Those doctrines, considered in themselves, might have been true and good; but they were held as a science to gratify the understanding, rather than as a principle to purify the heart. Hereby they were separated from heaven and associated with self. And it is because the intellectual things of the church were so circumstanced, that the internal worship of the people is said to have been corrupt.

Their external or ritual worship was, in all probability, in conformity with the representative character of the general church; but their internal worship did not correspond with its requirements. The light was pure, but the life was not. Doctrine was considered as the principal; virtue only as subsidiary and ornamental. And all the sentiments respecting the spiritual worship of the Lord which descended from such a parent, must necessarily have been more or less corrupt. "As was the priest so were the people." Hence by the sons of Ham are denoted all those sentiments which set the knowledge of religion and its rituals above the practice of its principles and duties; and, consequently, all those families and nations, with whom the internal things of the church were regarded more as sciences to be known, than as principles to be obeyed. To know the master's will and not to do it, is to be a son of Ham. And that such were the characteristics of the nations that subsequently took the names of those who are so called, seems evident from the intimations of history furnished by the Scriptures and other sources. There cannot be any well-founded doubt that many particulars respecting the truths and rituals of worship, which prevailed in the best times of the ancient church, were at one period known and cultivated in the land of Canaan, Egypt, Assyria, Chaldea, Syria, Arabia, Tyre, Sidon, and Nineveh. Such truths and rituals of worship were founded in the correspondence subsisting between natural and spiritual things; and the knowledge of which among these people was the foundation of much of that elaborate mysticism which modern research has found to be inscribed upon the monuments, and indicated in the sculpture exhumed in those countries.* It was a knowledge of these things, in some corrupted form, which constituted the esoteric doctrines held by the Magi, the Soothsayers, Diviners, and Priests of those lands in later times. A remarkable instance of this kind is mentioned in the first book of Samuel.† We are there informed that the ark, containing the two tables of the law, had been captured by the Philistines and deposited in the house of Dagon at Ashdod; whereupon the idol fell before it and

* See *Layard's Discoveries in the Ruins of Nineveh and Babylon.*

† Chaps. v. vi.

was broken; and also that several thousands of the people of Ashdod and Ekron were afflicted with emerods, and the land marred with mice. The alarm thus occasioned induced the lords of the Philistines to call for the priests and diviners, to determine what was to be done with the ark of the Lord, in order to avert their calamities. They advised the making of five golden emerods and five golden mice, and a new cart, on which they with the ark were to be placed, and sent to the sons of Israel as a trespass offering to the Lord by two milch kine that were to low on their way. These directions were adopted and the plague was stayed. Now it seems difficult to read of these devices, and to reflect upon their salutary consequences, without at the same time seeing that there must have been something orderly in the ritual itself, which, by correspondence, brought about the result.* This history, then, shows very plainly that among these descendants of the sons of Ham, some scientific acquaintance with the rituals which were prevalent in the ancient church, still continued to be cultivated. The rea-

*This may strike some minds as a very wonderful way of effecting the deliverance. The connection or *rationale* between the cause and the effect does not appear: but is it apparent in what are regarded as the ordinary methods of physical cure? Is it not difficult, in numerous cases of disease, to trace the connection between the means which the physician employs and the cure which follows? Experience has shown that certain effects in such cases follow certain causes; but how very little is known of the *modus operandi*. May not the *correspondence* subsisting between spiritual and natural things have very much to do with such results? Upon the principle that natural effects flow primarily from spiritual causes, this must be admitted. And it is only upon the doctrine of correspondence that numerous things related in the Word, and many customs prevalent among the eastern nations, can be accounted for. *Dr. Patrick* observes, "that it was a custom among the ancient heathens, to consecrate unto their gods such monuments of their deliverances as represented the evils from which they were freed." The temples of Æsculapius, and of other Gods supposed to have the care of man's health, were crowded with such representations. This custom is still practised among some of the Indians. When any pilgrim goes to a pagod for the cure of any disease, he brings the figure of the member affected, made either of gold, silver, or copper, according to his quality, which he offers to the god and sings. (See *Tavernier's Travels*, vol. ii., p. 92.) The circumstance of Moses having made a brazen serpent to effect the cure of those who had been bitten by fiery serpents, and that those who had looked upon it lived (Numb. xxi.), can only be accounted for on the law of correspondences.

son, however, why the Philistines were to be extirpated, and that the other countries to which similar knowledge had been extended, became a prey to calamity and ruin, was because of the great perversions of spiritual truth which prevailed among them. The people of those parts never connected the ritual observances of the church with spiritual life. They cultivated religion mainly as a science; they attended to its rituals, but, neglecting its virtues, they, in the process of time, came to forget their meaning: the sign began to be mistaken for the thing signified: idolatry arose; and thus cutting themselves off from the direct influences of heaven, they became the easy subjects of an opposite power, and so declined and fell.

Such were the characteristics of the doctrinals of religion, called the sons of Ham, together with their final consequences upon the nation by whom they were embraced. Of this the language which closes that list of names affords another illustration. It is there said, "These are the sons of Ham, after their families, after their tongues, in their countries, and in their nations"; which is nearly similar to the statement which closes the list of the sons of Japheth. But, it will be observed, that the *order* of enumeration is different, and also that the term *countries* is added. The words themselves signify the same as they did in the former case; but the reason why the order of their narration is changed is, because the order of the things treated of is different. In the case of Japheth, the doctrine and worship treated of was such as modified the lives and characters of the people; but in the case of Ham, the lives and characters of the people modified the doctrine. The sons of Japheth set their doctrines above their natural wills: the sons of Ham, set their natural wills above their doctrines. Hence it was that the nation in which this latter feature prevailed, became so thoroughly corrupt in all religious things. The term country is added to represent the presence of a moral element different from that which distinguishes the sons of Japheth.

By those who are called the sons of Shem, are represented all doctrines concerning the good of life, which were derived from those of the ancient church who were principled in the *love of internal worship*. They also signify all those nations by which

such doctrines were received. It is because this was the nature of the religious things denoted by the sons of Shem, and, also, because they were embraced by a people of a superior genius, that we find the traces of revealed religion so decided and enduring among the nations which are called Shemitic; the true evidence of their Shemitic origin being their religious characteristic, and not any genealogical tracing of their having descended from an individual called Shem.

Such, then, "are the sons of Shem, after their families, after their tongues, in their lands, after their nations": where the order of enumeration is the same as that appended to the sons of Ham: the reason is because in both cases the affections of the will are contemplated as having been employed on the subjects of religion: but in the case of the sons of Ham it was an affection which regarded doctrine in the light of science, and in the case of Shem it was an affection which regarded doctrine in the light of life.

From this general consideration we educe a spiritual and instructive sense from what, in the letter, seems to be the mere enumeration of names involving no religion, with some very obscure intimation respecting the natural origin and distribution of the nations. We also learn that the distinction between the sons of Japheth, Ham, and Shem, is as the difference between those who adopt doctrine that they may regulate their *conduct by it;* those who embrace doctrine chiefly from the pleasure of *scientifically knowing* it; and those who love doctrine as a means of improving their *spiritual character and principles.*

Of Nimrod in the line of Ham, and Eber in the line of Shem, some brief particulars are related requiring explanation. But these will be considered in subsequent chapters, when we come to treat of Nimrod's kingdom and the Hebrew nation.

CHAPTER XII.

OF NIMROD AS A MIGHTY HUNTER BEFORE THE LORD, AND THE BEGINNING OF HIS KINGDOM.

"It happens but too often that a prolonged study of the outworks of the Sacred Book—of its history, manuscripts, versions, language, &c.,—so absorbs the attention of those who devote themselves to it, that they become inattentive to its more intimate characteristics, its import, the moral power displayed, the beauties disclosed, and the life which flows from it.—Can such a one be acquainted with the temple? He has seen only its stones—he knows nothing of the Shekinah!" —*Professor Gaussen's "It is Written,"* pp. 206, 207.

The only name among the seventy enumerated as the descendants of Shem, Ham, and Japheth, to which there is attached any description of character, is that of Nimrod. Of him it is written that "He was a mighty hunter before the Lord: wherefore it is said, even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar." * This brief recital, amidst so many names, must have been intended to convey to mankind some information of a remarkable nature. Though other names became more distinguished in the subsequent history of the church, yet Nimrod is selected by Moses from all the rest for episodical remark and indication. The Scriptures do not furnish any more information respecting his life, character, or death. The name is once more mentioned, by the prophet Micah,† as the designation of a land, but without throwing any more light upon the Mosaic history respecting it.

In considering what is so briefly declared to have been Nimrod's character and the beginning of his kingdom, we take it for granted that two points are settled: *first*, that the description is an inspired composition; and, *second*, that as such its

* Gen. x. 9, 10.

† Chap. v. 6. Its occurrence in 1 Chron. i, 10, is only a citation from Moses.

primary object must be to communicate to the world some religious idea which is of importance to be known. We cannot conceive the Divine to have directed the writing of the worldly history of any individual, family, or society, without designing it to be the vehicle of some spiritual information respecting the diversified phases which religion has or may assume among mankind. This we regard as the cardinal design of all that is written in the Scriptures; and although, in some cases, actual history has been selected for this purpose, it has not always been necessary for its accomplishment, as the parables and the early portions of Genesis sufficiently attest.

The terms in which the character of Nimrod is described, namely, "a mighty hunter before the Lord," seem very forcibly to indicate that some ideas of a religious nature were intended to be expressed by them. If the design of the narrative had been simply to relate the prowess and hunting capabilities of an individual, why are they declared to have been so "before the Lord"? Surely there is something peculiar about this remarkable assertion. Some Jewish writers* have supposed that the sentence is simply a record of the Divine approbation of the bravery and skill which were employed in the attack and subjugation of the ferocious animals common in those times and parts. But we conceive that this opinion must have sprung more out of a love of the chase than from a serious study of revelation! It contemplates lion hunting and bear killing as sports which are viewed with favor by the Almighty, and it consequently supposes that the sentiments by which they are directed belong to a morality, if not to a religion, which God applauds! Can such a notion as this be really included in the history? It is true that many do not go so far as to believe that any moral approbation is implied. Still the generality of commentators agree in thinking that the natural chase is the subject treated of.† They do not appear to have thought that

* Abarbanel with other Rabbinical writers cited in *The Ancient Universal History*, vol. i, p. 276, 8vo. edit.

† Dr. Patrick seems to think so. In his commentary upon this point he says "It was not without some reason, that noble families carry in their coats of arms (as ensigns of their valorous achievements) lions, bears, tigers, &c., from their killing such like fierce creatures. For it must be noted that in

any other idea was intended to be conveyed by the narrative. For it is asserted that a clearing of the country of hurtful beasts, was one of the greatest benefits which an individual in those early times could confer upon mankind; and hence it has been maintained that the purpose of Moses was to represent Nimrod as a benefactor to society;* and that the sentence "before the Lord," was added to express the idea of his having been the most eminent hunter in the Divine estimation. And in corroboration of this view, the writers of *The Universal History* remark that the phrase, "before the Lord," may be taken as the commendation of a person's good qualities; and that there is nothing in the short history which Moses has given of Nimrod which carries with it any reproach, *except his name.* But the exception taken is sufficient to show that a favorable sense of the phrase is not the true one. Aben Ezer has stated that it was introduced for the purpose of informing us that Nimrod brought of the animals which he was successful in capturing, and offered them upon an altar as a burnt-offering unto the Lord. This suggests the idea of a pious intention; but there is no evidence to support the notion on which it rests.

Besides, the Hebrew sentence לִפְנֵי יְהוָה (lipheneay Jehovah) is peculiar. It does not, as the above opinions would seem to intimate, necessarily imply that that which was before the Lord, was so in the way of approbation; on the contrary, it may denote that it was before him in the way of opposition, or as something that stood as a hindrance to the communication of those graces which he was desirous of bestowing. St. Austin will have it translated *against the Lord.*† Rosenmüller and Gesenius take a very similar view of the subject;‡ and this, we

this age of Nimrod, the exercise of hunting might well be more highly esteemed, and win him the hearts of mankind, because he delivered them, by this means, from those wild beasts, whereby they were very much infested, and very dangerously exposed, while they were but few, and lived scattered up and down, in the open air or in tents but weakly defended."

* *Kitto's Bib. Cyc.*, Art. *Nimrod.*

† *De Civit. Dei.* lib. xvi. cap. 4.

‡ Rosenmüller says, of the original phrase, "Vidente et indignante Deo; cujas excusso metu ac reverentia, vi fraternum opprimere genus auderet."—*Annotation of Rev. J. Hewlett, B.D.*

conceive, ought to be the conclusion to which we should arrive respecting it. Nimrod's mighty hunting was before the Lord as an obstacle to the satisfactory advancement of the church. This agrees with the general tenor of the narrative which describes him to have been mighty in the *earth*,—so much so, that the acts of that might became a proverb among mankind: they had felt its subjugating influence, and spoke of it accordingly. It was not a proverb which took cognizance of what was right in the sight of God; on the contrary, it declares the experience of men in having been led away from the Lord by some seductive influence. Men remember and give sententious utterance to what they feel; and that which they had been made to feel by Nimrod, partook more of the force of persuasion than of the liberty of truth; more of appearances than of realities; more of the profession of faith, than of the practice of charity; this, however, will be more evident in the sequel. But the circumstance of Babel's having, among others, been the "beginning of his kingdom," is another fact, tending not only to show that something pertaining to the church is the main feature of the history before us, but also to prove that it is not of a favorable character. For Babel, or Babylon, is well known to be frequently employed in the Scriptures to represent religion under some unfavorable aspect. Moreover, Nimrod, having been one of Ham's descendants, may be taken as another evidence of this conclusion. So, also, may the power which is ascribed to him, because it is somewhat similar to that which distinguished a certain class of men just previous to the flood. Of them we are informed that they "became mighty men which were of old men of renown." * Thus their might, like that of Nimrod's, became proverbial; and there can be no doubt that it was intended to express the great daring to which moral depravity had arisen, because it is immediately followed by the declaration, that "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil and that continually." The circumstance of Nimrod's having been a mighty one in the earth, even to a proverb, is somewhat parallel. The former narrative

* Gen. vi. 4.

describes a profane power which broke out in the *celestial church* during the process of its decay; but the latter relates a corresponding power which was developed in the *spiritual church* during the corruption which led to its dispersion. All the churches of which the Scriptures speak as having reached their end, have been marked by this feature towards their termination. Some human power has arisen within their pale, by which the Divine will has been resisted. It is related of the Jewish church, and it is predicted of the Christian: not indeed in the same terms as those to which we have adverted, but still in such a manner as sufficiently puts forth the general idea. There were people at the end of the Jewish dispensation, who, by the exercise of a malignant power, overawed the government of Pilate, and brought about the crucifixion of Jesus. And in reference to the end of that peculiar form of Christianity which the Lord established during his manifestation in the flesh, it is written, "Then shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect";* which plainly contemplates the evolution of a power to mislead and to destroy.

The might of Nimrod in the earth was of this character. The generality of expositors have so understood it; and the words "mighty hunter" have been interpreted to mean a great tyrant. Scholars have recognized this idea to be included in the signification of the name. Dr. Pye Smith remarks, that it is strictly an abstract noun, signifying contempt, rebellion, apostasy, and impiety; and he thinks it ought to be considered not as a personal, but as a characteristic designation applied to him by society † נִמְרֹד. Nimrod, according to the Talmud, is derived from מרד *mared*, to rebel. About this derivation, however, there is some disputation among the Jews. Ohel Joseph observes that, if the name Nimrod were derived from the source stated in the Talmud, then it ought not to have been נִמְרֹד Nimrod, but מַמְרֵד *Mamred*. Simones remarks, that the word Nimrod is composed of נִין *niyn*, offspring, and מֶרֹד *merod*,

* Matt. xxiv. 24.

† *Kitto's Bib. Cyc.* Art. *Nimrod.*

rebellion; so that the two words mean a *son of rebellion.* Notwithstanding these differences about the etymological origin of the name, there is a common agreement about its unfavorable signification. An idea of this sort attaches to all the legends and traditions which are known respecting Nimrod.* The character drawn of him by Josephus is that of a bold, unscrupulous tyrant;† and the general impression, because derived from those sources, is of the same kind; for which, however, there is scarcely any history besides that which is furnished by the signification of the name. But to strengthen this evidence, *Rashi* interprets the sentence, "he began to be mighty in the earth," as meaning that he set himself up against the Omnipotent, and seduced mankind from their allegiance to the Lord.‡ Considerations of this kind could be extended; but at this stage of our inquiry, these may be sufficient to indicate that the prime elements of Nimrod's history are of a religious rather than of a secular character. And according to the principles laid down in the preceding chapter, it seems evident that the narrative was intended to represent a peculiar phase by which one of the doctrinal divisions of the ancient church came to be distinguished. And upon that principle Nimrod is to be contemplated not as an individual, but as a doctrine which gave name to a class, or to a community, by whom it was received. The quality of the doctrine, and conse-

* In the *Persian Astrognosia*, the constellation Orion is considered to represent the mighty Nimrod. And a Persian author gives the name a Persian derivation, as if it was *Nemurd*, that is the *immortal;* which appellation is said to have been given to him because of his long reign, being above 150 years. Authors have taken great pains to find Nimrod in profane history. Some have thought that he was the same as *Belus*, the founder of the Babylonian empire; and others have considered that he was the same as *Ninus*, the founder of the Assyrian monarchy. Some think that he was *Evechous*, who is said to have been the first Chaldean king after the deluge; and a fourth sort perceive a great resemblance between him and *Bacchus.* Mahomedan writers suppose Nimrod to have been *Zoak*, a Persian king of the first dynasty; others *Caycaus*, the second of the race; and some of the Jews say, he is the same with *Amraphel*, a king of Shinar. But all this is mere conjecture.—See *Ancient Universal History*, vol. i.

† *Antiquities of the Jews.* Book i. chap. vi.

‡ *Dr. Raphall's Genesis.*

quently of the mental character of the persons by whom it was embraced, may, in some measure, be gathered from what has been said respecting the name. Doubtless the name Nimrod is an abstract noun denoting *rebellion*, or *an apostate will;* and in the concrete form which such nouns sometimes take, it signifies a rebel, or an apostate ruler. Hence also, in the abstract, it strikingly expresses the idea of a doctrine which had revolted from its legitimate sovereign, and adopted for itself an independent rule; while in the concrete it denotes those parties to whom such a doctrine with such a purpose became acceptable.

Now external worship separated from internal principle fully answers to this description; and when a doctrine of this nature is adopted by mankind as the chief or governing principle of the church, then a revolt from spiritual life must have taken place, and Nimrod come into existence. Such were the doctrines and people indicated by that name. Worship of this character consists of mere formalities and rituals; and every one may easily see that when such a doctrine obtains dominion in the church its sway will be severe. The rulers in such a church insist upon its observance as the all in all. They threaten the negligent and persecute the doubter; and so they aim at securing the authority of a terrible dominion. But how plain is it that external worship without internal is no worship: it is nothing but a mere ceremonial, separated from that heavenly essential which is designed to give it sanctity and life. Internal worship is love to God and charity to man, having its ground in liberty according to reason. Without this vital excellence, external worship is nothing else than the paying of tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and omitting the weightier duties of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith.* It consists in regarding that to be essential which is merely formal; in mistaking the body for the soul; in captivating the senses by solemnities irrespective of the condition of the mind and heart. Thus it is a sort of ceremonial tyranny, which impugns the vitality of religion, and sets itself up as the only necessary thing to be obeyed. Such was the doctrine represented by Nimrod among the ancients; and it formed a section in the church among the people by whom it was embraced.

* Matt. xxiii. 23.

As intimated above, a doctrine somewhat similar to this has prevailed towards the closing of every dispensation recorded in the Scriptures. It is indeed, in each case, called by a different name, because in each case it existed under a different dispensation, and with a distinctive genius of mankind; still the relationship between them all is marked and evident. Under the antediluvian church it was represented by the giants who became mighty in the earth; under the postdiluvian church it was designated Nimrod, who began to be a mighty one in the earth; under the Jewish church it was represented by the Pharisees, who bound heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders, but would not move them with one of their fingers; and under the Christian church it is described by those who would undertake to deceive, if it were possible, the very elect.*

Seeing then what is the nature of the doctrine and the character of the people represented by Nimrod, we shall not find much difficulty in understanding why it is said that he became a mighty one in the earth; for by this is plainly signified that the doctrine grew in the favor of mankind, and came to be regarded as a powerful principle of the church. The earth, as it has been frequently shown, is a symbol of the church, because, among other reasons, it is to the bodies of men what the church is to their souls.

The reason why this doctrine grew in the favor of mankind was, because it was adapted to the external condition into which they had descended. Men become sensual in respect to the things of religion in proportion as they neglect the light and activity of spiritual principles, so that the condition of the church will always be found to run parallel with the states of the people. When they are intelligent, and possess a spiritual heart, the church will be a vital and a sanctified institution; but when they become external in their thoughts and sensual in their delights, then the interior sentiments of the church are put away, and its externals are clung to as the vital things; until at last its mere formalities come to be regarded as saving principles. When the church has descended into this condition it ceases to

*See Gen. vi. 4; x. 8; Matt. xxiii. 4; xxiv. 24.

be a teacher, and becomes a tyrant. It divorces charity, and substitutes for faith something that no one comprehends: it cares but little for the souls of men, but strenuously demands that their bodies should be compliant to its rule; it closes their intellects with blandishments presented to the imagination; and the result in the ancient church was the evolution of a disastrous power, which is represented by the might of Nimrod in the earth.

That the subject treated of is the erection of dominion in the church, follows from its being said that "he was a mighty hunter before the Lord." The introduction of the Divine name sufficiently proves that something pertaining to the church is referred to by the history. By his being mighty in hunting* is denoted that he was powerful in persuading; thus that there was an ability in this doctrine to captivate the minds of men, and to allure them into the meshes of a religion from which vitality had been driven.† The nature of an external religion separated from an internal, is persuasive. Mankind are more easily ensnared by it, because the generality among them are mostly of an external disposition and genius. They prefer a religion which presents itself to the feeling and the sight, to one which addresses itself to the mind and the sentiment. They are sooner caught by such a religion, than by one requiring intellect, reflection, and spirituality of character for its due appreciation; and hence it is that such a religion is said to be powerful

* Mighty in hunting is the more correct translation of the original, for the word *tzid*, does not signify a hunter, but hunting.

† "He was mighty in hunting (or in prey) and in sin before God; for he was a hunter of the children of men in their languages; and he said unto them, 'Depart from the religion of Shem, and cleave to the institutes of Nimrod,'" (*The Jerusalem Targum*). "He captivated men's minds by his eloquence, and seduced them to prefer him before God." (*Rashi*, cited by Dr. Raphall in his *Genesis*.) "He was indeed a mighty hunter, but his predations were not confined to the brute creation:—

'Proud Nimrod, first, the bloody chase began;
A mighty hunter—and his prey was man.'"

Annotations of the Rev. J. Hewlett, B.D.

"This phrase, 'Mighty hunter before the Lord,' can be proved, from Jer. v. 26, to signify that he grew hardened in wickedness, and became a prevailing seducer to idolatry."—*Hutchenson's Natural History of the Bible.*

in persuading. Its power resides in its adaptation to the natural idleness of men in respect to spiritual investigations. It takes advantage of their indolence and sensuality, and baits its teachings with the promises of relief from the duties of repentance and purification, if they will but submit to its authority; and so it ensnares mankind into the adoption of its profession, and establishes its renown by the multitude it catches. This is the kind of hunting in which Nimrod was mighty, and it became proverbial in consequence of its successes.

The Scriptures in many places refer to that employment in a purely spiritual sense. Thus of false prophets it is said, Woe to them that sew pillows to the armholes, and make kerchiefs upon the heads of every stature, to *hunt* souls! Will ye hunt the souls of my people, and will ye save the souls alive unto you? Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I am against your pillows wherewith ye there *hunt the souls* to make them fly; and I will tear them from your arms, and will let the souls go, even the souls that ye *hunt*, and they shall be no more in your hand to be *hunted.** And again: the prophet, complaining of the profligacy of the church says, "The good man is perished out of the earth, and there is none upright among men; they all lie in wait for blood, they *hunt* every man his brother with a net." † It is also written, "Among my people are found wicked men; they lay wait as he that setteth snares; they set a trap, they catch men. As a cage is full of birds, so are their houses full of deceit; therefore they are become great." ‡ From which passages it is plain that by hunting is denoted the following of men with allurements and persuasion to the end that they might be caught and so brought over to the party by whom they had been pursued.

Those who remember that the Lord while in the world, selected fishermen for his Apostles, and told them that henceforth they should catch men, will at once, and without diffi-

* Ezekiel xiii. 18 to 21. The Hebrew word *mispachoth*, which in the above passage is translated kerchief, properly means a sort of net used in hunting, and in every place where it occurs it will bear this signification; hence the use to which it is said to be applied, namely, to hunt souls.—See *Calmet*, and *Dr. A. Clarke.*

† Micah vii. 2. ‡ Jer. v. 26, 27.

culty, perceive that the idea of spiritual fishing is plainly recognized. Why then should there be any hesitation to admit a similar view of hunting? It is plain from the above passages that the Scriptures teach it; and the easy manner in which a description of it will admit of the use of analogous terms, may satisfy the reason upon the subject. But it may be asked, What is the distinction between spiritual fishing and spiritual hunting? We answer that it is as the difference between inducing men to acknowledge religion from the influence of *natural* truth; and getting them to embrace it from the persuasion of *scientific* truth. That there are these two kinds of truth is well known; and most persons are aware that some classes of mankind are arrested by the teachings of the former, and others by the demonstrations of the latter. Natural truth, in respect to religion, may be described as all that knowledge which belongs to the letter of the Word; and scientific truth, as including all that information by which the letter is explained. Both these kinds of truth belong to the perceptions of the external man; they are of the same general character; natural truth, being truth as it is perceived by children and the simple; and scientific truth, being the same kind of truth as it is regarded by children and the simple, when they are grown up and are instructed. Thus, in each case, it consists in bringing persons into the fold of the church; but in the one it is brought about by statements suited to simplicity of character, and in the other it is accomplished by expositions adapted to the requirements of a more intellectual condition. The occupation of the fisherman is contemplated as inferior to that of the hunter, when they are both referred to in a favorable sense. Hence the Lord, speaking of the return of the Israelites from their captivity, said, "Behold, I will send for many *fishers*, and they shall *fish* them; and after I will send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them." * Where, by sending fishers, in the first place, is denoted teaching from natural truth; and by sending hunters, afterwards, is represented instruction from scientific truth; for no one can learn the scientific things of the church unless he has previously become acquainted with its natural truths; because the idea of

* Jer. xvi. 16.

the former arise out of a knowledge of the latter. All must learn something of the letter of revelation before they can enter into any comprehension of those higher sentiments of which it is the appointed vehicle. Thus the fishers of En-gedi and En-eglaim * denote those who instruct men in the natural truths of religion; and the "skilful hunter" † represents those who instruct men in the scientific things of religion. But, in the opposite sense, by fishermen are denoted those who pervert the natural truths of the church, and thereby bring men over to their party; and by hunters, as in the case of Nimrod, are represented those who pervert the scientific truths of the church (which takes place when they are separated from the principles of spiritual life), and persuade men to adopt them, that dominion and rule may be secured. The historian informs us that his description of Nimrod's character became proverbial: his words are, "Wherefore, *it is said*, even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord." This sentence became a common saying in consequence of so many being caught by the persuasion: it forcibly characterizes any and every religion which deceives the reason and captivates the senses: and the phrase, "before the Lord," is added to teach us that it was before Him in the way of being brought to judgment, which the sequel sufficiently evinces.

It is said that "The beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar." This is commonly understood to mean that Nimrod *founded* those four cities: it is so treated by commentators in general; ‡ but that is not the idea expressed by the language of the text. Moses simply states that his power was extended over them; and certainly leaves it to be inferred that they had previously existed. "The beginning of his kingdom" was in those places. He did not build them to govern, but being built, he introduced a government. A kingdom is a government; in this case, a government exercised by means of religious doctrine; and this is said to have begun at "Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh," to inform us that the kind of worship, treated of above, had its

* Ezekiel xlvii. 10. † Genesis xxv. 27.

‡ "Nimrod was a great *builder*. Probably he was the architect of Babel!" —*Henry* and *Scott*.

commencement in those places, and subsequently rose among them into a governing institution; that is, that societies professing the doctrines of external worship separate from internal, or, what amounts to the same thing, the doctrines of faith separate from charity, sprung up in those several localities and became sufficiently predominant to exercise an influence upon all their proceedings: much in the same way that different aspects of Christianity have taken root in various nations, and impressed upon each some peculiarity, which, in the process of time, has come to be a governing principle in all their public transactions. The dominion of Popery in Italy and Spain, and the rule of Protestantism in Germany and England, are plain examples of this general idea. But it is easy to find illustrations of it upon a smaller scale. It is well known that what are technically called the "interests" of Arminianism and Calvanism, of high church and low church, with many others which could be named, have begun their existence under more favorable auspices in some places than in others, and that each has succeeded in establishing itself with greater influence in one locality than in another. Calvanism began its kingdom in Geneva; Puseyism began its reign in Oxford; and the espousers of each system of doctrine have since then been engaged in the atttempt to extend the boundaries of its dominion to other places; and in some of them their efforts have been attended with comparative success. From these illustrations it is easy to gather the idea which we conceive to have been represented by Nimrod's beginning his kingdom in Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh. Those cities in the land of Shinar became conspicuous from the energy with which their inhabitants embraced the religion designated Nimrod. In each locality the doctrine was modified by the natural characteristics of the people; and the name of each was derived from and expressive of the results which that modification induced.

Babel, it is well known, signifies confusion; specifically, confusion of an intellectual and spiritual nature. This was the necessary result of a doctrine which divorced spirituality from the church, and resorted to the mere observance of an external ritual as the all in all of its constitution and requirements. The rituals of the church are holy things when they are attended to

from an internal principle of spiritual life; but when that principle is set aside as of no account, and the ritual is continued to be observed, then an act of profanation is committed: for profanation ensues when men know the spiritual things of the church, and yet with an unholy principle keep up the form of religion by attention to its holy representatives. This is strikingly exemplified in the case of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, who having taken Jehoiakim the king of Judah, and part of the vessels of the house of God, carried them to the house of his God:* because by the vessels of the temple in Jerusalem were represented the holy things of the church; but when they came into the hands of an idolator, and were carried into the house of his idol, it is plain that the profanation of those holy things was represented, because they were employed for a religious purpose by those who acknowledged religious things, and yet had no internal religious principle, of which the Scripture history of Nebuchadnezzar and of the Babylonian empire is a sufficient proof. The same idea is expressly inculcated by the Apostle, who, when treating of the bread and wine as the symbols of redemption, said, "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh condemnation to himself": † the reason is, because they make use of the holy external things of religion without a holy internal principle, *i. e.*, "not discerning the Lord's body"; and so they are guilty of profaning them.

Babel, or Babylon, is frequently treated of in the Scriptures, and by it is constantly signified a religion and worship, the externals of which appear holy, but because they are averted from a holy internal principle, they are profane. The Babel, however, in which Nimrod began his kingdom, was less corrupt than the Babels which are subsequently mentioned. The slope which conducted to the worst condition was not descended all at once; for the nature of external worship is determined by the quality of man's internal sentiments; so far as that is defiled so far such worship must partake of a similar character. This defilement is effected by the love of self and the love of the world, and, consequently, by the love of dominion. In proportion as these principles enter into any religion, that reli-

* Daniel i. 1, 2.

† 1 Cor. xi. 27, 29.

gion is profaned. But, as just observed, the worst state is not attained at the beginning. When men commence a course of vice, they do not all at once relinquish every virtue. It begins its reign with a persuasive plausibility, and, if not checked, goes on from bad to worse until the cup of its iniquity is filled. It was thus with Babel. When the delusive and ensnaring doctrines of Nimrod began to reign, they were not so pernicious as they became at the confusion of tongues. Nor at that period were they so malignant as at the time when Belshazzar made an impious feast, and a hand wrote upon the wall of his palace, "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin." *

Critics have supposed that the Babel of Nimrod, the Babel at which the "confusion of tongues" took place, and the Babylon † of Nebuchadnezzar, were three separate cities. It is argued that there is no foundation in the Scriptures for the opinion of profane historians, or for the tradition, that they were identical. The Scriptures, it is said, are silent upon the subject. They tell us that Nimrod began his kingdom in one; but that there is no evidence, beyond a similarity of name, to show that this was the

* Dan. v. 25. The meaning of this sentence is explained by Daniel in the three following verses. It is however to be observed of this explanation, that *mene* is referred to only once, and that *Peres* is substituted for *Upharsin*. The reason why *mene* is mentioned twice in the original sentence is, because it refers to the numbering, that is, to the ascertaining of both the mental and the moral quality of the Babylonian church: but it is cited only once in the explanation, because in that both ideas are included. *Peres*, in the 28th verse, is derived from the verb *Paras*, which signifies *to divide;* and it is there substituted for *Upharsin*, in the 25th verse, because it expresses the intended action with a greater force. UPHARSIN, is *Peres*, without the ו vau in the beginning, or the plural termination ין *in*, and by it is literally signified, *And they divided it.* Some critics have thought that *mene* was repeated by the error of some transcriber; and *Houbigant* observes, that *Upharsin* ought to be read *Peres*, of course for the same reason: the argument for it being that Daniel must have repeated the words in the same number and order in which he saw them. The above consideration, however, explains the difficulty without having recourse to the desperate supposition of some errors having crept into the text. The banquet, at which this writing appeared upon the wall, was attended by an act of special profanation. The holy vessels which had been taken from Jerusalem and deposited in the house of Belshazzar's God, were carried from thence to the palace of the king, and used for the purposes of self-glory and riotous intemperance.

† Babylon is the Greek form of the Hebrew Babel.

same as that at which the confusion of languages occurred; and it is further contended, that this last could not have been the Babylon of Nebuchadnezzar, because it is said, that the people were scattered "abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city," * which admits the inference that it was left unfinished, and probably altogether deserted. Geographical and geological considerations are also brought in to show, that the Babylon of which we have some knowledge by its ruins, must have occupied a different site from that mentioned in the eleventh of Genesis.† The statement that the people "journeyed from the east," is likewise made to subserve the same purpose. For it is contended, that the journey of mankind from Armenia to the land of Shinar must have been from the north, and not from the east, as Moses relates. Without admitting any of these arguments to be very conclusive, it is not at all improbable that each was a different Babel; the latter having been raised upon a more convenient site, as the former fell into decay, and for the purpose of supplying its place. And this view of the case reconciles the above criticism with the statement of tradition. It contemplates Babel under three different epochs, but still regards the latter as a continuation of, or as a substitution for, the former. It also agrees with the spiritual representation to which we have adverted, and in which it was observed, that at each epoch Babel was the scene of profanation, but that in the last it was of a more direful character than in the first.

It is remarkable, especially in the two latter cases, that the people of Babel seem to have aimed at the security of magnificence and riches, far surpassing that of the metropolis of any other country.‡ This is a result conformable to the spiritual

* Gen. xi. 8.

† *Origines Biblicæ*, or *Researches into Primeval History*, by Charles Tilstone Beke, pp. 17–24; see also Rich's *Memoirs of the Ruins of Babylon*, p. 13, and Lyle's *Principles of Geology*, vol. i, p. 252.

‡ The attempt to build a city, and a tower whose top should reach to heaven (Gen. xi. 4), is a sufficient proof of this in one case, and the description to be gathered from Daniel plainly corroborates the other. Isaiah speaks of it as "the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency" (xiii. 19). *Herodotus* says, "It is situated on a large plain, and is a perfect square: each side of every approach is in length one hundred and twenty furlongs.

representation of the city. The Babylonian religion addresses itself to man's sensuality; and for this purpose it strives after worldly effects of every kind. It substitutes pomp for principle, appearances for realities, pride for dignity, and dominion for God. Those who embrace it necessarily descend into worldly and selfish loves; and when these become predominant, the requirements of heaven are defied, the true principles and sources of conservation are thrust aside, acts of enormity, political and social, are committed; so that invasion, conquest, decay, and ruin are the results. Such consequences are the sure retinue of a sham religion. History exhibits it in a variety of cases: Babel is a conspicuous example; and do not "Erech, Accad, and Calneh," attest the same fact? Where are those places? Have they not perished from the face of the earth? Erech and Accad are no more mentioned; and Calneh is referred to only once.* From those circumstances it would seem that they were not, at any time, places of great importance. Their locality in the land of Shinar is utterly unknown. There are no ruins to mark their topography, nor is there any history which details their progress or records their end. Hence it is probable that they were only small places, which gradually fell into decay by their inhabitants deserting them for a residence in Babylon. They were absorbed by the requirements and pretensions of the great city: their general history is the same as that of Babel; for they were all governed by the same religion, and ruined by the profanity of its laws. It is not in the nature of a merely external religion to cement society and perpetuate their institutions. Its professors for a time may unite in striving after eminence and

The space, therefore, occupied by the whole is four hundred and eighty furlongs. So extensive is the ground which Babylon occupies; its internal beauty and magnificence exceed whatever has come within my knowledge" (*Clio* 178); and *Dutens* remarks, that "The greatest cities of Europe give but a faint idea of that grandeur which all historians unanimously ascribe to the famous city of Babylon."

* Amos vi. 2. Some think *Calno*, named in Isaiah (x. 9), and *Canneh*, mentioned by Ezekiel (xxvii. 23), to be the same place; but if so, why did the Hebrew people write it differently? This *may* be answered by considering Calno and Canneh as two errors to be imputed to the transcribers; but for this notion there is no evidence. We believe in the integrity of the text, and therefore regard those names to be the designations of different places.

admiration; and there are some cases in which they have been successful in attaining a state of outward magnificence and power; but they have always carried within them the elements of dissolution, and these have never failed to explode when the summit has been reached. This is well known to have been the case with *Babel*, which, as denoting *confusion*, is a very significant name for the consequences that were produced upon its inhabitants by the reign of a religion which was designated Nimrod.

Its kingdom is also said to have extended to "Erech, Accad, and Calneh;" which three names also express three distinctive results which the government of that religion produced upon the inhabitants of those places. Erech denotes *length;* and by length is represented good:* Accad means a *spark;* and by a spark is signified truth: Calneh denotes *our consummation;* which expresses the attainment of a principal desire. From these considerations it appears that the government signified by the kingdom of Nimrod, upon the people of Erech, was received by them as a means to something which they could esteem as *good;* by those of Accad it was adopted as containing the sentiments of *truth;* and by those of Calneh it was embraced as a *consummation* earnestly desired: but because that government consisted in the doctrine of a religion which was separated from the influences of heaven, it is plain that the good, the truth, and the desire, by which it was respectively received, could only have

* That *length* denotes *good*, may appear from those subjects in the Word of which it is predicated. The *length of days*, so frequently promised on the condition of obedience, plainly means the *good* of perpetuated happiness. The apostle also speaks of the *length* of his love of Christ (Eph. iii. 18), to express the *good* implied in its duration. The length of land, which was given to Abraham, denotes the good of the church vouchsafed to the faithful. All earthly things are the images of something that is spiritual; and they are all distinguished by a *trine* of dimensions, namely, length, breadth, and height; such dimensions however are not predicated of spiritual things, but instead thereof corresponding qualities. The length, breadth, and height of the holy city (Rev. xxi.), being equal, denote that its good, truth, and eminence are from the Lord, whose ways are equal (Ezek. xviii. 29). It is from this signification of these dimensions, that height, depth, and long-headedness are predicated of wisdom, or of those who are reputed to be wise. Those terms, when spoken of persons who are not wise, have a signification in proportion to their destitution of wisdom.

been of a selfish and worldly nature. Persons who are low in their moral and mental condition, are known to consider that only to be good, true, and useful, which ministers to their sensual and temporary pleasure; but to those who contemplate them from higher ethics, they will appear as hollow and deceptive: those, therefore, who could accept the government of Nimrod as presenting any of those excellences must have gone far over to naturalism. The circumstance of the inhabitants of Erech, Accad, and Calneh, constituting a portion of his kingdom, reveals to us the quality of the people, and at once accounts for their cessation. Their fate was involved in that of Babel. Together, they constituted a kingdom and acknowledged a government in matters of religion, which were in opposition to genuine truth and spiritual principle; and this defection in the Ancient church was concentrated in the Babylonian history, which bore the same relation to that spiritual dispensation, as the Babylon of the Apocalypse does to the Christian church.

CHAPTER XIII.

OF THE WHOLE EARTH BEING OF ONE LANGUAGE AND OF ONE SPEECH; AND OF THE PEOPLE JOURNEYING FROM THE EAST AND DWELLING IN THE LAND OF SHINAR.

"Moses (in mentioning Babel, Gen. xi.) only gives an account of the rise of the first imaginers, or at least of the first after the flood: for what is rendered speech, is not a repetition of that which is rendered language. That rendered language has no relation to language other than as God is acknowledged or praised by the lip; or that the people all confessed, prayed to, praised or worshiped one God with common consent."—*Hutchenson's Essay towards a Natural History of the Bible. Works*, vol. i. pp. 26, 27.

In some of the preceding chapters we have considered several points respecting the superior condition of the ancient church; together with some of the circumstances which had conduced to its divisions, and subdivisions, down to that branch of it which was denominated Nimrod, together with its government at Babel. Moses, in opening the eleventh of Genesis, has furnished us with a brief *resumé* of the excellences of that dispensation during the periods of its integrity, and, also, with a general intimation of the causes by which its dispersion was occasioned. His words upon these points are these: "And the whole earth was of one language and of one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there." * It has been usual to understand this relation in a strictly literal sense. Considered in itself, that seems to be a very natural result of the simplicity of its structure; but the accuracy of it becomes exceedingly doubtful when it is viewed in connection with its subsequent particulars; of which, however, we shall have to treat in a subsequent chapter: it is sufficient for our purpose, to observe here that most of those who have critically examined the whole narrative with a view to establish the fact which the literal sense apparently declares, have been compelled to admit that it is

* Gen. xi. 1. 2.

surrounded with a series of difficulties, verbal and philosophical, which no ingenuity or learning has yet been capable of removing. Hence a miracle has been supposed to account for the phenomena related.* Besides, it is said that Babel existed as a portion of the kingdom of Nimrod, prior to the occurrence which is expressly said to have given origin to its name.† Moreover, before the dispersion which followed the confusion of tongues, which is commonly supposed to have occasioned all the diversities of language, we are expressly informed that the earth was divided in the days of Peleg; and previous to this event, the various families are said to have been divided in their lands, *every one after his tongue.*‡ These facts introduce strange confusion into the opinions of those who consider the diversity of language to have begun at Babel. To avoid these difficulties, chronology has been invoked, and corrections of various sorts have been attempted; with what success a few considerations will evince. For a long time, the event was supposed to have transpired about one hundred years after the deluge;§ but subsequent inquiry has compelled the chronologers to shift it downwards to a later date. The period assigned for it by the Septuagint, and adopted by Josephus, is five hundred and thirty years after the flood; and this, under the emendations of Dr. Hales,‖ is extended to about six hundred years; while Professor Wallace enlarges it to more than eight centuries.¶ Here we have learned authorities differing about the date of the transaction to the extent of four, five, and seven hundred years. What can be the cause of this but the assumption of some wrong principle of interpretation? It seems plain from those differences, and from other considerations that could be adduced, that those early

* "There are some differences of modification (of languages), of such an extraordinary character, that the profoundest scholars cannot believe them to have taken place by ordinary, and gradual, and slowly-progressing influence of changes in the habits, residences, and wants of men; but that they must be ascribed to a sudden, violent, and superhuman interposition."—*Dr. Burton's Deluge and World after the Flood*, p. 192.

† See Genesis xi. 7, 8, 9. ‡ Genesis x. 23; v. 20. 31.

§ This is the date assigned to it by Calmet and Archbishop Usher.

‖ *Dr. Hales' Chronology*, vol. ii. 45.

¶ *Dissertation on the True Age of the World*, &c. p. 298.

portions of the Scriptures do not furnish any figures, upon which accurate tables can be constructed, showing the periods in which occurred the circumstances related. Symbolic numbers have been mistaken for chronological data; and the early history of man in his spiritual relation to the church as a spiritual institution, has been mistakenly viewed as the history of his physical condition, and of his connection with the world and its natural concerns.

Upon the principle that all mankind descended from one common ancestry, there can be no well-founded doubt that there existed in the primitive ages of our race a unity of language. But what that language was it is difficult to say. Scholars have frequently inquired into the subject; but have not yet agreed upon any opinion respecting it. Some have thought that it was the Chinese;* for which they have adduced reasons that others have considered worthy of attention.† The Syrians say it was the Syriac; the Jews maintain that it was the Hebrew; and Grotius remarks that it is no where to be found pure, and that some remains of it are discernible in all languages. ‡ But what

* See *Howell's Essay on the Chinese Language.*

† See *Universal Modern History*, vol. viii. pp. 201, 323; and *Dr. A. Clarke on Gen.* xi. 6.

‡ Herodotus relates a curious anecdote respecting a similar dispute. He says, "Before the reign of their king Psammitichus, the Egyptians esteemed themselves the most ancient of the human race; but when this prince came to the throne, he took considerable pains to investigate the truth of the matter; the result was that they believed the Phrygians more ancient than themselves, and themselves than the rest of mankind. Whilst Psammitichus was engaged in this inquiry, he contrived the following as the most effectual means of removing his perplexity. He procured two children, just born of humble parentage, and gave them to a shepherd to be brought up among his flocks. He was ordered never to speak before them; to place them in a sequestered hut, and at proper intervals to bring them goats, whose milk they might suck whilst he was attending to other employments. His object was to know what word they would first pronounce articulately. The experiment succeeded to his wish: the shepherd complied with each particular of his directions, and at the end of two years, on his one day opening the door of their apartment, both the children extended their arms towards him, and pronounced the word *Becos* It did not at first excite his attention; but on their repeating the same expression whenever he appeared, he related the circumstance to his master, and at his command brought the children to his

those remains are, and how they are to be discovered, are not explained. The majority of Christians who have paid any learned attention to this matter, have adopted the opinion of the Jews. They have had a predilection for that idea; in consequence of the Books of Moses having been written in the Hebrew language, and also because those books have been thought to possess a greater antiquity than any others accessible to the Christian scholar. It is, however, to be remarked, that Moses speaks of books more ancient than his own: his citations from them proves the fact;* and these citations might have been *translations*, for Moses was brought up in the court of Pharoah, being "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and *mighty* in *words*." † However this might have been, it seems plain that his having written the Pentateuch in Hebrew, can be no evidence of that having been the primeval language.

But there is another argument by which that opinion is attempted to be maintained. The Scriptures, it is said, do not give us any reason to believe that there was any more than one language upon the earth from Adam to Noah; and that Noah with his sons must have preserved it in the ark, and brought it into the postdiluvian world, where it was continued down to the family of Heber, and by them transmitted to their descendants, who became the Jews. In support of this conclusion it is con-

presence. When Psammitichus had heard them repeat this same word, he endeavored to discover among what people it was in use: he found it was the Phrygian name for bread. From seriously revolving this incident, the Egyptians were induced to allow the Phrygians to be of greater antiquity than themselves." (*Book* ii. *Euterpe* 11.) If this absurd experiment, and equally absurd reasoning, had now first appeared in some modern publication, it might easily have been taken for a sly jest at the logic and conclusions of some of the ethnographers.

* Numbers xxi. 14, 27, 28. The 27th verse says, "Wherefore they that speak in proverbs;" it ought however to be, "Wherefore say the *enunciators*" (the original being *hammoshelim*), *i. e.*, the *books* of the enunciators, as we say the prophets for the books of the prophets. The book of Job has an antiquity of several centuries prior to the time of Moses, and is consequently by far the earliest literary work that has come down to us, its age being at least one thousand years greater than that of the Homeric and Hesiodic poems, the earliest works of profane history."—*Origines Biblicæ, by C. T. Beke*, p. 51.

† Acts vii. 22.

jectured that the original language of the posterity of Shem, among whom was the family of Heber, did not suffer at the catastrophe at Babel.* This, at first sight, may appear to be a plausible view of the case; but still it is a recital, the accuracy of which is open to discussion. The opinion that the Shemitic tongue did not share in the confusion of Babel, does not agree with the statement, that the *whole earth* journeyed from the east to the land of Shinar, where they made brick for stone, and undertook the building of a city; and where, also, the language of *all the earth* is said to have been confounded. This, then, removes the principal link upon which the argument depends. But does not the circumstance of the Hebrew language having been called *Hebrew*, after *Heber*, seem to intimate very plainly that it was different from that which had been known to Noah or to Adam? If not, how came it to be called by his name rather than by theirs? Doubtless that designation implies the existence of some characteristic in the language of that family and their posterity, which was not known to their ancient predecessors; and this, also, we think, considerably weakens the chain of argument by which it is attempted to show that the Hebrew was the one primeval language. The utmost that can be said in favor of this view of the case, and of the support which it is supposed to derive from a critical attention to the structure of the Hebrew tongue, is, that it may contain some of the elements of the original speech of man; but this also may be said of many other tongues, as is evident to those who have paid any careful attention to comparative philology. If we considered, which we do not, that Moses, in the narrative before us, really treated of natural languages, we should be inclined to think that the Hebrew might contain within it a larger amount of the primeval tongue than any others; and the arguments for this conclusion, which would exercise a considerable influence upon our mind, would be that it was made the vehicle of a very early revelation to the world; and also of its peculiar adaptation to express and to preserve the idea of spiritual things. Still, as it is certain that other revelations preceded the time of Moses, which are not known to have been written in the

* *Dr. Burton's Deluge and the World after the Flood*, p. 181.

Hebrew language; and as revelations have been subsequently made in Greek, it is plain that no very great reliance can be placed upon such arguments.

But if the primeval language was confounded at Babel, in the way which commentators have generally supposed, then, surely, it is in vain to search for it among any of those by which it has been succeeded. If all the diversities of language arose from that event, must not the oldest have suffered in the catastrophe, and the foundation structure of all the rest have been coeval in their origin? How fruitless then must be all inquiry about the first; and how useless must be any disputation which undertakes to prove the superior antiquity of any of the rest. It seems to us that, upon such premises, the whole subject may be reduced into the smallest compass, namely, that the primeval language was lost at the confusion of tongues, and that every other then began. This, surely, is the obvious consequence of literally interpreting those portions of the Mosaic records; and upon this view of the case the Hebrew must have taken its rise at Babel, and it is to be regarded as a sacred language, only because it has been chosen by the Lord as a vehicle by which to convey some knowledge of sacred things to men.

Starting in this inquiry upon the premises that all the varieties of mankind have originated with a single pair, it is most rational to believe that one language continued for a long time to prevail among their descendants. At all events this, without doubt, was a characteristic of the language of mankind among the people with whom the ancient church existed; that is, after the period when articulate sounds were employed as the exponents of thought: and, therefore, we are of opinion that Moses was directed to employ the fact in the narrative before us, not so much for its own sake, as for the sake of symbolizing the unity of intellectual thought about the things of primitive religion. If it had been the chief purpose of Moses in this history to treat of the original condition of natural language, we think that the character of that language would have been declared; and also that if it had been the Hebrew, he would not have failed to have said so. As the historian and the legislator of the Hebrew people, such a fact would have

been admirably suited to his purpose; and it cannot reasonably be supposed that he would have neglected to record so interesting a circumstance if it had been true.

But these things are not the objects of the narrative. The primeval language, and the origin of the diversities by which it was distinguished, may constitute learned themes for the investigations of the linguist and the philosopher, but it is very doubtful whether the real truth upon those subjects will ever be determined. The Scriptures, certainly, do not afford any sufficient data to guide research into those matters, or to determine the opinions which ought to be received respecting them. A very competent authority has said that the language of Noah is irretrievably lost:* and another scholar, after a very matured and careful examination of the subject, has declared that "The whole question, (concerning the original language and the confusion of tongues), runs parallel to that concerning the derivation of all mankind from a common ancestry, the family of Noah. The range of argument and difficulty is nearly, if not entirely, equal; and we humbly think that the resulting problems are insoluble by mortals in the present state."† But if it were otherwise, and if all those difficulties were resolved, what *religious* information would ensue? The communication of this must, after all, be the main purpose of God's revelation to man. We may, therefore, usefully pass on to such a consideration of the subject as will afford this desideratum.

Moses has distinctly recorded that "The whole earth was of one language and of one speech." By the earth here, as in the previous cases in which it has occurred, is represented the church; and the declaration that it had one language and one speech, is intended to inform us that it was in the possession of some desirable advantage. Was it that which the literal sense expresses? We think not. It may be granted that one universal language would greatly facilitate the intercommunication of nations: still this is only a speculative notion, contemplating a worldly convenience; and it has been doubted whether if attainable, it would be desirable, in the present condition of our race.

* See *William Jones's Works*, vol. iii. p. 199.

† Dr. Pye Smith. *Kitto's Bib. Cyc.*, Art. *Tongues, Confusion of.*

St. Pierre has remarked that "It is thought to be an evil, that nations do not understand each other: but if all spoke the same language, the impostures, the errors, the prejudices, the cruel opinions peculiar to each nation, would be diffused all over the earth. The general confusion which is now in words would in that case be in the thoughts."* This seems to show that such a language might, in the present state of things, be more injurious to the moral welfare of nations than otherwise; and, also, that a diversity of tongues would assist in the narrowing of particular evils to territorial limits. One universal language could only exist in, and be appreciated by, a very superior condition of universal society. If it ever did exist, it was in such a condition of society; and it must have ceased as that condition was destroyed: moreover it must have been a natural or spontaneous expression of ideas radiant from the whole face, rather than an artificial and labored articulation of sounds proceeding from the mouth.† The return, therefore, to one universal language is dependent on a return to one universal morality, purity, and religion. Although then the advantages of such a language might once have been enjoyed, its existence was dependent upon a state of universal spiritual excellences.

* *Arcadia*, p. 190.

† Upon these points Swedenborg has made the following remarkable statement:— "The men of the most ancient church had internal respiration, and none external, but what was tacit; wherefore they did not converse so much by *words* as subsequently and at this day, but by *ideas*, which they were able to express by innumerable changes of the countenance and face, and especially of the lips, in which there are innumerable series of muscular fibres which are not unfolded at the present day, but which, then being free, served as a means to suggest, signify, and represent their ideas; so that they could express in a minute what at this day could not be expressed by articulate sounds and words under an hour; and this more fully and evidently to the capacity and understanding than is possible by any combination of words. But in their posterity that internal respiration vanished by degrees, and external respiration, by degrees succeeded in its place, such as we experience at this day, and with external respiration the language of words, or of articulate sounds, into which were determined the ideas of thought. Thus the state of man was altogether changed" (*Arcana Cœlestia*, 607, 608). "The primitive language of mankind on our earth possessed an agreement with that of angels, because they derived it from heaven; and the Hebrew language possesses such agreement in some particulars" (*Heaven and Hell*, 237).

When, therefore, Moses, by inspiration, was directed to refer to it in the narrative before us, it was not so much for its own sake, as for the sake of indicating that internal eminence of which it was the evidence and the representation. The principitates of things are mentioned in the Scriptures to signify their principles; and, consequently, language and speech are mentioned as the exponents of affection and thought. By the former, man carries on his intercourse with man; but it is only by the latter that he can hold any communion with his God.

"Language and speech," viewed externally, are mere sounds; but, considered internally, they are feelings and sentiments. These things constitute spiritual utterances, which, it is reasonable to suppose, are perceived by those invisible beings with whom man is internally associated, and to whom oral enunciation can be of little value. The Lord taught this fact when he said, "Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth."* The angels, as "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation," † perceive and help the condition of men. By natural speech, which is articulate sounds, men speak to the world without; but by spiritual speech, which is affection and thought, they speak to the world within: hence during our lifetime here we have communication with both. Words are of a spiritual origin, which obtain natural utterance by means of the mouth. The latter may be various, while the former may be uniform. The people of all nations are found to think with great similarity upon subjects brought under the cognizance of their senses. The blue of the sky, the green of the meadows, the solidity of rocks, the liquidity of water, the fragrance of the rose, and the concord of sweet sounds, excite a similarity of thought concerning those qualities among all men, whatsoever be their nation, and howsoever different may be the intonations by which those thoughts may be uttered. A difference in language does not necessarily imply a dissimilarity of thought. The mind of the church may be one in thought, but the natural languages in which that thought is expressed may be much more multitudinous than they are. Unity of ideas respecting the general and particular doctrines

* Luke xv. 7. † Hebrews i. 14.

of the ancient church, is what constituted the one language and one speech, of which Moses has written. Ideas are the living things of intellectual light. Words die as soon as they are born. Unity of ideas about spiritual truth constitutes a blessing; but differences of opinion respecting it are regarded as a disaster. The former is the one language, and the latter is that confusion of it, of which Moses has spoken in the narrative before us.

It is reasonable to believe, and we think Revelation teaches, that, when men die they pass as to their spirits into the spiritual world, and permanently retain all the thoughts which they have pre-eminently loved. The languages by which they had been uttered in the world will no longer be required, because men will then be raised out of the conventional forms of expression, and passed into the region of the essential ideas of thought. In that world there cannot exist any differences of language, considered as the artificial means for the communication of mind. The speech of spirits therefore may be described as perceptible thinking. The thoughts of each will be spontaneously exhibited in corresponding expressions; and their signification will be known to others through an intuition which is inherent in every one from his creation. Some idea of perceiving intuitively what is present in the thoughts of others may be gathered from the circumstance, that we do sometimes clearly perceive what another designs to utter before it is orally expressed. Their meaning is anticipated with as much certainty as if it were declared; and it frequently happens that we can even assist them with the words necessary for their purpose. This occasional experience below may be taken as a common law of the spiritual world. It cannot be reasonably supposed that there are any national languages in heaven. Doubtless the speech of angels is a universal tongue, because it is the result of harmonious loves. No matter to what country a man may have belonged during his residence in this world, his nationality perishes when he leaves the earth and enters into heaven. There all nations, and kindreds, and tongues, and people utter their praises of the Omnipotent in the same language.* They are under the government of one king, who

* Rev. vii. 10.

is the Lord Jesus Christ; and he has enacted the same general laws for the edification and government of all. In that kingdom all must conform to think what is true and love what is good; and because the utterances of such thoughts will not be arbitrary sounds, as in the natural world, but the spontaneous expressions of living love, it seems plain that one language and one speech must prevail among its inhabitants. Opposition of thought would imply a contradiction of the truth; and this would cause one or the other of its possessors to be removed. There may be, and it is highly probable that there are, shades of differences arising from superior and inferior states of wisdom; nevertheless, all must concur with the leading principles of that kingdom,—they must think in unity and love in harmony. Thus there is one language and one speech; that is, there is a unanimity of affection and of thought concerning the general and particular doctrines of spiritual truth.

Now these, being among the characteristics of the church in heaven, ought also to be among the characteristics of the church on earth. Such was the state of the ancient church during the periods of its integrity; and it is described by Moses as "the whole earth being of one language and of one speech." The "whole earth" denoting the complete—the unbroken—church; and it is said to have been distinguished by "one language and one speech," to represent that there every where prevailed among its people, a unanimity of sentiment concerning the general and particular subjects of faith; their unanimity upon the *generals* of faith, being denoted by one *language;* and their unanimity upon the *particulars* of faith, being signified by *one speech.* It must be evident that two different ideas are intended to be expressed by the two terms language and speech,* *i. e.*, literally *lip* and *words;* and it is easy to see that the former expresses a more general idea than the latter. That the term *language* is employed to signify doctrine in general, is plain from many passages of the Scriptures. For instance, the prophet, treating of the state of the church when scientific knowledge will be hailed as serviceable to its intellectual in-

* A distinction has been acknowledged; hence some have said that Moses simply means to say that the people had not only the same language, but the same manner of pronouncing it. See *Dr. Patrick's Commentary.*

terests, says, "In that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt speak the language of Canaan";* where by the five cities of Egypt, are denoted all those who are instructed in the letter of Revelation; and by their speaking the *language* of Canaan is signified that they will come to acknowledge the general doctrines of its spiritual sense. The Lord also said, "I will turn to the people a pure *language*, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve Him with one consent."† Where by "a pure language" is denoted true doctrine; still of doctrine in *general*, because every one must have of this some particular perception arising from his individual character. Doctrines in *particular* are signified by speech; hence the Lord said, "My *doctrine* shall drop as the rain, my *speech* shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb."‡ The Divine speech is said to be like drops of dew and small rain, to express the particular truths which were enumerated. And again, it is written, "Day unto day uttereth speech";§ which plainly denotes that every successive state with man gives expression to some particular wants. The prophet also, in speaking of those who apply to the Lord under the influence of their afflictions, says, "Lord, in trouble have they visited thee; they poured out a secret speech when thy chastening was upon them";‖ where "a secret speech" plainly means the spiritual desire of particular necessities. Thus the design of Moses, in the history before us, was to show that there prevailed a unity of mind among the people concerning the general and particular doctrines of the ancient church. Doctrines are said to be *one* when men are influenced by mutual love and charity, because these principles promote unity among varieties. Under their guidance men are influenced by one prominent consideration, which is, the advancement of the Lord's kingdom by promoting the common good of society; in which case particular doctrines unite with, and contribute to confirm, the general doctrines of practical charity. The unity of doctrines in general, and of doctrines in particular, may be illustrated and distinguished by what is observable in man's physical structure. The body may

* Isa. xix. 18. † Zeph. iii. 9. ‡ Deut. xxxii. 2.

§ Psalm xix. 2. ‖ Isa. xxvi. 16.

be considered as one general mechanism, having particular mechanisms in the head with all its senses; in the hands, arms, legs, and feet, with all their complicated articulations; and in the trunk with all its interior viscera and activities; and notwithstanding each particular part acts differently from the general whole, yet they all act harmoniously and co-operate as one to sustain a general result. It is the same with the particulars which constitute every general doctrine of the church.

The general doctrine of love and charity is, then, that which is signified by the one language of the ancient church; and wheresoever this doctrine is not preserved and spoken, the church must have declined. This doctrine in its *general* form is thus expressed: "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets." * But its *particular* form will be various according to the diversified circumstances, which call upon men for their individual activities. It was, then, the existence of charity, in its general and particular forms throughout the ancient church, of which Moses has informed us under the figure of "the whole earth being of one language and of one speech." The people were united in their acknowledgment of charity as a *general* principle of the church; it was in this respect that they were "of one language"; they were also united in practising the *particular duties of charity;* and in this respect they were "of one speech." Thus, they were one in acknowledging the doctrines of charity, and one in the practice of its duties. It is the unity of the church in reference to these spiritual things which is the subject treated of, and not, as it is commonly supposed, the sameness of man's oral vocabulary. This is a point of great religious value. We see from it that God, in His revelation, regards the communication to us of spiritual information concerning the excellency of an ancient church. Unity of thought with which the doctrines of charity were embraced, and the unity of affection with which the duties of charity were practised, were among the good things by which it was distinguished.

Before entering upon a consideration of the circumstances by

* Matt. vii. 12.

which those advantages were destroyed, it may be useful to observe that this ancient or Noachic church possessed several features similar to those which are proper to genuine Christianity. Among these the doctrines and requirements of charity may be named, together with their capability of inducing mankind to think harmoniously upon spiritual things. The point, however, which is singularly conspicuous in the histories of both those dispensations is, that the subject of language is treated of as distinguishing what may be considered as the primeval periods of each.

The Lord, in establishing Christianity, said, that those who believed should "speak with new tongues." * But certainly he did not mean by this that all who believed were to be gifted with the ability to speak some new natural language. If so, and if that were to be among the evidences of their faith, how few have believed! There can be no doubt but that the promise was intended to be understood as expressing a universal and perpetual sign of true belief in the church. But the universal absence of such a sign among its members, would prove the universal destitution of such a faith! This latter, however, will not be conceded, and therefore the former cannot be the right interpretation of the promise. It is to be observed that the promise is concerning "new tongues," and not the abolition of old languages. Besides, the acquisition of other languages than those which are vernacular, could not be regarded as any evidence of spiritual faith in religion. How many linguists have been sceptics? The tongue, considered as an organ, is mentioned in the Scripture as the symbol of doctrine; but, regarded in the sense of language, it is significant of religion. Doctrine has relation to the truths of the church, but religion has reference to the life of them. Hence the promise to "speak with new tongues," as a sign following belief, properly means, to perceive and to act from the influence of that new religion which was then in the course of being established; and this every one may see is the natural result of a true belief in its principles. It induces "a new man"; † and this is accompanied by a new life which speaks of wisdom by the purity of its conduct.

* Mark xvi. 17. † Eph. iv. 24.

But the most remarkable circumstance, as being coincident with the unity of language in the ancient church, is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. It is there written that, "when the day of Pentecost was fully come, the apostles were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded because that every man heard them speak in his own language." * Here, also, the other tongues which are said to have been spoken and heard, imply the doctrines of another religion which were declared and received. But besides this, we are informed that foreigners, from about fourteen different parts of the eastern world, were, from one centre of linguistal communication, made acquainted with "the wonderful works of God"; that is, with his manifestation in the flesh, the miracles which he wrought, and the teachings which he delivered, together with some information respecting the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension which had been so recently witnessed. At least it is reasonable to believe that these were the subjects of the apostles' discourses.

Two general opinions as to the seat of this transaction have been entertained; † some maintaining that it was in the tongues of the apostles, and others asserting that it was in the ears of those who heard them. Those who advocate the latter opinion suppose that the apostles spoke in their own native language, and that the devout foreigners who were attentive to their preachings, were gifted with the ability to perceive what were the general subjects of their discourses; and that the reasons why it is said "that every man heard them speak in his own

* Acts. ii. 1 to 6.

† Some have supposed that the miracle was not so much wrought on the *disciples* as on their *hearers;* imagining "that although the disciples spoke their *own tongue*, yet every man understood what was spoken as if it had been spoken in the language in which he was born. Though this is by no means so likely as the opinion which states that the disciples themselves spoke all these different languages; yet the miracle is the same however it may be taken" (*i. e.*, in either way a miracle was performed).—*Dr. A. Clarke's Com.* There is a short discussion upon these two views in the *Intellectual Repository*, vol. i. for 1812.

language," is simply because the influence of thought from the spiritual world always flows into the natural language of those who are its subjects. Although it is possible that cases may have occurred, in which individuals have been enabled to perceive something of the meaning of a public discourse delivered in a language which they did not understand, yet we think that this can hardly be the meaning of the narrative before us.

Those however who embrace the former opinion abide more closely to the letter of the history, which expressly says of the apostles that "they spake with other tongues as the spirit gave them utterance." This view of the case, though not without its difficulties, can appeal to experience in which individuals, under peculiar circumstances, have been enabled, for a short time, to speak languages which they have not learnt. Examples of this fact are furnished by modern history, and attested by witnesses of great discernment and credibility. Why then hesitate to admit that a similar occurrence transpired with the apostles? It does not appear to have been with them a permanent endowment. The circumstance of their having been filled with the Holy Ghost, and speaking as the Spirit gave them utterance, proves that they were upon that occasion in an abnormal state; nor are we aware of any thing in the history of their subsequent intercourse with the world, by which to show that the ability then communicated was afterwards continued. It appears to have been a gift for a special occasion; and, the occasion being served, the gift was discontinued:* so that the opinion of those who abide by the letter of the history, and maintain that the apostles really delivered their discourses, on the eventful life of Jesus in the world, in different languages, may, we think, be safely regarded as the truth; for although there is no evidence to show that the foreigners who were present did not understand the vernacular language of Jerusalem, still it is expressly inquired, "how hear we every man in our own tongue wherein we were born?" Besides, this view of the subject is more simple than the former, because it accomplishes the same end with

* "The gift of prophecy and the gift of miracles were both dependent on the will of the Most High, and each of them was given only for the moment; and when the necessity was over, the influence ceased."—*Dr. A. Clarke's Com. Jer.* xlii. 7.

a less number of appliances. Those who think that the seat of the miracle was in the ears of the multitude, must suppose a great number of persons, from various nations, to have been the subjects of it; and, also, that it was intended to make them think they heard what they did not hear, namely, the vernacular language of the apostles as though it were a foreign tongue; and, consequently, to lead them to believe what was not true! Whereas the opinion of those who regard the seat of the miracle to have been in the tongues of the apostles, is supported by the express declaration of the history; by some incidental facts of a similar character, which, under certain conditions, have been witnessed in modern times;* by the circumstance of the apostles having been gifted with other supernatural powers; and by many other considerations which could be named, if this were the place to prolong such a digressive inquiry. "The apostles began to speak ἑτέραις γλωσσαις, *eterais glossais*, with other tongues, not 'as the spirit' gave the auditors ability to hear, but as he 'gave' the apostles 'utterance.'" †

But, as before observed, this matter is noticed chiefly to show that the histories of two dispensations, which were somewhat similar in their internal quality, refer to a phenomenon respecting language as a mark which distinguished an early epoch of each. The main point of both narratives is to represent the Divine efforts to establish among the people a unity of faith respecting spiritual things. And as there were numerous languages when Christianity was founded, so there might have been various tongues when the Noachic dispensation prevailed; for it, like Christianity, does not at any time appear to have been received by all the nations of the earth. The principal localities of that ancient church, were Canaan and the surrounding countries, such as Syria, Mesopotamia, Arabia, Chaldea, Assyria, Egypt,

* I can most solemnly affirm that I have heard him (Davis, the Poughkeepsie seer, while in a clairvoyant state,) correctly quote the Hebrew language in his lectures, and display a knowledge of geology which would have been astonishing in a person of his age, even if he had devoted years to the study. Yet to neither of these departments has he ever devoted a day's application in his life."—*Mesmer and Swedenborg*, by the Rev. George Bush, Professor of Hebrew and Oriental Literature in the University of New York.

† Gregory Nazianzen.

Zidon, Tyre, and Nineveh (among which different languages prevailed); for among the inhabitants of those nations a representative worship, founded upon a knowledge of the correspondences subsisting between natural and spiritual things, most certainly existed.* Evidences of this fact, in some dilapidated forms, are not yet entirely obliterated from their monumental and traditional history. But the principles of that church do not appear to have been embraced by the people of India, China,† the Americas, nor of many "islands of the sea." Some information respecting it might have been introduced to the first two of these nations, when perhaps it was in the process of being corrupted, but there is no evidence to show that it ever formed the integral religion of those countries, though their chronology claims a coeval, if not a more remote, antiquity: ‡ so that the saying of Moses in reference to the ancient church, namely, "the whole earth was of one language and one speech," is no more to be strictly construed than is that

* *Doctrine of the Sacred Scriptures*, 102.

† Dr. Shuckford remarks, that the first king of China was Fohi, and that he and Noah were contemporaries: and he concludes that they are the same person. (*Connection*, vol. i. 89.) This, of course, is asserted on the theory that Noah was the oldest man of the new world, and that he had migrated into China. But it does not conform with the Chinese chronology; and certainly the notion of Noah having settled there and become the first king is mere imagination. Is it likely that they would call the first man of the country the king? would they not rather regard him as the first man? A king implies a people and a government; and would Revelation have been silent upon the subject if he had been the founder of so large and populous an empire? But if such were the case, how did it happen that the Chinese language is so entirely different from that which is acknowledged to distinguish the other branches of the Noachic family?—See also vol. i. 106.

‡ Swedenborg states that the Word which belonged to the ancient church, and which was extant before the Israelitish Word, and which latter contains quotations from it, (see Joshua x. 12, 13; 2 Sam. i. 17, 18; Numbers xxi. 14, 15, 27, 30,) "is still preserved among the people who inhabit Great Tartary." He also says, "Seek for it in China, and peradventure you may find it there among the Tartars."—*Apocalypse Revealed*, 11. This recommendation to search for it, if taken in connection with the movement which has recently taken place in China, in favor of a spiritual religion, and which has induced England, with the assistance of other Protestant nations, to send there a million of New Testaments in the Chinese language, might not, if properly acted upon, be without successful results.

declaration of the apostle in reference to the Christian church, namely, "there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, *out of every nation under heaven.*" * It has been seen that Moses, by his terms, is treating of the unity of spiritual religion in the whole church; and the apostle, in the passage just cited, is speaking of something similar, namely, the collection and concentration at Jerusalem of all those who at that time were able and disposed to receive the Divine teachings, and who, therefore, are said to be "devout men, out of every nation under heaven."

This miracle then—of the apostles speaking with other tongues—was doubtless a display of the Divine solicitude to bring various nations acquainted with the great truths of Christianity. It enabled the devout men of several nations who were assembled to hear those truths, from one intellectual centre specially gifted for the purpose, so that they might be impressed with a uniformity of sentiment respecting the spiritual things which were declared to them. And in this respect Christianity had an epoch among the people of the nations by whom it was embraced, similar to that which distinguished the countries to which the Noachic dispensation was vouchsafed. One language and one speech, that is, one heart and one mind, prevailed respecting the general and particular doctrines of the Christian church. But by both dispensations, those advantages have long been lost, because the people have departed from the true light. Upon this fact, in connection with Christianity, I cannot dwell; † but the cause of it, in reference to the people of the ancient church, is thus described by Moses: "It came to pass as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there." ‡

The statement of their having journeyed from the *east*, has presented considerable difficulties to the commentators on Biblical geography; and the point is still in abeyance among them.

* Acts ii. 5. "This is an hyperbole."—*Whitby* and *Lowman.*

† For an enlarged exposition of the fact, the reader is referred to the "*End of the Church,*" by the Rev. A. Clissold, M.A.

‡ Gen. x. 2.

The Scriptures sometimes employ the term east in a way which does not correspond with the scientific idea, which the word is commonly understood to express. Thus קֶדֶם *kedem*, *eastward*, is said to be a name given in the Hebrew writings to certain regions of the earth, without any regard to their relation to the eastern part of the heavens. Indeed countries which comprehend Assyria, Mesopotamia, and Chaldea, are spoken of as being in the east, although in reality they are situated north of Judea, which is considered to have been the meridian or residence of the writer.* And it is a difficulty of this kind which is discovered in the passage before us. The mountain now known as the Ararat of Armenia, is regarded to have been the resting place of the ark, and, its immediate neighborhood, is considered to have been the first residence of Noah, his family, and his descendants. But to go from thence to the site now known as that of Babylon, and to which they are supposed to have migrated, would have required a journey not *from the east*, but *from the north*. Here then, is a geographical difficulty apparently opposed to the relation of Moses; but it arises chiefly out of a mistaken apprehension of the real purpose of the narrative. Still those who abide by the letter are perplexed by it; and various hypotheses have been advanced in order to remove it. Some have considered that the original expression מִקֶּדֶם *mikkedem*, which is rendered *from the east*, might be translated *towards the east;* and that the whole passage might be read, "As they now towards the east journeyed." † But to scholars it is evident that this cannot be the true meaning of the passage, because, as is well known, the direct and primary signification of the preposition מִן *min*,‡ is *from*. Others however have attempted a geographical solution of the matter. They have thought that the land of Shinar, to which they journeyed, must have been some western locality, and not that which is now known as the site of the Babylon of Semiramis and Nebuchadnezzar. To support this view of the case, Shinar is considered to have been

* See *Kitto's Bib. Cyc.* Art. *East.*

† Heeren's *Historical Researches. Asiatic Nations.* vol ii. p. 174.

‡ See Gesenius' *Heb. Lex.* Art. מִן. No. 5.

the ancient name of a small part of Mesopotamia, in which Noah and his family first settled; and that at a subsequent period the name Shinar was applied to the whole of the country east of the Euphrates as far as the Tigris. Thus that the Shinar in which Nimrod built Babel, was Shinar in its first or narrow signification, and that the Shinar in which the tower was built, was another locality * in the same land, to which the same name had been extended, and to reach which, they must have journeyed westward, that is from the east.† But all this is mere invention, to meet the requirements of a mistaken apprehension of the history. It is plain that Moses does not employ the term *east* in a scientific sense. He uses it as the representative of charity implanted by the Lord. With this meaning it is frequently to be found in the Sacred Scriptures. The east being that part of the natural heavens in which the sun rises to illuminate the world with his light, and to invigorate it with his heat, is a beautiful emblem of that charity by which the Lord can be present in the human mind, and wherein He can rise to make man sensible of His wisdom and His love. And because it is the emblem of charity, it is also the symbol of the Lord: for the Lord is essential charity, and where that is, there He is. It is in consequence of this signification of the term east that the prophet said, "Behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east." ‡ It was for a similar reason that when the prince prepared a voluntary offering unto the Lord, the gate looking to the *east* was to be opened. § The "sons of the east," || represented those who are principled in charity; and men from the east ¶ were called wise for the same reason. Assyria, Mesopotamia, and Chaldea, are sometimes said to be in the east, without any reference to the meridian of Judea; but chiefly to represent that the ancient church, which once existed in those parts, was distinguished by charity, and the acknowledgment of the Lord. And, therefore, when we are informed that those who had been of one language and one speech, "journeyed from the east," the meaning is, that those

* Gen. x. 10; xi. 2.

† *Origines Biblicæ*, by C. J. Beke, p. 25.

‡ Ezek. xliii. 2, 4.

§ Ezek. xlvi. 12.

|| Judges vi. 3; viii. 10; 1 Kings i. 4, 30.

¶ Matt. ii. 1.

who had been of one heart and one mind, departed from charity, and thereby became separated from the Lord. It was from this calamity that there arose all that ambition and confusion by which the church was afterwards divided and dispersed: the Mosaic description of which, we propose to consider in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE LAND OF SHINAR: BRICK FOR STONE; SLIME FOR MORTAR; AND BUILDING THE CITY AND TOWER OF BABEL.

"If the natural terms and histories, in and by which the *Word of God* is expressed, must needs, in many cases, present scattered and unconnected ideas, when interpreted only according to their natural or literal sense, whilst yet the spiritual ideas involved in them are connected together in the fullest concord and most perfect beauty of arrangement and order; if the *Word of God* be thus to appearance rude, discordant, and frequently contradictory in the letter, when yet in its internal spirit and meaning, it is altogether polished, harmonious, and in unison with itself; then who can pretend to interpret faithfully, and to edification, the Divine sense and purpose of the *Holy Book*, unless he be attentive to this circumstance of its composition and be enlightened at the same time to discern and develop the beautiful arrangement of its interior and spiritual contents, under the apparent vulgarity and dissonance of the letter?"—*Preface to the Gospel according to Matthew, by the Rev. J. Clowes, M.A.*

Several of the circumstances which marked the decline of the ancient church, have been pointed out in preceding portions of this work. But Moses, in the eleventh of Genesis, has furnished us with a brief summary of that event. In a comparatively few sentences he has described what constituted the excellence of that dispensation; the process of its decline; the substitution of error for truth, and of evil for goodness; the rise of a selfish ambition within its pale; and, finally, the confusion which resulted to all its spiritual knowledge. But all these particulars are related in that representative style which was peculiar to the ancients; and some of these, we shall, in this chapter, endeavor to explain.

It has been seen that the excellence of the ancient church consisted in the unity of its charity and faith; and that this was represented by its being said, "The whole earth was of one language and one speech"; and also that by their "journey from the east," was signified their departure from the Lord. In the process of this journey it is said "that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there." This is the first point to which our attention shall be directed: we will after-

wards notice the circumstances which are said to have occurred in that locality.

Shinar is generally considered to be the Hebrew name of a province in Middle Asia, subsequently known as Babylonia or Chaldea. But the geographical boundaries of this country are not very clearly defined. By some it is understood to have been bounded on the north by Mesopotamia, on the east by the Tigris, on the south by the Persian Gulf, and on the west by the Arabian desert. But by others it is said to have included Mesopotamia and nearly all the countries which were embraced by Assyria in its widest meaning. Passages of Scripture are cited to support this largest sense; but so far as we are aware, none are adduced to favor the more limited signification. It would be difficult to draw the map; still "the land of Shinar" may be taken to mean the same as "the land of the Chaldeans," or Babylonia. The extent of the country will not affect our argument. It is well known that the Scriptures are not very exact upon the subject of any of the physical sciences. The reason is because the main purpose for which they were given is not to teach men natural philosophy, but spiritual religion. The objects of astronomy and the localities of geography are referred to, rather to represent certain diversified conditions of the church, than to convey any scientific information upon those subjects. The heavens, with their phenomena, denote the internal man with his numerous states of illustration; and the earth, with its localities, represents the external man with its diversified conditions of fertility. These two facts may be rendered very evident; but it is the latter which here principally concerns us, and to which a little additional attention may be necessary.

Most persons know that the Scriptures frequently refer to certain geographical localities, for the purpose of symbolizing something pertaining to religion or its perversities. This is true of whole countries and of particular districts in each of them. Take, as instances which require no expositor, the land of Israel, Mount Zion, and the Valley of Achor. No one can be ignorant of these places being sometimes mentioned to signify spiritual things. Here, then, we have the principle both shown and admitted. If it is true in one case, why should it not be so in

all? On what ground can exemptions be claimed? And how could such exemptions be "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness," as "all Scripture given by inspiration of God" is said to be?* Indeed, Scripture geography, and especially that which is related in connection with the Jewish history, may reasonably be regarded as a map drawn by the spirit of God to represent various particulars belonging to the church, and the respective situations which they occupy in the minds of the people, with respect to each other. As there can be no doubt that Judea is mentioned in the Scriptures as a type of the church in general, so it is plain that each place by which it was distinguished, must have been the representative of some particular excellence and grace. It is for these reasons that the prophets and others were directed to write such glowing descriptions of the fertility and luxuriance of that country in general; † and in particular to declare Mount Zion to be beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth.‡ While then Judea was a symbol of the church as it exists in the *interiors* of the mind, so the nations by which it was surrounded were types of principles and sentiments which have place in the *externals* of the mind, and which are well known to be more or less in a state of antagonism to spiritual life. And this is the reason why most of the countries which lay beyond its borders are described as the enemies of Israel. The sentiments and delights of the natural man present obstacles to the pursuits and developments of the spiritual, and thus they are as it were in a state of continuous opposition and warfare: a circumstance which is strikingly represented by the menacing attitude so frequently assumed towards Judea by the surrounding nations.

It is admitted that much of the geography of the Scriptures is very vague. Hence it is found difficult to determine, with any certainty, the position of "the east," from which mankind are said to have journeyed; § "the sides of the north," from which Gog was to be brought upon the mountains of Israel; || or "the uttermost parts of the earth" that were to be given as a possession to those who ask: ¶ and many other localities are

* 2 Tim. iii. 16. † Numbers xv. 6. ‡ Psalm xlviii. 2.
§ Gen. xi. 1. || Ezek. xxxix. 2. Marginal reading.
¶ Psalm ii. 8.

mentioned which can not be pointed out with any accuracy. There can be no doubt that the earth is occasionally spoken of as a large tract surrounded on all sides with water. Thus it is written, "He hath founded the earth upon the seas, and established it upon the floods." * Josephus drew a similar idea from the description of Eden. He says, "The garden was watered by one river, which ran round about the whole earth, and was parted into four parts."† Upon other occasions it appears that Jerusalem was considered as occupying the centre of the earth's surface; for it said, "I have set Jerusalem in the midst of the nations and countries which are round about her." ‡ These descriptions cannot be received as communicating any real geographical facts: and as we may rest assured that the Holy Spirit, by whom they were dictated, was not ignorant of the truth, we may feel satisfied that they have been written for a purely representative purpose. If the earth and Jerusalem are viewed as types of the external and internal man, or church, we shall feel no difficulty in perceiving why the former is said to have been established upon the flood, and the latter to have been the centre of the nations. For the external church is established upon temptation experienced and overcome; and the internal church, with the regenerate, is the centre which exercises a spiritual influence upon all the inferior affections and thoughts of men.

This, however, is a subject upon which we might dwell at considerable length; and by the help of citations from the Word, it would be easy to demonstrate the positions to which we have alluded: but we will confine ourselves to another illustration, founded upon a declaration of the prophet respecting Egypt and Assyria, who were the great neighbors of Israel. It is thus written, "In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria; and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land: whom the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance."§ This is a prediction

* Psalm xxiv., see also Prov. viii. 27.
† Antiq. i. 2.
‡ Ezek. v. 5; see also following verses.
§ Isaiah xix. 23, 25.

respecting those countries, for which no historical circumstances have been discovered which can be reasonably construed into its adequate fulfilment. Some, indeed, have thought that it refers to the intercourse and correspondence which took place between the Jews, Egyptians, and Assyrians; and that in the process of time they should all come to serve the same God, but that Israel should be the chief among them in respect to this service. Those, however, who can be satisfied with this view of the subject cannot be hard to please; for at what period did the religion of the Jews exercise any considerable influence upon the inhabitants of Egypt or Assyria? and when did those nations look upon Israel as a blessing in their midst? Never! The fact is that the prediction does not refer to any outward occurrences which were to distinguish the history of those nations, but to some glorious condition of the church in which the three leading principles of the human mind should have a free and mutual intercourse, and so contribute something towards the excellence of each other. Hence the prediction is introduced by the phrase, "In that day"; which is well known to be frequently employed in the prophets, to indicate some happy condition of the future church. Those three principles are the spiritual, the rational, and the scientific. The scientific principle of the church is formed by *a knowledge* of the external things of religion; the spiritual principle is formed by *a love* of the interior things of religion; and the rational principle is constituted by *an acknowledgment* of the truths associated with the former, and a *perception* of the ends contemplated by the latter. Experience has long taught mankind that those principles, among the unregenerate, are at variance with each other;—that the natural or scientific, is opposed to the spiritual or heavenly, and that, in consequence, the rational has been brought into great perplexity. Now it is those three principles which are represented by the three countries above referred to; and the mutual intercourse which is to result from regeneration, which is the true establishment of the church, is the subject of the prediction. Thus, by *Egypt* is represented the *scientific principle;* for in that country the *externals* of the ancient church were preserved with greater knowledge and for a longer period, than among any other of the nations. Of this their hieroglyphical remains are a sufficient

testimony. It is in consequence of this representation that the prophet said, "Five cities in the land of Egypt shall speak the language of Canaan"; * where to speak the language of Canaan denotes to make acknowledgment of the truth of the church; and for this to be done by five cities in the land of Egypt, signifies that it will be abundantly attended to by the scientifics of the natural man when he is regenerated.

By *Assyria* is represented the *rational principle;* for reasonings concerning the interior things of the ancient church were cultivated, in that country, with more pertinacity, and longer duration, than among any other of the nations. This is sufficiently evident from the long continuation in that country of those classes of persons called Astrologers, Chaldeans, Soothsayers, and the Wise Men of Babylon. It was in reference to this principle existing in right order, that the prophet said, "Behold, the Assyrian was a cedar in Lebanon, with fair branches, and with a shadowing shroud, and of a high stature; and his top was among the thick boughs. The waters made him great, the deep set him up on high. His height was exalted above all the trees of the field. All the fowls of heaven made their nests in his boughs, and under his shadow did all the beasts of the field bring forth their young. The cedars in the garden of God could not hide him; and all the men of Eden envied him." † It is easy to see that by the exaltation of Assyria in the garden of God, treated of in this extract, is denoted the elevation of the rational principle of the church.

That *Israel* is representative of the *spiritual principle* is well known. It was in consequence of this that the apostle spoke of it as the shadow of better things to come, that is, the type of spiritual realities to be developed. Hence the highway out of Egypt into Assyria; and for the Assyrian to come into Egypt, denotes that with the regenerate there will be a free and open intercourse

* Isaiah xix. 18. "It is a way of speaking in Scripture to use a definite common number for an indefinite (see particularly Amos, i. 3, 6, 9, &c.), so here *five* cities denote several, and of these it is prophesied that they shall speak the language of Canaan, that they shall worship God with the *true Israelite*, and with one heart and one mouth glorify the true God together with them," *Lowth and Arnold. Com.*

† Ezekiel xxxi. 3—9.

between the rational and scientific principles of the mind. There will be an intercommunication between true science and true reason, in reference to the things of true religion: each will recognize the use and contribute to enhance the value of the other. Still, both the Egyptians and the Assyrians must serve; they must yield to the dictates and influence of a higher principle than themselves. Israel will be the *third with both;* that is, the spiritual principle will be the chief activity of each; for that is the import of its being designated the *third;* and therefore it will become a blessing in the midst of the land, because it will impart a spiritual excellence to all the faculties and powers of the regenerate mind, and thus realize that desirable state of the church in man, to which the phrase "in that day" practically alludes.

No person can have paid any careful attention to scripture geography, especially as it is mentioned by the prophets, without meeting with numerous cases in which it cannot be referred to in any natural sense.* It is, however, commonly admitted that Jerusalem and Babylon are frequently spoken of in a purely spiritual sense; that the former, in its glory, was a symbol of the true church; and that the latter, in all its conditions, was a type of the perverted church. Babylon is usually spoken of in such a way as to excite the repulsion of religious men; it is no where in the Scriptures treated of in a sense favorable to religion; its name, "confusion," suggests an idea to the mind which the intelligent will always endeavor to avoid, and the whole history of that city, whether considered in its profane magnificence or in its dilapidated glory, is expressive of something derogatory to religion and subversive of its laws. It is in this sense that it is referred to in the Apocalypse throughout.

Now it was from this city that the country called Babylonia derived its name; and Babylonia, as we saw at the outset, was the same with Shinar; it therefore follows that Shinar must

*** Several places mentioned in the Old Testament, are referred to in the Revelation of John, which being a book containing narratives of purely spiritual phenomena, can only be named in a purely spiritual sense. Thus the *River Euphrates*, chap. ix. 14; xvi. 12; *Sodom and Egypt*, chap. xi. 8; *Mount Zion*, chap. xiv. 1; *Babylon*, chaps. xvii.; xviii.; and *Jerusalem*, chap. xxi.**

have been a representative land, and also that it was employed as the type of some perverted condition of the church. This country is first noticed in connection with the government of Nimrod;* and, although it is mentioned under that name upon a few occasions, it is remarkable that, like Babylon, it is never referred to in any sense favorable to truth or virtue; the reason is, because, like Babylon, it was representative of the mind confused by the influence of a perverse religion —a religion which ignored all of spirituality but its name; which substituted an observance of the ritual of the church for the life demanded by its laws, and in the professors of which, the love of self grounded in the love of dominion, took root and grew up into a terrible profanity. Thus the Shinar of Moses sustained the same signification in relation to the ancient church, as the Babylon of John does to the Christian dispensation. It is on account of this signification that the Ephah seen in *vision* by the prophet, is said to have contained "wickedness," and therefore was carried by two women who had wings like a stork, "to build it a house in the land of Shinar": † where it is evident that the land of Shinar is mentioned only for the sake of its spiritual sense, for the whole was a scene presented to the spiritual sight of the beholder. For a similar reason we are informed that Nebuchadnezzar took the king of Judah, "and part of the vessels of the house of God, which he carried into the land of Shinar, to the house of his God; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his God."‡ Here the vessels of the house of God represent the holy things of his church; but for these to be carried away by the king of Babylon into the house of his God, in the land of Shinar, plainly denotes the profanation to which those holy things were subjected; for the relation, though historical, was also representative. Hence it is evident that the land of Shinar, into which the whole earth is said to have entered when they journeyed from the east, is the symbol of that external religion into which the whole church descended when mankind departed from the Lord; and when, as a consequence, they began to be influenced by a principle which was internally profane.

* Genesis x. 10. † Zech. v. 5—11. ‡ Dan. i. 2.

A departure from a love of the internal things of religion into the mere observance of its externals, is the first journey which has been undertaken by the people of every church which has declined and finally passed away. This fact, in reference to each church which has sustained that calamity, is variously described, in consequence of certain characteristics by which each was distinguished. When Adam fell, he went from Eden; when the Noachic church declined, they journeyed from the east; when the Jewish dispensation transgressed, they departed from Jerusalem; and when Christianity decays, it will be by its professors going away from the "true light." All those which have perished have successively gone from vital to formal things;—from the living sentiments of truth to its ceremonial observance. They have declined from charity to faith; and sunk from faith to reasonings; from reasonings to doubt; from doubt to disbelief; and during the whole of this process, the love of self has been gradually uprooting the love of God, and the love of the world successively destroying the love for His kingdom. Whence it is easy to see what is meant by the ancient church reaching Shinar, when it undertook to journey from the east. By receding from the Lord it went into profanation. The *lowness* of this atrocity, and the circumstance of the people having become *principled in the love of it*, are described by its being said that they found a *valley* in the land of Shinar and *dwelt there*. The original here rendered *valley*, is, in the authorized version, translated *plain*, the Hebrew, however, will bear both translations; and we have preferred the former because it is best adapted to express the idea required by the subject. A valley is a kind of low place between mountains; and as mountains are the representations of elevated states of religion, so valleys are the types of its depression. The Scriptures frequently employ the term in this sense; and it is peculiarly marked in those passages which treat of "the valley of the shadow of death"; "the valley of vision"; "the valley of slaughter"; "the valley of dry bones"; and especially in that saying of the Lord, "I am against thee, O inhabitants of the valley."* Hence for the ancient church to have found a valley in the land of Shinar,

* Jer. xxi. 13.

denotes that it had become exceedingly debased by its profanations; and the people are said to have dwelt there, to signify that they lived in conformity with such religion; for to *dwell*, plainly means to *live*. When the men of the church recede from the living things of charity, the bond of union is removed; for charity is the uniting,—the conserving principle. Where there is no charity, there cannot be any faith; nor consequently, can any barrier be long preserved, by which to prevent the intrusion of false persuasions and evil loves. Crude notions soon take possession of the mind, when charity is off its guard. Charity is one of the chief sentinels of heaven, and its duty is not only to preserve a correct direction of the heart, but to watch with scrupulous care over all the intellectual sentiments which men admit and cherish. Those who recede from this spiritual grace, at the same time turn away from the right appreciation of all spiritual excellence, and in the process of their declension they come to adopt falsehood for truth, and evil for good. This was the condition of the ancient church when "they said one to another, *Come*,* let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar."

This language describes the third condition of the declining church: the first consisted in its journey from the east; the second, in its dwelling in the valley of Shinar; and the third, in the proposition now before us. To make brick for stone, signifies to substitute falsehood for truth; and to have slime for mortar, denotes to have evil for good. It is well known that stones are frequently mentioned in the Word to signify truths. The reason of this is grounded in the solidity and permanence of their nature; and, also, because it was usual among the ancients, upon solemn occasions, to set them up as witnesses that certain events had transpired, and thus to be the evidences of their truth. Of this fact several instances are recorded: Jacob set up one stone as a testimony that he had purposed to

* This, in the authorized version, is "go to," the meaning of which is not very obvious. Rashi observes on the original הבה *haubauh*, above rendered, *come*, that "whensoever it is used in Scripture, it means prepare for action." Imp. of יהב *come on*. *Gesenius*.

serve the Lord;* he set up another as an evidence that God had talked with him;† and a third as a witness of the sincerity of his covenant with Laban, which they both acknowledged.‡ The sons of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh likewise built an altar to be a witness between them that God is the Lord.§ In each of these cases, stones were the representatives of that which was true or honest in the intentions of the parties concerned. Precious stones were set in the shoulder of Aaron's ephod, and in his breastplate of judgment, || because they represented all those brilliant truths which pertain to a powerful and heartfelt ministration of genuine religion. The foundations of the walls of the New Jerusalem are said to have been "garnished with all manner of precious stones";¶ to signify that the bases of the Lord's kingdom with men in the world, are adorned with valuable truths of every kind. Hence also the Lord, who is Himself "the Truth,"** is said to have been "the stone" which the builders rejected.†† And it is on account of this signification that He is expressly called "The Stone of Israel."‡‡

Such then being the spiritual meaning of *stones*, it follows, because bricks are a kind of artificial stone made by man, that they denote something which he substitutes in their stead, and, consequently, something that is false; for this must be the character of that which is not true, and developed by the invention of men to supply its place. Of course it will be understood that the falsehood thus represented had reference to religion. It is with this signification that bricks are frequently mentioned in the Word. The Lord said, "I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walked in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts; a people that burneth incense upon altars of *bricks*."§§ Where to burn incense upon altars of bricks, after their own thoughts, plainly means to offer worship upon false principles. Again, Ezekiel was commanded to "take a *brick* and portray upon it the city of

* Gen. xxviii. 22. † Gen. xxxv. 14. ‡ Gen. xxxi. 46, 47, 52.
§ Josh. xxii 10, 28, 34. || Exod. xxviii. 12—21. ¶ Rev. xxi. 19.
** John xiv. 6. †† Matt. xxi. 42. ‡‡ Gen. xlix. 24.
§§ Isa. lxv. 2, 3.

Jerusalem."* At this time the religion of the city had fallen into many lamentable corruptions; and it was to represent this false position of the church that Jerusalem was engraved upon a brick. The sons of Israel in Egypt are said to have had "their lives made bitter with hard bondage in mortar and in brick," † to represent the captivity into which the men of the church are brought by the influence of what is false in religion, in contradistinction to that freedom which is to result from knowing the truth.‡ It is thus evident that to make brick for stone, denotes to substitute falsehood for truth. And this has always been the case with declining churches: they have gradually receded from the acknowledgment of spiritual truth, and successively adopted some human fabrication to supply its place; so that in the process of time, doctrines have been introduced which no one comprehended; and the language in which they have been expressed has been so confused that men have not understood one another's speech.§

But the people of whose decline into false persuasions we are now treating, not only proposed to make brick, but they determined to burn them thoroughly; they not only invented false doctrines, but they decided to love them fully; for this is the import of burning, when falsehood is the subject treated of. Fire is a well-known symbol of love: hence the expression "burning love." "Heavenly fire" is spoken of to represent the love of God and heaven; and "hell fire" is employed to denote the love of self and the world. It was a love of this latter kind by which the bricks were burned,—by which the false persuasions of the people were hardened in their thoughts. Fire and burning are frequently predicated of evil loves, because of their resemblance to each other; hence the prophet, when describing the prevalence of lusts, said, there shall be "burning

* Ezek. iv. 1. † Exod. i. 14. ‡ John viii. 32.

§ A very remarkable example of this fact is furnished by what is commonly called "*The Athanasian Creed.*" Men have been so long accustomed to the strange language of that document that they overlook the sense—or rather the no sense—of it. Archbishop Tillotson, nearly two hundred years ago, said, "The church were well rid of it"; and since that period it has been a grave offence to the judgment of multitudes of pious, intelligent, and conscientious men.

instead of beauty";* and, again, when speaking of the Divine protection of the good, the Lord says, "When thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burnt; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." † Here to walk through the fire denotes to pass through the temptations of self-love; and not to be burned, signifies that they should not be hardened by its influence; the flame not to be kindled, means that lusts should not be excited. From which consideration it is evident that the burning of bricks thoroughly, is a striking representation of loving falsities fully: not that they loved them as falsities, but as truths. Ecclesiastical history is abundant in incidents by which this fact may be illustrated. The persecutions which opposing sects have suffered from each other, for holding opinions which they have believed to be the truth, are well known. No one doubts that falsehood has had its martyrs!

But the Ancient church, in the process of its defection, had not only brick for stone, they had also "slime for mortar"; that is, they had evil for good. If it had been the design of the Mosaic narrative, to inform us of the materials by which a natural city was erected by a band of ancient travellers, why is there no mention made of the iron or the wood, or of the things by which they were substituted, and which were equally essential to the construction of such a work? Surely such information might have been expected, if that had been the purpose of the history; but it was not; and the reason why there is no record of those materials is, because they were not adapted to carry on the significant purpose of the narrative; which is, to record, by suitable representations, that the two principal things of the church, namely, truth and goodness, were, in the process of time, perverted into falsehood and evil!

Every one has a sort of general perception of slime as being something that is offensive. The term expresses the idea of viscous filth; and in this sense it becomes a very striking emblem of the defiled affections of degenerate men. It is common to speak of such as filthy, and sometimes to describe their duplicity as slime. Slime, then, is the symbol of evil lusts; and it was on this account that the kings of Sodom and Gomor-

* Isa. iii. 24. † Isa. xliii. 2.

rah are recorded to have perished in the *slime* pits of Siddim.* But the original word חֵמָר *chemaur*, here rendered *slime*, upon the authority of Kimchi, and some other Hebrew authorities, is translated ασφαλτος, *asphaltos*, in the Septuagint; † and it is now very generally understood to mean a kind of bitumen, and there cannot be any well-founded doubt about this being the natural signification of the term. The church of whose disasters we are treating, was extant in Babylonia; and this substance abounded in that country, and from its productions were selected those substances which are employed as figures in the history before us. So that the slime referred to, being of a fiery quality, represents, with considerable force, the inflammatory ‡ nature of the evil loves into which the people had descended.

But they adopted this slime for mortar—this evil for good. Goodness, or what is the same thing, charity, is the mortar of the church. It is that which cements its truths, and unites its people into the household of faith. The solidity and compactness of this spiritual building mainly depend upon the genuineness of that principle. Without it society would fall to pieces; selfishness would arise and sever man from man, and all from God. But "charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth."§ But that uniting and perpetuating principle had departed from the ancient church, and the slime of an evil love was substituted in its place. It was because mortar is a type of good, that, when a house had been afflicted with leprosy, a command was given to scrape it within and about, to remove the dust to an unclean place, and to plaster it with other mortar.|| However valuable this might have been as a sanitary

* Gen. xiv. 10.

† Luther, and some of the modern Rabbins, translated it *clay;* by others it is rendered *pitch.*

‡ "This remarkable mineral pitch, to which the name of bitumen is given, is supposed to have been formed in the earth from the decomposition of animal and vegetable substances. It is the most inflammable of all known minerals."—*Pictorial Bible.*

§ 1 Cor. xiii. 4, 6. || Lev. xiv. 34—42.

regulation, it must be admitted, upon the principle that the Levitical was a representative law, that it was the type of something else. We cannot stop to enlarge upon its meaning; and therefore a brief summary must suffice. The leprous house represented a profane mind; to scrape it within and about, denotes to examine and break down the interior love and external conduct of such a mind; to remove the dust thereof to an unclean place, means to reject the evil therefrom, and to acknowledge that it is sin; but to plaster it with other mortar, signifies the renovation to be effected by the application of spiritual good. From these considerations we learn that to have slime for mortar, spiritually denotes to have evil for good.

That such are the subjects treated of in the history before us, may appear to every one, not only from the significations of the peculiar expressions employed, supported as they are by the evidences of analogy and other passages from the Word, but also from this consideration, that the nature and quality of the stones and mortar predicated of those ancient people, would not have deserved so particular a description in the Word of the Lord, if the whole matter had not been intended to convey a spiritual lesson to the future spiritual church.

And now we arrive at the point at which "they said one to another, Come, let us build us a city, and a tower whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." Here then, we have described to us a proposition and a motive, the terms of which must be explained before their subjects can be understood. From the literal context it seems as though the whole of the human race then extant, had undertaken a travelling expedition. Their design in abandoning the east, which appears to have been their native locality, is not recorded; nor is there any reason assigned for their having chosen a valley in Shinar for their future residence.* But although the letter is silent upon those points, we have seen that the spirit of the history sufficiently explains them. It is easy to comprehend how one or more persons, constituting the directors of a band of travellers,

*** Commentators intimate that it was selected on account of its fertility; but must not the east, from which they journeyed, and in which Noah cultivated the vine, have been a luxuriant country?**

might have made a proposition to halt, and undertake the erection of suitable habitations, and also that reasons of considerable weight might have been offered to bring about the general concurrence: but the history presents the matter before us as though it were the spontaneous utterance of the whole community. "They" that is, "the whole earth," "said one to another." Here then there is a cloud. But supposing that the letter in this case is admissive of some satisfactory explanation, the idea of proposing to erect "a tower whose top *may reach* unto heaven," is too insane to admit of any literal interpretation.* Besides, there is no intimation of the *use* to which

* There are no known remains, to indicate that any such a tower was actually erected. The plans which have been drawn of it (!), and the traditions which have been referred to it, are mere inventions. . . Many however have been wishful to regard the Birs-i-Nimrúd, near Babylon, to be the ruins of the tower in question. This place is described to be a shapeless mound, nearly 300 feet high, and, where it reaches the plain, from 200 to 400 feet in width, —apparently made up of crumbling rubbish, except the summit, which stands out like the fragment of a ruined tower. But a circumstance has recently transpired by which the history of this ruin is discovered, and that opinion respecting it dissipated. Upon this mound excavations have been carried on for some time, and the result has been remarkable. The following is abridged from a condensed memoir upon the subject, by Colonel Rawlinson, read before the Asiatic Society, Jan. 13, 1855, and reported in *The Athenæum* of the 20th of the same month. He says, The building was composed of a series of several square platforms, one over the other, diminishing in diameter as they rose from the ground, each dedicated to one of the planets, and colored externally with the colors attributed to the seven planets in the works of the Sabean astrologers, and traditionally handed down from the Chaldeans. In the course of the excavations, two cylinders were found, covered with inscriptions, and drawn out from their hiding place of twenty-four centuries, as fresh as when deposited there. The inscriptions were read, they were the same on both cylinders. The following is given as the substantial translation. It begins with the name and usual titles of Nebuchadnezzar, and proceeds with a summary of the buildings of Babylon which he had repaired or erected. It then says, the "temple of the planets of the seven spheres," *which had been built by an early king*, 504 *years previously*, having become ruinous, owing to a neglect of drainage, which allowed the rain to penetrate, and the sun-dried bricks causing the outer covering to bulge out, and fall down, the god Merodack had put it into his heart to restore it: that he did not however rebuild the platform, which was unimpaired, but that all the rest was restored by his commands. The inscription ends with the usual expressions of his aspirations for the eternal duration of his work, and the continuation of his family on the throne for ever. Thus,

such a tower was to be applied, even if it is conceded that the strong terms employed mean nothing more than a very lofty erection: and it cannot be reasonably imagined that so gigantic an affair as that is supposed to have been, would have been undertaken by the unanimous consent of "the whole earth," without the recognition of some important use; and, consequently, that the historian in recording their intention to construct such a tower would hardly have omitted to relate the *use* to which it was to be applied, if he had designed the narrative to be understood in its literal sense. This deficiency has been very generally experienced by all who have considered the subject, and suppositions have not been wanting to supply its place.

Some have considered that it was erected as a temple to "*the hosts of heaven*"; and they have thought that this idea was sustained, by the circumstance of there not being any thing in the original answering to the words "*may reach*," and which, when omitted, would enable the sentence to be read as if it were a tower with a top or summit to the heavens.* But for this there is no history; there is nothing related up to this period, of there being any disposition on the part of mankind to worship the *sun, moon, and stars:* and surely this must have become a very powerful and influential sentiment, before all would have concurred in the erection of such a temple for such a use. Julian the apostate, has taken notice of the recorded height of this temple for the purpose of deriding the whole story, comparing it with the mythological fable of the Titans, who are said to have undertaken a war against the Gods. St. Cyril's reply was, that the terms were not to be understood in a strict sense, and that the phrase *to heaven*, was put only to indicate something that was exceedingly lofty as the tower was.† The sequel will show that this favorite explanation may be doubted with advantage to the truth.

Others have thought that the tower was erected to afford some

it appears, Birs-i-Nimrúd was built about 1100 years before the Lord's advent.

* Hutchenson's *New Account of the Confusion of Tongues. Works*, vol. iv.

† Cyril against Julian. *Book* 4.

security to the people in the event of a second deluge.* If that had been the design of it, the people thereby certainly evinced great infidelity in reference to the Divine promise, no more to destroy the earth with a flood: moreover they must have expected it at a period when mankind were exceedingly few, because the top of such an erection could not have been a security for many. But if such had been the intended use of it, they would scarcely have perpetrated the blunder of placing it in a valley, when the advantages afforded by erecting it on a mountain were so many and so obvious. Dr. Jackson has supposed that it was built to be a "refuge whereunto the people might resort to continue their combinations"; † and Dr. Denison conjectures that it was consecrated, by the builders of it, to the sun, because it had dried the waters of the deluge; and, also, that it was intended as an altar upon which to offer sacrifice thereto. ‡ But as these opinions are not pressed by their propounders, we need not stop to attempt their refutation. The Targums, both of Jonathan ben Uzziel and of Jerusalem, assert that the tower was erected for idolatrous purposes, and that the builders intended to place an image on the top of it with a sword in his hand, probably to act as a talisman against their enemies! For this however there is no evidence. E. F. K. Roseenmuller thinks that it might have been erected chiefly as affording a central point of union in the event of a dispersion taking place; and Aben Ezer asserts that the purpose of the people "was simply to prevent their becoming separated, and to secure their dwelling together."§ These conjectures, it is thought, are supported by the motive which is said to have suggested the erection, namely, "Let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." But upon what grounds could this fear of dispersion have arisen? Hitherto mankind

* This is mentioned by Dr. Patrick as a common fancy. Sir Walter Raleigh, in his *History of the World*, takes objection against it; and Sir Thomas Brown, in his *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*, has written a chapter in opposition to it (*Works*, vol. ii., p. 225); and he states that *Pierius* thought it was designed "to have secured them from the world's destruction by fire!!"

† His work *On the Creed.* Chap. 16.

‡ His work *On Idolatry.*

§ Cited by Dr. Raphael in his Notes to his *New Translation of Genesis.*

had, to all appearance, lived in unity; nor does the letter of the history inform us of any thing that had transpired, by which to suggest the occurrence of its interruption. But supposing that by some sagacious reasoning, they foresaw the probability of their dispersion, *whose name* was the tower to mark in the event of its realization? whose reputation was it designed to proclaim and perpetuate? If all the inhabitants in the world were concerned in its erection, and they were scattered upon the face of the whole earth, it was as much an evidence of the enterprise of those who were driven abroad, as of those who continued in Shinar. According to this view they attempted a great work by which to establish their fame among themselves; for those who hold it do not admit the existence of any other among whom it could have been extended. And this appears to be something like a few men upon an island uninhabited by any but themselves, undertaking the erection of some considerable structure, from the motive of afterwards being enabled to say to one another, "How clever we are." However this might be, the supposition of the tower's having been built for the sake of fame, leaves the subject of its use altogether unexplained. It simply informs us of the motives of the builders, but it tells us nothing about the purpose of the building; and this, after all, was the only thing which was likely to have perpetuated their reputation. It is the usefulness of a thing which causes society to speak of its inventors. The world remembers its benefactors by their benefactions: it recollects its tyrants for their infamies; and thus fame rests upon *uses*, good or evil, and not upon *motives*, either right or wrong. Society has never recognized any use in the tower of Babel. Moses has not furnished any information respecting it: this is confessed to be a desideratum, for all the speculations to which we have been referring, plainly evince a desire on the part of the learned, to know more upon the subject than what the letter discloses. With what success has appeared: the results are different; and, as the learned are unsettled upon that point, what are the simple to believe respecting it? To answer this the whole ground of interpretation must be changed.

Besides, the context regards the whole proceeding to have been in opposition to the Divine will. How is this to be ac-

counted for, if the letter is to be received as the primary sense of the relation? Travelling is no crime; and we are not aware that the journey of the people was undertaken in defiance of any law which had been given them upon that point. And who can show that the building of a city was wrong, or that the erection of a tower was prohibited? Was there anything sinful in their apparent desire to remain a united community? And what law was transgressed by the building of a tower, which, in the event of their being scattered, might mark the locality from which they spread? The whole of these transactions, viewed in themselves, do not seem to evince any turpitude of character by which to indicate their opposition to the will of the Supreme; and we only learn that it was so by an inference from the sequel, which informs us that "the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded: and the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do." Surely the idea of God's coming down to see the city and the tower, ought to suggest that the city and the tower which he came down to see, must have been mentioned to signify some spiritual states into which Divine inquisition was about to be made. It cannot be pretended that the Lord came down in a natural sense, or that such a course was requisite for Him to see the works which men had executed. Neither can it be supposed that the architectural deficiencies or magnificence of houses built with finite hands, are such as to engage the special inspection of the Almighty! As then His coming down is not to be understood in any literal sense, so neither are the things which He came down to see. The *cities and towers* which He examines are of human *thoughts and affections;* and He is said to come down to them, when men, in low and depraved conditions, are made sensible of His presence. And thus, it is to the spiritual sense of the narrative that we must go for a religious and satisfactory explanation of the whole phenomena which it relates.

It is interesting to observe that the first journey recorded after the creation, resulted in the erection of a city:—"Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of

Nod, on the east of Eden—and he builded a city": *—and that the history before us mentions a similar fact respecting the first journey after the flood: to the latter a tower was added, for reasons which will subsequently appear. The journey, in both cases, was intended to represent man's separation from the Lord; the former, however, represented it more in respect to his voluntary principle; and the latter more in reference to his intellectual faculty: and the cities which were then "builded," denoted the doctrines which were then framed.

Cities are mentioned in the Word throughout, for the purpose of signifying the doctrinal sentiments of the church: true doctrines, when the state of the things treated of are in conformity with spiritual order; but false doctrines when the subjects narrated refer to transgressions and sin. An alteration in the subject changes the signification, in like manner as the use of certain objects become different in the hands of persons influenced by different motives. The incendiary will employ fire to destroy your property: the benevolent will use it to promote your comfort. The malicious will speak of your opinions to traduce you; the charitable who knows them will be silent if he cannot refer to them for edification. A city is what it is, by virtue of the opinions which characterize its inhabitants; it is enlightened or irreligious according as they are influenced by the sentiments of intelligence or impiety; and it is from this ground that it is mentioned in the Word as the representative of doctrine. The doctrines which men embrace, are the spiritual cities in which they dwell; when those doctrines are true, they are "cities of refuge"; when they are false, they are "cities of destruction." Hence Jerusalem, regarded as a holy city, was a symbol of the church considered as to pure doctrine; and the several phases of excellence by which it is distinguished, are described as "the city of righteousness"; "the faithful city"; "the city of praise"; "the city of joy"; "the beloved city"; "the city of the sun"; "the city of truth," and some others: all of which strikingly illustrate the fact to which we have alluded. But on the other hand, when the faithful city became a harlot, it represented the abandoned doctrines which

* Genesis iv. 16, 17.

the people had adopted; and some of their characteristics are described as "a bloody city"; "the city of violence"; "the desolate city"; and "the city of perverseness"; and in each instance it is plain that the city denoted the doctrine which is described in the epithet attached. Hence it is evident that a city is the representative of doctrine. It sometimes happens that no epithet occurs, by which at once to determine the quality of the doctrine represented; but in all such cases the name of the city, or the subjects of the context, will sufficiently declare it. The city which "the whole earth" are said to have built in the valley of Shinar, when they journeyed from the east, is a case in point. For, remembering what has been said respecting that journey and locality, it is plain that the *city* which they *builded*, denoted the *false doctrines which they framed;* and, also, that the *tower which they raised*, represented the *self-love which they exalted.*

Self-love is haughtiness and pride; and these are frequently spoken of as high, and compared to lofty things. The principle of this fact is distinctly recognized in the promise that the humble should be exalted, and the proud be abased.* It is common to speak of the proud as "high minded"; and the instances in which this idea is treated of in the Scriptures are very numerous. Hence we read of high looks and a proud heart being sin,† of men of high degree being a lie,‡ and of the high ones of stature being hewn down.§ The king of Babylon is described as saying in his heart, "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God—I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High";‖ which ideas resemble very closely those which are expressed in the proposition to build "a tower whose top may reach unto heaven." The same prophet also says, "The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down; and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. For the day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon *every one that is proud and lofty*, and upon *every one that is lifted up*, and he shall be brought low. And upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are

* Matt. xxiii. 12. † Psalm ci. 5. ‡ Psalm lxii. 9.
§ Isa. x. 33. ‖ Isa. xiv. 13, 14.

high and lifted up, and upon the oaks of Bashan, and upon all the high mountains, and upon all the high hills that are lifted up, and upon every *high tower*, and upon every fenced wall." * In which passage it is certain that the elevations of self-love in some of its manifold developments, are treated of; and also that a "high tower" is one of the figures by which it is represented. Again, it is written, "There shall be rivers and streams in the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall"; † which denotes that there will be truths in abundance when self-love is overthrown. "By pride cometh contention"; ‡ "a man's pride shall bring him low"; § "such towers shall be for dens for ever." ||

When the people of a church cease to be influenced in their conduct by the principles of charity, the doctrines of faith are sure to suffer degradation. They will be regarded by such people no farther than they can be converted into some means of giving conspicuousness to self: and in the process of time, as history sufficiently attests, mankind will not only substitute their own self-derived intelligence for the Divine teachings, but will look more to the elevation of themselves in society, than to the exaltation of God in His church. Those who depart from charity abandon faith; and then self-love is developed with all its impiety and haughtiness. The nature of this love when left without control, is an unscrupulous gigantic ambition. Those who are principled in it strive to raise themselves above their neighbors; nor do they feel any hesitation in attempting to overreach the laws of God. If they presume to worship Him, it is because by so doing they think they can the more effectually hide from society their designs for raising themselves. Self will be found to be the influential motive; and it is this, in preference to God, which is exalted and adored. It is more filthy and profane than any other love; it is entirely opposed to all the sentiments of heavenly life, and the director of "every thing that worketh abomination and maketh a lie." The pride and haughtiness of this abandoned principle, is represented by the tower erected by the men who journeyed from the east.

* Isa. ii. 11–15. † Isa. xxx. 25. ‡ Proverbs xiii. 10.
§ Proverbs xxix. 23. || Isa. xxxii. 14.

Thus, by the city which they builded is denoted the false doctrines which they fabricated; and by the tower which they raised is signified the self-love which they exalted: from which considerations we learn what was the condition of the ancient church, as to both its intellect and its will. And who does not see that confusion and separation must have been the necessary result? But of this we shall speak more fully in another place.

It is, however, to be observed that the principle specifically represented by the tower is self-love in connection with a profession of religion: hence it was proposed to raise its top to heaven; that is, to exalt it so that it might have dominion over all the spiritualities of the church. And every one may see that this enormity is perpetrated, whensoever men arrogate to themselves a power for the dispensing of its blessings. It was by this circumstance that they designed to make themselves "a name." Ambition had become a motive which influenced all the proceedings of the church. They confessed that the city and the tower were erected for the sake of reputation. The love of public utility, which would have indicated the presence of charity, was entirely neglected: self and its gratifications were the uppermost things. The brief sentence, "Let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad," draws aside the curtain, and presents the character of the people. It at once explains the difficulties suggested in a preceding page:* we see from it the evil involved in their journey from the east, the enormity which lay at the root of their building, and the defiance of God which a desire for a confederation in iniquity displayed.† From this it is evident that self-love had taken a place in the church,

* See page 301.

† Eusebius, cites *Abydenus*, an Assyrian author, as saying, "Some relate that the first men, who sprung up out of the earth, were so proud of their strength, that, considering themselves superior to the gods, they defied them, and began to build an exceeding high tower on the site at present occupied by the city of Babylon. They had almost reached the sky, when a mighty wind, aiding the gods, hurled down the whole immense mass of stone on the heads of the builders. These ruins furnished the materials from which Babylon was subsequently built. And whereas, all men had till then spoken the same language, they now began to talk in divers tongues" (*Præpar. Evan.* l. 9, cap. 14). *Moses of Chorenea*, in his *History of Armenia*, book i. chap. 8, cites from *Maribas of Catina*, who professes to have obtained

and developed a nefarious power. The people who are influenced by this principle are found to study the dispositions and character of mankind for the purpose of rendering them subservient to themselves. Those who are treated of knew that there is an inherent sentiment in all men which leads them to acknowledge the existence of a God, and that there is connected with this acknowledgment, a tendency to worship Him: these sentiments were continued, though religious information respecting them had become exceedingly imperfect. Advantage was taken of these circumstances to frame false doctrines concerning God, and to propound arrogant notions about religious authority, to the end that society might be governed by the dominion of some leaders in the church. These things were spoken of with solemnity and seriousness, because it is necessary to lull suspicion when "a name" is being invoked. A reputation for sanctity increased the power of those who sought it, and a pretension to fear the scattering of the people contributed to its extension. Thus holy things were employed that dominion might be obtained. Persons of this description have too frequently infested the church: piety has been resorted to for the purposes of fraud; learning has been cultivated for the sake of reputation; renown has been secured that power might be wielded; and all these iniquities have been pursued that self

his information from a Chaldee work, out of the Royal Assyrian Library at Nineveh, which work was translated into Greek by command of Alexander the Great, the following passage:—"From the gods, who at first inhabited the earth, there sprung forth a race of giants, of immense size and corresponding strength. Filled with pride and arrogance, they formed the impious project to build a high tower. But while they were busy building, a terrible wind, caused by the wrath of the gods, destroyed the immense structure, and threw unknown words among mankind, which gave rise to disputes and confusion among them." *Josephus Ant.*, book i. chap. 14, refers to a passage of similar import in the Sibylline oracles. These quotations are sometimes referred to as traditional evidences of the literal sense of the Mosaic history. But the fabulous statements of the passages themselves, in our estimation, prove the contrary. Tradition, in numerous cases, has originated out of figurative history being regarded as real events. The Assyrian historians had heard of the proud condition of the ancient church as it had existed in that country; and when they undertook to write the ancient history of the kingdom, they spoke of its beginning, in the figurative language which tradition had preserved.

might be exalted. Individuals of this character have been known to every age; but it was adopted as the common policy of the ancient church when it departed from the east, dwelt in Shinar, and built a city and a tower with its top to heaven. Hence the idea of being "scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth" was regarded with dismay. A name had been obtained, that power and admiration might be secured; but dispersion would destroy all the means of distinction that was aimed at, and so bring about the humiliation of self, the contemplation of which could not be endured. Such were the fallacies and ambition which distinguished the ancient church in the land of Shinar. But "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." *

* Proverbs xvi. 18.

CHAPTER XV.

THE DIVINE INSPECTION OF THE CITY AND THE TOWER WHICH MEN HAD BUILT; THE CONFUSION OF THEIR LANGUAGE, AND THE DISPERSION OF THE PEOPLE.

"We have not sufficient reason to believe that the differences in the languages which exist among mankind originated in this event" (*i.e.*, the confusion at Babel).—*Dr. Pye Smith. Kitto's Bib. Cyc.*, Art. *Tongues, Confusion of.*

"The confusion predicated at Babel was not about language, but about religion."—*Hutchenson's New Account of the Confusion of Tongues. Works*, vol iv. p. 12.

From the explanations given in the preceding chapter, of the Mosaic narrative respecting the building of Babel and its tower, we learn that the ancient church had become an awful apostacy. The pure and chastening influences of a Divine religion were put aside, and notions of human fabrication were substituted in their place. The sobriety of truth, and the modesty of virtue were no longer regarded as spiritual graces. Faith had degenerated into the acknowledgment of human authority and opinion; and charity had become a form of which worldliness was the life. Self-derived intelligence put itself in the place of God's teachings; and self-love reared its detestable head with an attempt to rule the highest things. Hence we are informed that "nothing would be restrained from them which they had imagined to do."* In consequence of this abandoned course the ancient church was brought to judgment, and it passed away.

The character which distinguished the professors of that dispensation, immediately preceding their being "scattered abroad" resembled, in several particulars, the enormities which disclosed themselves among the people of the Adamic church, just preceding the flood. The descriptions are indeed presented through the instrumentality of figures somewhat different, because there was a difference in the original qualities of the two

* Gen. xi. 6.

dispensations, and this prevented the degeneracy of the latter from becoming so atrocious as the former. The original quality of the first was *celestial*, or that in which men acted more from the influence of their wills; but that of the second was *spiritual*, or that in which men were guided mostly by the activity of their understandings. The celestial being the highest, fell from a loftier summit than its successor, and so produced the greatest wreck. Still, by making allowances for those distinctions, we shall be enabled to recognize the resemblance of several particulars in the language by which Moses has related the delinquencies of both.

In reference to the former, we are told that men had become *giants* in those days; and in respect to the latter, we are informed that the men of those times had commenced a *gigantic* work, and the existence of both is associated with the idea of fame, which is called "*renown*" in the one case, and "*a name*" in the other. The *imagination* of the hearts of the first, is said to have been evil continually; and of the second it is written that nothing would be restrained from them which they had *imagined* to do. Again, God is described to have seen the great wickedness of the one, and to have come down to see the city and the tower of the other. The sight of the former was attended by the destruction of man from the face of the earth, and the inspection of the latter was followed by scattering them abroad upon the face of the whole earth.* The cessation of life is predicated of the one, because the will to do good, which is the life of the church in men, was actually destroyed: but confusion of language is described of the other, because the understanding of truth, which is the intellect of the church, was so thoroughly corrupted. From these facts and considerations it seems evident that the design of this latter narrative (similar to that of the former, as shown in the *Antediluvian History*) is to describe the circumstances which brought about, and the catastrophe which terminated the ancient church.

As then "the city and the tower," said to have been built by the "children of men" (in contradistinction to the enormities said to have been committed by the "sons of God"), denoted

* Compare Gen. vi. 1—7 with Gen. xi. 1—9.

the false doctrines and evil loves by which the church had become apostate and depraved, it is easy to see that the subject of judgment is treated of in the narrative, which informs us that "The Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them which they have imagined to do. Come let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of the whole earth: and they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth, and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth." * The nature of the judgment thus related will subsequently appear.

The coming of the Lord is an idea under which His judgments are frequently represented in the Scriptures: in proof of which it is sufficient to be reminded of its being written that "The Lord cometh—He cometh to judge the earth; He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with His truth."† And, also, that when He came into the world by the assumption of humanity, He expressly said, "For judgment am I come into this world"‡: "Now is the judgment of this world."§ The periods of His judgments are spoken of as "the day of the Lord,"|| and "the fullness of time,"¶ because the day and the time referred to, denote not only the day and the time of such occurrences, but also the state and completeness of condition by which they are induced. The Divine judgments always include two general things, namely the removal of the evil by which the good of the Lord's church has been obstructed in its operations upon mankind; and the providing of new means by which its benignities might be enabled to live and be continued in society. The first of these two general acts implies the end of the church in which such depravity has been devel-

* Gen. xi. 5—9. † Psalm xcvi. 13. ‡ John ix. 39.
§ John xii. 31. || Isa. ii. 12, xiii. 6 ; Joel i. 15 ; Zeph. i. 7, &c. &c.
¶ Gal. iv. 4 ; Eph. i. 10.

oped; and the second involves the establishment of another dispensation. Such are the manifest teachings of the Scriptures concerning the judgments which they relate. Thus when God finally visited the Adamic church, it was not only brought to an end by the catastrophe of a flood, but it was succeeded by the establishment of another; and when He "came down" to see the enormities of *that*, it was not only terminated by the confusion of tongues, and the scattering abroad, but it was followed by the Hebrew dispensation. So, also, when the Lord came into the world by incarnation, He not only consummated the Jewish economy, but founded the Christian religion. The end of one church has always been followed by the establishment of another. When men, by their wickedness, induce destruction, God by His mercy brings about the times of refreshing. But the complete judgment of every church has been delayed until the measure of its iniquity has been filled; particular judgments have been performed during the process of its decline, but the final judgment has always been postponed until the general enormity has been developed. Such was the condition of the ancient church when men determined to build a city and a tower with its top in heaven; and therefore the Lord is said to have come down to see them. Of course this coming down is not to be understood as a literal descent, for He is present everywhere, and by virtue of His omniscience seeth all things; but it is so said because it is expressive of the judgment that was about to be displayed.

The reason why this judgment is described by the Lord's *coming down* to see is, because boundaries have been set to wickedness, beyond which it is not permitted that men should pass. Nothing has been so bad, that something worse could not have happened. When transgression reaches certain limits, it is followed by punishment as a necessary consequence. The transgression of orderly laws, whether natural, moral, or spiritual, brings in sufferings of some sort as unavoidable results; pain follows injury to the body: a sense of guilt proceeds from a violation of morals; and a feeling of disquiet arises out of the rejection of religion. The evil consequences which spring out of the infringement of any law, is called a judgment; and it is particular or general, as the experience of it

is individual or common. So long as men pursue wickedness with impunity, it *appears* to them as though the Lord were at a distance, and did not observe their conduct; but when the punishment of their guilt is being experienced, they begin to think that the Lord has *seen* them, and then they pray Him to withhold His hand; and it is in conformity with those appearances that, in the case of men suffering the consequences of their iniquities, the Lord is said to come down among them. Having departed from the laws of His providence, they come under the laws of permission. *Providence* is predicated of good, but *permission* of evil. Punishment is permitted to result from evil, in order that evil may be restrained: it acts in one stage of crime as an obstruction to the advancement of another. God is not the punisher in the sufferings which He permits: they, as it was said, are the unavoidable results of violating some law. Correction is one of His designs in permitting them; another is to prevent the greatest severity from accruing; so that all the punishments which men endure are really evidences of the Divine love regarding superior ends. And this love would remove every suffering if it could be done, and man could be continued in his freedom. But how could this be possible? To take away man's liberty, and to prevent him from plunging into transgression, whence sufferings arise, would be to take away the very essential of his manhood, for

> "Freedom and reason make us men:
> Take these away, what are we then?
> Mere animals; and just as well
> The brutes might think of heaven or hell."

When individuals or society, depart from the laws of Providence and enter into the laws of permission, they recede from the influences of God, and pass into the experience of suffering; and it is from the circumstance of this *real* descent on the part of man, that God *appears* to come down: and it is from this appearance that such statements are mentioned in His Word.*

* "Whenever a person of high degree directs his attention to the doings of men who are greatly his inferiors, he is said to *descend* or *condescend;* a figurative expression, which depicts the act of moving from a high place to a lower one. When the Supreme Lord of the universe vouchsafes to impart his inspirations to a prophet, the spirit of God is said to descend upon him;

Another reason why the Lord is said to come down on such occasions is, because He is "the Highest," that is to say, He is the inmost of all things; and it is because all judgments are exhibited as taking place in the lowest or outermost things, that He is, upon such occasions, said to descend. Hence it is written, "Bow thy heavens O Lord, and *come down:* touch the mountains and they shall smoke. Cast forth lightnings and *scatter them:* shoot out thine arrows and destroy them." * And again, "The Lord of Hosts shall *come down* to fight for Mount Zion, and for the hill thereof."† "Behold the Lord cometh forth out of His place, and will *come down* and tread upon the *high places of the earth.*"‡ In which passages it will be observed, that among other purposes of the Divine coming, were those of "scattering men," and "treading upon the high places of the earth." From which considerations it is plain, that by the Lord coming down to see the city and the tower which the children of men had builded, is denoted that the time of inquisition and judgment had arrived. False doctrines and evil loves, had reached a height beyond which it was not permitted they should pass: and the natural consequences of the guilt which had been perpetrated were about to follow.

But at this point, the Lord is spoken of as contrasting the present with the former condition of the church: "Behold," said He, "the people *were* one, and they *had* all one language: and this they begin to do." Now what evil was there in the natural erection of a city and a tower, that those advantages were not to be continued? The literal sense affords no reasonable answer; and it is only by regarding the narrative as the figurative history of the intellectual and spiritual perversions of the men of the church, that we can recognize any natural connection between such erections, and the sequel which is related.

and when the justice of the Most High deigns to notice the deeds of sinful men, in order to requite them according to their doings, the expression made use of in the sacred Scriptures, is also, *descend.* Not as if the Deity, who is omnipresent, moved from a high place to a lower one, but to express His condescension, even as the Psalmist says (viii. 5,) "What is man that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man that thou rememberest him." *Maimonides*, cited by Dr. Raphael in his Notes to his *Translation of Genesis.*

* Psalm cxliv. 5, 6. † Isa. xxxi. 4. ‡ Micah i. 3.

It will be observed, that we have rendered the above citation in the past tense; the authorized version translates it in the present, not, as we think, for a grammatical necessity, but because the narrative has been thought to refer to natural language, which continued *one* down to the period of the Divine visitation, when it is considered to have become the subject of a miracle, out of which all subsequent varieties have arisen. This, however is a view which cannot be supported; but of this we shall speak more fully in another place. It seems plain, from the series of things referred to, that the former condition of the church, spoken of in the first sense, was intended, by the citation before us, to be contrasted with the apostacy into which it had descended. Thus the people at one time were in the possession of certain intellectual and spiritual advantages, described *as being one, and having one language;* but, in consequence of their departure from those excellences, and thereupon the fabrication of falsehood and perversity, it was said, "and this they begin to do, and nothing will be restrained from them which they have imagined to do." They who had been right, had descended into wrong, and then their past advantages were contrasted with their present condition. By the people having been one, is denoted that they were conjoined by charity; and by their having had one language is signified that they had been united in faith. Oneness is predicated of those who have for an end the good of society, the welfare of the church, and the advancement of the Lord's kingdom; because the Divine, who is One, is present in all such ends. This, however, had ceased to constitute the delights of His people: they had begun to do that which was to result in a very opposite condition. The church had become depraved. There is no coherence among false doctrines, nor is there any unity among men when selfish loves prevail; such a state of things must necessarily have brought about confusion and divisions. "A corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit." When error is cherished, the mind is perplexed; when self is regarded as an end, the Lord is excluded, and society is broken into varieties according to the different ends which selfishness proposes. Man is what he is by virtue of the ends which he proposes to himself, and from this he is regarded by the Lord. The end constitutes his spiritual life, or what

amounts to the same thing, his inmost love; and this rules in all he thinks and does; for it is not possible that any end should be regarded which is not loved; and that which is supremely loved is ardently pursued. The difficulties which oppose the designs of any love, stimulate its energies, and sharpen its inventions; so that the phrase "Love laughs at locksmiths," may be understood in a wider sense than that in which it is commonly employed. Love will leave nothing unattempted which it thinks to be conducive to the end proposed. Hence it is said of the people of the ancient church in its last days, that nothing would "be restrained from them which they had *imagined* to do." * They would not permit anything that could be removed to stand in the way of gratifying the self-love in which they were principled. They were bent upon pursuing its purpose through any path however devious; through any wilds however dangerous; for evil loves revere no orderly law in the securing of their ends; and as this state of enormity had arrived, the period for its judgment had also come.

The nature of this judgment is described to have consisted in the "confounding of their language so that they might not understand one another's speech, and the scattering of them abroad upon the face of the whole earth." This is commonly regarded as a statement of the circumstance in which originated the various ancient languages of the earth; but philologists, who have considered this opinion with great learning and pious care, have found it difficult, upon reasonable grounds, to arrive at this conclusion, and at the same time to keep within the requirements of the letter of the text: indeed considerable diversity of sentiment prevails among them respecting the precise nature of the fact which is intended to be recorded. They are not certain as to what was the real character of the language employed by mankind up to this period, and, therefore, they cannot have any certain data upon which to start their philological inquiries; and the ascertained mutability of languages, together with the changes which many are known to have

* יָזְמוּ yauzemvou, *imagined, He thought, to resolve*, especially *to propose evil.* See Gesenius.

undergone from natural causes, have contributed very much to embarrass the investigation.

The Hebrew language is very generally thought to have been that which prevailed among mankind for the first two thousand years of their existence,* and to account for its having escaped from the confusion of Babel, it is supposed that the descendants of Ham were the only branches of the Noachic family who undertook the impious work,† and, consequently, that the confusion only applied to the Hebrew as spoken among that people, and that that language has been preserved through the Shemetic races who had no hand in undertaking the erection of Babel.‡ It is, however, to be remembered that these are mere conjectures, invented to escape a difficulty, and that a strict adherence to the text not only requires that "the whole earth" should be considered as having been engaged in that building, but also that the language of "all the earth was confounded."

But, if these conjectures were admitted, the confusion of tongues among the descendants of Ham must have been very slight or very temporary, for in after times we find individuals of the Shemetic race, which is supposed to have retained the Hebrew without confusion, holding intercourse with them without the intimation of any difficulty arising from a difference of language. Thus Abraham conversed with the kings of Sodom and Gerar;§ and Jacob and his family discoursed freely with Pharoah and the Egyptians;‖ and when the Israelites, upwards of four hundred years afterwards, entered Canaan, the language of that country does not appear to have presented any obstacle to their communication, for the spies who were sent thither are described to have discoursed freely with Rahab, and she with them.¶ Hence it would appear that the language of the Hamites could not have been very different from the Hebrew of the

* See Chapter xiii.

† This is the opinion of Augustine and other ancients; also of Luther, Poole, Patrick, Wells, S. Clarke, Henry, Bryant, Burton, and others.

‡ "All the best authors earnestly contend to have the Hebrew escape a confusion at Babel."—*Ravis' General Grammar; Discourse concerning the Eastern Tongues*, p. 66.

§ Gen. xiv. 21, 22; xx. 9—13.

‖ Gen. xlvii. 8, 9; xliv.

¶ Joshua ii. 9—14.

Shemetic race. Besides, it is observed by philologers, that the Canaanitish or Punic idiom, which is said to be a Hamitic dialect, evinces a close affinity with the Hebrew, so that the confusion which is supposed to have disturbed the Hebrew of the Hamites, does not appear to have been of that extensive and unintelligible character which the history has been supposed to demand. And for these and other reasons, many have conceived that the effect of the confusion must have been transient, and to have gradually worn away after the purpose had been accomplished for which it was produced. So that, according to this view of the subject, the confusion at Babel could not have given origin to the diversities of languages which prevail.

Every one capable of reflecting upon a matter of this kind, may see, that it is not easy to make alterations in old words, so as to render them incomprehensible to those who have been educated in the language to which they belong. Moreover, if the history had been intended to record the obliteration of the primitive tongue, and the introduction of several new languages in its place, it is difficult to see why that should have occasioned the discontinuance of the enterprise upon which the people were engaged, for they to whom the new languages were given, must be supposed to have understood them, and therefore, there must still have been continued the means of intercourse among them. Besides, the terms required by workmen for the purpose of carrying on a building are comparatively few,—a very large amount of work, when once begun, could be carried on by means of the eye and gesticulation,—and, therefore, if the primeval language had been suddenly lost to them, and new ones as suddenly introduced, the difficulty of learning the new terms in each, for the purpose of carrying on the work, could not have been insurmountable, unless it is also supposed that they were struck with an incapacity to learn; and this will hardly be pretended.

But the notion of new tongues having come into existence at Babel, is considerably embarrassed by a preceding relation, which informs us respecting the separation of the descendants of Noah, and expressly says, they "were divided in their lands; every one after his tongue, after their families in their nations." *

* Gen. x. 5, 20, 31.

From this it would appear that a quiet separation of the people into nations, and a diversity of tongues, took place before the occurrences at Babel. Moreover, the time of this dispersion is strongly marked: it is said to have taken place in the days of Peleg.* This apparent discrepancy between the two narratives, is attempted to be met by the assertion, that the particulars recorded in the tenth chapter, refer to a time posterior to the confusion at Babel: but for this there is no evidence; and if this were the correct view of the case, it is reasonable to suppose, that some reference would have been made to so remarkable a cause for the diversity of tongues and nations; but there is not; and those who hold the opinion seem to forget that they are accusing Moses of having inserted that history in a wrong place, and thereby to have given occasion to the existence of much uncertainty upon the subject of which he is supposed to treat. But all commentators do not dispose of the discrepancy in this way: many consider the two narratives to refer to two different events. They understand the statement "every one after his tongue," to mean nothing more than the particular idioms and forms of expression which arise from natural causes among all languages; † but if the sentence had meant, as this supposes, nothing more than dialectic differences, it would scarcely have been mentioned in terms so precise, and at the same time have been associated with expressions indicating a different nationality. The circumstance, then, of there having been nations after their own tongues before the confusion at Babel, renders it very difficult to regard that event as having, according to the common opinion, given origin to the diversity of languages. They who take that view of the subject are compelled to set at defiance all *reasonable* considerations respecting it. They must either suppose that the primeval language was suddenly erased from the memories of men, and that, forgetting their experience, they were induced to suspend their oral intercourse with each other until they should have acquired some knowledge of the new languages then begun; or they must believe that men

* Gen. x. 25. "He was called Peleg because he was born at the dispersion of the nations to their several countries; for Peleg among the Hebrews signifies *division*."—*Josephus Ant.*, chap. vi. § 4.

† See Rev. J. Hewlett's, B.D., *Annotation*, and Dr. Patrick's *Com.*

were suddenly gifted with the ability to fix new words to every idea they had acquired; and, also, that every man who embraced any of the many languages then supposed to have begun, must have been suddenly inspired to comprehend the utterances of those who used them! But as these things will hardly be insisted on, the opinion which requires them must certainly be abandoned.

Others have thought that the terms of the sentence, "Confound their language, so that they may not understand one another's speech," do not imply the introduction of any new language into the mental conceptions and original expressions of the people,* but that they simply mean the inducing of some difference in pronunciation, and a few other divergences, by which misunderstandings should arise, and thereby such disagreements be created as would cause them to leave off building the city and to disperse. And those differences and divergences have been thought to have arisen out of the great ambition of the people, who sought to extend their language by the introduction of new words into it, at the same time as they undertook to establish their fame by building a metropolis for their empire.† But to this it is objected, that it assigns to the operation of natural causes, a transaction which the Scriptures describe to have been the result of supernatural interference. Ambrose maintains that the confusion of tongues could not have come from men, because they would not have done themselves so great a mis-

* "There seems no good reason to ascribe the diversities of language to the original ramifications of the Noachian family; whether we ascribe that diversity to the dispersion at Babel, or with many orthodox commentators, suppose the miracle (?) there recorded, to have consisted rather in a temporary confusion of the mind, producing, as its effect, a corresponding confusion of expression, rather than any miraculous change in the permanent dialects, and refer the subsequent diversities to the operation of gradual causes, arising from long separation, distant emigrations, and new associations, constantly modifying the simplicity of earlier language. Whichever of these views we may adopt, there seems no authority whatever, for attributing distinct tongues to the immediate family of Noah's first descendants, rather than to subsequent causes, which may have blended together in a course of common emigration, the members of different Noachic houses."—*Rev. J. Conybeare's Lectures*, p. 94.

† Dr. Shuckford's *Connection of Sacred and Profane History*, pp. 114, 115.

chief; * and Origen asserts that it could not have been occasioned by angels, good or bad, because they are not endowed with a sufficiency of power: † and subsequent critics, after having expended a large amount of ingenuity and learning to account, rationally, for the opinion that the transaction at Babel gave origin to the diversity of tongues, have found themselves compelled to refer the whole cause to the will and power of God. And this is the *orthodox* conclusion. Dr. Walton maintains it from the express declaration of history, namely, that "the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth." ‡ Bochart was of the same opinion: § so also was Buxtorf, who, by way of closing the inquiry, says, in the language of Mercerus, "There is no reason to inquire too curiously into this matter; it was effected instantly, in a way and manner of which we can give no account; we know many things were done, but how they were done we cannot say. It is a matter of faith."

This may be a convenient way for closing any difficult inquiry: but is it the right course to be adopted with the subject before us? Ought it really to be consigned to the catalogue of miracles? Are the terms of the text so precise as to render that course indispensable? We do not think so: and we believe that all the difficulties which have been experienced, do not so much belong to the narrative itself as to the ideas which it has been supposed to declare. Men have thought that it means what it was never intended to mean; for how can the statement, *that their language was confounded*, be fairly construed to mean that the primeval language was obliterated, and that a series of others were communicated in its stead? The difficulties lie in this conception, and not in the real signification of the history. The circumstance of its being said, that "the Lord did there confound their language," no more necessarily expresses the occurrence of a miracle than does the declaration, "He caused his wind to blow, and the waters flow." || In the Scriptures multitudes of things are ascribed to God, without the least intention of thereby indicating the performance of a miracle, and this respecting the confusion of tongues is one of them. Most of

* *Thes. Ambros, de Causis Mutationis Linguarum.* † *Origen. Homil.* ii.
‡ *Prolegom.* § *Geograph. Sac.* p. i. lib. i. c. 15. || Psalm cxlvii. 18.

the eminent miracles recorded by Moses as having taken place in early times, are spoken of, more or less directly, by the later prophets, or they are referred to either in the apocryphal books or in the New Testament, but that which is supposed to have occurred at Babel is nowhere mentioned. This silence would scarcely have been observed, if the affair recorded had been a miracle that could have been pointed at as that which had given origin to the diversities of language, for in that case it would have been among the most eminent, because it had produced results which had been perpetuated among mankind. The omission then of all mention of such a miracle, may fairly be regarded as telling against that idea of the record. But Dr. Pritchard, who considers the history as relating a miracle, remarks that it is incumbent on those who reject the Scripture account of the confusion of tongues, on the ground of its making reference to a supernatural, and, as it may be termed, an unknown agency, to furnish us with some account of the first existence of our species which does not imply events at least equally miraculous.* This does not appear to us to be a good argument: it does not follow that because certain miraculous phenomena might have been associated with the early existence of mankind, that the transaction at Babel must be classed among them. The former may be believed, and the latter denied with the most perfect consistency. We, however, do not doubt that Moses records this circumstance as a miracle, on account of the narrative making reference to a supernatural or unknown agency; but simply because we do not see that the supposed consequence of such an agency is sufficiently expressed; and, as before observed, that the mere circumstance of the event's being ascribed to the Lord, does not necessarily imply the performance of a miracle in any just definition of that term.

Another argument against those who question the confusion at Babel to have given origin to the diversities of language is, that the instantaneous impartation, to the men of that period, of a language of which they had no previous knowledge, is no more wonderful, or more beyond the reach of the mere human under-

* *Origin of the Celtic Nations.*

standing, than the miraculous gift of tongues which was poured out upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost.* But we contend that there is no analogy between the two events. The languages imparted to the apostles were those which had long been known among mankind, and of the existence of which the apostles must have heard something in their intercourse with society. Moreover, the gift appears to have been for the fulfilment of a particular prophecy,† and for a temporary occasion; because we do not find that they afterwards employed the gift, nor do we read in any of their writings that they made any point of having once possessed it. Whereas that which is claimed by the above argument for the transaction at Babel, is the obliteration of men's native tongue, and the sudden creation of a variety of new languages, which afterwards became the permanent inheritance of the nations. Besides one was to scatter abroad; the other was to unite: of one, it is expressly said that "they began to speak with other tongues as the spirit gave them utterance," and the people were astonished at the intelligence they heard; but of the other it is only said that "their language was confounded, and that they understood not one another's speech." There is then not a point in the two narratives of an analogous character: and, therefore, on the supposition that the transaction at Babel was a miracle, it would have been quite as pertinent to have contrasted it with any other miracle, for as such one may be very reasonably said to be no more wonderful than another. But, as we have said, the terms of the narrative do not require that the events should be placed in the catalogue of miracles. And this is in a manner admitted by all those learned inquirers who have attempted to explain, upon comprehensible grounds, the phenomena supposed to be related: for if they had regarded it as a miracle, that ought to have been considered as sufficient to settle the question; and they would hardly have attempted to explain, upon the grounds of reason and experience, that for which neither could be pleaded.

Without proceeding further with those investigations, we learn that the principal opinions which have been educed from

* Acts. See J. C. Bekes' *Origines Biblicæ*, p. 235.

† Acts ii. 15—20; Joel ii. 28—31.

the narrative, considered as a literal history, are beset on all sides with difficulties and uncertainty, for the removal of which there is no rational hope: the reason is, because in our view of the case, the whole inquiry has been conducted upon wrong data: a point of factitious narrative has been construed into literal history; so that the symbol has been mistaken for the thing it was intended to signify. The main purpose of the revelation was to convey to the world, by means of a representative imagery, some information concerning the spiritual confusion which the false doctrines of a delinquent church had brought upon mankind.

It is usual to object to spiritual interpretations, that they belong to the regions of fancy; and also, that they are uncertain. This may be just in reference to some interpretations with that profession, but it cannot be applicable to all; for the Lord said His words are spirit and life;* and His apostle has declared that the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.† Those who think that certainty is secured by remaining in the letter, are certainly mistaken. It can hardly be pretended by those who believe that they are adhering to the literal sense of the subject before us, that thereby the question has been solved and settled. Most of the interpretations to which we have adverted, profess to have been carried on under a strict adherence to the letter, and yet we find that no small amount of fancy and uncertainty has been indulged. Mere literal interpretations of the Scriptures, have led to results far more uncertain than any other which has been tried. The divisions of Christendom take their rise from this very ground. Almost any thing may be apparently proved from the literal sense of the Word, when the interpretation is not guided by any knowledge of its spiritual meaning: error is the sure result of inattention to this circumstance. This meaning is conveyed to us through the law of correspondence, which employs, in the Scriptures, natural effects to indicate spiritual causes, of which we have treated in former articles; and of this the narrative before us affords an example remarkable for its simplicity and force. Language and speech are the natural exponents of spiritual affection and thought, and therefore the former are

* John vi. 63. † 2 Cor. iii. 6.

employed as the appropriate representations of the latter. It is the internal states of men about which the Scriptures are vitally concerned: this is the subject treated of in the history before us, and not the confusion of Hebrew, or the formation of Syriac, Coptic, Chaldee, or any other natural language. It is the condition of men's loves and ideas, and not the linguistic forms in which they may be uttered, about which God has made a revelation; and language and speech are mentioned only because they are their ultimate termini, and consequently their natural representations. It is, then, the confounding of men's mental conceptions respecting the truths and virtues of religion, which is the subject of the narrative, and not, as it has been commonly supposed, the destruction of one oral vocabulary and the substitution of others. There is nothing said about the obliteration of the native tongues of the people—nothing is related about the then beginning of new languages of the earth. The narrative simply informs us, that confusion was introduced into that which is treated of, and not of the destruction of one language, nor of the creation of any.

Now it has been shown in a preceding chapter, when investigating the statement that the whole earth was of one language and one speech, that those terms, in that case, were employed to represent the unity of the whole church in respect to the general and particular doctrines by which it was distinguished; and therefore the confounding of that language and speech, must plainly signify the introduction of confusion into those doctrines: this confusion denoting to pervert, to darken, and to dissipate the truth. This result arose from two sources; *first*, from the evil loves which men had cherished; and, *second*, from the false persuasions which had been cultivated from those loves, for the purpose of favoring and defending their pursuits. When men begin to love evils, they will soon invent some reasons to cover and excuse them. The Lord has furnished a remarkable example of this in the case of those who were bidden to the supper. They were not disposed to accept the invitation, and therefore "they all with one consent began to make excuse." * It is the will which influences the decisions of the understanding, and when the one is determined

* See Luke xiv. 16—24.

upon an evil, the other will be sure to be infested by a falsehood. Vice cannot be followed in society without lying. Now, as we have seen that evil loves and false persuasions had set in upon the inhabitants of Shinar, it is, with these views before us, easy to perceive how the language of the whole earth—how the doctrines of the whole church—became confounded, *i. e.*, perverted and corrupted.

It is said that this was effected by the Lord; but it is evident, from the series of things treated of, that this is an apparent rather than a real truth. It belongs to the same class of expressions as those which speak of God being angry and repenting, when, nevertheless, fury is not in Him,* nor, is He a man that He should repent.† It is so written, because it so appears to those of whom it is spoken. The sun appears to rise and set, and we speak of it as such, but it is not true. God appears to every man according to his state of apprehension; to the froward he appears froward, and to the upright he appears upright;‡ His real character is truth and love. "God is not the author of confusion," § that arises from the evils and errors of mankind; and when these become uppermost in the church, confusion and misunderstanding of its truths are the sure results. Specifically to confound their language, denotes, to pervert and corrupt their knowledge of spiritual things; and not to understand one another's speech, signifies inattention to each other's sentiments, together with the disagreements and aversions which thence arose among the people. לא יִשְׁמְעוּ *la yishemegou*, which, in our version, is translated *they may not understand*, literally means *they may not hear;* and thus it does not express an absolute incapacity to comprehend, but rather a wilful inattention to learn and to obey any of the spiritual teachings of the church. This was the natural consequence of self-love and the love of the world having become the predominating principles among the people of the ancient church. Those who are so characterized pay but little regard to the Lord, or to their neighbor, nor will they care for anything that is true or good, unless the interests of self are likely to be advanced by so

* Isa. xxvii. 4. † Numb. xxiii. 19; 1 Sam. xv. 29.
‡ 2 Sam. xxii. 27; Psalm xviii. 26. § 1 Cor. xiv. 33.

doing. They may indeed, from this motive, make external profession respecting them, but external profession, when there is no internal love, is no acknowledgment that heaven can receive. Such will be in the continual effort to bring the teachings of true religion into a conformity with their own delights; and during this process, not only do these teachings become corrupted, but the very language in which they come to be expressed, is so confounded—so unintelligible, as to convey no understanding to the people.* Viewed under this aspect, the narrative before us is brought within the scope and purport of revelation; we see that it treats of the corruption and consequent profanation, into which the ancient church descended; and thus it becomes a lesson to all subsequent dispensations, teaching that truth will be lost when charity is abandoned.† Such having been the condition to which the ancient church was reduced by the perversities of the people, they could no longer be kept together in a state of unity, and therefore are said to have been "scattered abroad from thence, upon the face of all the earth." This dispersion represented the judgment by which that dispensation was brought to its end—that judgment being understood to mean the depravation of truth, and the hostilities which ensued.

It is easy to see that by scattering abroad, is denoted the divisions which resulted from the errors which had been produced. False doctrines are not capable of preserving the unity of the people; it is an essential property of such doctrines to

* It cannot be denied that a very remarkable illustration of this is preserved and presented to us in the formulary "commonly called the creed of St. Athanasius."

† Mr. Hutchenson, in his *New Account of the Confusion of Tongues*, in which he repudiates the popular notion upon the subject, and advocates the idea that the history refers to disagreements about religion, says, (page 24,) "The effect I think, was, that those who had fallen away from the true confession, and were beginning to frame another, instead of agreeing upon a new form for them all, disagreed among themselves about the wording it, and the manner and degree of the service. Each principle gained a party, and each followed the reason or dictates of their respective leaders; so each party formed themselves into a sect, and set up a particular form of confession." This is interesting as being an approximation to what we conceive to have been the truth.

produce confusion and divisions; and whensoever these are observable, they may be taken as certain indications that error has been at work. It is said that the Lord effected these dispersions, but it is so stated to express the appearance which it had to the people concerned. It is plain that it could not have come from Him, who had taught His prophet to say, "Behold, how good and pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." * All the separations of a desolated church hold some doctrines concerning God's providence, and each construes the permission which has been given for its own existence, into some peculiar act of providence favorable to itself; even in this, self indicates its presence, and it is in conformity with the mistaken apprehensions of this state, that the Lord is said to have scattered them abroad. Those divisions were permitted in order that the people might be induced to *leave off building the city*—in order to prevent them from enlarging the false doctrines which they had already produced; for, as it has been shown, the city of Babel was the type of such doctrines. Separations diminish the power of self-love, and weaken the activity of its enormous inventions. Self-love is not so strong in divided society, as it is in combinations. Unity is strength, division is weakness: consequently, the evils which resulted from the separations that were affected, were not so great as those which would have ensued from a continued combination; and therefore, upon the people being scattered, "they left off to build the city,"—that stopped the progress of the enormity which would have been developed by confederation. So much of the city had been built that confusion was produced—so many false doctrines had been framed, that misunderstandings and divisions resulted from them—and so an end was put to the enormity, by each party being thrown upon its own enfeebled resources to maintain that which had been embraced. Thus, the breaking up of the church, when false doctrines had spread, and self-love became a tower within its pale, was a merciful permission, intended to diminish the magnitude of those evils, and so to place a hindrance in the way of their further profanation. The Lord, by His divine providence, is continually watching over

* Psalm cxxxiii. 1.

the state and fluctuations of his church with men; and always endeavoring to promote by it the greatest amount of good which his unwearied respect for human freedom can accomplish.

From these considerations we learn that what is written of the confusion and divisions at Babel, represented the termination of spiritual worship in the ancient church; the love of self and the love of dominion had dissipated its intellectual vitality, and nothing of it continued to be recognized but a mere exuviæ out of which arose those numerous idolatries, which are well known to have distinguished all the nations of antiquity. And we see that there was mercy in the reason which permitted the disruption; for thereby a stop was put to the guilt of internal profanation into which the people were descending. By ceasing to perceive and acknowledge the principles of internal worship, they necessarily ceased to profane them; because men cannot profane that which they do not know and believe. Thus, then, an entire change was wrought upon the whole church. The Divine mercy preferred that external idolatry should come into existence, rather than that internal profanation should be continued, because the guilt is less enormous. The one is an external sin, the other is an internal one. The former would reduce the guilt of its professors to that of simplicity and ignorance, for which some excuse could be found; but the wickedness of the latter would be that of a high hand with open eyes, from the eternal consequences of which, there could be no rescue. Hence the Lord said unto the Jews, "If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth"; * and again, to show that the former state was preferable to the latter, He said, "That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven: but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."†

It was thus that the Noachic dispensation was brought to a close. To *scatter it abroad*, was to that ancient church, what *the flood* had been to its predecessor. The end of both was brought about by the profanations of the people; but that which

* John ix. 41. † Matt. viii. 11, 12. See also Luke xiii. 23—30.

related to the *most* ancient church, principally consisted in the profanation of the *good which had been loved;* whereas that which related to the ancient church, mostly consisted in a profanation of the *truths which had been known.* *A flood* is predicated of the former, because the *celestial* genius of the people perished by the *wilful* enormities which they invoked; but *scattering abroad* is predicated of the latter, because the *spiritual* genius of the people was dissipated by the *intellectual* hostilities which they cherished. And so terminated the first two churches of which any history has been preserved.

CHAPTER XVI.

OF THE HEBREW CHURCH AND NATION BEFORE THE CALL OF ABRAM.

"It was from Eber that they originally called the Jews Hebrews."—*Josephus Ant.* chap. vi. § 4.

"The general knowledge of a Divine nature, supposing men ignorant of the true God, only laid a foundation to erect his idolatrous temples upon; and the belief of the soul's surviving the body after death, without a knowledge of the true way of attaining happiness, made men more eager of embracing those rites and ceremonies which came with a pretence of showing the way to a blessed immortality." *Dr. Stillingfleet, Origines Sacræ,* vol i. book l. § vii.

Moses follows up the history of events which closed the Noachic dispensation, with a narrative of the generations of Shem to Abram. The generations which are spoken of in the early portions of Genesis, and in all other parts of the Scriptures, principally refer to the things of the church; that is to say, to the nativities, the propagation, and duration of certain doctrinals and characteristics of worship. Thus, when any new sentiments respecting faith and charity were developed, they are represented to have been born, and a succession of these developments is described as a generation. There are two cases of this kind before the flood, and three after it, down to the time of Abram.* The generations of Shem down to Eber, and from him through the descendants of Joktan the youngest of Eber's two sons, are related in a previous chapter.† But the generations of Shem, now before us, is only a part of that which preceded Eber, and from him through the descendants of Peleg, his elder son; and the literal object of this *appears* to be limited to the purpose of furnishing a list of Abram's predecessors.‡ The real design of those genealogies, *considered as a revelation*, is to inform us of the succession and declension which took place in reference to the internal things of the church; and at the same time to teach us that they resulted in idolatrous worship;

* Gen. ii. 4; v. 1; x. 1; xi. 10, 27 † Gen. x. 21—23.

‡ Gen. xi. 10—26.

the universal existence of which, in the time of Abram, gave occasion for the commencement, with him, of a merely representative dispensation.

The two generations of them which are recorded, are intended to reveal the successive derivations and declensions of the Noachic church, both as to its external and its internal condition. The generations of Shem, traced through Eber and Joktan, denote the births of a variety of defective sentiments respecting faith, and thus of the final corruption of the externals of the church: and the generations of Shem, traced through Eber and Peleg, represent the births of a variety of defective affections respecting charity, and thus of the final corruptions of the internals of the church. The principles of charity are more interior and universal than the sentiments of faith, and when the former were declining the latter were corrupting, so that at length the worship of the church gave birth to a mere exuviæ. This was its condition in the time of Abram; and therefore it was that in his time were commenced those representatives of a church which were more fully established with his posterity. We speak of the Israelitish dispensation as not being a church, but only as the representation of such an institution, because it consisted in the mere ceremonies of worship, without their corresponding internal principles being acknowledged; and where there is no such spiritual worship, there cannot be any actual church; though the ceremonies, which the Jewish people were commanded to observe, were beautifully arranged and adapted to be the representation of a spiritual dispensation. In themselves they were exuviæ which represented the vital things that had gone out of them, and at the same time were the shadows of good things to come.* The apostle calls them a shadow, to express the idea of their destitution of spiritual substance.

Another purpose of the generations of Shem through Eber and Peleg, *seems* to have been to record the ages of the respective patriarchs when they became the fathers of those who are named, and to inform us how long they lived after that period —and "begat sons and daughters." Thus of Shem it is said, that he was "an hundred years old and begat Arphaxad—and

* Heb. x. 1.

Shem lived after he begat Arphaxad five hundred years, and begat sons and daughters"; from which we learn that *six hundred* years are predicated of the life of Shem; nothing being said about his death,* nor indeed about the death of any of his descendants until after the birth of Abram. Thus some hundreds of years are predicated of the life of the majority of the names which are recorded, though it appears that they were gradually decreased, and that the shortest life among them was that of Nahor, the grandfather of Abraham, who is said to have lived a hundred and forty-eight years. The great ages thus recorded, afford an argument against their being chiefly applied to individual men. There is no good reason for supposing that the duration of human life has at any time been extended over several centuries. There is not any really literal history for such an opinion. The early chapters of Genesis, in which those ages are mentioned, being symbolic narrations, do not employ numbers in a strictly numerical sense. Besides, chronologers are exceedingly perplexed about the true value of those ages, because they find them differently related in the Hebrew, the Septuagint, and Samaritan versions.† These, how-

* At the close of all the lives after the word daughters, the Samaritan version adds the words *all the days of* —— were ——. The Septuagint adds, *and he died.* The Hebrew affords no authority for those additions.

† The following tabular statement of those discrepancies may be useful to the reader. The first column consists of references to the verses in the eleventh chapter of Genesis, in which the ages are recorded; the other three consist of the Hebrew, Septuagint, and Samaritan chronologers.

Verse.	*Hebrew.*	*Septuagint.*	*Samaritan.*
12	35 years	135 years	135 years
13	403 ,,	400 ,,	303 ,,
14	30 ,,	130 ,,	130 ,,
15	403 ,,	330 ,,	303 ,,
16	34 ,,	134 ,,	134 ,,
17	430 ,,	270 ,,	270 ,,
18	30 ,,	130 ,,	130 ,,
19	209 ,,	209 ,,	109 ,,
20	32 ,,	132 ,,	132 ,,
21	207 ,,	207 ,,	107 ,,
22	30 ,,	130 ,,	130 ,,
23	200 ,,	200 ,,	100 ,,
24	29 ,,	179 ,,	79 ,,
25	119 ,,	125 ,,	79 ,,

ever, are questions upon which we need not enter here. Upon the subject of patriarchal longevity, the reader will find some special consideration in the *Antediluvian History.** After having consulted what has been said upon the subject, it will be found unnecessary to enlarge here upon those ages, further than to observe that they are employed to denote the times and states which distinguished successive branches of a declining church. The circumstances of each having lived so many years and begat a son; and of having lived for centuries afterwards and "begat sons and daughters,"—a style of stating these circumstances which is maintained throughout the whole enumeration,—are intended to inform us of the duration and state of each branch of the declining church, before it began to be the parent of those doctrinal descendants which are named; and, also, of the continuation and state of those branches during which they were in the process of originating other doctrines respecting faith and life. They were prolific in such productions after they had once begun. The first birth, in every case, is mentioned as a son; and those which followed are invariably said to have been "sons and daughters," to represent that all of them first began to decline by bringing into existence some perverted doctrine respecting faith, and this being accomplished, they began to be prolific, not only in erroneous doctrines, but in defective lives. The birth of one error is sure to be succeeded by the origination of others, and these brethren of falsehoods will certainly be accompanied by a sisterhood of evils.

Shem was to the ancient church, what Seth was to the most ancient; namely, the inmost principle of it, and therefore it was the most enduring and conspicuous; and it is interesting to observe that the generations of both are related in a similarity of style.† Each generation is as it were, the preface to the events in which were to be commenced another dispensation. They indicate to us the lines in which, notwithstanding their defection, were preserved the *remains* of the expiring churches, and out of which the successors were to be established. Thus the Noachic dispensation was formed from the remains which were preserved among the descendants of Seth; and the Israel-

* Chap. xviii. † Compare Gen. v. 6 to end, with Gen. xi. 10—24.

itish economy, which had its beginning in the call of Abram, was raised up from the *remains* which were preserved among the descendants of Shem. The nature of those remains we have treated of before: it has been shown that they are spoken of in the Word, and that they denote the remnants of the truths and virtues of religion which had decreased and were continued with but few, and that upon these, as upon a foundation, the Lord was pleased to raise the superstructure of another dispensation of His mercy: and in this connection it is important to remark that there were *ten* generations from Adam to Noah, and that precisely the same number of generations occurred from Noah to Abram.* These facts must have some meaning; they would not otherwise have been indicated in the revelation of God. They are not to be cast aside as curiosities without significance: they are not the results of chance, but the effects of design, and we must receive them as truths to be interpreted: and how strongly do they corroborate our views of the number ten being employed in the Scriptures as the index of *remains*. When the Adamic or celestial church perished, its spiritual successor was begun by the tenth generation, because by that number was represented the remains which were necessary for its accomplishment: and when the Noachic or spiritual church perished, its natural successor was begun by the tenth generation for the same reason: this view of the signification of that number, beautifully harmonizes with the facts in which were begun the two dispensations to which it is applied.

Another circumstance of interest to be observed is, that Eber, in the line of Shem, was to the Noachic church what Enoch was, in the line of Seth, to the Adamic. Each collected and preserved, for the future use of mankind, certain doctrinals of his respective church. It was on this account, in reference to Eber, that the Hebrew branch of the scattered church afterwards came into greater prominence than any of the rest. And this brings us more directly to the object of this chapter, which is to con-

*1. Adam	6. Jared	1. Shem	6. Rew
2. Seth	7. Enoch	2. Arphaxad	7. Lerug
3. Enos	8. Methuselah	3. Salah	8. Nahor
4. Cainan	9. Lamech	4. Eber	9. Terah
5. Mahalaleel	10. Noah	5. Peleg	10. Abram

sider the state and character of the Hebrew church and nation before the call of Abram.

The ancient church, of whose corruptions and dispersion we have treated in a preceding chapter, was extended over a considerable portion of the oriental world. It was established in Assyria, Mesopotamia, Syria, Ethiopia, Arabia, Lybia, Egypt, Tyre, Sidon, and the land of Canaan. But as the rise of this church in those countries was progressive, so its decline was gradual. The knowledge of spiritual truth, when it is once obtained, cannot be suddenly extinguished, either in an individual or in a nation: it goes out in proportion as the love of self and the love of dominion take their rise. And although every branch of the church was infested with these loves at the period of its dispersion, and, consequently, they all experienced a depravation of the truth, yet the errors which were adopted by some were not so direful as those which prevailed with others; and the result of this among the nations was the longer duration of some than others. Many of the minor causes of separation, were, no doubt, afterwards absorbed by the more powerful heresies which had succeeded in establishing for themselves a nationality, which was certainly the case with the religion of those countries above referred to. The histories of their religion, which are preserved in the Scriptures, and in other sources of information, literary and monumental, belong to a later period than that which we are contemplating—a period so late as that of Jewish history, when it is well known that the religion of most of those countries had ceased to retain any just connection with genuine truth. This however was not the case for a considerable time after the confusion of tongues was experienced. Heresies of divers sorts prevailed among them all; still they did not suddenly relinquish every truth which had been known to their Noachic predecessor. There cannot be any well-founded doubt, that each retained, for a considerable period, some one or more of the leading doctrines by which that had been distinguished. Some doctrines respecting God, the soul of man, and a life after death, were no doubt continued among them all, because the acknowledgment of these things underlie, and are essential to, the existence of all religion; nevertheless these doctrines were retained with different perceptions respecting them

among the nations. And these perceptions were defective in all, yet with some the defection was not so flagrant as with others. The names of important doctrines were remembered long after the true ideas were lost of which they had been originally expressive; and these became the stocks upon which were engrafted and propagated a variety of religious perversities. Error very seldom walks abroad openly and by itself. It usually contrives to take with it something from the temple of truth, though for the most part it is little else than the name; and by this means it more effectually provides for itself an acceptance and currency among mankind: hence it is that error is not received as error, but as truth. The grossest of corruptions have sought to maintain a character from the use of that sacred name.

It has been seen that the Noachic church embraced three general classes of mankind, and that among these were distributed the three general principles of spiritual religion, which are, internal love, intellectual knowledge, and simple obedience, and that these were represented by Shem, Ham, and Japheth. The two last of these principles were represented by the two last of these names; and it is easy to perceive, that the people who adopted those principles, irrespective of the first, would become liable to descend into the greatest errors. Being comparatively external, and without the conserving principle of love, it is plain that, in the process of time, the perceptions of truth would be sure to fail them. This is acknowledged to have been the case among those which are commonly regarded as the Hametic and Japhetic nations. The reason is, because faith lives by charity, and truth is perverted when goodness is neglected. The light of the sun would go out, if its heat were to be withdrawn.

But the Shemetic nations, because they regarded love as the essential—the living thing of religion, were thereby enabled to preserve certain information respecting spiritual truth for a longer time and in a better way. It was the genius of those nations to love the sentiments which they adopted for religious truth; still with a difference, some devoting themselves to it with more intensity than others. And these considerations enable us to account for the circumstance, of revealed religion having been most prominently continued in one line of the Shemetic race. This line was through Arphaxad and Eber, down to Abram.

The religious doctrine and worship implied in the successive generations which are named, became more and more corrupt, because the affections of the people became less and less exalted; and in the time of Abram they had become addicted to mere idolatries and perversions. Nevertheless, the *genius* of the people, which found a terminus in Abram, and among whom the Shemetic sentiments of religion were so long in reaching their extinction, being continued to their Jewish descendants, fitted them in a peculiar manner to become, in preference to all others, the receptacles and conservators of the revelation subsequently vouchsafed. It is in consequence of this that Moses, immediately after relating the circumstances by which the Noachic church was disrupted, proceeds to give us the generations of Shem through Arphaxad, for the purpose of revealing to us the person in whom was commenced its representative successor. All that is written before this enumeration, may be considered as the universal history of two churches, respectively called celestial and spiritual: but with this enumeration there is begun the particular history of their successor, which was a merely natural or representative dispensation. This, however, did not actually begin until after Abram was called. The history of this church is, for the most part, precisely such as it is related to have been in the literal sense of the Scriptures: nevertheless, this also is representative and significative of spiritual things. The histories, by which its commencement was preceded, are purely figurative, but after that period the narratives are literal as well as symbolic. And the reasons for this transition of style in the Divine Writings, arose out of the change which had taken place in the mental appreciation of mankind for spiritual things. They had ceased to perceive and regard such things as realities; and, thereupon, they could not be affected with any thing that did not address itself to their external and sensual minds; and a literal sense was adopted as the vehicle of revelation, in consideration of, and in condescension to, the necessities of this condition. Still, the transition from one style to the other is not very marked, because the change from one state to the other was not very sudden. The conveyance of spiritual truth to the man of the church is the principal object of every style in revelation. Moses, in relating the generations

of Shem, begins to introduce the names of individuals, with whom certain doctrines, during the Shemetic corruptions, acquired a peculiar prominence. The names which he has enumerated, in the genealogies which he has previously recorded, were significant of doctrines and worship, together with the *communities* by whom they were received: but in this generation of Shem, such names not only continue to express such doctrines and worship, but, also, to indicate *individuals* by whom they were embraced. The things of the church having become external, the external signification of the terms in which revelation was conveyed to it, began to be narrowed: universals were reduced to particulars, and names which had been employed to express only a generic or collective sense, now began to be used with a specific or individual meaning. Abram subsequently became the principal historical personage mentioned in this list. His brothers, Nahor and Haran, gave names to two cities in consequence of the people having adopted their religion; * and from what is related of them the whole family appear to have been idolators; † but of this we shall have occasion to speak more fully in another place. Eber is the principal historical personage in this list, before the time of Abram, and it is to him, and to the church begun with him, to which our attention is now to be directed. Before however, we enter upon this, our next point, it will be proper to remove a difficulty which these considerations may suggest.

The circumstance of the names of individuals being introduced into the generations of Shem, among those which have only a generic signification, and the speaking of the latter as being the fathers of the former, may seem somewhat perplexing to those who confine their thoughts to the more literal indications of the history. They can easily see how an individual may be called the father of a community; but they do not so readily perceive how a community can be considered as the father of an individual. But in our view of the case this is by no means a difficult idea. Natural generations are not the subjects treated of in those early portions of the Mosaic records. This, we think, is sufficiently evident from the generations of

* Gen. xxiv. 10; xii. 4. † Joshua xxiv. 2.

Ham and Japheth, in which are introduced plural names, apparently in the sense of individual fathers.* But independently of this fact, it is well known, that the state and requirements of communities and nations, have frequently given birth and development to individual characters, and that these have imparted an entirely new condition to the circumstances of the people, who as a parent had contributed to their existence. This was the case with Salah, who begat Eber.† Salah was a community, so called from their religion. Their religion was a mere *derivation* from science, and, therefore, it was called Salah, which signifies a *shoot.* The unfavorable circumstances in which this external religion placed the people by whom it was adopted, gave rise to the characteristic individual, Eber. He collected and arranged certain doctrinals which had prevailed in the better periods of the Noachic church; and by their subsequent propagation he came to be regarded as the father of that, which from him was called the Hebrew religion; a religion which was, in some measure, afterwards revived among the Jews, who were also called Hebrew on account of that derivation.

In opposition to the idea of the Jews having derived their Hebrew patronymic from Eber, two different theories have been set forth respecting the origin of that name. The *first* considers *'ibri* to be derived from עבר, Eber, regarded as a verb denoting to *pass over:* and from this it is argued, that Abram was called a Hebrew by the Canaanites in consequence of his having come over the Euphrates into their country. This opinion is favored by Origen, Jerome, and a few other early Christian writers: and some have thought that it was given to Eber by Salah, as a prediction respecting this passage of his posterity. But those opinions do not appear to us to possess any weight; and they are certainly refuted by the fact, that Eber could not, in the first signification, have been a distinctive name, for the event supposed, at a period when, according to the common interpretation of the preceding history, so many tribes had so recently passed over the Euphrates.‡

* Gen. x. 13—18. † Gen. x. 21—24.

‡ S. Morinus De Ling. *Primæva*, p. 64.

The *second* theory bears some resemblance to the first; still it is distinct, though they have been frequently confounded. It is constructed on Joshua saying to the Israelites, "Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abram, and the father of Nahor."* It takes for granted that Mesopotamia is the country referred to by the sentence, עֵבֶר הַנָּהָר, *eber hagauhaur*, "the other side of the flood"; and thereupon it is contended that *'ibri* is derived from the preposition, עֵבֶר, in that combination, so that the word should be understood to mean one who dwells on the other side of the river. This has been regarded as the most plausible of the two theories, and it seems to have been held by Diodorus, Tarsensis, and Chrysostom: but to us it seems a very improbable opinion that a single race should have been called Hebrews simply because they dwelt *Eber*, *i. e.*, beyond the river, particularly as, according to the usual geographical interpretations of the preceding history, that was the dwelling place of the ancestry of many other of the nations. Hezel is said to have stated some of the best objections against each theory; and Ewald has emphatically declared both to be untenable.† To arrive at the true origin of the cause from which the Jews were called Hebrews, we must go to broader facts than those which are afforded by verbal criticism.

It is quite evident from the Scriptures, that there was a religious community called Hebrews, after the dispersion at Babel, and before the call of Abram. There were indeed several other religions extant during that period, which spread themselves out among the nations; but this of Eber is the only one to which Moses has specifically referred. He interrupts the order of his relation concerning the generations of Shem, to lay particular emphasis on Eber and his children,‡ clearly to mark

* Josh. xxiv. 2. † Kitto's *Bib. Cyc.* Art. *Hebrew Language.*

‡ Gen. x. 21. "Some refer the golden age to the time of Eber and Peleg, contending, that if we can suppose there ever was such a pacific and innocent state on this side of the flood, that it is most likely to have been in the days of Noah and his three sons."—*Eben Amid*, p. 28. "The Arabs have a tradition that *Hud*, who is supposed to have been the same with *Eber*, was sent to preach to one of their ancient tribes named *Ad*." *Eben Amid*, p. 29. *Ab 'ul farag*, p. 12. Cited in the *Ancient Universal History*, book i., chap. 3.

his connection with a religious people, to whom he would subsequently refer. It is common to confound the Hebrews with the Jews, but they were two distinct nations,—nations to be considered in a religious, rather than in a political character. Abram, indeed, is upon one occasion called a Hebrew;* and the Jews are frequently so denominated; but this is no proof that they were one and the same people: the circumstance that it was not their common designation, may be taken as evidence that it was a foreign graft. The reason why they were so called, is, because the religious doctrines respecting God, and the sacrificial ritual which prevailed with the Hebrews, before they became idolators, were revived among the descendants of Abram. Thus the Jews were Hebrews only in the sense of their having been made the final depositories of the leading principles of the Hebrew religion. The Jewish religion was not essentially original: it was the revival of doctrines and the adaptation of a ritual which had previously existed. The leading principles of the Jewish religion were the acknowledgment of Jehovah to be their God, and the offering of sacrifice; but a similar acknowledgment respecting God, had prevailed, both in the Adamic and Noachic churches; and it was continued in most of the branches of the ancient church, which are called the sons of Shem; still with a difference in the perception of the people respecting its meaning. That sacrifice, in the sense of slaying animals for religious offerings, and that idolatries also took their rise among them is well known. But the Hebrew branch of the scattered church acknowledged, for a longer time and with greater veneration than any of the rest, that Jehovah was their God, and the sacrifices which they offered were most in correspondence with the laws of spiritual worship. But these distinguishing characteristics of the Hebrew religion were lost in the time of Abram; and they appear to have been again lost among his descendants in the time of Moses, who was raised up for the purpose of reviving them among the Israelites. These facts are plainly taught in the Scriptures. The Lord said to Moses, "I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by

* Gen. xiv. 13. This is the first passage in which the epithet Hebrew occurs.

the name of God Almighty; but by My name *Jehovah*, was I not known to them." * Moses himself had to have this distinguishing name of the Supreme Being specially revealed, notwithstanding it had been so well known to ages long before; for when Jehovah appeared to him, and gave him instructions respecting the liberation of the sons of Israel from Egypt, he "Said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is His name? what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM; and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, JEHOVAH the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is My name for ever."† Thus, it is plain, that both Moses, and the Israelites in general, had revived among them the lost name of Jehovah. In reference to them, and for their encouragement, He is spoken of as the God of their fathers; but a greater antiquity was to be assumed for this name than that afforded by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the intercourse that was to be opened out with *Pharaoh*, respecting the liberation of their descendants from his power. The plea which Moses and the elders of Israel had to set before the king of Egypt, for this purpose, was, that "Jehovah the God of the Hebrews hath met with us; and now let us go, we beseech thee, three days journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to Jehovah our God."‡ Thus Pharaoh is appealed to by Moses and the elders of Israel, not because their own God had appeared to them; not because the God of their fathers had appeared to them; but because the God of the Hebrews had done so, thus the God of a people of whose existence, antiquity, and superior information concerning religious truth, Pharaoh might have possessed some knowledge,—not the God of those whom he obviously regarded as his ignorant bondsmen, but the

* Exod. vi. 3. Some further considerations of this passage will be presented in the next chapter.

† Exod. iii. 13, 15. ‡ Exod. iii. 18.

God of a people whose religious history might, in some measure, have been known to him; and, consequently, that an appeal, founded upon the fact of the God of that people having appeared, would have had some weight in inducing him "to let Israel go." Hence it was that Moses was instructed to declare that his authority for appealing to Pharaoh upon the subject, was, that "Jehovah the God of the Hebrews, hath sent me unto thee." Without the above idea, it will be difficult to see any force in the argument employed, or in the authority declared, so far as Pharaoh was concerned; but with it they both become exceedingly powerful, and at the same time they show us the amazing obduracy of character by which he was distinguished. From these considerations, it is plain that the Hebrews were a religious community, who had descended from Eber, as a father, and that the sons of Israel are, upon a few occasions, called Hebrews, because they had revived among them some of the characteristics which had originally belonged to the Hebrew religion; particularly those which related to the name of their God, and certain sacrificial observances which had prevailed among them.

This view removes a considerable amount of difficulty which has been supposed to surround this subject. The Jews themselves held the opinion, that they were called Hebrews from Eber the alleged ancestor of Abram. But Christian commentators have not been satisfied with this conclusion; some indeed have adopted it, but it is rejected by many, because they have not seen any reason why the Jews should have been called Hebrews from Eber, in preference to every other name that occurs in the catalogue of Shem's descendants: but the above view supplies a reason: it shows us that Eber became an historical character, together with the materials by which it was developed: and the peculiar declaration that Shem was "the father of all the children of Eber," proves that an emphasis was laid upon that name for an historical purpose, which is not observable of any of the rest.* The phrase "children of Eber,"

* "From an inscription found on a marble in that country (Arabia), it should seem that many of its inhabitants, from whom the idolators had divided or separated, did still preserve for a long time the religion of *Eber*."—*Sir W. Jones. Bib. Research*, vol. ii. p. 95.

not only denotes those among whom Jehovah was acknowledged, and the worship of Him by the observance of a representative ritual; but it also expresses the idea of *those who are on the other side*, not simply in the sense of those who are on the other side of a geographical locality, but as meaning those who, by virtue of the superiority of their religion, were placed in opposition to the common degradation of the times. Eber, then, was the founder of a Hebrew church, which existed prior to the call of Abram. This is sufficiently proved by the fact that, "the God of the Hebrews" is mentioned in the history of Abram and his descendants, as the true God, who was acknowledged by a more ancient people so called. But to understand its character and quality, it will be requisite to attend to some other considerations.

It is to be remembered that the Noachic church, which was spread far and wide among mankind, especially in Asia, had become degenerate, in consequence of the people turning into idolatrous objects all those things which, in the wiser periods of our race, had been understood to be the representatives and significatives of the spiritual things of a living and enlightened church. Idolatry took its rise from men beginning to worship the things representing, and neglecting to perceive the objects represented,—in mistaking the sign for the thing that was signified; and this began to prevail very generally after the confusion at Babel; though with some it was more flagrantly obnoxious than with others; its worst features were, in all probability, developed among those who are described as the descendants of Ham and Canaan. In the Shemetic line it was less offensive, because some glimmerings of light concerning spiritual things continued to be preserved; still these were in the process of decline, and it is quite certain that those glimmerings went out among some of the Shemetic people. But with Eber they continued more bright and for a longer time than with any of the rest; and, with the view of hindering their extinction, he collected and brought into an intellectual focus some of the attenuated information on spiritual subjects, which were in the process of being lost, and on these was formed a new institution of religion, subsequently called from its founder, the Hebrew church. The principles of this church

consisted in the adoption of a ceremonial worship, under the acknowledgment that it was representative of holy things. It was about the time when this dispensation was established that sacrifices first began, because mankind had descended so low, in reference to all spiritual knowledge and perception, that they began to prefer them to every other ritual. Still, in the Hebrew church, it was long known and believed that they were nothing else than external rites speaking to the senses of fallen men concerning spiritual sentiments and love. In this respect it was a truly representative church, and so distinguished from both its Noachic predecessor and its Israelitish descendant. For the former was not a ritual dispensation properly considered. It is, indeed, said to have offered burnt-offerings; nevertheless, that is to be understood only as a relation by which to signify the holy principle of worship which then prevailed: this has been shown in a preceding chapter of this work which treats of that point. And the latter was entirely a ritual dispensation, in which the people had no knowledge of the spiritual things represented by their religious ceremonies; and therefore it was not properly a church, but only an institute of rites by which a church was represented. That sacrifices constituted an essential portion of the worship of the Hebrew church, is evident from Moses saying that the God of the Hebrews hath met with us—that He commanded the people to hold a sacrifice unto Him in the wilderness, which is immediately afterwards spoken of as a feast unto Jehovah.* Hence we see that the nature and quality of the ancient Hebrew church, was that of a ritual dispensation in which the people had some clear understanding of the meaning of the ceremonials which they observed. Sacrifices did not originate out of any Divine command, for it is written that the Lord said, "I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices." † They were indeed commanded by Moses when instituting the Israelitish economy, but that was long after they had come into existence: and it is to be regarded as the regulation of the sensual practices which had become prevalent among mankind, and the reduction of them to the purposes of a religious and repre-

* Exod. iii. 18; v. 1—3. † Jeremiah vii. 22.

sentative use. They originated out of the sensual imagination, which natural men began to entertain concerning the significatives which had been known by a superior people in a preceding age. The former represented, by material acts, the affections and perceptions which the latter had enjoyed: and because all those acts, which had gradually come into existence by mistaking the sign for the thing signified, were associated in the minds of their observers with a religious element (though an exceedingly low one), the Lord, who does not break the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax, was pleased to regulate and turn those acts into a way which should subserve the purposes of spiritual use. This, in the ancient Hebrew church, was accomplished by the people being enabled to see that the sacrificial rite, which naturalism had evoked, was but the material expression of some spiritual sentiment: much in the same way that intelligent Christians regard the material elements of baptism and the Lord's Supper, as the indices of spiritual things.

The ancient Hebrew church, which, as it has been said, was extended throughout many countries of Asia, gradually lost sight of the knowledge and principles upon which it was established, and therefore the people among whom it had prevailed, gradually became idolators: still this result took place in some countries sooner than in others. It seems to have been consummated in "Ur of the Chaldees" in the time of Abram, but not entirely so, at the same period, in the land of Canaan, into which the Lord commanded him to go,* for we find his grandson, Joseph, when in Egypt, describing himself to have been stolen from the land of the Hebrews,† *i. e.*, the land of Canaan. The rites of the ancient Hebrew church lingered not only longer in that country, but more conspicuously there than in any other. Hence it was that when they were thoroughly corrupted we still find its inhabitants adhering to a sacrificial worship, but conducting it upon an idolatrous principle. An idolatry which not only consisted in the worship of false gods and images, but also in the worship of external objects without regard to, or a knowledge of, spiritual principles, and these results took place in consequence of men having abandoned and

* Gen. xii. 1—5. † Gen. xl. 15.

perverted the true meaning of representative things. The significations and representations which had been derived through oral tradition from the most ancient church, all of which had respect to the Lord and the spiritual things of His kingdom, were successively turned by various nations into idolatrous ceremonials, in each of which they differed in proportion to the ignorance and wilfulness by which the perversion had been pursued. To arrest the progress of this enormity, and thereby to prevent the destruction of the universal church which it threatened, the Lord permitted that a knowledge of certain significations and representations should be connected with certain kinds of ritual worship: hence their idolatrous character could be removed; for an external ceremonial is not an idolatry, if the people who obey it have regard to internal things, and look upon the ceremonial simply as their exponent and suggester. The knowledge just referred to was restored to the church through the instrumentality of Eber, who, upon the principle that the things employed in external worship, were only the exponents of internal perceptions, first established this kind of worship in Syria. It consisted principally in high places, groves, statues, anointings, the establishment of a priesthood and of all such things as had relation to it as a representative office, together with sacrifices, because that mode of worship had then come to be preferred to all other ritual. Hence the Hebrew church was raised up as a check upon the increasing idolatry of mankind, and it not only served to explain to them the ground of the error which they had committed upon that subject, but it also became an intellectual medium, through which they could be raised out of the degradation into which they had descended, and have secured to them a better way.*

* There is nothing in the letter of the Scriptures by which to point out the time in which idolatry began, or to determine the objects of it. There can be no reasonable doubt that it was a gradual development, occasioned by men successively losing sight of the true idea of God and all spiritual things. "The generality of authors, particularly of the Fathers, agree to place the origin of idolatry in the time of *Serug*, whom some suppose (!) to be the introducer of it; yet others make it more early, and it is said that in *Rew's* days mankind was fallen into various kinds of false worship, and that about that time, also, the custom of men sacrificing their children to devils is pretended to have been introduced" (*Ancient Universal History*, book i., chap.

Those advantages were certainly embraced by some of the nations adjacent to Syria; and there can be no doubt of their having been extended to the land of Canaan, where, in the time of Abram, they were retained with more accuracy than in any of the rest. At a later period we find in that country, the remains of a ritual worship which both the priesthood and the people regarded as having some recondite meaning, and as being capable of opening out some secret influences for their advantage: and there is one case in which it appears to have been attended with remarkable efficacy.* Canaan is distinctly called "the land of the Hebrews,"† before it was inhabited by the posterity of Jacob as a peculiar people: and there can be no doubt that the subsequent idolatries, which were practised there, arose from the corruptions of the sacrificial rituals of the Hebrew church.

It is highly probable that those two extraordinary personages, Melchizedec and Balaam, had some connection with the priesthood of that dispensation. Balaam was of Syria,‡ where the Hebrew church was first planted; and that he offered sacrifices, and called Jehovah his God, which were the peculiar characteristics of that church, are well known from the history of his intercourse with Balak the king of Moab.§ And that which is written of Melchizedec king of Salem, who, as a priest of the Most High God, brought forth to Abram bread and wine, and

2, note). The most probable idea upon the subject seems to us to be, that idolatry began with some of the posterity of Ham and Canaan, who, being an exceedingly sensual race, were allowed the sacrificial worship of animals to prevent them from sacrificing their sons and daughters.

* See 1 Sam. vi., where the Philistine priests advised that a *trespass-offering* should accompany the return of the ark to the Israelites, and the result appears to have been the staying of the plagues under which the people had been suffering.

† Gen. xl. 15.

‡ Numbers xxiii. 7. "Balak, the king of Moab, hath brought me (Balaam) from Aram." Aram is the Hebrew name of Syria. It was called Aram from the religion introduced there under that name, by those who are called the fifth son of Shem.

§ Numbers xxii. 39, 41; xxiii. 1, 2, 3, 14, 29; xxiv., see the chapters throughout.

blessed him,* is certainly a description of acts that must have resulted from the teachings of a church which knew something of spiritual things, and concerning which church there is no other indication than that which is afforded by the fact of there being something of the Hebrew dispensation then extant. The book of Job we consider to have been one of the sacred writings which belonged to an early period of this church.† The peculiarity of its style,—its indications of belief, and forms of expression concerning supernatural agents,‡—its allusion to Sabianism, or the worship of the constellations,§—its non-recognition by Moses,—its description of Job offering burnt-offerings,||—its retention of the name Jehovah,—and its complete destitution of all reference to the history of the Jews, proves that it was produced apart from all connection with that people; and there are other internal evidences which show, that it must have been extant before the time of Abram, and thus that it belonged to the Hebrew church and nation which existed before that name was given to Abram and his descendants, and which took its rise with Eber as a father.

Eber is said to have had two sons, Peleg and Joktan. As real history was now about to be employed for the purpose of revelation, this was, in all probability, a literal occurrence, still, the principal design of this statement, as a revelation, was to represent the two kinds of worship by which the Hebrew church was distinguished, and, consequently, the two classes of persons by whom they were adopted. These two kinds of worship were its internal and external, both of which are requisite to the existence of a church, and they are considered as brethren. The internal worship of this church was repre-

* Gen. xiv. 18, 19.

† "This book has given rise to endless hypotheses, and called forth the most precious talents of the most highly gifted of the champions of Revelation. The authors who have confined their researches to this portion of Holy Writ, not to mention the well known and highly valued commentators, would make a formidable catalogue. The result of a very careful consideration leads us, not only to concur with a host of literati, in concluding that the era of Job *cannot* be fixed *after* the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt, but to submit that it must be placed even about 200 years before Abram."—*Dr. Burton's Deluge and World after the Flood*, pp. 251, 261.

‡ Job i. 6; ii. 1, onward. § Job xxxi. 26—28. || Job i. 5.

sented by Peleg, and its external by Joktan. Moses relates the generation of Joktan in the tenth chapter of Genesis;* but he there says nothing of the generation of Peleg: that was reserved for the following chapter, in order to indicate the ancestry of the Jewish nation. Joktan denotes what is *little* or *disputatious;* and this very forcibly describes the characteristics which entered into the mere externals of worship, of which he was the representative. That kind of worship, considered in itself, is destitute of a living principle, and therefore it is without a conserving element. Hence it soon gave way to innovations, and, in the end, its original character was lost by the *littleness* of mind which it produced, and the *disputations* which it evoked. It is on this account that Joktan and all his descendants,† as representing the diversified parts of the external worship of the Hebrew church, are no more mentioned in other portions of the Word. It is true that the names of three sons, viz., Seeba, Havilah, and Ophir, do again occur in other parts of the Scripture, not however as the sons of Joktan. The two first of these were also the names of two sons of Ham,‡ and it is in connection with the history of some of the Hamitish nations that those names are subsequently repeated.§ Ophir is afterwards mentioned only as the name of a country celebrated for its gold ||—so celebrated even in the days of Job,¶ whose antiquity, it is highly probable, is as great as that of Eber; and therefore it can no more be reasonably pretended that Ophir derived its name from a son of Joktan, so called, than it can be satisfactorily maintained that the land of Havilah—another locality distinguished for its gold—mentioned in connection with

* Verses 26 to 29.

† These amounted to thirteen, "Almodad, and Sheleph, and Hazarmaveth, and Jerah, and Hadoram, and Uzal, and Diklah, and Obal, and Abimael, and Sheba, and Ophir, and Havilah, and Jobab" (Gen. x. 26 to 29).

‡ See Gen. x. 7.

§ See Gen. xxv. 18; Psalm lxxii. 10. "There can be no doubt of the existence of an Havilah founded by a descendant of Ham." "There seems no reason to doubt that Sheba was a region of Africa, known to the Hebrews as the land of Cush."—*Kitto's Bib. Cyc.* Arts. *Havilah and Seba.*

|| 1 Kings ix. 28.

¶ Job xxii. 24; xxviii. 16.

Eden,* was so named from another of his descendants so denominated.

Taking Joktan, then, as the representative of the external worship of the Hebrew church, and, consequently, the representative of those by whom it was embraced, it will follow that those who are said to have been his sons, must have been the representatives of derivations from, and varieties of, that worship: and it is because all these derivations successively became so corrupt and remote from their Hebrew original, that they are no more referred to in Sacred History.

It was, however, not so with Peleg and his descendants, because he, as it has been said, represented the internal worship of the Hebrew church, and thus the possession of a principle in which there was a greater vitality, and, consequently, a longer life. Peleg denotes *division;* and it is said that "in his days was the earth divided,"† to express the actual *separation* which the internal worship of the Hebrew church effected for those by whom it was embraced, from all the other branches of the Noachic dispensation, and by whom it was rejected. Still the internal worship of this church was not a real internal worship, because it was not a truly spiritual institution. It was evoked in a degenerated age, and it may be regarded as a sort of reformation in the Noachic dispensation, which served to check the rapidity with which it was declining, without possessing an internal worship which was much distinguished for really internal things. And, therefore, when it is said that Peleg represented the internal worship of the Hebrew church, it was an internal worship that was external, in comparison with the internal worship of a truly spiritual dispensation. The descendants of Peleg, like those of Joktan, represented the derivations and varieties of this sort of internal worship. These, however, in succeeding generations, gradually receded from internal things, and became more and more external, until,—in the later ages of their degeneracy, they, like all the rest, closed in the evolution of an idolatrous worship. This is particularly evident in the case of Terah, the father of Abram and the father of Nahor, who are distinctly said to have served other gods.‡

* Gen. ii. 11. † Gen. x. 25. ‡ See Joshua xxiv. 2, 14, 15.

Hence we learn how the Hebrew church with that nation fell away, and with that fall we arrive at the complete cessation of the Noachic economy. Thus, our examination of the Mosaic history, contained in the first eleven chapters of Genesis, has led us to see that the main object of it was to reveal the rise, progress, establishment, decline, and fall of the two first dispensations of Divine religion communicated to the world, respectively called the Adamic or *celestial*, and the Noachic or *spiritual*. We have seen that these revelations have been made to us through the medium of symbolic and representative narrative, the nature and structure of which we have also endeavored to explain; and here we might have closed our exposition, but it seems that the matter would be more complete, if we considered the call and character of Abram, with whom was commenced a third or *natural* dispensation, popularly called the Jewish church, and with which was begun the revelation of spiritual things through the medium of literal history. To this, therefore, we will next direct our attention, and so employ the concluding chapter.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE CALL OF ABRAM, HIS RELIGIOUS CHARACTER AT THAT TIME, AND THE NATURE OF THE BLESSINGS THEN PROMISED TO HIM.

"Historical types are the characters, actions, and fortunes of some eminent persons recorded in the Old Testament, so ordered by Divine Providence as to be exact prefigurations of the characters, actions, and fortunes of future persons who should arise under the Gospel dispensation."—*Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, by T. H. Horn, M.A.*, vol. ii., p. 658.

One of the great efforts of the Divine Providence, in reference to men, has been to preserve them in a state capable of respecting the truth and of appreciating the good of religion. As they have descended from one eminence, and so forsaken that dispensation of God, He has mercifully come down and vouchsafed to them the commencement of another. When they have been declining, He has followed them in all their meanderings, warning them of the danger towards which they were drifting, earnestly inviting them to turn away from their disobedient course, and to come back to Him for the reception of those blessings of intelligence and virtue which He alone can give. This is the plain general scope of the Old Testament history of God's dealings with mankind, and the truth of it is strikingly confirmed by the evidence contained in the Gospels. It seems plain, also, that the history of those merciful dealings terminated with the intimation of events, which show that mankind, at the closing of the Jewish, as the last of the Old Testament dispensations, had fallen into the lowest possible condition of human degradation; and that this was the reason why the Lord, at that time, was pleased to undertake the lowest possible manifestation of himself to the world. The extreme of the Divine mercy was displayed when the extreme of human necessity had arrived. But to understand how it was that mankind, at that period, completed the catastrophe of their fall, when it is so well known that wickedness of almost every description had been perpetrated in the preceding ages of the world, it is requi-

site to notice some particulars respecting the interior characteristics of mankind, as indicated in the nature of the religious dispensations, under which they had respectively lived and sinned. There was an Adamic dispensation, and the men of that period fell and perished by the flood; there was a Noachic dispensation, and the men of that period fell and were scattered abroad in consequence of the perversity of their conduct; and there was an Israelitish dispensation, and the men of that period fell, and their religion was consummated. Thus there were three successive dispensations, and three successive catastrophes, in the last of which the fall of man became complete. As it is plain that the first dispensation was of a more interior character than the second, and the second more interior than the third, it will follow that there was a more interior capacity for the reception of divine things opened among the men of the first, than among those of the two others by which it was succeeded; and, consequently, that the fall which took place under the first was of a more interior and malignant kind, than that which transpired under the other two.

Now these facts open out to us a very important consideration respecting the fall of man. Viewing that circumstance in connection with the nature of the three dispensations of religion, which had been vouchsafed before the coming of the Lord to establish Christianity, it is plain that the calamity of the fall of man ought not to be interpreted to mean a single act of disobedience; nor that he had merely fallen into criminal acts and vicious loves, but that it primarily means the entire corruption of man's three human principles, since it is out of those corruptions that acts and loves of wickedness arise. Those three principles are, celestial, spiritual, and natural; they are discrete degrees of human life; they exist separately, and one more interiorly in man than another, the inmost being celestial, the inner spiritual, and the outmost natural. The first, or Adamic dispensation, was specifically adapted to the perception of the celestial principle; the Noachic, to the discernments of the spiritual principle; and the Israelitish to the genius of the natural principle. So that the fall of man, which took place under the first, consisted in the corruption of his celestial principle; and

that which occurred with the second and third respectively, consisted in the corruptions of the spiritual and natural principles; so that the fall of man could not have been completed, until, by the corruption of his natural principle, he had rejected and perverted the religion which has been specifically provided for its use, as he had previously done with those which had been provided for the uses of his celestial and spiritual principles: and as this did not take place until the end of the Jewish dispensation, it seems plain that that must have been the period in which the catastrophe was finished.

These intimations could be easily elaborated and extended by a variety of considerations, but what has been said must be sufficient for our present purpose, which is, to mark the peculiar characteristics of the two epochs through which we have conducted our inquiry. Our examination of the Mosaic documents, so far as we have proceeded, has shown to us the end of the Adamic and Noachic churches, and, consequently, the degeneracy and wreck of those two interior principles of orderly human life, to the uses of which they were specifically adapted: and now we arrive at that point in the history of the Lord's merciful dealings with our race, in which we are informed of the provision that was made for the inauguration of the third, or Israelitish dispensation, and which was adapted to meet the requirements of the natural principle, that being the only principle which remained, and which was then capable of appreciating any of the sentiments and duties of religion. This was done by the "call of Abram," and involved in the blessings which were promised him, which are thus related: "Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee. And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing; and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed."*

It is with Abram that Moses commences the plain relation of history which is to be understood as it is presented in the letter. There are, indeed, some slight indications of this style

*Gen. xii. 1, 2, 3.

in the matters which are previously described respecting Eber; but this mode of writing, as the vehicle of revelation, was not adopted in all its breadth and fulness until the time of Abram; and the reason why recourse was had to it at that period is, because mankind had then sunk into a merely natural condition. The religions which prevailed before that period were adapted to either the celestial or the spiritual perceptions of men, which were more or less open until the respective closing of the Adamic and Noachic dispensations. We have seen that during those periods Divine instruction was not conveyed to the world in the literal history of mundane affairs, but in the figurative history of those things which pertained to the rise, progress, decline, and termination of those two churches. And the reason why figurative history was preferred upon those occasions is, because it was best adapted to interest the mind as it then existed; to keep it in a state of activity respecting interior things, and thus to promote the edification of men, whose genius and characters were respectively celestial and spiritual. To have employed the actual history of worldly occurrences, as the vehicle of revelation, during those epochs, would have assisted in leading the thoughts and affections away from spiritual to terrestrial things; and, consequently, it would not have been suited to maintain the high interests of the dispensations then extant. But when mankind sunk into mere naturalism, as they had done at the time of Abram, then recourse was had to real historical writing as the medium for representatively conveying down to them some idea concerning spiritual and heavenly things. It was then that the Lord, as it were, came down to the lowest room, in order that He might direct the attention of those who were abiding there to some consideration respecting the higher apartments of His house. Mankind having mistaken and perverted the true sense of that figurative history, in which divine things had been previously communicated to a superior people, the Lord was pleased to adopt a literal mode of communication, suited to that sensual state which degeneracy had evoked, and which might be understood, by men, in all times, in its purely literal sense, without prejudice to the religious sentiments, which it, also, is employed for the purpose of representing. That the real historical por-

tions of the Word are also significant of spiritual things, must be evident from this single consideration, namely, that they are portions of the Word of God.* It is concerning such things as these that men in the world required a revelation, and it is of these that the Lord treats in that "spirit and life" which he has declared to be characteristics of His Word. The precise points at which the absolutely figurative history closes and the literal history commences, are not indicated with any remarkable precision; the former passed gradually into the latter, because men successively sunk from the superior to the inferior condition which required it, without indicating the precise point at which they ceased to be entirely spiritual and began to be wholly natural in their estimation of religion and its objects.† The literal history, however, which is employed as the medium of Divine Revelation, first becomes conspicuous in that which relates the call of Abram. Still there are many peculiarities which are set forth in the history of that patriarch, which plainly show that it was written chiefly with the view of indicating spiritual things. Hence it is that commentators have found it necessary to distinguish the promises which were made to him, into those which are temporal and those which are spiritual.

* The reader will find this subject somewhat largely treated in the author's work on the *Peculiarities of the Bible*, chap. xi., "History viewed as a representation of Divine and spiritual things."

† It may be useful to remind the reader that this almost imperceptible gliding of one order of means for setting forth Divine truth into another, is not peculiar to the Word, but that it has analogies in creation. It is well known to naturalists, that it is by no means easy to define the points at which the animal kingdom terminates and the vegetable begins, and where the vegetable ends and the mineral commences. "They melt into each other by such imperceptible degrees, that there are animals whose sensitive powers are not much greater than those of vegetables, and there are vegetables which exhibit such an approximation to sensation, as to render the propriety of assigning them to the vegetable kingdom almost a matter of doubt." "There are many mineral productions which, when left to assume without restraint the forms most agreeable to their nature, seem to extricate themselves from their originally implastic state, and aspire to the kingdom immediately above them, emulating so exactly the vegetable shape, that, judging by this test alone, it would be difficult to determine to which province of nature they belong."—*Noble's Plenary Inspiration of the Scriptures Asserted*, pp. 152, 154.

The temporal appear to be regarded as those outward circumstances, in which the promises received a literal fulfilment, and the spiritual as being those for which no such historical realization is discoverable. Without caring to sympathize with the grounds on which those distinctions are drawn, or even with the distinctions themselves, yet there can be no doubt that there are historical realizations of some portions of the promises made to him, and none for others. Indeed, very much of that which is generally considered as the literal fulfilment of these promises, is open to criticism and doubt. Take, for instance, the common ideas which are entertained of the promises respecting the extent and duration of his possessions, together with the number of his posterity. Those promises are thus related: "The Lord said unto him, Lift up now thine eyes and look from the place where thou art, northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward; for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered." * The extent of inheritance thus promised, is considered to have been afterwards defined as stretching "from the river of Egypt, unto the great river, the river Euphrates." † Now in what sense could this promise have been made, seeing that neither Abram nor his posterity ever possessed the territory thus described? And with what meaning could it have been

* Gen. xiii. 14—16. It is remarkable that the number of Abram's seed is promised, not only to be as the dust of the earth, but also "as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore" (Gen. xxii. 17). Now these things cannot have been said for the sake of rhetoric, but because each expression has its own particular signification. By Abram is represented the man of the church; by his *seed* is denoted the truths of which he becomes receptive, and by their number is signified their quality. Thus by their number being as the *dust of the earth*, is denoted the indefinite increase of the quality of his *knowledge of the truth;* by their number being as the *sand upon the sea shore*, is signified the indefinite increase of the quality of his *affection for truth;* and by their numbers being *as the stars of heaven*, is represented the indefinite increase of the quality of his love for *spiritual intelligence.*

† Gen. xv. 18. Some have thought that this was fulfilled in the days of Solomon, (see 2 Sam. viii. 3; 2 Chron. ix. 26); though how a *temporary conquest* is to be considered as an *everlasting possession*, is not explained.

said, that Canaan was given to his seed *for ever*, when their occupation of that country was considerably less than two thousand years, and from which they have so long been driven? What could have been the meaning of the promise, that his descendants should be in numbers as the dust of the earth, when Moses, in another place, so expressly tells us that they were the fewest of all people,* a statement respecting them, the truth of which has been maintained to this day. It is also said, that in "him shall all the families of the earth be blessed," † although it would not be easy to show how this has been accomplished in any literal or historical sense.

Now these difficulties, with many others which could be readily named,‡ can only be satisfactorily explained by taking the narratives in which they occur, out of the field of literal occurrences, and placing them among those occasional deviations from strictly worldly history, which sometimes occur in

* Deut. vii. 7.

† Gen. xii. 3. A similar promise was made to Isaac (Gen. xxvi. 4), and to Jacob (Gen. xxviii. 14).

‡ There is one of a chronological kind involved in what is said of the age of Abram when he departed out of Haran; but to understand this it is requisite to refer to a few preceding verses. There it is written that "Terah lived seventy years and begat Abram"—"and the days of Terah were two hundred and five years." And "Now the Lord said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country" (Gen. xi. 26, 32; xii. 1); and Stephen expressly informs us that he did not leave Charran until after his father was dead (Acts vii. 4); from which it appears (Terah having begotten Abram at seventy and afterwards dying in Haran at two hundred and five), that Abram must have been at least one hundred and thirty-five years old when he left that country, and yet the text immediatly before us says that "Abram was seventy-five years when he departed out of Haran." (Gen. xii. 4.) Now how is this discrepancy to be accounted for? The favorite way of dealing with it is to assume that Abram was Terah's youngest son, and that Moses only places him before his two brothers, Nahor and Haran, to indicate the superiority of his character, and from this to infer that Abram was not born until his father was considerably older than the text asserts, that is to say, one hundred and thirty. (See Dr. Patrick, Dr. A. Clarke, &c.) The circumstance however, in our estimation of it, cannot be explained upon chronological grounds. Those numbers were employed chiefly for a spiritual purpose, and it is only by considering the matter from this point of view, that a solution of the difficulty can be accomplished.

the Scriptures,* and which have been introduced among the recital of actual events, for the sake of representing, in their orderly series, those spiritual things, the indication of which is the chief purpose of all that is written in the Divine Word. This indeed follows from a single consideration, namely, that, as portions of the Word of God, they must contain "spirit and life." Under this view, all the points of difficulty to which we have just adverted, will be found to vanish, and in their stead a beautiful series of spiritual ideas will immediately arise, eminently instructive to the man of the church; but of these more will be said in the sequel.

Although, then, the first conspicuous features of actual history, as the vehicle of revelation, are selected from the history of Abram, yet it must be evident that they are all employed, arranged, and expressed, with the primary view of representing spiritual things. And this brings us to consider more particularly, the events which gave origin to his call.

It is plain that at the period when the Lord is said to have first communicated with Abram, that all the spirituality of the preceding churches had passed away, and that mankind had sunk into a state of varied, but absolute, idolatry. Nothing remained among them to indicate the real character of the churches which had previously existed, but the mere wreck and perversion of their representatives and ceremonials of worship. The idolatries of the people arose from their having gradually lost sight of the spiritual things represented by natural objects (for every object in creation is the outbirth of some spiritual affection and thought by which it was created), and thereupon successively declining into the worship of the objects themselves, until at last all ideas of the spiritual things represented by them entirely perished. Such was the general state of religion when Abram was called, and there can be no doubt that he, up to that period, had participated in the common degradation of the times. Nevertheless, the prevalence of idolatry supposes the acknowledgment of something relating to religion as still lingering in the natural mind: and the Lord, because He is

* Several illustrations of this will be found in the author's *Treatise on the Peculiarities of the Bible*, chap. xi., on "History viewed as the representation of Divine and Spiritual things," p. 395.

always desirous that men should have some knowledge concerning Him, was pleased to undertake the turning of this sentiment to some future beneficent account: and Abram was called, and commanded to go from his country, his kindred, and his father's house, in order that he might be instrumental in effecting this purpose. It is plain that he was called to sustain a position in the future dispensations of Providence very different from that for which the education of his youth had fitted him. There can be no doubt that, as an inhabitant of Ur of Chaldea,* he knew nothing of the nature of genuine religion. Indeed, it is expressly written, "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nahor; and they served other gods."† From this it appears that the whole were a family of idolators. Some, indeed, have endeavored to rescue Abram from this charge; but with this evidence against him it is impossible to succeed. Besides, it was to avoid the influence of such degradation that he was commanded to leave his country, his kindred, and his father's house. Moreover, the Lord said, "By My name Jehovah was I not known to him"‡—a fact, concerning the apprehension of which, there cannot be any difficulty up to the period of his call; and even then the Lord did not communicate with him as Jehovah, but as God *Shaddai.*§ It was twenty-four years after that event before this revelation was made to him.|| This name אֵל שַׁדַּי *el Shaddai*, is, in the authorized version, translated Almighty God; and this idea may be involved in the expression:¶ still it is not merely

* אור, *Ur*, signifies *fire*, and Ur of Chaldea, is supposed to have been a city of this country, the inhabitants of which were *ignicolists*, or worshipers of fire. Many of the learned are of opinion that this kind of worship began in this place.

† Joshua xxiv. 2; see also 15. ‡ Exod. vi. 3. § Exod. vi. 3.

|| Abram was called in his seventy-fifth year (Gen. xii. 4), and "when Abram was ninety and nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said, I am God Shaddai" (Gen. xvii. 1). The period between the two events was twenty-four years.

¶ Interpreters suppose Shaddai to signify Omnipotent, others to signify Thunderer; but it properly signifies Tempter, and Benefactor after temptation. It likewise signifies vastation, for temptation is a species of vastation; but inasmuch as it derived its origin from the nations of Syria, it was not

an attributive title of the Supreme, as this translation would make it, but it appears to signify the name under which Abram had acknowledged Him. The reason why the Lord was pleased to appear to him under this name Shaddai, in preference to that of Jehovah is, because he is never willing to destroy suddenly, much less instantaneously, the principles and sentiments of worship which have been inseminated into any one from infancy; even though their tendency might be in opposition to Himself; because to do so would be to pluck up and destroy the principle of adoration itself. He takes care that in gathering the tares He does not root up also the wheat with them. The principle of worship implanted in early life is of such a nature that it cannot sustain violence without endangering its existence; and therefore it is a law of the Divine Providence to bend it in a right direction with moderation and gentleness. The principle of adoration may exist in man, though the object may be false towards which he may direct it. And it was the principle of adoration thus circumstanced, which distinguished the religious character of Abram at the period of his call. Though required to leave his country, and forsake his kindred, in order to constitute the beginning of a new epoch in the dispensations of Providence, yet his previous religion was not suddenly abandoned; neither was he instantaneously instructed in the purposes of God respecting him, nor in the nature of the religion which was to take its rise from his obedience. The relinquishment of

called *Elohim* Shaddai, but *El* Shaddai; and in Job, only Shaddai, and El, or God, is mentioned separately. "The ground and reason why God Shaddai signifies temptation is, because in ancient times they distinguished the Supreme Being, or the Lord, by various names, and this according to His attributes, and according to the goods which are from Him, and also according to the truths, which every one knows are manifold: they who were of the ancient church, by all these denominations, meant to describe only one God, viz., the Lord, whom they called Jehovah. But after the church declined from good and truth, and at the same time from this wisdom they began to worship as many gods as there were denominations of the one God, insomuch that every nation, and at length every family, acknowledged one of them for its own particular god. Hence existed so many gods, of whom mention is made in the Word throughout. The case was similar in the family of Terah the father of Abram, and also in the house of Abram itself; for that he worshiped other gods is evident from Joshua xxiv. 2, and especially the God Shaddai, from Exod. vi. 3."—*Arcana Cœlestia*, 1992, 3667.

the error which was to be exposed, and the adoption of truth which was to be elucidated, were gradual processes. After his departure from Ur of Chaldees, we find him undergoing a series of divine instructions; still it is evident that he clung, for a considerable time, to the religious impressions which were made upon him by the perversities of his former life. Sacrifices were certainly associated with the idolatries of that period; and it is highly probable that human victims were occasionally employed for this purpose, especially among some of the Hamitic nations. In the time of Moses this horrid rite seems to have been well known, because we find that he has written laws for its prohibition.* And it can hardly be pretended that such a detestable practice first came into existence after Abram was called. The Jews, at one period, were prone to its adoption, and there are some cases related in which they fell into the practice of this abominable superstition.† Doubtless it was the revival of an ancient custom, of the existence of which Abram cannot be supposed to have been ignorant. Indeed his own conduct in reference to Isaac is, to us, a proof, not only that he knew something of human sacrifices, but also that he had an inclination to adopt a similar rite. It was this inclination which constituted a plane in his mind for that temptation by which he was induced to attempt the offering of his son;‡ for no one could be tempted to do, as an act of religion, that which is so contrary to all its virtues and so shocking to all the humanities of man, unless he was in some measure previously disposed towards its adoption. It is said, indeed, that God tempted him to do this;§ but it ought to be evident that this is not said of the true God, or that if said of Him, it must be only in the way of an appearance to Abram, and not in the way of a fact respecting God; be-

* See Lev. xviii. 21; xx. 1 to 5. Moloch, here referred to, was the god adopted by the Ammonites, who were relations of Abram, they having descended from the son of his nephew, Lot.

† 1 Kings xi. 7; 2 Kings xxiii. 10, 13; 2 Chron. xxviii. 3.

‡ Gen. xxii. 1 to 11.

§ It deserves to be noticed that it is *God*, and not *Jehovah*, who is said to have done this; and when it is remembered that Abram's idea of God was that of God Shaddai; and that Shaddai denotes *temptation*, it will be easy to account for the above assertion.

cause the genuine truth upon this point, as laid down by the apostle is, that "God tempteth no man, but every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed."*

Another remarkable fact which strongly indicates Abram's deficiency in true religious information, is furnished by the express declaration that the Supreme was not known to him under His name Jehovah. This passage has always been felt to present some difficulty, in consequence of that name being very generally employed in the history of Abram, and particularly from its being said that he addressed the Supreme by the name Adonai Jehovah. How then can it be said that this name was not known to him? Commentators have presented various explanations of this apparent discrepancy; though we are not aware that it is necessary to hold any one of them in order to be orthodox. Some think that the passage ought to be read interrogatively; and, consequently, that the sentence ought to be interpreted to mean that that name was known to Abram: but this is evidently at variance with the whole tenor of the narrative in which it occurs: others think that the statement ought to be understood in a comparative and not in an absolute sense; thus as simply declaring that the Divine *idea* expressed by that name was not known to Abram. Doubtless that idea was not known to him, but it is the name itself, and not the idea which it expresses, of which it is affirmed that he was ignorant. Many suppose the assertion to mean, that Jehovah was not known to Abram in His character of the fulfiller of the promises which He had made to him, until the period when those promises came to be realized; and, consequently, that it was not fully understood before the liberation of his descendants from the bondage of the Egyptians. This supposition, regarded in itself, may be true; but as it considers the *name Jehovah* to have been known to him, contrary to the express declaration of the text, it can hardly be received as the true explanation of it. A few conceive that the name Jehovah was not revealed until the time of Moses, and that it is introduced by him into the history of Abram only because the book of Genesis was written some considerable time after that name came into general use among

* James i. 13, 14.

the Israelites: but this supposes Moses to have been the author of a discrepancy which ought to have been avoided, and this will scarcely be regarded as a satisfactory removal of the difficulty. There are some who think that the statement, "*By my name Jehovah was I not known to him,*" does not mean *that Jehovah was not known to him by that name:* they conceive that the latter form of the sentence is necessary to express absolute ignorance of the word Jehovah; but that the former only declares that there was something peculiar *in* the name, and not the name itself, that was unknown. We, however, hold that not only was the precise idea which the name expresses unknown to him, but also that the title Jehovah was not revealed to him. This appears to us to be the plain scope of the whole narrative. The Supreme appeared to Abram as God Shaddai, and not under the Tetragram, יהוה, Jehovah. The reason however why this Divine title occurs in the historicals concerning Abram is, because those portions of the Word were written by Moses, to whom, after it had been lost, it was again revealed, and who, for the sake of the internal sense of those histories, was directed to employ it therein; for in the Word throughout, the various names of the Supreme are carefully distinguished and employed according to the quality of the spiritual things which are the subjects of revelation; thus *Jehovah* is always named when love or goodness is the subject treated of, but God is invariably adopted when the subject treated of is concerning truth or faith.

These intimations, then, concerning the early religious history of Abram, show us the deplorable condition, as to spiritual knowledge, into which the nations had descended at the period of his call. All true insight into spiritual excellence had perished through the prevalence of self-love: and all correct information respecting God, His government and requirements, had departed through the predominance of the love of dominion; so that another critical period in the history of human existence and its connection with the Divine had then arrived. This crisis the Divine was wishful to avert, as He had done with respect to those which had previously occurred, and for this purpose He, by the call of Abram, undertook the initiation of another dispensation, adapted at once to mark and to ameliorate

the sensualities of the world. A church, in some form, must exist on earth, or men would cease to dwell thereon: it is the medium through which God acts to sustain the humanity of man. If there were nothing of a church extant, there would be no orderly medium for the maintenance of that connection between men and God, which is so essential to their perpetuity. Thus the church, or something relating thereto, is, as it were, a sort of central life, the complete removal of which from men would be attended by their cessation. As the conservation of mankind is an unquestionable purpose of the Divine solicitude, so also is the maintenance of a church. Men are created with a religious inclination, and a church, in some form, has always been provided as the medium for its development. The preservation of man through all ages, is the greatest possible proof of the existence of a church in all times. It has undergone a great variety of changes, and it is highly probable that others are awaiting that which is now popular in the western portion of the world; but from Adam to Abram it sustained a series of remarkable corruptions; and still among them all it is evident that a religious element was preserved: it was by means of this that the Noachic church was formed when the Adamic perished; and it was by similar means that the Jewish was initiated when the Noachic was scattered abroad.

Although, then, something of a church had always existed, we find that its influences for good became, at length, so exceedingly feeble, as to be incapable of resisting the temptations of idolatry. This sensual condition of mankind prevented them from appreciating the intellectual and spiritual purposes of genuine religion. They had ceased to comprehend the symbolic teachings of which their ancient predecessors, for a time, had cultivated the knowledge with so much earnestness and advantage; but having become external in all their expectations respecting the promises of religion, the Lord was pleased to institute a dispensation accommodated to the mental degradation in which He beheld his people. This He began by calling Abram, and therewith commencing to make His revelations through the medium of literal history. Mankind, it was found, would not attend to any teachings of religion that did not offer some worldly reward as a stimulant to obedience. But it was

desirable to preserve even this sentiment of duty; and this was done; for we find that it was frequently active among the posterity of Abram. How plain it is that they were mainly induced to comply with the Divine teachings by the promise of some external reward as the result; moreover, those very rewards generally followed their obedience. It was the promise of abundance and prosperity in Canaan, which stimulated their compliance in the desert. And Abram, the progenitor of that race, was originally no better than themselves: for it is plain that he was induced to abandon his country, forsake his kindred, and leave his father's house, upon the promise that he would be shown a better land, and be made a great nation and a great name: and surely, inducements by which the love of the world, and the lusts of ambition were to be gratified, would not have been laid before him if motives of a higher order had been accessible.

It is then most plain that the religious character of Abram, during his residence in Ur of Chaldees, partook of the common degradation of the times: and it is not reasonable to suppose, that his removal from that locality was, of *itself*, indispensable for his improvement. It is not essential to the development of religious knowledge, that men should dwell within some particular geographical boundary. They may know and worship God as well in one country as in another. Why then was Abram commanded to leave the land of his nativity for the accomplishment of that purpose, if it could have been effected without such a removal? It is no satisfactory answer to say that this would separate him from the unfavorable circumstances by which he had been surrounded, and place him in greater freedom to pursue the Divine instructions; because similar impediments to those from which he was escaping in Mesopotamia, were equally conspicuous in Canaan: that, also, being the scene of a diversified idolatry. Another answer must then be sought for, and this is afforded by the representative character of that removal.

Canaan had originally been the scene of the preceding dispensations, and, therefore, it is, throughout the Word, contemplated as the symbol of the true church, and consequently, of that goodness and truth from which it is derived, and with

which it is in association. But Chaldea, or Babylonia, had been the principal scene of all the profanation by which the Lord's church had been infested, and therefore it is commonly spoken of in the Scriptures as the representative of such abominations; and, consequently, of the evil and falsehood out of which they had sprung, and with which they were connected. Hence the Divine command for Abram to go out of the latter and pass on to the former, was an intimation of the Divine wish to rescue men from the degradations of the one condition, and bring them into the elevations of the other. Thus the actual history of Abram, at the very outset, is representative, like the symbolic history by which it is preceded.

But this brings us to inquire more particularly into the reasons for Abram's call. Upon the principle that "God is no respecter of persons," * it follows that he could not have been called so much for his own personal benefit as for the general advantages of future men. This conclusion is apparent even in the letter of the promises which were made to him. How then was this call made to subserve that purpose? To this several answers might be given, all of which would tend to set forth the mercy and wisdom of the Divine Providence in respect to fallen man, but we shall confine ourselves to the notice of two most suitable to the purpose of this work. And these are, *first*, that Abram might become an instrument for initiating that representative of a church which was subsequently developed among his descendants: and, *second*, that because men had then become sensual, to the exclusion of all celestial and spiritual perceptions, it had also become requisite, in order to reach and interest minds so circumstanced, with the purposes of revelation, that the literal sense of such revelation should be founded in actual history, and which, therefore, was begun with the events connected with the patriarch's call. But it will be useful to consider each of these positions a little more at large.

That Abram was an instrument for initiating that representative of a church, which was subsequently established among his posterity, is sufficiently evident from his history, and the manner with which his name is connected with that dispensa-

* Acts x. 34.

tion; and, therefore, this first point need not occupy further attention.

But in regard to the second, it is important to notice that the Divine Providence does not bring about its purposes by sudden evolutions, but by regular gradations and orderly successions. Creation was not completed in a day. The Adamic church was a progressive development, so also was the Noachic: they did not reach the summit of their excellence at the same hour in which they began their existence. A similar process of introduction preceded the establishment of the Jewish church; it was initiated by the call of Abram, but it was not developed until the legation of Moses. The Divine always brings about its ends by a series of means, and each means is, as it were, a link which connects the former with its final terminations.

Now, the Jewish Church was a mere external and sensual dispensation; and the reason is, because it was instituted to meet the requirements of an external and sensual condition of mankind; still it was a link by which the preceding churches were to be connected with succeeding Christianity; and thus its rites and ceremonies were not simply shadows of good things to come, they were also representative of the high things which had passed away. In this fact it is most plain, that the Jewish economy, though of great service to the sensual people by whom it was received, was not established for their exclusive benefit, but also for the edification of all men in some future condition of the Lord's Church. In confirmation of this view of the case, and to prevent any misapprehension respecting the position to which the Divine Providence had called them, Moses said unto the people, "Understand, therefore, that the Lord thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness; for thou art a stiff-necked people." * And, again: "The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; (for ye were the fewest of all people); but because the Lord loveth you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers."† Thus, then, as they were not chosen either for the superiority of their character, or for their national

* Deut. ix. 6.

† Deut. vii. 7, 8.

strength, but because the Lord loved them and would keep the covenant which he had entered into with their fathers, it is plain that they must have been selected to promote some munificent designs of Providence for the eventual benefit of all mankind.

And what was the nature of those designs? We answer, that they were to provide a permanent revelation for the whole world, in its lowest condition, by selecting for its bases the literal history of that "peculiar people." That which constituted their peculiarity was their genius, by which they were strongly inclined towards the adoption and the punctilious preservation of a ceremonial religion, without being at the same time careful to understand anything respecting its spiritual use and meaning: and also, that for the sake of providing historical materials for such a revelation, individuals, and the nation itself, were providentially led into the courses related of them, without any compulsory interference with their natural disposition, liberty, or character. The period of the Jewish dispensation constituted a remarkable era in the religious history of mankind. The church then recognized by God, was certainly much more external than either of those by which it had been preceded; and there can be no doubt that it was inferior in its spiritual influence, to that which was presented in the Christianity which followed. The requisite state had not come for the establishment of the New Testament era, because the fulness of time had not arrived; that is, because the utter subversion of the natural principle in man, in reference to religion, was not accomplished. That did not take place until the time when the Lord God of Israel visited and redeemed his people*—when the light shined in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not—when He was in the world and the world knew him not—when He came unto his own, and his own received him not.† It is, therefore, most evident that the Jewish economy was a merciful link in those providential arrangements by which the spirituality of its predecessors was to be connected with, and continued into the Christian dispensation. And as it was between these two epochs that the great bulk of the Scriptures was provided—and pro-

* Luke i. 68. † John i. 5, 10, 11.

vided too from the materials afforded by Jewish history, it is further evident that those people must have been chosen for this purpose. Mankind, at the time of Abram, having closed their interior and spiritual perceptions respecting heavenly things, and nothing of religion remaining among them, but a sort of natural inclination towards it for the sake of the worldly benefits which it was supposed to be capable of bestowing,* could no longer properly esteem and value a revelation expressed in figurative history. *That* was adapted to the perceptions and regard of higher conditions of religious sentiment than those which they possessed; and hence it became necessary, in order to meet the low religious requirements of merely natural men, that the revelation provided for them should have its foundation in actual occurrences. That was a form for it adapted to the appreciation of the merely natural mind. The vehicle of the revelation provided for this condition being, for the most part, the history of the Jews, they could value and preserve it with reverence and care: in this respect it was, as it were, a sort of appeal to their own nationality for these results; and this is one of the secrets of that success with which it has been perpetuated. As neither Abram nor his descendants, in their normal states, had any clear and actual perception of spiritual things, it is plain that they would have neglected and put aside a purely allegorical vehicle of revelation; such a form for it would have appeared to them as destitute of all reality; and, certainly, it would not have been capable of securing the attention of merely natural and sensual men. Hence it was that they were permitted to regard, that which Moses had provided respecting the churches which had existed before Abram's time, as the history of mundane affairs; and it is to this permission, granted to a peculiar race, that the origin and perpetuity of this mistaken opinion is to be ascribed. The Jews, then, having passed into the lowest condition in which any idea of Divine things could

* A very strong and remarkable instance of this is recorded in the case of Jacob, who, in the following passage, is stated to have placed his obedience to God upon the condition of God vouchsafing worldly prosperity to him. "If God will be with me and will keep me in the way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God" (Gen. xxviii. 20, 21).

be appreciated, the Lord was mercifully pleased to lay the foundation of his revelation in the lowest possible basis. Hereby he has brought down Divine intelligence to the lowest boundaries of human recognition and wants, and thus, also, he has provided for its permanent abiding in the world. It is however to be remarked, that the history of those people, is to be regarded as the *vehicle* of Divine revelation, rather than as Divine revelation itself; because all the occurrences which are related respecting them, were representative and significative of internal and spiritual things; and it is these things, the knowledge of which could not have been obtained without a supernatural interposition, and not mere external literal history, which constitute revelation. In thus making the history of Abram and his descendants representative of spiritual things, which they were not capable of perceiving, all the advantages of the purely allegorical style which had been previously employed for revelation, were secured, without any of those inconveniences which merely natural men were sure to experience respecting it: though it has an inconvenience of its own, which is its tendency to keep such men to the letter of the history, and so for a time to induce them to overlook that "all these things happened *for types.*"* As then all the really historical portions of the Word, like its figurative history, are representative, it necessarily follows that all the expressions which occur therein, are significative: that is to say, they have a different meaning in their internal sense from that which is apparent on the letter: and, consequently, it is the duty of Christians to "serve in the newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter";† and to be "able ministers—not of the letter but of the spirit; for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."‡

From these considerations then, we see that the external

* 1 Cor. x. 11. Marginal reading. † Rom. vii. 6.

‡ 2 Cor. iii. 6. "The old covenant had its *letter* and its *spirit*, its *literal* and its *spiritual* meaning. The law was founded on this very supposition of the Gospel; and all its sacrifices, types, and ceremonies refer to the Gospel. The Jews *rested* in the *letter*, which not only afforded no means of life, but *killed*, by condemning every transgressor to death.—Every institution has its *letter* as well as its *spirit*, and every *word* must refer to something of which it is the *sign* or *signification.*"—*Dr. A. Clarke.*

vehicle for revelation, was changed in consequence of the change which had taken place in man's regard for religious things; and that thereby God has mercifully provided a means for conveying some knowledge of spiritual truth, even to the apprehensions of natural men. Thus we learn that when mankind descended from their spiritual eminence, God came down to them by suitable provisions for their religious instruction: and that when they would no longer appreciate the higher means of revelation, He was pleased to adopt a lower. When the Lord could no longer reach them through the form of teaching adapted to their celestial perception and spiritual intelligence, and thus operate upon them by an internal way, He determined to approach them through a form of instruction that should interest their natural capacities; and, thus He would influence their minds by an external way, after the internal had been closed. Hereby revelation through the medium of figurative history ceased, and the history of actual occurrences was selected for its subsequent communication.

This, as it has been said, was commenced in its breadth and fulness when Abram was called. The purpose of that event, viewed as an historical occurrence, has already been discussed; and of the promises then made to him, it has been observed that they could not have received any literal fulfilment in the world: for it must be obvious that the nations could not be, and that all the families of the earth have not been, blessed in the progenitors of the Jewish race. It, therefore, only remains for us to notice the religious information which the narrative was intended to convey. But on this we shall not dwell. The principal object of this work has been, to furnish some general idea concerning the religious side of the postdiluvian history of Moses—to show the points at which the figurative style of its composition was interrupted and discontinued, and to indicate the reason for adopting actual history as the medium for subsequent revelation: and this having been accomplished we need only a brief explanation of that which is set forth as the call of Abram and the promises which were made to him.

That Abram was a representative, as well as a real person, will scarcely be disputed. It was for the purpose of exalting his representative character that his name was changed to

Abraham,* by adding to his original name the letter H, taken from the name Jehovah; and it is in reference to the representation thereby created that he is said to be in heaven; † and, indeed, that heaven itself is spoken of as being his bosom.‡

Abram, before he was called, represented the state of man previous to his becoming sensible of spiritual truth. His being commanded to get out of his country, from his kindred and from his father's house, denotes Divine instruction concerning the duty of departing from selfish, worldly, and corporeal loves: the land which he was then to be shown, which was the land of Canaan, represented the church into which the man who complies with that instruction is be be introduced. And how plain is it that the promises to make Abram a great nation—to make him a great name—to be a blessing—that those who blessed him should be blessed, and those who cursed him should be cursed, and that in him all the families of the earth should be blessed,§ —are portions of the Divine History which refer wholly to the spiritual state of such a man. All these particulars are significant of benefits that were to result from his entering into Canaan; that is, of advantages which are to arise from man becoming a true member of the church. To make him a great nation, and a great name, denotes to impart goodness to the affections and thoughts of the man of the church; for goodness is that which is great in the Divine estimation: goodness to the affections is a great nation, and goodness to the thoughts is a great name. To make him a blessing, is to make the man of the church, a man of intelligence and charity; such a man is a true blessing. To bless them that bless him, is to confer happiness upon all who show that they value such virtues by adopting them; to curse them, then, that curse him, is to withhold happiness from those by whom the means to it are resisted: and for all the families of the earth to be blessed in him, signifies that all things of the church will find in him an affectionate and an intelligent receiver, and that these things will all be blessed because they will realize the purposes for which they are communicated. In this spiritual elucidation of the promises, we are

*Gen. xvii. 5. † Luke xiii. 28. ‡ Luke xvi. 23.
§ Gen. xii 2, 3.

presented with a comprehensible and practical meaning of them; and these seem to us desiderata eminently calculated to increase our love for the Scriptures, and to convince us that they are the Word of God.

In closing this work with this brief summary of the internal sense of what is written concerning the call of Abram and the promises which were made to him, I desire earnestly, yet humbly, to recommend the whole of the subjects which have been presented to the attention of the reader, to his calm, candid, and intelligent reflection: and it is hoped he will have seriously noticed, that one of the main drifts of all the expositions, has been to set before him the great fact of the Lord's desiring to make him a man of love, faith, and virtue. May he fully appreciate and practically realize all these graces!

APPENDIX.*

"Inasmuch as, in the article above, it has been shown that faith alone, or faith separate from charity, cannot produce goods of life, as a tree does fruits, it is of importance now to show in what manner spiritual faith, which is faith derived from charity, is acquired. But inasmuch as the learned world have not heretofore known, what is the nature and quality of the spiritual [principle] in its essence, and how it is distinguished from the natural, therefore neither could they know the nature and quality of spiritual faith, and how this is distinguished from natural faith; and yet natural faith, without spiritual faith as its origin, is not any faith, but only science, and thought thence derived that a thing is so, which; if it is called faith, is merely historical faith, and when it is confirmed is persuasive faith, and both these kinds of faith are natural, and faith merely natural does not save, but spiritual faith; wherefore in what follows it shall now be explained how spiritual faith is formed by the Lord. It is a known thing in the world, that there is a natural man and a spiritual man, likewise that the natural man is worldly, and the spiritual man heavenly, but still it has not been known what spiritual faith is, and how this differs from natural faith; wherefore it is to be observed:

"1.—That every man has two minds, one natural and the other spiritual; and whereas it is the mind which wills and thinks, every man has also a natural will and thought, and a spiritual will and thought; the natural mind wills and thinks as a man in the world, and the spiritual mind wills and thinks as an angel of heaven; hence it follows, that faith, inasmuch as it is in man, is also natural and spiritual, and that natural faith is according to the will and thought of a man in the world, and

* From *Apocalypse Explained*, Chap. xiii, No. 790.

that spiritual faith is according to his will and thought in heaven. It is said will and thought, because all things from which man is man have reference to these two principles; for from the will he acts, and from the thought he speaks: and whereas man acts and speaks either from himself or from God, therefore he wills and thinks either from himself or from God. From these considerations it is clear, first, that there is given a natural faith and a spiritual faith, and that natural faith without spiritual is to think such things as are in the Word from self; but that natural faith from spiritual is to think them from God, although this also appears to man as from Himself.

"2. Inasmuch as every man has two minds, a natural and a spiritual, and the natural mind is opened and formed by such things as are in the world, but the spiritual mind is opened and formed by such things as are in heaven, and inasmuch as those things which are in heaven are all spiritual, therefore it is necessary that man's spiritual mind be opened and formed by those things which are in the Word, where all things are spiritual, because they are divine. In the Word are contained truths which are to be known and thought, and goods which are to be willed and done, and therefore, by both the latter and the former, man's spiritual mind is opened and formed; from which considerations it follows that unless the mind is opened and formed by truths and goods from the Word, it remains shut, and that when this is shut, the natural mind only is opened and formed by such things as are in the world, from which man has indeed a natural lumen, but such as has no discernment of any thing from heaven. From these considerations it is clear, secondly, that faith is not faith so long as the natural mind alone is opened; but if the thought that a thing is so, is called faith, that it is historical faith, which is nothing else but science from which the natural man thinks.

"3.—In order that the spiritual mind may be opened and formed, it is necessary that it have a storehouse from which it may supply itself with what is useful for its purpose, for otherwise the man would be as it were empty, and no divine operation can take place in emptiness. This storehouse is in the natural man and its memory, in which everything knowable can be stored up, and thence called forth as occasion may re-

quire; in this storehouse, for the formation of the spiritual man, there must be truths which are to be believed, and goods which are to be done, both derived from the Word, and from doctrine and preaching from the Word; these man must learn even from his infancy. But all these things, in whatever abundance they may be, and although they are from the Word, before the spiritual mind is opened, are only natural, for they are mere science. It is the thought from this storehouse which is called faith by those who separate faith from good works in doctrine and in life.

"4.—The spiritual mind is primarily opened by man's abstaining from doing evils, because they are contrary to the divine precepts in the Word; if man abstains from evils from any other fear than this, that mind is not opened. The reasons why the spiritual mind is thereby opened and not otherwise, are these: *First*, That evils must first be removed with man, before communication and conjunction can be given him with heaven, for evils, which are all in the natural man, keep heaven shut, which, notwithstanding, must be opened, inasmuch as otherwise man remains natural. The *second* reason is, because the Word is from the Lord, and consequently the Lord is in the Word, insomuch that He is the Word, for the Word is divine truth, all which is from the Lord; hence it follows, that he who abstains from doing evils, because they are contrary to the divine precept in the Word, abstains from them by influence from the Lord. The *third* reason is, that in proportion as evils are removed, in the same proportion goods enter: that this is the case, man may see from natural lumen alone, for lasciviousness being removed, chastity enters; intemperance being removed, temperance enters; deceit being removed, sincerity enters; hatred and the delight of revenge being removed, love and the delight of love and friendship enters; and so in other cases; and the reason of this is, because the Lord enters, and with the Lord heaven, in proportion as man abstains from doing evils from the Word, because he then abstains from them by influence from the Lord.

"5.—But this shall be illustrated by examples; thus with respect to the four precepts of the decalogue, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not kill, thou

shalt not bear false witness, which are divine precepts, because they are in the Word; he who shuns and is averse to adultery, from a fear that it is against the Lord, against heaven, and against the spiritual life, which is the ground of eternal felicity, such a one loves chastity, and also his conjugal partner, inasmuch as love truly conjugal is chastity itself. He who shuns or is averse to theft, from a like fear, such a one loves sincerity, and also the good of his neighbor as his own good. He who shuns and is averse to murders, or deadly hatred, from a like fear, such a one loves his neighbor and is in charity. He who shuns and is averse to false testimony, from a like fear, such a one loves justice, and also verity, and this from the Lord because from the Word: hence such persons after death, when they become spirits, are like the angels of heaven, and therefore become angels. But he who does not shun adultery from that holy fear, but from a fear of the loss of fame and thence of honor and gain, or from fear of the law or of disease, or from infirmity, such a one is still unchaste, inasmuch as he fears only the world, and the loss of his emolument in the world, and does not fear the Lord, nor consequently the loss of heaven and of eternal life; in like manner he who abstains from thefts, from murder or murderous hatreds, and from false testimonies, from natural fear only and not from spiritual fear, such a one abstains from these things from himself, and not from the Lord, and he who abstains from them from himself, still remains interiorly in them, inasmuch as no one can be withdrawn from them but by the Lord. From these considerations it may appear, that the spiritual mind with man is opened by his abstaining from doing evils from the Word, and that it is opened in the same degree in which he abstains by shunning and becoming averse to them.

"6.—So far concerning the opening of the spiritual mind; something shall now be said concerning its formation: the spiritual mind is formed from those things which are deposited in man's memory from the Word, the memory being a storehouse, of which we have spoken above, but those things are elevated by the following means. *First:* man is gifted with the affection of truth, which is called the spiritual affection of truth, and which consists in loving truth because it is truth;

the reason why this affection of truth is then given, is, because evils being removed, man is in goods from the Lord, and good loves truth, and truth good, and they desire to be conjoined: this affection is given from the Lord alone, inasmuch as the Lord in heaven is divine truth, and it is given by the Word because the Lord in the church is the Word. *Secondly*, those things which are from the Word in the above mentioned storehouse of man are raised up and purified by the Lord, and genuine truths are there discriminated and separated from false; for the spiritual mind cannot be formed but from genuine truths, inasmuch as heaven is not in any other. *Thirdly*, those truths are elevated by the Lord in a wonderful manner, and become spiritual, which is effected by the influx of heaven, and thence of spiritual things corresponding to natural, which truths are there disposed into a celestial form, the nature and quality of which may be seen described in the work concerning *Heaven and Hell*, n. 200–212. *Fourthly*, but truths elevated into the spiritual mind are not in a natural form, but in a spiritual form: truths in a spiritual form are such as are in the spiritual sense of the Word, but truths in a natural form are such as are in a natural sense of the Word, which, that they are distinct from each other, and yet united by correspondences, may also be seen illustrated in the work concerning *Heaven and Hell*, n. 87–115: hence it is that man after death when he becomes a spirit, and his spiritual mind is opened, no longer thinks and speaks naturally, but spiritually. *Fifthly*, man does not at all know, so long as he lives in the world, what he thinks in the spiritual mind, but only what he thinks from that mind in the natural; but after death the state is changed, and he then thinks from the spiritual mind, and not from the natural. So far concerning the opening of the spiritual mind, and its formation.

"7.—When the spiritual mind of man is opened and formed, then the Lord forms the natural mind; for the natural mind of man is formed from the Lord by the spiritual mind; the reason is, because the spiritual mind of man is in heaven, and his natural mind is in the world, for the natural principle cannot be formed to the idea of such things as are in heaven, otherwise than from heaven, nor before communication and conjunction with heaven is effected. This formation is effected from the

Lord by influx out of the spiritual mind into the natural, whereby the things which are in the natural mind are disposed in order, so as to correspond to those which are in the spiritual, which correspondence is treated of in many places in the *Arcana Cœlestia*, and also in the work concerning *Heaven and Hell.* The truths which are in the natural mind from the spiritual, are called rational, moral, natural, and, in general, scientific truths, and the goods which are in that mind from the spiritual are called affections and desires for those truths, and from them to think, to speak, and to do them, and in general are called uses. All those things which are from the spiritual mind in the natural, come under the man's intuition and into his perceptions.

"8.—It is to be observed, that this formation of both minds with man continues from his infancy to old age, and afterwards to eternity, and sometimes from the middle age of man to his last, and afterwards to eternity; but still in a different manner in the other life to what it is in the world; and so man is formed, so he is perfected in intelligence and wisdom, and becomes man, for no man is a man from his natural mind, being rather a beast from this, but he becomes man by intelligence and wisdom from the Lord, and in proportion as he is intelligent and wise, in the same proportion he is a beautiful man, and an angel of heaven: but in proportion as he rejects, suffocates, and perverts the truths and goods of the Word, thus of heaven and the church, and thence refuses intelligence and wisdom, so far he is a monster and not a man, because he is so far a devil. From these considerations it may appear that man is not man from his parents, but from the Lord, of whom he is born anew, and created; this therefore is regeneration and new creation.

"9.—These things being premised, something shall now be said concerning the will and understanding of the man who is created anew or regenerated by the Lord, and afterwards concerning charity and faith. The will of the regenerate in the natural man is formed by the influx of the heat of heaven through the spiritual mind from the Lord; the heat of heaven in its essence is divine good proceeding from the divine love of the Lord; but the understanding in the natural man is formed by the influx of the light of heaven through the spiritual man

from the Lord; the light of heaven, in its essence, is divine truth proceeding from the divine love of the Lord: hence it follows that the will is formed from goods, by virtue whereof man is endowed with love and affection; and that the understanding is formed from truths thence derived, by virtue whereof man is endowed with intelligence and wisdom; and whereas truths are nothing else but forms of good, it follows that the understanding is nothing else but the form of its will, the only difference is, that the understanding sees, and the will feels: hence it is evident, that according to the quality of the will of good appertaining to man, such is his understanding of truth, or what amounts to the same, according to the quality of his love, such is his intelligence. Hence it appears, that although the will and the understanding are two faculties of life, still they act as one, wherefore also those two faculties of life are called one mind. This is the case in the natural man; in the spiritual man also there are will and understanding, but much more perfect, which are also called one mind; the latter, therefore, is the spiritual mind and the former the natural mind. Such is the case with the man whose spiritual mind is opened and formed, but it is altogether otherwise with him whose spiritual mind is shut, and only the natural mind opened.

"10.—The same things may be said concerning charity and faith as are said concerning the will and understanding, for the will is the subject and receptacle of charity, as it is the subject and receptacle of good, and the understanding is the subject and receptacle of faith, because it is the subject and receptacle of truth, for charity derives all its quality from good, and faith derives all its quality from truth, wherefore also we say the good of charity and the truth of faith: hence it follows, that charity and faith act as one, like will and understanding, and that according to the quality of the charity such is the faith; this takes place in the natural mind, but in the spiritual mind, the love of good is in the place of charity, and the perception of truth in the place of faith.

"11.—That spiritual love, which is charity, produces faith, may appear from this circumstance only, that man after death, who is then called a spirit, is nothing else but affection which is of love, and that his thought is thence derived, wherefore the

universal angelic heaven is arranged into societies according to the varieties of affections, and every one in heaven, in whatever society he may be, thinks from his own affection; hence then it is that affection, which is love, produces faith, and the faith is according to the quality of the affection; for faith is nothing else but to think that a thing is so in verity: by affection is meant love in its continuity. But man in the world at this day is ignorant that his thought is from affection, and according to it, and the reason is, because he sees his thought, but not his affection, and whereas thought is his affection in a visible form, therefore he knows no otherwise than that the whole mind of man is thought; the case was otherwise formerly with the ancients, where the churches were, who, inasmuch as they knew that love produces all things of thought, therefore made charity, which is the affection of knowing truths, of understanding them, likewise of willing them, and thereby becoming wise, the principal medium of salvation; and inasmuch as that affection makes one with faith, therefore they were unacquainted with the term faith. From these considerations it may not only appear how faith is formed with man, but also that faith can never produce charity, but that charity, which is spiritual love, forms it to a resemblance to itself, and therein presents an image of itself, and that hence it is that the quality of faith is known from charity and its goods, which are good works, as the quality of a tree is known from its fruit: by the tree, however, is not understood faith, but the man as to his life, by the leaves thereof are signified truths whereby is faith, and by the fruits thereof are signified goods of life, which are goods of charity. Besides these there are innumerable other arcana respecting the formation of faith by charity from the Lord; but still the Lord alone operates all those arcana, whilst man is ignorant thereof; all the operation which is necessary on the part of man, is to learn truths from the Word, and to live according to them."

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