

CHRIST
ON
EARTH
AGAIN

Paul defines faith as "the substance of things hoped for", and he states that "without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. 11:6). How important, therefore, to be motivated by such a faith as can make a reality of that which, for the moment is only a matter of hope. This is possible, by gathering together the Scriptures relating to the future purposes of God with the earth and man upon it, and building up thereby a mental picture of how Christ's coming will change the world. A basis for such an exercise is provided in this treatise by Brother Roberts. It can be supplemented by personal effort in extracting from the Daily Readings any verses that depict the future and classifying them under their relevant headings: the King, the Government, the Worship, the Saints, the Nations, Israel etc. The mind will be constantly refreshed by such a contemplation of the glory that will one day fill the earth, and motivated to conquer the flesh. In the midst of his trials Paul looked to the future, and concluded that "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:18). He wrote: "We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. 4:18).

CHRIST on EARTH AGAIN

OR

THE NATURE OF THE KINGDOM TO BE
ESTABLISHED BY HIM

AT

HIS SECOND APPEARING

“ IN THE DAYS OF THESE KINGS SHALL THE GOD OF HEAVEN
SET UP A KINGDOM WHICH SHALL NEVER BE DESTROYED :
AND THE KINGDOM SHALL NOT BE LEFT TO OTHER
PEOPLE, BUT IT SHALL BREAK IN PIECES AND CONSUME
ALL THESE KINGDOMS, AND IT SHALL STAND FOR EVER ”
—(Dan. 2 : 44).

“ IN THAT DAY WILL I RAISE UP THE TABERNACLE OF DAVID
THAT IS FALLEN, AND CLOSE UP THE BREACHES THEREOF ;
AND I WILL RAISE UP HIS RUINS, AND WILL BUILD IT
AS IN THE DAYS OF OLD ”—(Amos 9 : 11).

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Christ on Earth Again

CHAPTER I

AN ARGUMENT FROM THE PAST

NOTHING is written more plainly or more deeply in human affairs than the fact of Christ's appearance among men some 1,900 years ago. The record is written everywhere in a language that requires no learning to decipher.

And nothing was asserted more plainly by Christ when upon the earth than the fact that "after a long time" (to use his own expression) he would "come again". He *has* been away the long time he said he would be away. Many things combine to tell us that the "long time" is near its end, and that we may look for the happy event of his re-appearing at no very distant date.

The question we propose to consider is the effect that his re-appearing will produce among men; the state of things he will establish on the earth; and the position and relation he will sustain to the state of things so established.

There is great dimness and uncertainty in the popular mind on these topics. This dimness need not exist if the teaching of the Scriptures is accepted on the subject; and surely no one can refuse to accept the Scriptures who accepts Christ, who said he had come to fulfil them (Matt. 5:17; Luke 24:44).

His first appearing was the subject of prophecy ; and his second appearing is the subject of prophecy. We know what his first appearing was like. We have it in our power to compare the facts of his first appearing with the language of the prophecy foretelling it, and this ought to enable us rightly to understand the language foretelling his second appearing.

We all know that the first appearing of Christ was as literal and personal as that of any man, and that his participation in the transactions of his life was as actual and practical as the deeds of any man's life. He was born an actual baby ; grew up through all the stages of an actual boyhood ; lived and walked and talked an actual man ; died an actual death ; received an actual burial ; was the subject of an actual resurrection ; and of an actual removal from the earth.

Now here are the prophecies referring to these things. First of all, HIS BIRTH : " Unto us a child *is born.*" " A virgin shall conceive and *bear a son.*" Second, the PLACE OF HIS BIRTH : " Thou Bethlehem . . . *out of thee* shall he come forth unto me." Third, HIS RECEPTION at Israel's hands : " When *we shall see him*, there is no beauty that we should desire him . . . We hid as it were our faces from him ; he was despised, and we esteemed him not." THE TREATMENT HE RECEIVED : " He was oppressed and he was afflicted . . . despised and rejected of men." HIS PERSONAL ATTITUDE : " He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street." HIS ARREST : " He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth." HIS CONDEMNATION : " He was taken from prison and from judgment." THE INDIGNITIES OF HIS EXECUTION : " They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture." HIS CRUCIFIXION : " They pierced my hands

and my feet ” ; “ He was cut off out of the land of the living . . . He made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death.” HIS RESURRECTION : “ Thou shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth ” ; “ Thou wilt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.” HIS ASCENSION : “ Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive ” ; “ Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool ” ; “ I will wait upon the Lord, who hideth his face from the house of Jacob ; ” “ I shall be glorious in the eyes (presence) of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength.”

When, therefore, we read, “ He shall come ” ; “ He shall reign ” ; “ He shall execute judgment in the earth ” ; He shall sit on “ the throne of his father David ” ; “ He shall be one king to all Israel on the mountains of Israel ” ; “ He shall reign on Mount Zion ” ; “ The rod of his strength shall go forth from Zion ” ; “ He shall be a priest on his throne ” ; “ All peoples, nations, and languages shall serve him ” —what can we reasonably conclude but that the life of his kingly glory upon earth will be as actual and literal and practical and visible as we know the life of his humiliation to have been ?

We are compelled to accept such a view by the terms that expressly affirm the visibility of the affairs that will appertain to his glory. Thus : “ Every eye shall SEE him ” (Rev. 1 : 7). “ The kings shall shut their mouths at him, for that which had not been told them shall they SEE ” (Isa. 52 : 15). “ Thine eyes shall SEE the King in his beauty ” (Isa. 33 : 17). “ Ye shall not see me UNTIL the time come . . . ” (Luke 13 : 35). “ They shall LOOK UPON me whom they have pierced ” (Zech. 12 : 10). “ Ye shall SEE Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom ” (Luke 13 : 28). “ All that SEE them shall acknowledge that they (the comforted of the Lord) are the seed which the Lord hath blessed ” (Isa. 61 : 9).

“ He shall reign in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and *before* his ancients gloriously ” (Isa. 24 : 23). “ He shall judge *among* many people ” (Mic. 4 : 3). “ When ye see this, your heart shall rejoice ” (Isa. 66 : 14). “ Then shall ye return and *discern* between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not ” (Mal. 3 : 18). “ Behold, my servants shall eat, but ye (that serve not God) shall be hungry. Behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty. Behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed. Behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit ” (Isa. 65 : 13).

Christ was “ despised and rejected ” in no concealed sense. He was “ bruised ” and “ put to grief ” in a very open, visible, and practical manner : is his glory to be less real ? less open ? less apparent ? Will his honour be less actual than his shame ? Will he occupy the throne in a less real and manifest sense than when he hung on the cross in the presence of jeering multitudes ? Will not “ every eye ” see his glory as actually as the eyes that saw his humiliation and his blood ? Christ has promised that his brethren shall receive glory and honour : of what does “ glory and honour ” consist but in the deference and renown which rulers receive at the hands of those who are subject to them ? He promises that “ they shall laugh ” (Luke 6 : 21) ; that “ they shall be filled ” (6 : 21) ; that “ they shall inherit the earth ” (Matt. 5 : 5) ; that “ they shall be confessed before his Father ” (Matt. 10 : 32) ; that “ they shall be comforted ” (Matt. 5 : 4) ; and that their enemies “ shall come and worship before their feet ” (Rev. 3 : 9) ; that “ they shall have power over the nations ” (Rev. 2 : 26). How are these promises to be fulfilled except by the saints “ reigning with ” Christ possessing the earth with him, and exercising the authority with him God has given him over all

peoples, nations, and languages? Jesus has prospectively enthroned the twelve apostles there over the tribes of Israel (Luke 22 : 29, 30 ; Matt. 19 : 28). He has, in advance, placed Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob there as conspicuous, visible figures among all the prophets (Luke 13 : 28 ; Matt. 8 : 11). The Lord, by Isaiah, has planted his accepted servants of all past ages there (Isa. 66 : 13, 14 ; 25 : 6, 9 ; 26 : 1, 2, 19), saying :—“ Ye shall be comforted *in Jerusalem* ” ; “ *In this mountain, . . . he will swallow up death in victory.* ”

CHAPTER II

THE AFFLICTED WORLD'S NEED

TO see this conclusion in all the fulness of the force that belongs to it, it is necessary to realize the work that belongs to the Second Advent of Christ. In its briefest form, it is this : to fill the earth with God's glory and remedy all the evils to which man is subject. How entirely those evils are the result of the withdrawal of God's open countenance and direction of man (consequent on human insubordination) is not discerned till after much experience and reflection, and then the discernment comes with terrible power. When men multiplied upon the earth, and grew into communities, the evil involved in this withdrawal became apparent. Instead of divine power controlling and regulating, there was nothing to restrain human rapacity but human force, and force fighting force resulted in the earth becoming “ filled with violence ”. Wars in endless succession ensued, and have continued to the present day. In the intervals, there is “ law and

order", but it is such law as man pleases to devise, and such order as comes from mere repression. The result is seen in the extreme affliction of mankind.

Peace and liberty—much vaunted terms—are much of a mockery under the prevailing conditions. The arrangements enforced by human law are not only such as do not ensure blessedness, but they produce evil in endless variety. They give the land to a few, and limit the rights of the many to the receiving of wages equivalent for what they actually do when they can get it to do, and to go short when they cannot: while an open door for endless competition puts it into the power of energetic and ingenious exploiters still further to impoverish the result of labour when it can be got by reducing its productiveness to the individual. The poverty thus induced compels incessant labour for mere subsistence, which in its turn degrades and brutalizes the labourers who have no strength left for mental culture, and whose offspring necessarily inherit the same evil in an exaggerated form.*

The evil is cumulative from generation to generation. The evils are slow in growth, and when they come, their origin is not quite apparent, and so human affairs settle into a frightful quagmire, from which no human power can extricate them. Socialism is a furtive and unavailing look in the direction of a remedy. Men require more means of living—better food, better clothing, better houses. They require more leisure, so that the higher faculties may have opportunity of expansion by travel and otherwise. They require more instruction, and that of a correct sort. They require a complete education, and an education that should embrace the highest relations of man as well as the lowest. Man should be instructed not only in the arts that concern the

* This was written in 1892. The form of the evil is somewhat changed to-day.

relation of man to Nature, but in those that affect his relation to God and to his kind. He should be led and held in the channel of the highest truth, as well as truth of history or truth of science. The duty of veracity and love and honesty should be enforced as rigorously as the payment of rates. The crime of unchastity should be punished as severely as the crime of theft or forgery. The obligation to worship God should be upheld with as firm a hand as that which now exacts respect and reverence for authority in the courts.

The work of Christ at his second advent is to secure these conditions as the rule of human life upon the earth, with a view to the removal of death itself at last. The object is to bring back mankind to the service and friendship of God, in which alone his true well-being can be found. This can only be done by an open and visible manifestation of power. How is the present system to be removed without force? And if the force were human force, it would be powerless to establish a system that would either be good or lasting. The work of abolishing the present evil order requires divine force; and the language promising the change admits of no other: "The God of heaven shall set up a Kingdom, which . . . shall *break in pieces and consume* all these kingdoms". "Thou (the Messiah) shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." "I will execute vengeance in anger and fury upon the nations, such as they have not heard." "I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the nations."

And if it require the open visible interposition of divine force to remove the present system, what but that force could build the new system—"the new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness"? Who could devise and establish the new institutions needful to secure the blessing of man,

and the glory of God, but God Himself? Mortal erring man could not do it: he has had his day: a poor day it has been at its very best, even when man has been acting as an instrument under divine direction, as in Israel's past history. It is now the Spirit of God that is to enter into the arena, as saith God, "Not by (human) might, nor by power, but by my spirit". And the form of its instrumentality is revealed, as well as the nature of its work. "My King" (Psa. 2:6), "the Son" (verse 12), "My servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; *I have put my spirit upon him: HE SHALL BRING FORTH JUDGMENT TO THE GENTILES*" (Isa. 42:1). To whom God says: "I HAVE PUT MY WORDS IN THY MOUTH, AND I HAVE COVERED THEE IN THE SHADOW OF MY HAND, *that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth,* and say unto Zion, Thou art my people" (51:16).

CHAPTER III

THE REMEDY AT CHRIST'S RETURN

THE work of establishing the new order of things is the work of Christ, and, therefore, of those who belong to him, for he shares his work with them. "The isles shall wait for his law" (Isa. 42:4). "Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem", for there shall be his throne, as will be proved. None but the immortal, unerring Son of God could promulgate such a law. Mortal erring man is excluded from all participation, except in so far as he may be subordinately employed as servants are employed in a great house, to deliver messages, to fetch and carry and perform; for, of

course, it is never to be lost sight of that the mortal population of the earth, after subjugation and purification, is the basis of the whole operation.

And how could such a law be promulgated and administered successfully among a mortal population except in the hands of divine instruments? A mortal judge can only judge "by the sight of the eye, and the hearing of the ear". Therefore, mistakes are inevitable in such hands in the application of the best law that could be framed: the evidence upon which such a judge must depend may be false, and he himself may be dim of discernment. It is necessary that a law that is to bless all mankind should be administered by those who cannot err, and cannot be deceived. That this is to be so is testified: "He shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears, but with righteousness shall he judge the poor" (Isa. 11 : 3). If this is the case with "the Branch" from Jesse's roots, on whom "the Spirit of the Lord shall rest, and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord", will it not be so with his brethren who are to "reign with him"? It is so testified: "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" (1 Cor. 6 : 2). "Now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known" (1 Cor. 13 : 12).

It must be evident to ordinary reflection, based upon the common experience of everyday life among men, that the accomplishment of these things requires that the agency accomplishing them should be a visible, practically working agency: for herein lies its power, that it should be visible, immediate, and effective. God's justice and judgment exist as really now as they ever will: but because they are not brought to bear—because men for a time are allowed to do as they please, subject to each other's coercions only, the wickedness of man is great upon

the earth. But let man be daily in the presence of a divine power administered through living agents, that avenges injustice and punishes the guilty with swift and unerring stroke, it is easy to realize that a great change must soon be brought about.

It is not only in matters of judgment, but in other directions that the presence of such a visible living agency is required. A thousand doubts and contradictions arise among men in the present state of things on questions most vitally affecting their ways. There is no one to settle them. "One man's opinion is as good as another's", as the saying is. It is not quite true, but the principle is acted on; and so the human race staggers along in confusion. But let there be leaders whose word is law, and all this chaos will end, and human life will flow in peaceful harmony.

This is promised. Immortal kings and priests reigning upon the earth supply the need exactly. But if they did not show themselves, and did not interfere, their existence would be of no use. They might as well be in the moon. But they will show themselves, and will interfere, and that most effectually. For this is promised to Israel, in whose benefits all nations will share. "I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding" (Jer. 3:15). "Thine eyes shall see thy teachers; and thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way; walk ye in it" (Isa. 30:20, 21). Who these teachers are, the apostolic writings reveal; the twelve apostles over the twelve tribes: all the prophets and all the saints in the kingdom, kings and priests unto God.

The recompense of the saints in glory consists in part, of the honour and supreme satisfaction of having the power to bless placed in their hands, and in having their part openly recognized. This is their

“reward”. The idea of reward may be foreign to some sublime philosophies ; but it is an element in the economy of salvation, and it is in harmony with the constitution of human nature. Even supposing it could be successfully maintained that “virtue is its own reward”, there could be no objection to the addition of other rewards. The men do not live who would refuse them at the hand of divine munificence, however strongly they might prate under the influence of half-sighted views. “My reward is with me”, says Jesus, “to give every man according as his work shall be.” That this “according as” means “in the degree of”, is shown by the other statement, that “he which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly ; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully”. The nature of the Kingdom of God admits of these degrees. “Have thou authority over ten cities” : “have thou authority over five cities”. This is the fulfilment of the more general promise : “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne . . . to him will I give power over the nations” ; also that other promise : “the trial of your faith . . . might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Christ”.

Sentimental literature has obscured these robust and glorious truths. The Kingdom will be a reality. Salvation is not a dream or a state of idle sensuous bliss. It is an affair of strong immortal men inheriting the earth and ruling mankind. The head of them is Christ. In the carrying out of this affair, there must be details, and one of them is the revelation by Ezekiel : that Christ, the prince, has an estate of his own, of immense extent, embracing thousands of square miles in the best of the land, when it is “like Eden, like the garden of the Lord”, and that in this royal domain—in the very presence and under the wing of the Holiness and Majesty of the whole earth, it shall be his happiness, when he chooses, to confer the

happiness and high honour of a special residence and possession upon such as enjoy his special approbation. When such are his sons (that is, his immortal brethren), the inheritance is for ever. When they are mortal servants, it is a revocable gift, and reverts to the owner in the year of jubilee.

It may seem a "gross" conception to those who spiritualize the meaning, but it is scriptural, and it is reasonable and beautiful, and is such an arrangement as none of the most refined and sublimated spirituals of our day despise in actual life. If a well-appointed mansion, in rural seclusion, is a desirable attainment in these mortal days, why should it be a thing despised when righteousness reigns, and when there is immortal strength in the possessors to enjoy the gift without drawback? Whatever sentimental objection there may be, it is a matter of divine promise that the friends of God shall inherit the earth and reign therein with Christ; and Ezekiel's vision is a glimpse of what this means in practical fact. The thing seen is nothing but beautiful and altogether lovely.

CHAPTER IV

THE KINGDOM THAT IS COMING

WHAT we have submitted in the foregoing chapters concerning the second appearing of Christ and the work to be done in connection with that event is immeasurably strengthened by a contemplation of the nature of the Kingdom of God as revealed in the Scriptures of the prophets, and in the teaching of Christ and his Apostles. The modern understanding of the phrase (the Kingdom of God) is but the merest shadow of the Scriptural

idea. We have to go wider afield, and take many things into view before we see the Bible conception of the Kingdom of God. The kingdom of Israel was the Kingdom of God in a preliminary phase. It is so styled (2 Chron. 13 : 8 and 1 Chron. 17 : 14), and because it was so in fact : for in every element of its constitution, it was a divine work by visible operation, from the rescue of the people from Egyptian bondage to the last message of inspiration. It was removed because of the insubordination of Israel in many generations. As it is written, "Behold, the eyes of the Lord God are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth ; saving that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith the Lord" (Amos 9 : 8). God purposes the restoration of this overthrown kingdom. "I will raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof ; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old" (verse 11).

This kingdom of Israel restored is the Bible conception of the Kingdom of God. The question put by the apostles to Christ before his ascension is enough to show this : "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1 : 6). If it needs confirmation, the confirmation is found in the promise of Christ to them. "When the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. 19 : 28), and in Paul's description of the gospel as "*the hope of Israel*", to which the twelve tribes looked forward (Acts 28 : 20 ; 26 : 7).

It shines especially in the covenant of the land to Abraham and his seed, which is the groundwork of the Kingdom of God. We must keep all our spiritual ideas fastened here as with hooks of steel. It is impossible for diligent and intelligent readers of the Scriptures to miss this as a first principle.

The promise to Abraham as recorded in Genesis is without ambiguity: "For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever" (Gen. 13 : 15). The very frequent allusions, throughout the Scriptures, to the relations subsisting between Israel and God, lay hold of this land covenant as defining the essence of that relation in its briefest, pithiest form. "An everlasting covenant, saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance" (Psa. 105 : 10-11). The apostolic application of the matter connects it with the essential fabric of the one faith and hope for believers: "God gave it (the inheritance) to Abraham by promise" (Gal. 3 : 18); "a *place* which he should after receive for an inheritance . . . He sojourned in *the land of promise* as in a strange country" (Heb. 11 : 8, 9). "To Abraham and his seed (which is Christ) were the promises made . . . And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3 : 16, 29).

Paul tells us that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob saw these promises afar off (Heb. 11 : 13), and that though strangers and pilgrims on the earth, they, nevertheless, sought a country—the promised country—a better country than the one Abraham had left by command, to which he had it in his power to return if he had been so minded—the betterness consisting of this, that it was "a heavenly country"—not heaven, but a country of heavenly character, a city or polity having foundations (which no Gentile country has—Babylonish or British) whose builder and maker is God. The prophets abound with indications of the characteristics that will constitute the land of Canaan a heavenly country in the day of the fulfilled promise—a city having foundations, with God for its architect.

1. *A supernal condition of the land physically.*—
"They shall say, This land that was desolate is

become like the garden of Eden ” (Ezek. 36 : 35). “ Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations ” (Isa. 60 : 15). “ The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir tree and the pine tree and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary, and I will make the place of my feet glorious ” (verse 13).

2. *The blessed state of the inhabitants.*—“ The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick ” (Isa. 33 : 24). “ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing ” (35 : 5, 6). “ The voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days ; for the child shall die an hundred years old . . . They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble ” (65 : 19, 20, 23).

3. *The enlightened character of the population.*—“ Thy people shall be all righteous ; they shall inherit the land for ever ” (Isa. 60 : 21). “ They shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord : for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord ” (Jer. 31 : 34). “ They shall use this speech in the land of Judah, and in the cities thereof, when I shall bring again their captivity, The Lord bless thee, O habitation of justice, and mountain of holiness ” (31 : 23).

4. *The powerful influence for good it will exercise in all the earth.*—“ The Gentiles shall come unto thee from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit ” (Jer. 16 : 19). “ The isles shall wait for his law ” (Isa. 42 : 4). “ Out of

Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem " (Isa. 2 : 3). " Many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of Hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of Hosts : In those days it shall come to pass that ten men out of all the languages of the nations shall even take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you " (Zech. 8 : 22, 23).

CHAPTER V

THE GLORIFIED LAND OF PROMISE

THE prophecies quoted in the foregoing chapter clearly disclose to us the reason why the land promised to Abraham should be considered " a heavenly country " in the day of its glory. But it was reserved for the vision of Ezekiel to give us those particulars that inform and satisfy the mind as to the form and shape of things in practical detail. The whole land is theirs, Abraham's and Christ's, but there is a method in the inheritance. Necessarily prominent are Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whom many mustering co-heirs from the east and the west and the north and the south, *shall see* (Luke 13 : 28). Above all, they " see the King in his beauty "—(Isa. 33 : 17)—the Branch raised unto David who shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land (Jer. 33 : 15) : for " the Lord shall be king over all the earth : in that day there shall be one Lord, and his name one " (Zech. 14 : 9). But these are general aspects. What are the details ? There must be details in every actual thing. It is only

sentimental dreams that have no details. The details in this case are supplied.

First of all, the glorified land of promise is apportioned in parallel strips among Abraham's seed after the flesh. No one will call this in question who believes the Ezekiel prophecy: "This is the land—the frontiers and divisions having previously been indicated—which *ye shall divide by lot unto the tribes* of Israel for inheritance, and these are their portions, saith the Lord God" (Ezek. 48 : 29 ; see whole of chapter : also 47 : 13-23).

Secondly, a central portion out of thirteen equal portions into which the land is divided is dedicated wholly to the Lord, as "an holy portion of the land", an offering to the Lord, in length from east to west as one of the other parts (48 : 8).

Thirdly, the middle part of this holy portion of the land is cut out, reserved, separated, or sanctified as an oblation to the Lord, forming an exact square of 25,000 lengths of the reed that was in the hand of Ezekiel's guide, which measured about 11 feet (48 : 20 ; 40 : 5). Reduced to English measurement, this square, speaking approximately, is about 50 miles in length each way, and contains about 2,500 square miles.

Fourthly, this land-offering of 2,500 square miles is divided into three sections—two of equal area, and one having an area equal to half of either the other two. *The first*, containing 1,000 square miles, is reserved for the sanctuary, and for residences of the Sons of Zadok, "the ministers of the sanctuary that come near unto the Lord" (45 : 3, 4 ; also 48 : 10, 11). *The second*, also containing 1,000 square miles, is reserved for the second class of priests, "the Levites that minister to the house" (45 : 5 ; 48 : 13). *The third*, containing an area of 500 square miles, is assigned to the city (verse 6). The city is a square, and stands in the centre of this

assigned area, occupying its full extent north to south, and measuring nearly ten miles each way (45 : 6 ; 48 : 15, 30, 35). On each side of the city stands 200 square miles (in all, 400 square miles) of the assigned area, east and west ; which is appropriated to market gardens for the supply of the city (48 : 18).

Fifthly, east and west of the whole square, which contains these three several sections, lies an immense tract of country, on the same measurement, north and south, as the square, but extending to the Mediterranean sea-coast on the west, and as far east as the covenanted land may reach (the eastern border of which is defined as comprehending Damascus, Gilead by Jordan, and ending in the east sea—Persian Gulf.—Ezek. 47 : 18). The exact size of this territory is not stated, but it must contain at least ten thousand square miles, which is allowing for its being only four times the extent of the central square, and it must be much larger than this. The southern border of the whole land is as far south as Meribah Kadesh (Ezek. 47 : 19 ; Num. 20 : 14). Now if a line be drawn from Meribah Kadesh, which is one journey northwards from Ezion Gaber (Num. 33 : 36)—and it must be a horizontal line, for the portions are horizontal east and west—the line will strike the head of the Persian Gulf, and answer exactly to “the eastern sea” as the southernmost point of the east border. The applicability of such a line to the Dead Sea is out of the question. Such a boundary would take in vast regions which are now desert, but which then will “rejoice and blossom as the rose”—for “I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree, and the myrtle and the oil tree : I will set in the desert the fir tree, and the pine and the box tree together” (Isa. 41 : 19). This would give enormous lateral extension to the holy portion of the land, and give an area much more likely

to be 50,000 than 10,000 square miles : it will certainly be a large territory.

To what purpose is this magnificent domain applied? The answer is "the residue (on the one side and on the other of the holy oblation) *shall be for the PRINCE*" (Ezek. 48 : 21), "MESSIAH THE PRINCE" (Dan. 9 : 25). What a splendid matter of detail is this ! It is no speculation. It is a matter of revelation. It is what the whole scheme requires. The tribes have their portions in the land ; the priests of all grades have their portions ; the city has its portion ; and the Son of David, whose name is exalted above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow—shall he have no "portion in the Holy Land when he chooses Jerusalem again" ? (Zech. 2 : 12). Shall he be the heir of the vineyard and have no possession therein ? (Matt. 21 : 38). Shall he sit on the throne of David and have no place in David's land ? (Isa. 9 : 7). Shall he be the King over all the earth and have no abiding place among his loving subjects ?

"The prince's portion" is the answer. A stately realm in the land of promise, stretching far enough east to embrace the original Garden of Eden, whence the first Adam was expelled, is assigned to the last Adam, as the palace of his glory on earth, the retreat of his loving communion with the Bride, the Lamb's wife.

This revelation by Ezekiel is a necessary supplement to the general declarations of the Lord's proprietorship of the earth, for we should not otherwise know the mode of his personal adjustment to that proprietorship in the day of his glory. The mere intimation that God would establish a kingdom ; that Christ would be the head of that kingdom, and that the kingdom would primarily be the ancient Kingdom of Israel restored, would have left the mind in somewhat of a haze as to the personal relation

Jesus should sustain to such a state of things. There would necessarily have been more or less a sense of anomalousness in the Lord of Glory taking part in the ways of mortal life. But all feelings of this kind are dispelled in the presence of an allotment, not only of a holy portion of the land, containing the city and sanctuary, but of a portion for the prince containing over 10,000 square miles. Such an immense area, laid out in the paradisaic beauties of Eden, is a suitable privacy for the once-crucified king of all the earth.

CHAPTER VI

A NEW CONSTITUTION

THOUGH rebuilt "as in the days of old", the fallen house of David will not be built upon the same plan. It will be a new and more glorious edifice in every way. There will be a change in the law and a change in the administrators thereof, though certain elements in the old law and certain features in the old administration will be retained. This is the testimony: "I will make *a new covenant* with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt" (Jer. 31 : 31).

Jesus identifies himself and his work with this new covenant, in saying at the breaking of bread, "This cup is *the new covenant* (R.V.) in my blood which is shed for you" (Luke 22 : 20). Paul places Jesus right in the kernel of it in saying: "He is the mediator of a better covenant which was established on better

promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant . . ." (Heb. 8 : 6-8).

The setting aside of the old covenant for this new covenant involves the introduction of a new priesthood. This is Paul's argument in Heb. 7 : 15 : " After the similitude of Melchizedek there ariseth another priest, who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life . . . There is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before, for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof." " The priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity *a change also of the law.*" Christ is the high priest of the new covenant, as Aaron was of the old. His office is first employed in the development of " his own house ", " whose house are we if we hold fast . . ." (Heb. 3 : 6). When they are developed, they are changed to his glorious state, and incorporated in his priesthood as the sons of Aaron were under the law of Moses. They become " kings and priests unto God ", in which capacity they are to " reign on the earth " (Rev. 5 : 10). They are a royal priesthood now in a preliminary sense, offering the incense of praise and the sacrifices of a spiritual service (1 Pet. 2 : 9) : but their " manifestation " as kings and priests unto God (Rom. 8 : 19 ; Rev. 1 : 6) is reserved for the day of power and glory when they shall, with Christ, judge the world (1 Cor. 6 : 2) and reign with him (2 Tim. 2 : 12).

God Himself says to them : " Ye shall be named the priests of the Lord : men shall call you the ministers of our God : ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves " (Isa. 61 : 6). This language is not addressed to Israel after the flesh except in so far as they form

the outer fringe of the true Israel "to whom the promises are made". The words are addressed to the true Israel who, in all their generations, wait for the consolation of Israel, and arise from death at the Lord's coming to see and share it (Isa. 66 : 10, 13 ; Mal. 3 : 16, 18). This is evident from the introductory verses. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me" (that is, Christ, as Jesus declared in the Nazareth synagogue—Luke 4 : 18, 21) "because the Lord hath anointed me to . . . comfort all that mourn . . . to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." Jesus settled the application of these promises in his words to the disciples: "*Blessed are ye that mourn*, for ye shall be comforted. Blessed are ye that weep now, for ye shall laugh" (Matt. 5 : 4 ; Luke 6 : 21).

It is the saints at the resurrection, therefore, of whom it is written : "Ye shall be named *the priests of the Lord*, and men shall call you the ministers of our God : ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves". Why are they to be named "priests", and called "ministers"? Because they are to be so : "priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years" (Rev. 20 : 6). Here, then, is *an immortal order of priests* having to do with men. As it is added, "Their seed (that is, their sort, their kind, even the seed of Abraham which they are—Gal. 3 : 29), shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people. All that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed" (Isa. 61 : 9).

But as Aaron and his sons had the tribe of Levi placed at their disposal for the service of the tabernacle (Num. 8 : 19), so the mortal Levitical order are placed at the disposal of the Melchizedek king-priest of the new constitution and his sons (for the

brethren of Christ are also considered as his children—"I and the children which God hath given me").

This is a feature made visible in "the ordinances of the house", shewn to Ezekiel in vision. In this vision there are *two orders of priests*. The one—the lower order—is described (chap. 40 : 45) as "the keepers of the charge of the house", and the other as "the keepers of the charge of the altar" (verse 46). That there is a much greater difference between them than would at first sight appear from this description is manifest from the definition of their duties, and the explanatory comment with which the definition is accompanied. Of the one—the lower order—it is said, "They shall not come near unto me to do the office of a priest unto me, nor to come near to any of my holy things in the most holy" (Ezek. 44 : 13). Of the other, the first order, it is said, "THEY SHALL COME NEAR TO ME to minister unto me : and they shall stand before me to offer unto me the fat and the blood, saith the Lord God. They shall enter into my sanctuary, and they shall come near to my table, to minister unto me, and they shall keep my charge" (verses 15, 16).

Here is a complete contrast. The reason given is still more indicative of a great difference between the two orders. In brief, this reason may be said to be : *The reward of obedience* in the one case, *the punishment of disobedience* in the other. In the one case, it is thus defined : "The priests, the Levites, the sons of Zadok, that kept the charge of my sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from me, they shall come near". In the other it is thus given : "The Levites that are gone away far from me when Israel went astray, which went astray from me after their idols, they shall even bear their iniquity".

The full nature of the difference is not apparent in Ezekiel. We are indebted to the further revelation by Jesus and the apostles for a knowledge of

details indicated, though not clearly disclosed, to the prophets. That one order of priests is immortal and the other mortal, is not stated in so many words, but it is involved in what is said, and it is necessitated by the revelation elsewhere that the High Priest of the new order is the righteous Son of David, who is to bear the glory, and sit and rule as priest on his throne (Zech. 6 : 13), and that the glorified brethren of "that Righteous One" are to rule with him as kings and priests.

The idea that Ezekiel's statements concerning the sons of Zadok are inconsistent with the fact of their being immortal, is based upon a misleading appearance in the wording of this part of the vision. It is supposed that they are referred to in the regulations concerning marriage (44 : 22), which are rightly held to be inapplicable to those who shall "neither marry nor be given in marriage" (Luke 20 : 35). The supposition appears to be favoured by the absence of a distinctly marked transition from one order to the other in the discourse concerning the priests, after the introduction of the parenthetical allusion to the sons of Zadok. Verse 17, by the use of the pronoun "they", appears to speak of the sons of Zadok, who are spoken of in verse 15 ; but that it is not the sons of Zadok but the Levites that are spoken of in verse 17 and after, is manifest from verse 19, that they shall "go forth into the outer court to the people", *which is the office of the Levites, and not of the sons of Zadok*, as is plainly stated in verse 11 : "They (the Levites) shall slay the burnt offering, and the sacrifice for the people, and *they shall stand before them to minister unto them*, because they ministered unto them before their idols". But as for the sons of Zadok, "They shall come near to me to minister unto me" (verse 15).

Consequently, we are compelled to understand the Levites to be spoken of in the verses in question,

which *describe duties applicable only to them*. That these verses should appear to apply to the sons of Zadok is due to the introduction of a parenthesis at verse 15, which is not formally indicated. Verses 14 and 17 must be read consecutively to get the true sense: "But I will make them (the Levites) keepers of the charge of the house for all the service thereof, and for all that shall be done therein . . . And it shall come to pass that when *they* enter in at the gates of the inner court (for they shall have charge at the gates of the house, see verse 11) they shall be clothed in linen garments . . . They shall not gird themselves with anything causing sweat, . . . neither shall they take for wives a widow . . ."

The second (mortal) grade of priests being in question in these verses, there is none of the difficulty of sweat and marriage that many naturally feel on the first reading. If the question be asked why the distinction was not more clearly indicated, we can only say it is not the only case where the pronoun is employed with reference to sense merely, and not as the equivalent of a grammatical antecedent. In a similar case in Matthew, it has been contended that it was Simon the Cyrenian that was crucified and not Jesus (see Matt. 27:32, 35). This was, of course, a perverse contention, because the context entirely excludes such an absurdity. Still it had the same ground—the absence of a clear association of the pronoun. In this other case, the context shows the right application of the pronoun, and relieves the subject of a difficulty that is only apparent.

CHAPTER VII

THE NEW PRIESTHOOD

THAT there should be two classes of priests is in harmony with the character of the institutions of the age to come. It is a mixed dispensation in which death reigns in a population ruled by immortals; and it is suitable that the mortal element should be utilized in the lower branches of the service. And it is a feature of exquisite moral beauty that the particular form in which this mortal element should appear in connection with the temple service should be the exclusion of a class from the higher grade on the ground of former faithlessness. Yet that the Levites should appear in the service is in harmony with the fact that the kingdom is a restoration. That they should have the drudgery of the service is in harmony with their past history. That the honourable part of direct communion with God should be reserved for the Sons of Righteousness is beautiful.

On the face of it, it appears a feasible contention that as the degraded Levites are the mortal descendants of a faithless order, so the sons of Zadok are the mortal descendants of a faithful order. But this apparent feasibility becomes an impossibility in view of the supercession of the Mosaic priesthood by Christ, and the testimony that the "priests unto God" in the age to come are the immortal saints. And it is out of harmony with the moral fitness of things; for whereas the degradation of descendants is a fitting retribution for the unfaithfulness of a class, the exaltation of descendants is not the revealed recompense of righteousness. Immortality is not rewarded vicariously, though sin may be appropriately visited in this way. "The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him: and the wickedness

of the wicked shall be upon him " (Ezek. 18 : 20). " The righteous hath hope in his death." This hope is the hope of individual resurrection to "glory, honour, and immortality". As Jesus plainly puts it, " They that have done good (shall come forth) to the resurrection of life " (John 5 : 29).

That this resurrection, at the coming of Christ to set up the kingdom, includes the faithful of the Mosaic age, we know from Christ and his revelation to John in Patmos ; " Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets " is Christ's own specification (Luke 13 : 28) : and by his revelation to John, his words are that at " the time of the dead " (the sounding of the seventh trumpet), God will judge them and give reward to His servants the prophets, and to the saints, and to them that fear His name, small and great (Rev. 11 : 18).

These principles require that the sons of Zadok " that kept the charge of my sanctuary, when the children of Israel went astray ", should be individual righteous men of previous generations, and therefore immortal. The difference in the way they are described, as distinguished from the description of the rejected Levites, would indicate this distinction. The degraded Levites are " the Levites that are gone away far from me " ; this is a class, a tribe, a whole body of people ; but the Levites that are to " *come near to do the office* of a priest " are " the sons of Zadok that kept the charge of my sanctuary ". These are individual Levites selected from the whole body of Levites. Zadok was a faithful priest, but the sons of Zadok—in the family sense—are not distinguished for faithfulness above others in Israel's history ; but individual sons of righteousness, as contrasted with the sons of Belial, there have always been. There is therefore a sparkle of beautiful analogy in the employment of a family name that should define their class, while actually specifying a prominent member of that family.

CHAPTER VIII

THE "SONS OF ZADOK"

THE employment of the phrase "the sons of Zadok" to denominate the class to which Zadok himself belongs, and of which he stands as the spiritual prototype, rather than to definite literal descendants, is in harmony with the scriptural usage exemplified in the case of Abraham. The Jews were all the seed of Abraham in the literal sense: but Jesus did not recognize them as *the children* of Abraham. He said, "I know that ye are Abraham's seed, but . . . if ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham" (John 8:37-39). Moral likeness is the ground of kinship. So the merely literal descendants of Zadok would not be the sons of Zadok in the divine use of these terms. The sons of Zadok are those who have "done the works" of Zadok in the ages of Israel's disobedience.

There is a peculiar force in this description of them. Zadok was a faithful priest; but *Zadok* is also the Hebrew word for *Righteousness*. Zadok was the leading priest figure by the side of the king under the typical reign of Solomon. That a word having all these associations and relations should be chosen to describe a class in which the personal Zadok will have a prominent and permanent place; to which the individuals composing it are admitted on the principles of personal righteousness exclusively; and who are called expressly to stand by the side of the greater than Solomon in the capacity of "priests unto God" in the day of his manifested kingly glory, is one of those dazzling beauties which are everywhere hidden under the surface of things in the Scriptures.

It is an enhancement of this great beauty that the description should be employed in connection with a matter specially calling for it—viz., the restored temple service of the age to come. The introduction of a vision on this theme almost called for a definition of the new priesthood in harmony with the temple history of which the Ezekiel temple is a renewal and continuation. The more so, because this new temple dispensation involves the dealing out of what we might call the deserts arising out of the previous one. It had been written: "Then shall ye return, and discern between . . . him that serveth God and him that serveth him not"—that is, "in that day when I make up my jewels" (Mal. 3: 16-18). The day of the restored kingdom of Israel is that day.

To Ezekiel is shewn the glory of this day; and it was appropriate that the new priesthood of the restored system should be designated with reference to the history of the old. This is done by calling them *the sons of Zadok*—that is, all of the Zadok type. That they should include many Gentiles is no difficulty, since these Gentiles cease to be Gentiles when they are incorporate with the divine polity which is wholly composed of the Zadok type—all sons of righteousness.

The opinion of some, that the Ezekiel "sons of Zadok" will be mortal blood descendants of Zadok, is irreconcilable with two things: 1—the character of the Zadok priesthood as revealed, and 2, the extent of country assigned for their occupation.

It has been revealed that the saints are to be the priests of the age to come. This is the governing element in the question. Nothing must be allowed to clash with this. The Levites, as mere Levites, are excluded on account of the part they performed in Israel's transgressions. The class chosen in their place is a selection from them because of former faithfulness with many new individuals added and

incorporate with them,—who, though originally aliens, become fellow-citizens with the household of God—built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets—and therefore forming one class with “ the priests, the Levites, the sons of Zadok ”, who stand by the side of the son of David in the glory of the Kingdom. As to the other point (the idea of a limited literal family of Zadok), it is excluded by the number provided for in the Ezekiel distribution of the land. They have assigned to them a tract of country, measuring about 50 miles from east to west and 20 miles from north to south (Ezek. 45 : 3-4). This provides an extensive domain for the sons of Zadok—irrespective of the much more extensive “ Prince’s portion ”, in which the Prince will give special inheritance to those whom he delights to honour.

CHAPTER IX

THE NEW KING (A PRINCE-PRIEST)

WH^O is this Prince who receives such prominence in the vision of the Kingdom shown to Ezekiel? Those who prefer categorical answers to their questions, will find the direct answer to this question in the information communicated to a contemporary of Ezekiel forty years after the vision shown to himself.

Ezekiel was shown the Prince-vision in the twenty-fifth year of the captivity (chapter 40 : 1). He was told to declare all that he saw to the house of Israel (verse 4). We must assume that he did as he was told, and that the prophecy, when reduced to writing, would be attentively studied by all in Israel who were of a faithful mind, among whom was

Daniel, whom we find as a student of Jeremiah (Dan. 9 : 2).

Among this class it would naturally be a matter of enquiry—Who is the Prince so prominent in this vision by Ezekiel? It is no extravagant speculation that this would be among them a moot question. Daniel would desire to know, if he had not already, as is probable, made up his mind in the light of Jer. 30 : 21. In this connection, the communication made to *himself about forty years after the date of Ezekiel's vision*, appears as a direct settlement of the question.

He had prayed, “ in the first year of Darius, the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes ”, about forty years after Ezekiel's “ five-and-twentieth year of our captivity ”, for the taking away of Israel's sins, and the return of God's favour. The answer was the message by Gabriel concerning “ the seventy weeks ” (of years) which were to end with the crucifixion of Christ, who would “ finish the transgression, make an end of sins, make reconciliation for iniquity ”. “ Know therefore and understand ”, were the angel's words, “ that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the MESSIAH *the Prince* shall be ” seventy weeks. Why should the Messiah be described here as “ the Prince ” except that the question who the Prince was had been for forty years in agitation among the faithful, ever since the publication of Ezekiel's prophecy? Whatever may have been the reason, here is a divine settlement of the question : Messiah is “ The Prince ”. The Prince is the Messiah.

This conclusion is necessitated by the royal covenant of the kingdom—the covenant made with David concerning the throne which was supplementary to that made with Abraham concerning the land.

God promised a son to David who should sit on his throne for ever (2 Sam. 7 : 13 ; Psa. 89 : 35-36 ;

Acts 2 : 30). God fulfilled this promise in raising up Jesus, as Paul told the Jewish congregation in the synagogue of Antioch (Acts 13 : 23). Peter, by the Spirit, declared on the day of Pentecost that David himself was aware that the promised son would be the Messiah : David " being a prophet, knew that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne " (Acts 2 : 29-30).

This being beyond question, we have to realize how entirely the Messiahship was an affair of *Kingship in the position originally occupied by David*. The Messiah was to be a sufferer ; he was to be a priest ; he was to be a saviour ; he was to be a conqueror. But these were but adjuncts, as we might call them, to the office and function of the Messiahship. The Messiahship itself in its foundation character is *rooted in the throne of David*. " Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne " (Psa. 132 : 11). " The Prince of Peace . . . on the throne of David, and upon his kingdom " (Isa. 9 : 6). " The Lord God shall give unto him (Jesus) the throne of his father David " (Luke 1 : 32). This is the everlasting covenant which David declares to be " all my salvation and all my desire " (2 Sam. 23 : 5) ; and the things involved therein are " the sure mercies of David " which God proposes to extend to every perishing, thirsting son of Adam who will accept them on His terms (Isa. 55 : 3).

Then we have to notice that it is in no ornamental, or sentimental, or honorary, or figurative, or spiritual sense that Christ is to occupy David's throne. He will be a King on that throne in the place where it was formerly established, and for the purpose for which David occupied it. David reigned (2 Sam. 8 : 15) ; Christ will reign (Isa. 32 : 1 ; Rev. 11 : 15). David executed justice and judgment (1 Chron. 18 : 14) ; Christ will execute

justice and righteousness in the land (Jer. 33 : 15). David made war (2 Sam. 22 : 34) : Christ will make war (Rev. 19 : 11-15).

The throne of David was *a visible institution*. Any theory that puts Jesus in the place of the angel of the covenant or the glory of the Shechinah or the divine presence in the sanctuary would exclude him from the throne of David. These all pertained to David's God, but were none of them David's throne. While Christ is David's Lord and God (as he was to Thomas—John 20 : 28), we must not forget that he is also David's son, and will *sit on David's throne*.

It is one of the peculiar glories of Christ that he blends in himself many things that were never before combined : he is both God and man ; the king and his son : the priest and the sacrifice : the Ruler and the servant ; Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending : the first and the last. We must by no means exclude him from the occupancy of David's throne. In this position, he will be " ruler in Israel ", as testified in Micah 5 : 2 ; he will reign in righteousness (Isa. 32 : 1), he will be visible in his beauty (Isa. 33 : 17). Kings and princes will come from afar to do him homage (Psa. 45 : 12 ; 72 : 11).

At his manifestation, even some who know him not will enquire about the wounds in his hands (Zech. 13 : 6). Others will claim his recognition on the ground of a previous acquaintance, saying, " We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets " (Luke 13 : 26). His relation to all the affairs of his kingdom will be as real and practical as was his relation to the affairs of his humiliation and sacrifice. He will not be in the background in the day of his glory : " Every eye shall see him ".

In his hands, the throne of David will be established for ever. Read Psalm 45 for the picture of his kingly glory. " Life, length of days for ever and

ever." "There was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom . . . his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (Dan. 7 : 14).

But there is one feature of his position that did not appertain to David. David was not a priest, though in his typical capacity he even offered sacrifices, "girt with a linen ephod" (2 Sam. 6 : 14, 18 ; 24 : 18, 25). But of Christ, his son and everlasting successor, it is written, "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek" (Psa. 110 : 4 ; Heb. 7 : 17). This priesthood of Melchizedek combined both the kingly and sacerdotal elements, and was divinely conferred on Melchizedek, and not by law of heredity. He was made priest not because of "father or mother", but because of his appointment by God. Christ is a priest after this order and not after the order of Aaron, which was constituted by birth and bounded by a limitation of age. Christ, in being after this order, is therefore a priestly prince or a princely priest, which is a perfect fulness of character. How glorious a head for Israel and mankind—a man to whom God has not only given all the authoritative and executive power of a temporal prince in matters of law and property, but whom He has also invested with the tender character of an Intercessory Friend in things pertaining to God—and all this, after a suffering life in which "he loved righteousness and hated iniquity". "Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."

He is the priest-prince of the age to come. His name as prince is of frequent occurrence ; "The Prince of the kings of the earth" (Rev. 1 : 5). The Prince of Peace (Isa. 9 : 6). Messiah, the Prince (Dan. 9 : 25). The Prince of Life (Acts 3 : 15). A Prince and a Saviour (Acts 5 : 31).

“ Messiah the Prince ” in the day of his glory by reason of his Melchizedek character is “ a priest upon his throne ”. This is expressly testified in Zechariah. “ The man whose name is THE BRANCH . . . He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne ; and he shall be a priest upon his throne ” (Zech. 6 : 12-13).

That “ the Prince ” should be the Son of God is necessitated by the office assigned to him : he is to approach to the Lord and “ make reconciliation for the house of Israel ” (Ezek. 45 : 17). Who could fill this part in the day of Christ but Christ himself ? This question is suggested by God Himself in the word by Jeremiah : “ I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith the Lord ; because they called thee an outcast, saying, This is Zion, whom no man seeketh after . . . And their nobles shall be of themselves, and their governor shall proceed from the midst of them : and I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto me : for who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me ? saith the Lord ” (Jer. 30 : 17, 21). Here is emphasis placed upon the fact that the governor of Israel under the restored regime should draw near to God in the capacity of a mediator. It is noted as a matter of surprise that a governor “ proceeding from the midst of Israel ” should be qualified for such an honourable place. It was a way of calling attention beforehand to the fact that such a one must be provided by God Himself. That Jesus is this governor is made certain by Micah’s prophecy applied apostolically to Christ : “ Out of thee (Bethlehem) shall come a Governor that shall rule my people Israel ” (Matt. 2 : 6 ; Micah 5 : 2). When we learn that this governor is the Word made flesh—“ the power of the Highest ” manifested in the seed of David—we see the answer to the question, “ Who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me ? ” It is one who is worthy, and who alone is worthy : “ My beloved Son,

in whom I am well pleased ” (Matt. 3 : 17). “ Holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners ” (Heb. 7 : 26). “ My servant, whom I uphold ; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth. I have put my spirit upon him ; he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. . . . He shall not fail nor be discouraged till he have set judgment in the earth : and the isles shall wait for his law ” (Isa. 42 : 1-4).

At present (“ a great high priest ”) he is “ passed into the heavens ” ; but his own promise and the many-times revealed purpose of God is that he will come again in the sense and manner of his departure (John 14 : 3, 28 ; Dan. 7 : 13 ; Acts 1 : 11). He remains as and where he is “ until the times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the prophets ” when “ God SHALL send him ” (Acts 3 : 19-21). He is coming to sit on the throne of David, and to be a priest upon his throne (Isa. 9 : 6 ; Zech. 6 : 13). Who could be the Prince-Priest but he ?

CHAPTER X

CHRIST AND THE JEWS AT HIS COMING

IT was foretold that “ the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice ”. “ Afterwards, they shall return, and *seek* the Lord their God, and *David their King* ” (Hos. 3 : 4, 5).

Their “ seeking ” is not an entirely enlightened one in the first case. Whether it be David in the personal sense, or David in the dynastic sense, their finding goes beyond their seeking. Like Philip, they find “ him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets

did write", in "Jesus of Nazareth" (John 1 : 45), but without at first knowing it is he, as appears.

David truly they find at last, for David with "all the prophets" of whom he was one, appears "in the Kingdom of God" at the coming of Christ—the sought and admired of the "many who shall come from the east, and the west, and the north, and the south, and sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob" (Luke 13 : 28-29). But they find him in unexpected association with one whose hands show wounds, and whose identity up to this point has been concealed from them. We learn this from Zechariah 13.

There has been some attempt to divert this prophecy from application to Christ. The attempt cannot succeed with those who know the Scriptures with the affectionate intimacy that was the rule with the saints in the apostolic and previous ages. It is the effort of sceptical learning to blot Christ from prophecy as much as it can.

The whole context of Zech. 13, in the light of the gospel of the restoration of Israel's kingdom, is decisive as to its application to Christ and Christ alone. A brief analysis will show this.

In chapter 12 we have Jerusalem in the latter days, "a burdensome stone for all people". "All that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces" : for there is divine interposition in the stress to which Jerusalem is brought "though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it". "In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem." What day this is, we learn from chapter 14—a day that has not yet come : a day when "the Lord shall go forth, and fight against those nations", and when "his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives". In that day, says chapter 12, "he that is feeble among them (the inhabitants of Jerusalem) shall be as David,

and *the house of David shall be AS GOD*, as the angel of the Lord before them ”.

The inhabitants of Jerusalem at this time only know that God has delivered them. The form of the instrumentality they have not yet understood. It dawns upon them at the next stage (verse 10). “They shall look upon *me whom they have pierced*, and they shall mourn.” Like the crowd on the day of Pentecost, whom Peter convicted of having slain the Lord’s Anointed, they are “pricked in their hearts” and in a mood to cry out, “What shall we do?” Chapter 13: 1 answers the question. “In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.” In this fountain they will cleanse themselves in the way that will be appointed. For God has said, “I will bring them into the bond of the covenant”. “I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sins no more.”

This glorious revolution accomplished in the City, the work extends to the whole land: “I will cause the prophets (that is, the false prophets) and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land” (13: 2). These prophets are an obstacle. Their number is great in the Holy Land at the present time, of all sorts, names, and complexions: Jewish Rabbis, Mahommedan Doctors, Roman Catholic Priests, Greek Fathers, Monks and Eremites and other ecclesiastics of the current abominations. It is not in human power to suppress the deep-rooted impostures that flourish everywhere in this age, and nowhere more rankly than in the Holy Land, which reeks with their lies and their defilements. The power established by the repulse and extermination of mighty armed hosts at the reappearance of Christ in the Holy Land will be equal to it, and will effect it with this result, that “It shall come to pass that when any shall yet prophesy (for the power of eccle-

siastical habit is strong) then his father and mother that begat him (so awed by the terror of the new power manifested 'according to the days of the coming out of the land of Egypt'—Micah 7 : 15-16) shall say unto him, Thou shalt not live : thou speakest lies in the name of the Lord ". (No toleration in those days. Toleration is all very well as between man and man : it is a childish chimera in the presence of the Creator's power and authority.) The effect of such vigorous measures is thorough. " The prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision . . . neither shall they wear a rough garment to deceive." They will acknowledge the fictitious character of the position they now sustain with such unction (and with much pious pretence). Their reformed attitude will be that of the man who says, " I am no prophet, but—" a mere cattle-drover in true nature ; " man taught me to keep cattle from my youth ".

And now comes the verse about the wounds, which the sceptical interpreter contends applies to the supposed cattle-drover : a verse which with such a sense has no meaning ; " And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands ? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends." Of what consequence to any mortal whatever, could wounds in an impostor's hands be ? On the face of it, such an application is devoid of rational significance. If the critic say it can have no other application in the context except such as may be artificially created, his attention has to be called to two things that close his mouth and give to the prophecy a totally different meaning with much of sense, significance, and importance, of which his interpretation is entirely lacking. The first is the absence of an expressed nominative to the verb " shall say ". " One " is absent from the original, as the italics in the Common Version intimate to the English reader. The words we have really to deal with are, " and shall say ". The question *who*

shall say, is determinable with reference to the nature of the subject entirely ; in which we shall find there is perfect guidance. In verse 5, we have "*He shall say*": that is, the false prophet ; for he shall say " I am no prophet ". But in verse 6, the speaker is not specified : and if we are to supply the hiatus from verse 5, we should be obliged to put in "*The false prophet shall say*". Shall say to whom ? "*Shall say unto him*". Here is another person introduced with wounds in his hands : " What are those wounds in thine hands ? "

The second point is this, that the identity of this hand-wounded personage is settled for us by an immediate appendix which can apply to none but Christ. " Awake, O sword, against *my shepherd*—against the man that is MY FELLOW, saith the Lord of hosts. Smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered, and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones." This 7th verse is in the nature of an explanatory parenthesis, thrown into the description of Israel's latter-day deliverance to account for the wounds of the principal actor. The speaker's account of the wounds is, " They are those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends "

That he should give such an account in the day of his manifestation to Israel in power and glory, is most suitable and telling. That an explanation should be introduced in the prophecy at a time when the wounds were not yet matter of history, is part of the completeness of the prophecy. Its fulfilment is explicitly before us in the apostolic history, both as regards the shepherd and the little ones. Christ himself makes the application (Matt. 26 : 31), so that we are not on speculative ground. The smiting of the shepherd is too notorious to require more than the most general reference to the crucifixion, which inflicted hand-wounds that remain with Christ for ever. The turning of God's (supporting) hand to the little ones is illustrated in the miracle-

attested labours of the Apostles when Christ had left them.

Verse 7 is a parenthesis. Verse 8 resumes the account of the latter-day events in the land, including the subjection of the Jewish population of Palestine to a fiery ordeal that purifies and fits them for citizenship in the kingdom which their Messiah has at last arrived to establish.

But, it may be asked, why should conforming false prophets or any other class, make the wounds the subject of enquiry? We do not say the enquirer is a conforming false prophet. The hiatus above referred to might be filled in in other ways. The absence of a specific nominative shows that the pith of the verse lies in the question and not in the personality of the questioner. It would be sufficiently represented in idiomatic English if we were to read it, "And it shall be said unto him"—it matters not particularly by whom.

A consideration of the salvation to which it stands related will show to us that it is a perfectly natural question in the circumstances. Deliverance has come to Israel—miraculous deliverance—equal to anything that happened in Egypt, or to Assyrians under Sennacherib. And Jerusalem knows that the deliverance is the act of their God by the hand of the long-promised one. This promised one the Jews even now look for as destined to be of the house of David though at the time of his manifestation "no man knoweth whence he is". This was their idea in the days of Jesus (John 7 : 27). It was one of their difficulties in receiving Jesus that they knew his origin as they supposed; "of Nazareth".

When Christ at his appearing in the first instance delivers them from the Gogian invader, it will seem that their traditional idea has been realized, and their opposition to Jesus vindicated. Messiah,

the son of David, has appeared, and shattered the terrible power of their foe ; and no man knows whence he has sprung. He overthrows, expels, and exterminates the invader, and brings the iron rod of suppression on all the superstitions and idolatries that infest the land, and for a time conceals his identity, like Joseph, from his brethren. A suitable moment for the disclosure arrives. He allows himself on some special occasion to be freely seen, and contrives to exhibit the nail-wounds of his hands.

There is no idea of his being Jesus. That idea will have been triumphantly dismissed in view of the total discrepancy between the deeds of this man, and the Jesus of the sects of Christendom who is the only Jesus the Jews know anything about. And this man will have so totally ignored Christendom, and will have been so totally disowned by them as a false Christ, that any idea of his being Jesus of Nazareth will be out of the question with the Jews to the last moment. His handwounds are therefore a matter of curious enquiry merely, to which the enquirers address themselves with all confidence.

“What are these wounds in thine hands? *Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.*” We can enter into the sequel: “They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son.” What a signal for Jewish humiliation throughout the world ! What a confounding of Gentile pretensions ! With what an interest the sufferings of Christ invest the glory, as the sale of Joseph into bitter bondage paved the way for his elevation, and for the pathos of his revelation afterwards to the brothers who sold him. All these considerations invest the wound-prophecy of Zechariah with the utmost dignity and significance and pathetic interest, of which the cattle-drover interpretation would totally deprive it.

CHAPTER XI

CHRIST AND THE NEW TEMPLE

WHEN we go with Ezekiel to one of "the high mountains of Israel", and overlook the sanctuary of Messiah the Prince's age, outspread at our feet "as the frame of a city on the South", we look upon a structure excelling all previous temples in dimensions and beauty, as shown in the architectural demonstration of Mr. H. Sulley, architect, Nottingham. Looking upon it, we are looking on the very locality that witnessed the Lord's agony and crucifixion 1900 years ago. We are looking on the very hill on which he stood and said with tears in his eyes, "Ye shall not see me henceforth, *till ye shall say*, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord". We are surveying the very scene which heard his parting word, "If I go away, I will come again."

In Ezekiel's company, we are also witnesses of this promised coming again, the time having arrived for the Jews to accept him after so many ages of rejection.

The glory of the Lord enters the house by the gate "whose prospect is towards the east". Then from within, Ezekiel is addressed thus: "Son of Man, (this is) *the place of my throne*, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever" (43 : 1, 7). Afterwards, he is brought back by the way of the same gate and finds it shut, and is informed, "It shall not be opened, and no man shall enter in by it; because the Lord, the God of Israel, hath entered in by it . . . *It is for the prince*; the prince, he shall sit in it to eat bread before the Lord; *he shall enter* by the way

of the porch of that gate, and he shall go out by the way of the same " (44 : 2, 3).

The apparent distinction between the God of Israel who enters the house and the Prince, who alone uses the gate by which the glory enters, has led some to suppose that the Prince is distinct from the entering glory. In a sense he is distinct, the sense, namely, affirmed by Christ when he says, " The Son of Man will come in his glory ", and " the glory of his Father ". But in another sense he is one with the entering glory. Their identity is obvious from the very wording of the statement concerning the eastern gate.

This proves that the Prince is no mortal man, but Christ. Man shall not enter that gate because God has entered: the Prince may enter—shall enter. He will freely and familiarly use the gate by which God has entered. This shows that the Prince is an element of the divine glory that entered. If the Prince were a mortal man, we have a prohibitory regulation stultifying itself—enacting that no man shall enter, and then providing that a man shall enter.

Jesus, though a man in the days of his flesh, is now " the Lord, the Spirit ", in whom dwells the fulness of the Godhead bodily (Col. 2 : 9). That he should sit in the gate consecrated by the divine entrance is according to the fitness of things.

Then this " eating bread before the Lord " can only apply to Christ. That it was associated in Israel's mind with the immortal inheritance of the kingdom, is evident from the remark of one of Christ's hearers when he was on the earth: " Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God " (Luke 14 : 15). That Jesus associated the act in the same way is evident from his promise to his disciples, " I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me ; that ye may eat and drink at my

table in my kingdom " (Luke 22 : 29, 30). The character of this eating could not better be defined than by saying it is "before the LORD". Jesus calls the kingdom "My Father's Kingdom" (Matt. 26 : 29). All that is done in it is "before" him: in his presence: by his sanction, under his protection, under his auspices; and therefore having a glory and stability that never appertained before to any domestic, social, or political procedure of man.

We may learn something on the subject from a glance at Rome, where the anti-Christ has been enthroned for centuries. The false exhibits the semblance of the true, as all counterfeits do.

In Rome, the falsely so-called "Eternal City", we have a priest claiming to be the prince of the kings of the earth, and having under him a vast body of priests scattered through the earth as the organs of his authority. We see him claiming a false infallibility, and periodically and falsely posing in the eyes of the populations as the guardian of human interests, as the father of the faithful, and the shepherd of mankind.

We see in Rome a prince-priest claiming to be "higher than the kings of the earth"; and we behold him on fitting occasion surrounded by his cardinals, taking part in the public ceremonies of the Papal religion.

In Jerusalem, the world will yet see "Messiah, the Prince", Yahweh's firstborn and higher than all the kings and rulers, take part with majestic condescension in the feasts and appointed times, in the service of Yahweh, surrounded by his brethren, in their very midst, exalting Yahweh's praise, recounting His mercies, and showing forth the honours of His name, "When the people are gathered together, and the kingdoms, to serve the Lord" (Psa. 102 : 22). "The people of the land shall worship at the door of this gate before the Lord; on the sabbaths

and in the new moons . . . And when the Prince shall enter, he shall go in by the way of the porch of that gate, and he shall go forth by the way thereof." To himself and all who are members of him, he shall say, " The Lord hath chastened me sore : but he hath not given me over unto death. Open to me the gates of righteousness : I will go into them, and I will praise the Lord : this gate of the Lord, into which the righteous shall enter. I will praise thee, for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation. The stone which the builders refused is become the headstone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing : it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made ; we will rejoice and be glad in it. Save now, I beseech thee, O Lord. I beseech thee send now prosperity. Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord : we have blessed you out of the house of the Lord " (Psa. 118 : 18-26).

Those who think it incompatible with the greatness of Christ that he should perform such a lowly part are unconsciously animated by the false sentiment which, in the first century, led many to deny the reality of his sufferings, and ultimately to deny the reality of his appearing in the flesh. These thinking to honour Christ were wise above that which is written : and those who deny him his place as the Prince make a similar mistake. Their human sentiments would really mar and hide the glory of Christ in the affairs of the Kingdom as the others did in the affairs of his sufferings. " Lord, this shall not be unto thee ", is not a new form of well-meant antagonism to divine wisdom.

Christ, the prince-priest of the age to come, will certainly be great beyond compare, but his greatness will be manifested by those very acts of condescending service which are considered inconsistent with his dignity. In the days of his flesh, he washed the disciples' feet. In the days of his glory, it will be no

true humiliation that he worship at the appointed gate and offer his sacrifices, and show himself to the people. "It shall be the Prince's part to give burnt offerings, and meat offerings, and drink offerings, in the feasts, and in the new moons, and in the sabbaths, in all solemnities of the house of Israel: he shall prepare the sin offering, and the meat offering, and the burnt offering, and the peace offerings, to make reconciliation for the house of Israel" (Ezek. 45: 17). The Prince prepares these only as a king does anything, that is, by the hands of those around him, who act to his direction literally. "*The priests shall prepare his burnt offering and his peace offerings, and he shall worship at the threshold of the gate*" (46: 2).

CHAPTER XII

THE NEW WORSHIP

THERE are special times for the people to take part in the worship. "The people of the land shall worship at the door of this gate (the eastern gate of the inner court) before the Lord in the sabbaths and in the new moons" (46: 3). When they do so, they observe a particular method of coming in and going out. They enter and depart in two streams, north and south, none returning by the way he came (verse 9). By this all the confusion to which the movements of immense multitudes is liable will be avoided. By this arrangement, also, the Prince and his attendants are secured from mob embarrassment. The people use the north and south entrances exclusively. The east side is set apart for the Prince; but the people in their passage, at the appointed seasons, from north to south, or

vice versa, pass by this east side by the inner face of the gate of the inner court, yet outside the temple proper, which encloses the most holy (circular) limits of the mountain (43 : 12). This gives the point of contact between the Prince and the people. This gate is "shut the six working days ; but on the sabbath it shall be opened, and in the day of the new moon it shall be opened" (46 : 1). When the people muster at these appointed times, the Prince, who is described as "in their midst", enters the sanctuary also (verse 10), but not in the same way : "When the prince shall enter, he shall go in by the way of the porch of that gate, and he shall go forth by the way thereof" (verse 8). By the way of the porch of what gate ? Verse 1, 2, supplies the answer : "*The gate of the inner court that looketh toward the east shall be shut the six working days ; but on the sabbath and in the day of the new moons it shall be opened : and the prince shall enter by the way of the porch of that gate without (or outside).*" This is quite intelligible when we understand that the Prince on these occasions enters from without on the east side.

The outer and the inner gates require to be distinguished to prevent confusion. Both are involved in these descriptions. "The gate of the outward sanctuary that looketh toward the east"—(that is, the outmost gate on the eastern side)—is never opened to the people at all. "No man shall enter in by it ; because the Lord, the God of Israel, hath entered in by it, therefore it shall be shut. *It is for the Prince* : he shall sit in it to eat bread before the Lord ; he shall enter by the way of the porch of that gate, and shall go out by the way of the same" (44 : 1-3). The whole eastern side and the buildings and court belonging to it are in the exclusive occupation of the Prince and his companions. But he is not there at all times. He is often in "the Prince's portion", which lies east and west of the

holy oblation, and comprises, as before said, an ample domain of many thousands of square miles, in which he assigns special inheritance to his sons for ever (46 : 16). Here he spends oft-recurring seasons of delightful communion with them in the rural delights of Paradise restored. But at the appointed seasons, he repairs to the sanctuary to lead the worship of rejoicing multitudes. How does he then enter? He enters both by the outer and the inner gate (44 : 3 provides the first ; 46 : 1, 2, for the second). His entrance by both is necessary, for he meets the people who are in the inner court in front of the temple proper (46 : 10) ; and to meet them he must pass through both outer and inner court gates. If it be said that Christ would not need to have doors opened to him, we have to remember that while all miracle is possible, miracle is not the normal exercise of divine power. It is special for special ends, as in every case where it has been performed. The Kingdom of God is the accommodation of immortal rulers to mortal needs while the human race is in process of being brought back to union with God ; during such a process, faith is, doubtless, as much a necessity for the mortal population as it now is for the saints. It is, therefore, according to the fitness of things that all should be apparently natural, and that the institutions proposed for obedience should be such as have authority only for their basis, as in the case of all kinds of sacrifice and offering. The express provision for the entry of the Prince, first by the one gate, then by the other is, therefore, in keeping with the whole institution and its objects.

Imagining him having entered by the outer gate, as provided for by 44 : 1-3, he is in the gate buildings, or, it may be, in the court among his brethren, the sons of Zadok. In this situation, we understand what happens to fulfil the description of 46 : 2. He crosses the outer court and enters the

outer porch of the inner gate opposite. This, which is shut the six working days, is now thrown open, and the Prince passing through, finds the people massed at the door of that gate on the other side, that is, the inner. He then offers the required offerings and leads the worship offered by the people (verses 2-3), in which we know glorious singing forms a part (40 : 44). The gladsome stirring exercises complete, the Prince retires by the way he came, but the inner gate at which he stood is left open until evening (46 : 2). The outer gate is always kept closed and used only by the Prince and his own. The change to take place at the close of the thousand years may include the removal of this restriction. We cannot be sure of details that have not been revealed ; but it is likely that when all are immortal and the kingdom given up to the Father, all the barriers implying a distinction between the immortal and the mortal will be abolished. But while the thousand years continue, the whole eastern side of the sanctuary is closed, except to the Prince. The inner gate is open sometimes, and notably on the days on which the Prince has offered sacrifice in the presence of the people. It is no imagination that fancies the streaming reverent multitudes lingering a little as they pass, to contemplate the spot made holy by the Lord's actual appearance earlier in the day.

The sanctuary in its entirety, with all its arrangements and ordinances, is the topstone of the new political edifice that will be reared upon the earth when the God of heaven has set up the kingdom that He hath promised to them that love Him. It is the most conspicuous feature of the tabernacle of David rebuilt in the times of the restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His prophets since the world began.

David himself is there as one of the prophets and the fathers whom Jesus has plainly indicated as

then present (Luke 13:28). But THE PRINCE is David's son, for this is promised—that David's son shall sit on David's throne in David's presence (Luke 1:32; Acts 2:30; 2 Sam. 7:16; Psa. 89:3, 4; 34-36). The title, "Prince", has lost some of its meaning in modern times. It has come to signify a secondary dignity, as defining the heir to the throne rather than the occupant of the throne. It was not so in ancient times; it signified the sovereign ruler, as the reader will discover in consulting all the instances of its use in the Scriptures. It is with this sense we must read it in the prophecy of the temple. Reading it thus, the identity of the Prince is settled beyond question; for who is sovereign ruler in the Kingdom of God but Christ, the seed of the woman, the seed of Abraham, the Son of David and Son of God? That he should be the chief in things pertaining to God—that he should be the high priest as well as the sovereign ruler—is one of the exquisite beauties of the coming government, as contrasted with present governments.

CHAPTER XIII

SACRIFICE IN THE NEW ERA

THE central principle of the Kingdom of God is the worship and service of God, as distinguished from human governments, which propose merely the repression and regulation of man. What more befitting than that the head of the kingdom should appear most conspicuously in connection with exercises and appointments that have direct and open reference to God?

This is the case with sacrifice. Sacrifice gets its whole meaning from God's existence and God's

claims. Nothing could bring Him so distinctly before the mind. In the case of the heirs of the kingdom, it is the sacrifice of God's own son—the real Lamb of God—whose spotless offering up “through the Eternal Spirit” is memorialized every first day of the week in the breaking of bread. Enlightened intelligence never engages in this memorial act without having God opened to the view, Who required this sacrifice at the hands of His Son, that we might be “redeemed unto God by his blood”. What if some eat and drink unworthily, undiscerningly; the true nature of the institution remains.

But in its political bearings, the recurring actual sacrifice of the typical animal is more effective. Hence, under the law, it was the type that was kept in the front, with faith behind; and hence, under the kingdom restored, the typical animals are again employed in leading the population into an acceptable attitude to God. This will not be questioned by those who know the testimony in the case. Some such may think it incongruous that the Prince (being Christ and none other) should offer these sacrifices, which include sin-offerings; but the incongruity disappears and actually changes into a suitability that is ravishing when we realize that the offerer of these typical and memorial offerings in the temple restored, is the very Lamb of God who offered his own body on the cross in his character as the anti-typical high priest.

There is something sublime in the arrangement by which, in the day of his headship over all people on earth, he will thus publicly identify himself with the one acceptable offering, in a performance which was typical under the old covenant, and is again typical under the new, “in lambs and bullocks slain”. In such recurring exercises of service, immortal strength in Jesus and the saints finds scope for congenial and constant activity. Christ is to eat

the passover and drink the memorial wine with his disciples in the kingdom of God: for so he said (Luke 22 : 16-18). What is there more out of keeping in his also offering the memorial sacrifices which derive their chief meaning from himself? It is revealed that he will do this: and all human objections, advanced on whatever ground, are only so many high thoughts, exalting themselves against the knowledge of God.

The whole drift of prophecy involves the temple idea amplified in Ezekiel. If God is to set up a kingdom in which He will govern the nations by His appointed and anointed king (Dan. 2 : 44 ; 7 : 14 ; Micah 4 : 1-4), and if this kingdom is to be the kingdom of David restored (Amos 9 : 11), worship must necessarily be its governing feature, and this involves the apparatus of worship; for though worship is of the heart, and an act for every place, yet it seeks appropriate forms and times of expression, especially in national life. And this it is purposed to provide in a new temple, eclipsing all previous erections. This is declared in such forms as these:—Many people shall go and say, “ Let us go up to . . . the HOUSE of the God of Jacob ” (Isa. 2 : 3). The nations “ shall go up from year to year unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts . . . In that day there shall be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS TO THE LORD; and the pots in the LORD’S HOUSE shall be like the bowls before the altar ” (Zech. 14 : 16, 20). “ The glory of this latter house shall be greater than that of the former ” (Hag. 2 : 9). “ Because of thy temple at Jerusalem shall kings bring presents unto thee ” (Psa. 68 : 29). “ He (the Branch) shall build the temple of the Lord ” (Zech. 6 : 12). “ I will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore ” (Ezek. 37 : 26, 28). “ I will make the place of my feet glorious ” (Isa. 60 : 13).

All this is opposed to the current of religious public opinions. But it cannot be contradicted where the Bible is known and accepted. Whatever God appoints must be suitable and beautiful. He has appointed that restored sacrifice shall be a feature of the provisional dispensation of the age to come ; and He has appointed that Christ and the saints shall be the kings and priests, who shall, in that age, rule mankind, and offer those sacrifices ; we have but to enquire reverently what may be the object of such an arrangement. We are informed what the object is. “ From the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same *my name shall be great among the Gentiles* ; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering : *for my name shall be great among the heathen* ” (Mal. 1 : 11). It is not possible to conceive a better method of exalting the name of God among the populations of the earth than by requiring a ceremony which has no meaning apart from the supremacy of God, and the utter humiliation of man. Ceremony is usually shaped with a view to human honour or human comfort ; but here is a ceremony which has nothing to do with either. It is not merely for the happiness of man that Christ reigns, but first for the honour of God ; and the happiness of man requires that his dependence on God and the headship of God be kept before his attention in some special way. Sacrifice is the way, and no better could be imagined—sacrifice on every approach.

Sacrifice not only brings the supremacy of God into the foreground : it goes back to the breach that separated man from God, and plunged him into all the evils resulting from self-management. This is perhaps the most beautiful of all the beautiful features of the Kingdom of God—this feature of reminiscence in the kingdom—this going back upon the past—the justifying of the ways of God during

the dark history through which the world is now passing.

In all human changes of fortune for the better, the past ignominies are covered out of sight and forgotten as fast as possible ; because those ignominies were not part of any plan on the part of those suffering them. They were in the chapter of accidents ; they stood related to no principle. In the Kingdom of God, it is different in every way. Not only the deliverance, but the evil from which deliverance has taken place, is of God, and is therefore kept in sight as having a reason in them while at the time appearing to outrage all reason.

That the world should suffer is a mystery apart from its explanation : that the friends of God should be in affliction is a dark enigma, if looked at without reference to its object ; above all, that the sinless Son of God should have been called upon to endure such contradiction of sinners against himself, and to submit to such a terrible end, looked at by itself, is an inexplicable violation of every principle of righteousness. Yet all is righteous and all will be understood in the happy day that is coming when " the knowledge of the glory of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea ".

CHAPTER XIV

SUNRISE

WHEN Christ has returned to the earth to take charge of its distracted affairs, the sun will have risen upon our long and dark night, and the day will have begun.

This is the figure made use of by the Spirit of God in David in his "last words", wherein he refers to this coming reign of Christ as "the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds" (2 Sam. 23 : 4). The figure is beautiful and entirely applicable. A beautiful morning is always a joy, but how much more after a night of special trouble. Who that has endured the horrors of a prolonged night in circumstances of danger by land or sea, has not felt gladness when the sun has risen in brightness, and filled the sky and earth with beams of healing warmth and light? The very sparkle of the dewdrop and the brilliant emerald of Nature's smiling face, as it opens to the effulgence of the advancing King of Day, seems to thrill the heart with delight. Thus, in a sense inexpressible, it will be at the end of the earth's troubled history.

The Scriptures speak of the present state of things upon the earth as "the night" and Christ as the sun. How dark that night is—gross darkness—we do not realize at first, because we naturally belong to the night, and owls and bats do not think the night oppressively dark. When our minds open to the light, then we see how dark is the night that has for so many ages oppressed the earth. Even men whose eyes have not been opened are aware that there is something terribly anomalous and evil in

the present state of things. The sufferings of all classes, and the efforts of every kind to bring mitigation to the state of man, bear witness to the terrible truth. Even after so many thousand years, men are discussing whether life is worth living. What hope is there of any change if the instrumentality continues the same ?

There has been improvement in the appliances of material comfort. We can travel more quickly, communicate more rapidly, manufacture more easily, and labour more cheaply. The employment of machinery in every department of human effort would seem to promise an age of rest and amelioration for all. But the promise is as far as ever from fulfilment. The blessedness of mankind is not increased by these advantages. Why ? For lack of that supreme direction in the application of them which is necessary to get the blessedness out of them. This requires a governing will superior to man's—a will that not only knows what is good for man, but with wisdom and power to enforce it even against man, like a father in his own family.

So long as law rests with man, he will legislate in harmony with the inclinations and tendencies of man under whatever form of government he may devise them, and there must necessarily always be failure. It is not in the capacity of man to recognize the glory of God as the chief end of human life, and kindness to man as the chief law of human behaviour. There may always be a minority of exceptions : but it is not in their power to devise, still less to enforce, a system of law among men that will give these things their scope and effect. And even if the feeble minority were to become a majority, they could never protect any good system from the disintegrating effects of ceaseless change and the inevitable " decline and fall " that comes to the best and most powerful of human institutions.

The one element that is needed can never be provided from human resources—the element of stability that would result from deathlessness and irresistibility in the administrators of a divine system of law. There is, therefore, no hope in human directions. Human politics are but the restless heavings of a turbid sea, on which governments become more and more what Carlyle used to call the drowned carcasses of animals floating in the current. The waves rise in response to the spouting gales, and there is plenty of activity, but no progress towards real human weal. The man who knows and believes the Bible is emancipated from the necessity and pain of a vain looking in this direction for hope.

The messenger of good tidings will come ; but never from the tumult of human chaos. He will come from the shining heights of Heaven's prevailing purpose. " God shall send Jesus Christ . . . whom the heaven must receive until ——" (Acts 3 : 20-21). This is the hope, and the only hope. The past is the pledge of the future in the matter. Christ has been in the earth. The earth is already filled with his name. Let him come again, and all will be well. He was a blessing when he was here ; he will bless as never before when he is in the earth again ; for he comes to fulfil the long-standing promise that all families of the earth shall be blessed in Abraham and in his seed. He will do this in the only way in which it can be done, as even meditative intelligence now perceives : by setting up a single government that will absorb all others, and such a government as the world has never seen before—a government that cannot be successfully resisted, a government that cannot err, and a government that cannot be changed by decay or death ; a government governing in the fear of God, and in the love of man and in the practice of truth and mercy and justice ; without respect of persons or permission of the people.

This is the promise and pledge of divine wisdom and power. It is the true goal of human hope—the true end of human history. The world-wide tradition of “a good time coming” has no other foundation than this. It can never, in the nature of things, be realized apart from it.

They were no empty words in which Jesus proclaimed himself “the Light of the World”, yet the fulness of their meaning will not be manifest till the day contemplated in the last words of David —“He shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds”. Many other beautiful declarations of the Scriptures on the subject will then have their full illustration, of which the following are a few examples :—

“Arise, shine : for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people : but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising . . . Thy people also shall be all righteous : they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified ” (Isa. 60 : 1-3, 21).

“Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment. And a man shall be as a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest ; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land ” (Isa. 32 : 1-2).

“He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass : as showers that water the earth. In his days shall the righteous flourish ; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth . . . He shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor . . . His name shall endure for ever : his name shall be continued as long as the sun : and men

shall be blessed in him : all nations shall call him blessed " (Psa. 72).

" Sing, O heavens, and be joyful, O earth, and break forth into singing, O mountains : for the Lord hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted " (Isa. 49 : 13).

" In this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory ; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces ; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth : for the Lord hath spoken it. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God ; we have waited for him, and he will save us : this is the Lord ; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation " (Isa. 25 : 6-9).

" Therefore my people . . . shall know in that day that I am he that doth speak ; behold, it is I. How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace ; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation ; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth ! . . . Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem ; for the Lord hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem . . . Behold, my servant shall deal prudently ; he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high . . . The kings shall shut their mouths at him : for that which had not been told them shall they see, and that which they had not heard shall they consider " (Isa. 52 : 6, 7, 9, 13, 15).

" Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his

people, and God himself shall be with them and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes ; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain : for the former things are passed away ” (Rev. 21 : 3-4).

“ And there shall be no more curse : but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it ; and his servants shall serve him : and they shall see his face ; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there ; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun ; for the Lord God giveth them light : and they shall reign for ever and ever ” (Rev. 22 : 3-5).

“ And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true : and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done . . . He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus ! ” (Rev. 22 : 6, 20).