

removed by the conduct of an overruling Providence, and the truth will universally prevail.

Dear brother, it is in a very rough manner I have glanced at so large a field. I have written, because I love you, and I love the truth, and know that we in this large city want help. We have had many years of contention on these matters; we have all sects and parties advocating these subjects; and not a few among the Reformation. With me, the *simple gospel*, which ought to be first with them, seems to be last; or, perhaps, lost sight of altogether: and, I think I may say, it seemed so with yourself. Be assured, brother, whatever view we take of these matters, it is only as we develop to men that God is love—giving them to apprehend that love in the gift of *Jesus*, that we can successfully preach so that men may be saved.

That you may be the means of turning many from darkness to light, such as will finally be saved, is the prayer of

Your's, in the Glorious Hope,

JOHN BLACK.

DR. THOMAS' REPLY TO MR. JOHN BLACK.

DEAR BROTHER.—You say truly, that the subject to which you have called my attention embraces "a large field." I fully appreciate your motive in addressing me. I feel assured that you "do love truth," and though we yet differ in its interpretation, that does not affect my conviction of your sincerity. I am persuaded, that you have no bye-ends to subserve in these matters more than I have; it therefore gives me pleasure to hear your objections and difficulties, and to do the best I can to co-operate with you in causing the light to shine, that all may be established and enlarged.

The points which seem to demand principal notice in your epistle, are,—

1. That this mortal state in which we dwell, being so corrupt, must be changed, before Jesus Christ can dwell here.
2. That *God will give up* the kingdom to Jesus.
3. That the kingdom, and the everlasting kingdom, are two essentially different institutions.
4. That the resurrection of the just and unjust, and the judgment day, are simultaneous, or synchronical.
5. That "the restitution of all things," is synonymous with the *accomplishment of all things*.
6. That God proposed to fill the earth with the knowledge of the Lord, and effect all other things named in Isaiah xi., by the influence of the gospel preached on or before Pentecost.
7. That the coming of Jesus in person to accomplish the things of Isaiah xi., would not agree with "*the nature of things*, and God's way of dealing with men."

8. That when Jesus comes the second time, "hope will cease," so that a personal reign must put an end to the conversion of sinners, and the fitting of saints for the glorified state.

9. That the Jews are not to be related to a literal Jerusalem because they shall "no more say, The ark of the covenant," &c., Jer. iii. 16: that the bringing in of the Jews is not literal, but spiritual.

10. That because it is written "Jerusalem is above," we do not want a literal Jerusalem.

11. That the building up of the tabernacle of David, and setting up its ruins, means the ingathering of the Gentiles.

12. That Christians are the true circumcision.

13. That the kingdom was set up on Pentecost.

14. That the present is the "gospel dispensation" in which God is preparing a kingdom.

Such appear to be the fourteen points of your letter concerning which you would have me to consider.

There seems to me to be this deficiency pervading the reasonings of the letter before me, viz., a right use of the words, "*literal* and *spiritual*." These terms, I perceive, are used as opposites. They are not so used, however, in Scripture, nor in good English authors. *Literal* is that which belongs to the letter of a language, the meaning of which is alone determinable *by the rules of speech*. It may either be *exact* or *figurative*. The *exact literal* means precisely what is said; the figurative, means something else than the words import in the lexicon. Thus we say, "the kettle boils;" if this be interpreted *exactly* literal, the interpretation is untrue and absurd; but, if it be construed *figuratively*, as it always is, according to a *law* of figurative speech, it may be strictly true; for by metonymy, which uses one word for another, as the *kettle* for the *water* it contains, the *exact* signification of the figurative speech is, that "the water boils." Figurative speech is based upon real things. A *real rock* must first exist before there could be a figurative one; but they who make the figurative application must define its meaning. *Common use* has defined the figurative meaning of the *exact* phrase, "the kettle boils;" but in things scriptural, common use, or custom, which is human tradition, is without authority. In the Sacred Writings, it is the Spirit of God alone that makes a figurative application of real things, and defines its signification. Thus Moses smote a real rock in the wilderness; the Spirit has made a figurative application of that rock to signify a man; and hath explained that "the rock was the Anointed One," that is, *representative* of Jesus, "the stone of stumbling and rock of offence to both the houses of Israel;" for according to the Hebrew idiom, when one thing is representative of another thing it is said to be the very thing itself; as "this bread *is* my body," &c. If this had been understood there never would, or could, have been any disputes about transub, or consubstantiation.

use, "hope will cease," so
 conversation of sinners, and
 a literal Jerusalem because
 covenant," etc., Jer. iii. 16.
 d, but spiritual.
 a is above," we do not want
 he of David, and setting up
 them.
 words.
 textual.
 proposition" in which God is
 of your letter concerning
 regarding the reasonings of
 words, "literal and spiritual."
 They are not so used
 the authors. *Literal* is that
 the meaning of which is plain
 either be exact or figurative;
 the figurative, means some-
 other. Thus we say, "the
 literal, the interpretation is
 d figuratively, as it always
 it may be strictly true; for
 rather, as the *literal* for the
 the figurative speech is, that
 used upon real things. A
 be a figurative one; but they
 show its meaning. Compare
 the exact phrase, "the *literal*
 a, or custom, which is human
 red Writings, it is the Spirit
 nation of real things, and de-
 a real rock in the wilderness;
 an of that rock to signify a
 was the Anointed One," that
 mashing and rock of offense
 according to the Hebrew
 another thing it is said to be
 lady," etc. If this had been
 here been any disputes about

Hence then the literal is either *exact* or *figurative*; and the figurative
 is either of *traditional* or *scriptural* signification. When an exact or
 lexicographical and syntactical interpretation of the Word of God makes
 sense of itself, and harmonizes with the general teaching of Scripture,
 reason dictates its reception as the truth; but, if it makes nonsense, or
 does not harmonize with every passage of the Word, the interpretation
 should be rejected, or held only as an opinion. Now as tradition is
 human, it is of the earth earthly, carnal, natural or animal; hence what
 it teaches are "earthly things;" but Holy Scripture is of God, com-
 municated from him by his Spirit, its knowledge comes from heaven, so
 that its revelations which to us relate to things past, present, and to
 come, are "spiritual," "or heavenly things." Hence *spiritual* is not
 the opposite of "*literal*," but the antithesis of "earthly," "natural,"
 "carnal," "human." In other words, "spiritual," are *the things revealed*
and appointed of God, and which will become ACTUAL when his promises
are accomplished—they are "the things which God hath prepared for
 them that love him; and which he hath revealed unto us by his Spirit,
 that we might know the things that are freely given us (by promise) of
 God, which things we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom
 teaches, but in the words which the Holy Spirit teaches; expressing
 spiritual things in spiritual words. 1 Cor. vii. 15. *This spiritual lan-*
guage must be grammatically construed, or it cannot be understood.

These few remarks on the *literal* and *spiritual* will supersede the
 necessity of any subsequent dissertation in connection with the letter in
 hand. Now just turn if you please to point 1, and read it, as I shall
 now say a word or two concerning it.

Point 1. The present corrupt state of our mundane system creates a
 necessity for the presence of a Divine governor among the nations. If
 the present state were incorrupt and holy, and men were doing the will
 of God, "as it is done in heaven," there would be no necessity for the
 personal presence of God's vicegerent. He comes to make God's laws
 victorious and respected; which the experience of 5933 full years has
 proved never will gain the supremacy in the absence of God, or his re-
 presentative. Jesus has dwelt here once. He was then pure, holy,
 just, separate, and undefiled. His character is the same now though
 his body is deathless, and as resplendent as when clothed in the majesty
 of his glory on Tabor's mount. I see no reason why that which hath
 been in Israel's land already, should not also be again. The nature of
 spiritual things, not of earthly things I admit, declares it; and the
 positive declaration of the Word affirms that it will be so, for it is
 written, "Of the fruit of thy body, O David, will I (Jehovah) set upon
 thy throne; for the Lord hath chosen Zion (where David's throne was)
 he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest *for ever*—here
 will I dwell—for I have desired it. There will I make the horn of
 Daniel to bud. I have ordained a lamp (a light to enlighten the

Gentiles and to be the glory of my people Israel) for mine Anointed, David. Psa. cxxxii. "Then the moon shall be confounded and the sun ashamed when the Lord of Hosts (Jesus) shall reign on Mount Zion, and on Jerusalem, and before his ancients (the Prophets, and Apostles, and Saints) gloriously." Isa. xxiv.

Point 2. If you turn to 1 Cor. xv. 23—28, you will find you have erred in the reading of it. It is not God who is to deliver up the Kingdom to Jesus, but Jesus who is to deliver up the Kingdom to God when the end comes. Verse 23 speaks of the coming of Christ; verse 24—26, of his retaining the Kingdom *till* he hath put down all the rule, authority, and power of the enemy, and death itself; and that the accomplishing of this marks THE END of the strife and enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent; when the former gains the victory. In verse 27 is a quotation from Psa. viii. where the subjection of all things on earth to the Son of Man, is decreed. There is but one exception to this subjection. While the Son is to have the preeminence in and over all things here as long as death, and sin, and the curse endure, yet, when the Melchisedec, or Rego-Priestly, kingdom is surrendered, the Father is to be all and in all, and the Son next to him, as the first subject of his Father.

Point 3. The Scriptures make no distinction between the "temporal" and "everlasting," when speaking of the Kingdom of God. The "Everlasting Kingdom" is temporal, for it belongs to time. It will last throughout the future age, as long as ever the "DISPENSATION OF THE FULNESS OF TIMES," continues, which is, "a season and a time," or "1000 years." There is to be no more kingdom of Christ after the delivery of it to the Father. The Kingdom is one; but, when the 1000 years are ended the world will have beheld the SAME Kingdom *under two different constitutions*; first, the Kingdom as it existed under David and his successors till the Babylonish Captivity; and secondly, as it is yet to exist for 1000 years under David's and God's Son, and his co-heirs "the saints of the Most High."

Point 4. There is and has been since 1789, and will be till 1864, the judgment sitting upon the Little Horn and Kingdoms of the world. I read of the "Day of Christ," a period of 1000 years, in which he will judge or rule the world in righteousness, when, "all nations shall call him blessed;" and that, while he is thus sitting upon his throne, "the dead shall be judged out of the books according to their works;" but read of no "judgment day," as a simultaneity with resurrection according to the general opinion.

Point 5. I cannot admit that "restitution of all things," is the same as, "the accomplishment of all things." The Heaven is to retain Jesus, "until *the times* of restitution;" not until all things predicted in the Bible are accomplished. The restitution refers to the things indicated in the question, "*Wilt thou at this time RESTORE AGAIN (or restitute)*"

the Kingdom to Israel? And Jesus said, it is not for you, my Apostles, to know *the times* and the seasons." "Shut up the words, and seal the book even to the time of the end; many shall run to and fro and knowledge shall be increased;" and then, "the wise shall understand."

Point 6. God sent Jesus in person to begin the accomplishment of Isaiah xi. and I believe assuredly he will send him again to finish the work thereof. Isaiah lxxv. 17—24, comes in between the 5th and 6th verses of chap. xi. The influence of such a gospel as is preached to the Gentiles can never bring these things to pass, or fill the earth with anything but superstition and unbelief.

Point 7. We must not judge of the fitness of spiritual things by the nature of things, which pertain to mere human experience. When "God deals with men," he does so by judgments poured out after he has fruitlessly besought them to be reconciled by personal agents. In relation to the past, the Lord saith, "I have a long time holden my peace; I have been still and refrained myself: now will I cry like a travailing woman; I will destroy and devour at once." We shall incur great hazard, if we argue, or act, in relation to the future, on the presumption that, because the Lord "hath held his peace, been still, and refrained himself" since the age of the Apostles, he will therefore speak and act no more as he did with Pharaoh and his Egyptians. Their typical overthrow hath yet to find its accomplishment in the coming of Jesus, as the Archangel of the Lord, utterly to destroy the man of sin by the brightness of his appearing.

Point 8. The Hope of the Gospel of the Kingdom will indeed become historical when Jesus comes; but the Word of the Lord which is yet to go forth from Jerusalem will doubtless present "a Hope" which will find its accomplishment in the things to be manifested when Jesus delivers up the Kingdom to the Father. We stand related to the Hope of the Kingdom, not to one to be preached after "the God of Heaven sets up the Kingdom" in the days of the Toes of the Image. The "personal reign" will no more put an end to the conversion of sinners in the Future Age, than the personal presence of Jesus in Palestine did to their conversion there when he preached repentance through the gospel of the Kingdom. When Jesus comes, there will be no more fitting of saints for the glory of the Kingdom; nevertheless, a probation of 1000 years will be granted to the world for "the fitting of saints for the glorified state" which will succeed the delivering up of the Kingdom to the Father at "THE END."

Point 9. Jer. iii. 16 teaches that the Jews will not boast themselves in the things of the Mosaic Constitution of the Kingdom, but in Jerusalem as the Lord's Throne, because Messiah the King, the real "Ark of the Testament of God" will himself be there. The bringing in of the Jews is both literal and spiritual. They are inseparable. The Israelites are the political and ecclesiastical *subjects* of the Kingdom of

God and of Christ; but *not* heirs of the Kingdom, because they are children of the flesh. It is only Israelites and Gentiles, who believe the Gospel of the Kingdom, that are *heirs*. These believing Jews and Gentiles are blended into one class, and without distinction of natural birth, are "the Israel of God"—"the Four Living Creatures and Twenty-Four Elders"—"the Lamb's Wife," &c. :—they are, when resurrected, transformed, and gathered unto Jesus in the air, and *about to descend*, "the Holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of Heaven, prepared as a Bride, adorned for her Husband." Every one who believes the truth and obeys it, is of this "Jerusalem which is above" *when caught up*; and the common "mother" of the saints, when they shall be gathered. But in relation to Jerusalem, where David reigned, read Isaiah liv. This City must be contemplated first as under the Mosaic Constitution; second, as desolate; and thirdly, as restored hereafter. Abraham and his two wives illustrate the *constitutional* relation of the City to God. Under the Hagar constitution she was in bondage and finally divorced; while lying desolate, she is in her "widowhood" and barrenness; but when the children of the promise came to her, and the Child of Promise sits upon her throne, she will be the Free Woman, the Sarai of the Lord, under the New and Everlasting Covenant made with David.

Point 11. This cannot be; for the passage plainly declares, that the taking out of the Gentiles a people for the Name of Jesus precedes the restitution of David's dwelling place. Read verse 14 of Acts xv. then verse 16. "*After this I WILL RETURN and will build again,*" &c. *After what?* After the thing of verse 14 is perfected. Why will the Lord *return*? "To build," &c. *Why will he build?* "That the residue of men might SEEK AFTER the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom the Lord's name is called." *What "residue" is this?* Mahomedans and Pagans to whom he has never yet spoken. *Who are "all the Gentiles" specified?* Catholics and Protestants, called "Christians," but who now *seek not* the Lord, neither do they know him.

Point 12. Circumcision has regard to two classes of Jews and one of Gentiles. The Jew, after the type of Nathaniel, who was "an Israelite indeed in whom was no guile" was circumcised in a double-sense; first, he was subjected involuntarily to the mark in the flesh, which was "*a token of the Covenant between Jehovah and Abraham,*" and "*a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had before he was circumcised.*" Said covenant was the subject-matter of Abraham's faith (see Heb. xi.; Gen. xv. 8—21.) Jesus was that seed who was to be his heir, and to inherit the land (verse 18) and the world (Rom. iv. 13)—Gal. iii. 16.—The "*token of the Covenant*" was marked on Jesus on the eighth day. Whosoever of the Jews believing in the Covenant of the Kingdom made with Abraham, and walked in the steps of Abraham's faith, became "*children of the promise,*" or "*Israelites indeed,*" the foreskin of whose hearts was circumcised as well as their flesh: and, Jesus being come,

when they received him, "believing on his Name," and were immersed into him, so putting him on, they were circumcised by the circumcision of Christ in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh. Thus, *belief of the hope promised in the Covenant with Abraham*, divided the Nation into two classes—those "Children of the Kingdom" to whom this Hope was "the anchor of their souls both sure and steadfast within the veil;" and those "Children of the Kingdom," which, like the Jews of our own time in this country, care nothing at all about it. Matt. xiii. 38; viii. 12. Circumcision has regard to one class of Gentiles only, and this is composed of "Israelites indeed" in every particular except natural birth and the mark of the flesh. They are adopted into the Commonwealth of Israel through belief of "the hope of the promise made of God unto the fathers" of Israel, and of the things concerning Jesus, and "the putting off of the body of the sins of the flesh." This makes them one with the believing Children of the Kingdom of the stock of Israel, and fellow-heirs with them.

Point 13. This is contrary to fact, and therefore cannot be admitted. The Kingdom of which Jesus is "the Heir," and the Apostles and Saints are the "joint-heirs," is the Kingdom over which David reigned. This has had no existence for 2,400 years. It is limited to the land promised to Abraham, and extends not a mile beyond the frontiers defined in the Covenant. It has a DOMINION attached to it, which will encircle the globe, the *subjects* of which will be, not the Jews, but all other people, nations, and tongues.

Point 14. The period in which the Nations govern themselves by their own laws, is not "the Gospel Dispensation," but simply "the times of the Gentiles" during which they prevail against the Saints and tread the Holy City under foot. If "God is preparing the Kingdom," as you remark, it cannot certainly have been set up on Pentecost.

In conclusion, it is not written, "having received a Kingdom," as I find it quoted in your letter; but Paul saith, "we having a Kingdom which cannot be moved." *Receiving* is not received; receiving is the present participle, received, past time. Paul wrote this thirty years after Pentecost, and yet he speaks of it as a receiving—a *continuing process*. "We receiving a Kingdom."—How? By believing the Gospel of the Kingdom and the Name; by being baptized into the hope of it; by walking in the tribulation of the Kingdom worthily; and by being born from among the dead, or by being changed by the Spirit into incorruptible and immortal saints; to whom will *then* be said, "Inherit, or possess, the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Then, and not till then, it may be said, "We *having* received the Kingdom," shall henceforth reign with thee, O Lord, "upon the earth."

I have thus touched in brief the several topics you have presented; to say all that might profitably be said about them would fill a volume.

What I have written, therefore, I would just present to your consideration as so many hints which you can improve at your leisure.

That the truth may have free course and be glorified, and that we may be accounted worthy of equality with the angels when the Lord comes with them,

I subscribe myself, your's faithfully, JOHN THOMAS.

3, Brudenell Place, New North Road.
Hoxton; July 15th, 1848.

THE highly commendable spirit in which Mr. Black received the above reply, is abundantly evinced in the following note transmitted to Dr. Thomas during his sojourn at Nottingham:—

"DEAR BROTHER THOMAS.—Very many are loudly exclaiming, 'When will brother Thomas be at Ellstree Street?' They want to hear more from you; and the inquiries go far beyond the Brotherhood. I am therefore, requested to write, and to obtain the earliest information I can. If we had a much larger place, no doubt it would be filled easily. I was much disappointed you were not at our assembly on Lord's day week; if you had, I should openly have invited you for the evening, &c. Hoping to hear from you by return of post,

I am, Your brother truly,
In the Hope of Incorruptibility, JOHN BLACK."

August 1st, 1848.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.

EVERY thing in the condition of mankind pronounces the approach of some great crisis for which nothing can prepare us but the diffusion of knowledge, probity, and the fear of the Lord. While the world is impelled with such violence in opposite directions—while a spirit of giddiness and revolt is shed upon the nations, and the seeds of imitation are thickly sown, the improvement of the mass of the people will be our grand security; in the neglect of which the politeness, the refinement, and the knowledge accumulated in the higher orders, weak and unprotected, will be exposed to most imminent danger, and perish like a garland in the grasp of popular fury.

EXPOSITION OF THE XXIII PSALM.

ALL animate and inanimate things are held up before us as mirrors to reflect the image of His love. From the eagle that stirreth up her nest, and beareth her young ones on her wings, to the domestic fowl that gathers her brood beneath them—no figure too simple, no illustration too familiar, for the pen of inspiration to employ. As is the husband to the wife, and the parent to the child—as is the head to the body, and the king to his people—as is the physician to his patient, and the advocate to his client—so is God *in* Christ to the soul of man.

The Scriptures teach us to regard God, not only as an Almighty