

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST
BOOK 2
REVELATION 1:4-8

CHRIST REVEALED
BY NAMES

EDWARD IRVING
1831



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*Exposition of the Book of Revelation:
in a series of Lectures*
1831

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WHY THIS WORK?

The first time I came across the writings of Edward Irving, deep in the back shelves of the Theology Library at UBC (Vancouver, BC, Canada), I was deeply impressed with the unusual treatment he gave to the final book of the Bible.

He wrote as one who knew his calling, and knew that he had a message from God for his generation. Combined with that urgency, Irving had a large sense of the glory of God in Christ, and God's purposes through Christ to reveal Himself unto the world through the Church.

He also possessed a large gift for language and expression, and apparently was quite an orator, as well as being a man of great compassion and sensitivity.

His work on the book of *Revelation*, which originally comprised two volumes, but only covered the first six chapters, towers above other similar commentaries because of its unique blend of gospel and prophecy.

Coming from a church founded on the Advent movement of the mid-1800's, I was somewhat familiar with books on the prophetic parts of Scripture. Irving's commentary was nothing like those.

Whereas the standard prophetic works tended to get quagmired in historical events and details, thus dwelling on the vessel by which God's purposes were worked out, Irving kept his eye single to the glory of God, and searched into those deep purposes as far as he was able. He rightly dwelt on the treasure that was in the vessel of prophecy. Like Moses, he wanted to see God's glory, or as much as was humanly possible. And he did see much, indeed.

And because most of the treasure he unearthed is practically lost to the Church today, I have for a long time had a strong desire to make these works more widely available.

In this republication, I have taken only a few liberties: correcting and modernizing spelling and grammar in a few places (including the language in the KJV Bible references), breaking up large paragraphs and sentences, and inserting full Bible references where appropriate. I have separated the original 2-volume work into smaller books, one for each of the fifteen original lectures. Otherwise it is as Irving wrote it.

This is Edward Irving's parting gift to the Church of Christ. In his own words, from the exposition on Laodicea:

"But my confidence in truth never fails me. I know that these things are not published in vain. It is not for myself, nor for my flock, but for the church of God, that I write these things, which I pray God for His own name's sake to hasten and bless."

Gather up the fragments, that none be lost.

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Revelation 1

⁴ John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before His throne;

⁵ And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood,

⁶ And has made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

⁷ Behold, he comes with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen.

⁸ I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, says the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

INTRODUCTION

THE single object of this book is, as we have shown in our former discourse, to reveal or disclose the person and the office of Jesus Christ, as God has constituted Him since His ascension into glory, and as God would have Him to be believed on in the churches.

This is the highest object which a communication from heaven can have. If God's glory be the one great object of a creature's being; and if that glory is to be seen in the face of Jesus Christ, and there only to be seen, then this book, which proposes to take the veil from off the countenance of Jesus, and show it to the intelligence of the creature, is the book of all others most concerning to the glory of God, and to the chiefest end of man.

In our former lecture, when treating of the subject-matter of the book¹, we laid it down in general that the object of the first vision, which is contained in the first three chapters, is to reveal Christ as the Universal Bishop, or the only Head and High Priest of His Church. This, therefore, we set down as the general title of our discourses upon the first three chapters which, containing one and only one subject, ought to be expounded in subordination to that subject which they contain.

But upon inspecting the subject-matter more closely, we find that it consists of three parts:

1. **The Prelude** to the whole book, being contained between the fourth and the tenth verses;
2. **The First Vision**, being the vision of the Son of Man in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, contained in the remaining verses of the first chapter; and
3. **The Epistles** to the seven churches, contained in the second and third chapters.

¹ See *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Book 1, Chapter "The Substance and Method of the Book", Section: "Christ the Universal Bishop", p. 75-79.

Of these, the last falls likewise into three parts:

1. **The Superscription** of the epistles, or, in other words, the titles which Christ assumes to each of the churches;
2. **The Epistles** themselves; and,
3. **The Sayings of the Spirit** unto the churches.

This seems to me a complete subdivision and arrangement of the matter of the first three chapters; to the due and orderly consideration of which we do now address ourselves.

I. THE PRELUDE, OR OVERTURE

Revelation 1

⁴ John to the seven churches which are in Asia...

IT BEGINS with the inscription of the book to the seven churches which are in Asia: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. These were seven principal cities of Asia Minor, which remain unto this day, and nearly in that state threatened or foretold in the seven epistles to the churches which were planted there.

To these seven churches the apostle indites the book which he had received from the angel of Christ, and which Christ had received from God, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass.

God, in giving it, indites it to all His servants, and the style of it throughout is, to every one that has an ear to hear, to all the churches (*Revelation 2:23*), and according to its destination of God, it has come to all the churches.

THE NUMBER SEVEN

Wherefore then, it may be asked, does John address it to these seven only? The answer to this question is found in verse 11, where Christ expressly commands him so to do. This command John faithfully obeys, by addressing the account of what he saw to these seven churches, with such an introduction as seemed to him best. Wherefore the Lord commanded him to address it unto them peculiarly, is a question which it may be as well to answer at once in this place.

The number seven is employed in this book several times, and always, as we judge, with the same signification, denoting unity out of diverse things, completeness out of diverse parts, totality out of diverse particulars.

And this property of expressing completeness, totality, and unity, the number seven derived from the only work of God

which is finished; the work of creation, which was accomplished in seven successive acts, and yet is one complete work. From this God appointed the enumeration of time by weeks of seven days each, being the most common and simple circle, or cycle of time.

From this constant custom of counting seven days, and then beginning to count again, the number seven has acquired that property of denoting a whole, which a number can only obtain by such a means. While by consisting of several individuals it denotes a complete whole, consisting of many parts; the root of this signification being, as I have said, that the only complete and all-inclusive work, the work of creation, was ordered in this wise.

But whatever may be the account rendered of this matter, there can be no doubt with respect to the fact that the number seven is so used in this book; a few instances of which we shall adduce.

In the very verse the Holy Ghost is denoted by the seven Spirits, to signify unity of subsistence in a variety of persons.

In *Revelation* 5:6 the Lamb is represented with seven horns and seven eyes; whereas the four living creatures which worship the Lamb are full of eyes, within and without. But the Lamb who is worshiped has only seven, a clear and decisive proof that the number seven expresses more than fullness of eyes, even all vision, complete and perfect knowledge. So likewise do the seven horns express complete and perfect power.

In like manner, the seven-sealed book expresses the complete unrevealed mystery of God; and the seven trumpets the complete action of His judgment.

And throughout this prophecy, whatever is characterized by the number seven, expresses totality, or the inclusion of all the parts.

This being admitted in general, as indeed it is on all hands admitted, when applied to the churches, it must likewise sig-

nify the whole of them; all the particular churches in all ages, whose completeness constitutes the unity of the Church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven.

Not therefore to those seven individual churches alone, nor yet to all the churches in that age, but to all the churches in all ages, until the number of the elect shall be accomplished, is this book of the Apocalypse indited.

The seven churches in Asia, whose names are written, were indeed the first custodians of the precious treasure; as were the churches of Rome, and Corinth, and Ephesus, and Thessalonica, of their several epistles.

But as a matter of more deep concern, this book is given in charge to seven churches; and that in such a way as to import that they, in that charge, did but represent all the churches of God which were to be, till Christ should come again.

Upon this most striking distinction, I observe, first, the superlative dignity thereby conferred upon the treatise, that it should be addressed to all the churches, as that without which they would find themselves incomplete. And blessed be the care of God to give this book dignity and importance: cursed be the arts of man, or of the devil, to lessen or undervalue it.

I observe secondly how idle are those, and contradictory of the truth, who say that it is a book whose importance has not yet come to be felt by the Church; nor will, until the very time of the coming of the Lord. For if so, it would not thus solemnly and universally have been addressed.

Paul would not have addressed an epistle to the Ephesians which concerned not the Ephesians, nor any one else for many generations. No more would God have given a book to Christ, and Christ to the angel, and the angel to John, and John to the seven churches, unless it were instantly to come into profitable use.

And I observe thirdly upon this inscription of the book, how preposterous are those who would hoard it up for the

Jews; as if they had not enough of Scripture already, and more than they have made good use of. If the Jews, as Jews either converted or unconverted, had possessed such an interest in it, why indite it to seven Christian churches?

I wish men would not part with common sense when they interpret God's Word. But more of these things hereafter.

II. THE BENEDICTION

WE NOW come to the benediction, which is expressed as in the other books of Scripture,

Revelation 1

⁴ ...Grace be unto you, and peace...

This is no part of the Revelation, but of John's endorsement of it, as indeed are all the six following verses.

Now because these words, grace and peace, do ever occur at the outset of the apostolic communications, and form the subject of their benediction, we may well believe that they are words most pregnant with meaning, and therefore worthy always of the most grave consideration.

GRACE

Grace is that attribute or quality in God's being, which Christ fully and truly revealed: as it is written,

John 1

¹⁷ ...grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

It expresses the aspect of His countenance, and the dispositions of His mind towards the sinful children of men: being the aspect of benignity, and the disposition of love. This disposition includes not only forgiveness of sin, but endowment with undeserved, unpurchased favor. Grace is directly opposed to works, in that passage where it is written,

Romans 11

⁶ And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace...

When, therefore, the apostle says "Grace be unto you," he wishes and, so far as they had faith, communicates unto them that light of love with which God shines upon men in Jesus Christ.

PEACE

And when he likewise wishes unto them peace, he repeats that which Christ came from heaven to preach, as it is written,

Acts 10

³⁶ The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (He is Lord of all:)

Now as grace implies a condition of humiliation wherewith to be gracious, so peace implies a condition of warfare whereto peace may be proclaimed. The humiliation to which God is gracious in the gospel is man's miserable and lost estate by nature through sin. The state of warfare to which He preaches peace is the rebellion and alienation of his will from the will and mind of God.

These conditions require a gospel. Grace and peace have no meaning, no blessing, yea no object, unless we grant the world to be in a state of condemnation and alienation without a gospel. The uncondemned man asks not for grace; the righteous man asks only for justice. Friends ask not for peace, because they have it already.

The continual use of these words, grace and peace, in the mouth of Christ and His Church, do bespeak the world to be by God's appointment in a state of condemnation and alienation from Himself; and by that same appointment brought back and restored unto a state of reconciliation and pacification.

When I say by God's appointment, I do not mean an arbitrary act of will, but a necessary law of being, an unchangeable attribute of His essence; whereof it is as true that He is just, as that He is the justifier of him that believes; as true that He is holy, as that He is gracious; as true that He can punish, as that He can forgive.

And when the apostles do in their benedictions to the churches say, "Grace and peace be unto you," they not only

declare the forgiveness and favor of God to sinful men, but likewise communicate these gifts unto those who have faith in their office.

And herein lies the chief dignity of the ministerial office, that we do bless the people in the full assurance that, wherever faith is, our blessing will there rest. And only where faith is not, will it return to us again: for neither are the ordinances, nor the persons appointed to minister them, empty things, but full of the spiritual substances signified therein.

It was no vain wish of John when he said, “Grace and peace be unto you;” nor is it an empty wish at this far distance of time and place from its utterance. But upon him who reads and upon him who hears with faith, these words of benediction shall in the very substance of the thing arise within his heart. The more may God endow us with faith in every jot and tittle of His holy word!

But this certainty of blessing to him that believes will the more appear when we consider next the unchangeableness of the persons in whom it is contained inexhaustible, and from whom it flows everlastingly.

III. THE NAME OF THE FATHER

Revelation 1

⁴ ...from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before His throne;

⁵ And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth.

THE style of the persons of the blessed Godhead is grand and sublime, like everything else in this book. That of the Father, whose prerogative it is to be self-originated, whose name is Jehovah, I AM THAT I AM (*Exodus* 3:14), expressive of unchangeableness and identity in all times and places is, as here given, expressive of the same truth of His underived and unchangeable being:

⁴ ...from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come.

This some have thought to be a translation into the Greek of the Hebrew word Jehovah; and in the 8th verse, where the same style is used of Christ, they suppose the word Almighty, which is added, to be equivalent to the Hebrew word Elohim or God, so as to make up for Christ that most frequent name of God in the Old Testament, Jehovah Elohim, or the Lord God. However this may be, there can be no doubt that this is the style appropriated to the Father in the passage before us, “which is, and which was, and which is to come.”

And the question arises, What is its precise import, and what is the propriety of its use in this place? With respect to its import, we observe that it denotes freedom from all change, independence upon all time and place; a being with whom past, present, and to come are one and the same.

Now, every creature whatsoever has a beginning, and therefore is under the conditions of time; and every form of being has fallen, and is therefore under the condition of change. Wherefore it seems to me that this style best ex-

presses the condition of Him who is not a creature, but the Creator, God over all, blessed for ever.

When this same style of Godhead is applied unto Christ in the 8th verse, there is added to it “the Almighty,” or the Governor of all; by which addition the absolute style of the Father is linked, and, as it were, limited to the created universe; declaring to us, that in Christ there is the same Godhead as in the Father, yet not in the same absolute state, but in the state of being applied to the government of all things.

The addition of the word Almighty, or All-Governor, in the 8th verse, does not add unto, but detract from, the awful abysmal depth of the absolute Being expressed by the words “which was, and which is, and which is to come;” and does in fact represent the Godhead acting with powers defined and limited unto the end of governing the world.

The one being the Godhead unknown and unknowable, in the person of the Father subsisting, and worshiped of every creature; the other being that same Godhead manifested within the limits of reason in the person of the Word made flesh, who can be known, and ought to be known; and for no other end than to be known, did so bound and limit Himself.

THE GODHEAD

This is a point which required some little explanation; and as it concerns man above all things to know God, and not to be ignorant of Him, I count no labor so well bestowed as that which I give to unfold and glorify the name of my Father which is in heaven.

The Godhead being purposed to manifest itself in the person of the Son, by exhibiting Him under conditions of change, born, humbled, slain; and afterwards in the person of the Holy Ghost, by bringing the world under the Son incarnate, it became necessary for expressing the true character of Godhead and preventing all misunderstanding, that its essential, unrevealed, unlimited, unsearchable properties, should remain

hidden in the person of the Father, and there abiding, be worshiped by the Son incarnate, and by the Holy Ghost in the hearts of regenerate men.

Godhead, in its incomprehensibility, stands therefore in the person of the Father; in its comprehensibility, in the person of the Son; and in its communicability, in the person of the Holy Ghost.

All that can be felt of God, is in the Holy Ghost; all that can be known of God, is in the Son; and all that is of God, is in the Father.

Yet there are not three Godheads, but one Godhead; and therefore that Godhead which is worshiped in the Father, is the Godhead of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. And so also is that Godhead which is known in the Son, and which is possessed in the Spirit.

The Godhead changes not, but exists in three subsistencies; the one for worship of the creature, the other for knowledge of the creature, the other for inhabitation of the creature. And all in-working of the Spirit refers unto Christ, as its origin and end; and all manifestation in Christ refers to the Father, as its origin and end. In this way, absolute Godhead, essential and incomprehensible Godhead, is glorified in all our knowledge, and in all our experience.

Christ glorifies God, and every member of Christ glorifies the Son and the Father; whom in the Son they ever behold, but cannot altogether behold. And wherein they cannot know Him, and wherein they cannot contain Him, they worship Him, believe in Him, and trust upon Him.

So that all experience and all knowledge is unto worship: and worship begins where knowledge and experience end: and knowledge and experience are but the footing upon which worship stands, to minister unto God the acceptable offering of entire trust and complete dependence.

And because this care and guardianship of Godhead's unre-

vealed and worshiped fullness belongs to the Father, He has, in the passage before us, the style of the absolute one.

IV. THE NAME OF THE HOLY GHOST

THE SEVEN SPIRITS

WE NOW come to the style in which the Holy Ghost is spoken of in this benediction:

Revelation 1

⁴ And from the seven Spirits which are before His throne:

Upon which we observe, in general, that it carries a distinct reference to the vision of the fourth chapter, where we have the throne of God represented to us, and before that throne the seven Spirits:

Revelation 4

⁵ And out of the throne proceeded lightnings, and thunders, and voices; and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

Now whereas it is said in our text, that the seven Spirits are before the throne of Him which was, and is, and which is to come; and in the text just quoted, that they are before the throne of Him which was to look upon like a sardine and a jasper stone, we certainly conclude, that it is the person of the eternal Father which is there represented unto us, but with the limitation of the All-Governor; not in the absoluteness of the Father, which cannot be represented by any vision, nor seen by any eye, nor comprehended by any mind, but within the limits assumed by the Son, for the end of showing forth the Father's glory.

And in that same vision of the fourth and fifth chapters, we have likewise the person of the Son representing His own assumed character, by a Lamb which had been slain, and lived still; that is, as the first-begotten from the dead. And there He receives His other dignity of the Prince of the kings of the earth; for into His hand is given that seven-sealed book, which possesses the mysterious power, as it is unrolled, of chastising, afflicting, and finally dethroning them all.

In the vision of the fourth and fifth chapters, which in our former lecture we have observed is the master vision of all which follows, we have embodied by symbols that style of the Godhead which in the benediction is expressed by words: teaching us this lesson, that the apostle John, when he had received the further insight given in this book, into the being and operation of God, did straightway begin to make his use of it, in speaking to the churches; and prefers to preface his book with that style rather than with the ordinary style of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. He learned from his vision; and what he learned, he instantly used for the profit of the Church.

We now proceed in particular to open the mystery which is revealed in the words,

Revelation 1

⁴ ...the seven Spirits which are before His throne:

That this denominates the Holy Ghost, will hardly be doubted by any one who observes the place where it occurs between the Father upon the one hand, and our Lord Jesus Christ upon the other.

It is not to be believed that in a benediction proceeding from three persons, of whom two are assuredly the person of the Father, and the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, the third should not be the person of the Holy Ghost.

But this is put beyond all doubt, from what is written of the Lamb (verse 6), that it had seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth. Now, who but the Holy Spirit thus inheres in the Lamb, as His power and His vision, and from Him proceeds over all the earth? Who is Christ's power but the Holy Ghost?

And as we have already seen the absolute name of the Godhead applied to, and made to inhere in, the name of Christ, so have we, in the text just quoted, the name of the Holy Ghost likewise made in Him to adhere. Thus we are shown this great

point of doctrine, that though the person of Christ is the person of the Son, yet in Christ, and in Him only, is the knowledge of the Father, and the knowledge of the Holy Ghost to be apprehended: as it is written,

Colossians 2

⁹ For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

How this is, it is not difficult to perceive. The human will in Christ is actuated by the person of the Son; and that to which it ever conforms itself, is the will of the Father:

Luke 22

⁴² ...not my will, but Yours be done.

He that conforms it, is the Son; He to whom it is conformed, is the Father; and the power operating to resist the world, the flesh, and the devil, is the Holy Ghost. And so, in Christ the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily. If I want to know what the Father's will and word is, I must examine what Christ said and did.

John 14

⁹ ...he that has seen me, has seen the Father.

Again, if I would know what the Holy Ghost can effect with the materials of fallen nature, I must behold the perfect righteousness of Christ:

John 16

¹⁵ He shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you.

With respect now to the expression, "seven Spirits," it is to be understood according to what has been said above upon the seven churches, as denoting a totality in partition, a unity in divided, not separated parts; the Spirit in the state of diffusion through the complete body of Christ. And as the unity of the body is represented by seven churches, so the unity of the Spirit is represented by the seven Spirits.

To clear this matter a little, it is necessary to bear in mind that as the Son, in order to become the Christ, descends from His absoluteness of Godhead into the limitations of manhood,

so the Holy Ghost, in order to become the Spirit of Christ, likewise condescends from His absoluteness of Godhead into the limitations to which it pleases the Father and the Son that the work of redemption should extend.

To no one is it given to feed upon the Holy Ghost in His Divine subsistence, save to the Son, likewise in His Divine subsistence. Every one of Christ's members must receive the Holy Ghost as flesh and blood of Christ; that is to say, in the form of redeemed manhood. The Godhead of the Holy Ghost is no more mingled with the creature than is the Godhead of the Father and the Son.

That which incorporates itself with the regenerated creature is the Holy Ghost, the life of the humanity of Christ, and from thence proceeding to gather thereinto all the members which the Father gives unto Him, until His body shall have been completed.

This is the view of the Holy Ghost's operation in the Church; joining and subordinating the members unto Christ the Head. And if this only true view of the operation of the Holy Ghost were duly recognized, there would be, ever at the same time, a recognition of the Church, and of the union of its members, with Christ their Head.

All this is lost sight of for lack of reverence for the book of *Revelation*, where the Holy Ghost is never otherwise expressed, than by the seven lamps of fire before the throne, the seven horns and seven eyes in the head of the Lamb.

BEFORE HIS THRONE

Now with respect to the other part of the title, "before His throne," connected as it is in the fourth chapter with the symbol of the seven lamps of fire, I think the key of the mystery is in the custom of Eastern kings, to have seven princes who were permitted to see the king's face always:

Esther 1

¹⁴ And the next unto him was Carshena, Shethar, Admatha,

Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, and Memucan, the seven princes of Persia and Media, which saw the king's face, and which sat the first in the kingdom.

Ezra 7

¹⁴ Forasmuch as you are sent of the king, and of his seven counselors, to enquire concerning Judah and Jerusalem, according to the law of your God which is in your hand;

I know not whether it was so in other dynasties; but certainly it was so in the Persian dynasty, concerning which the historical books of the Old Testament are chiefly concerned.

I mean, that the position of the seven Spirits before the throne of God expresses that it is by the Holy Ghost, thus proceeding from Christ, that the purposes of the King of kings are fulfilled. If it is the office of Christ to personate the enthroned one, then it is the office of the Holy Ghost to personate the seven princes who see His face, and carry forth His commands.

By the Son, the will of the Father is perceived, and rendered intelligible to all creatures. By the Holy Ghost, the will of the Father, thus brought into creature bounds, is carried forth and effected in other creatures.

In one word, the throne of God is known in Christ, and felt beyond the person of Christ in the Holy Ghost; not that the Holy Ghost of His own will does anything, but of the will of the Father, and of the will of the Son; being properly the executive, and only the executive of the kingdom; the legislative lying in the harmony of the Father and the Son, meeting and kissing one another in the two natures of Christ.

Now there lacks but two remarks to complete what we have to say upon this second of the persons from whom the benediction proceeds. First, that while the benediction in the substance of it, grace and peace, agrees with other books of the New Testament, it has the peculiarity of mentioning all the Three Persons of the blessed Godhead; whereas the apostolical Epistles do mention only the two first; of which peculiar-

ity I take the reason to be this: that they, being given by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, do testify only of the Father and the Son, the Holy Ghost being himself the testifier; but this being communicated by an angel, and not inspired directly by the Spirit, properly bears testimony of all the three, as it is also in the conclusion of some of the apostolic Epistles, when the apostle speaks in his own name:

2 Corinthians 13

¹⁴ The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all.
Amen.

The second remark is, that the Holy Ghost occupies the second place, and not the third, according to the usual and orthodox form; whereof I take the intention to be this: that Christ, in this book, as indeed in all Scripture, is represented as deriving His subsistence as the Christ, or the God-man, from the Holy Ghost:

- By Him conceived in the womb;
- By Him endued for His ministry;
- By Him presented spotless on the cross;
- By Him raised from the dead;
- By Him informed with these seven horns of power, and seven eyes of knowledge.

And being so, that He upon the throne sits there in lineaments of Godhead, manifest in flesh, it well beseems and well represents the mystery, that Christ in His human character and office should stand after the Holy Ghost, who furnishes Him for the same.

V. NAME OF THE SON

Revelation 1

⁵ And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness...

THERE now follows a brief and ample designation of the second person of the blessed Trinity, here mentioned last, for the reason given above, and perhaps also for the sake of the doxology, and successions of other things concerning Him which follow through the space of four verses.

JESUS

Revelation 1

⁵ ...and from Jesus...

The name Jesus He has,

Matthew 1

²¹ ...because He shall save His people from their sins.

This is the name of His manhood and humility, which He shall exalt into the highest, loftiest place of heaven, until:

Philippians 2

¹⁰ ...at the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth.

This is the name by which He was named at, or rather before His birth, and which He bore until He had accomplished human redemption; and by which, therefore, He is to be preached among men:

Acts 4

¹² ...for there is none other name given under heaven, whereby we must be saved.

CHRIST

Revelation 1

⁵ ...and from...Christ...

His name, Christ, or anointed one, He has in virtue of that anointing which He received from the Holy Ghost at His con-

ception, and in virtue of which He was a holy thing, though He had taken up an unholy substance; in virtue of which, also, He lived that life which is recorded in the Gospel, according to the word of Peter:

Acts 10

³⁸ God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and with power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him.

In virtue of which anointing, He also offered Himself upon the cross, a pure and spotless sacrifice for that sinful humanity whereof He had assumed a portion, according as it is written:

Hebrews 9

¹⁴ ...through the eternal Spirit, He offered himself without spot unto God.

In virtue of which anointing, also, He arose the Son of God, with power from the dead; as it is written:

Romans 1

⁴ ...declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.

And as if all this gift and possession of the Spirit, which in His conception, life, death, and resurrection, He enjoyed, had been nothing when compared with that fullness of power into which He entered at His ascension, Peter, in his sermon on the day of Pentecost, speaks of Him as if He had but then received the promise of the Holy Ghost:

Acts 2

³³ Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He has shed forth this, which you now see and hear.

Inasmuch, also, that He rests the demonstration of His Christhood upon that very act of power which He put forth in the giving of the Holy Ghost:

Acts 2

³⁶ Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God has made that same Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.

As the possession of any personal property is only made known to others by the coming forth, or communication of the same, so the knowledge that Christ possessed the Holy Spirit, or was the Christ, became a fact for us, that is, for the Church in general, only when He dispensed the same on the day of Pentecost, and enriched the Church with the endowment which He Himself had possessed within Himself, from the moment of His conception, and executed during all the period of His life.

Therefore, we are properly to regard Him as Jesus until His ascension, during which time our salvation was accomplished; and from that time forth to consider Him also as Christ, during which He has been making Himself known to us as the possessor and bestower of the Holy Spirit.

THE FAITHFUL WITNESS

Revelation 1

⁵ ...who is the faithful witness...

As it is written:

John 18

³⁷ To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.

He has this name, as being the visible manifestation of the Father, the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, according as it is written:

John 14

⁹ ...he that has seen me, has seen the Father.

For without Christ, the Father neither is nor can be known, as it is written:

Matthew 11

²⁷ No man knows the Son but the Father, neither knows any man the Father but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him.

And not only of the Father is He the faithful witness and only manifestation, but also of the Son, as it is written:

John 8

¹⁴ Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true, for I know from where I came, and where I go.

The same may be said also of the Holy Ghost, of whose fullness in a sinful substance, His humbled humanity was the manifestation, as His glorified humanity shall through eternity be the manifestation of the fullness of the Holy Spirit in majesty and power, so that the Holy Spirit in His dealings with the Church, only takes of the things of Christ and shows them to our souls.

Well is it said, therefore, that in Christ dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, because in Him and upon Him, were concentrated all the Divine attributes which can be communicated and manifested in a finite form. There can be nothing of Godhead known, seen, apprehended, or possessed, besides what is witnessed in Christ, and by Christ; for Christ is, as He Himself declares:

- not a true word merely, but the Truth;
- not a guide merely, but the Way;
- not a living one merely, but the Life, and the Maker of it.

Furthermore, He is the faithful Witness, as being the Word in the mouth of all the prophets, and the ultimate end of all their predictions: according as it is written:

John 1

¹⁶ Of His fullness have all we received...

Revelation 19

¹⁰ The spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus.

So also was He the great witness of the holiness of the law, which before Him had been dishonored and treated as if it were untrue, or unfit for man. It did indeed serve to prove every man a liar; but no man had arisen able to prove it true, until Christ fulfilled the law, and made it honorable; so that He verified the wisdom, and goodness, and holiness, which is in the law, showing that it was made for man, and fitted to bless man.

In all those respects which concern the perfection and truth of manhood, as well as in all those respects which concern the truth of Godhead, in destroying all false philosophy, as well as all false religion, and preaching out a system of eternal truth, yea, also in a higher sense still, is He the faithful Witness.

I mean, inasmuch as He it is who in the age to come shall cast the liar out of the earth, and the great lie out of the creation; and shall make the handiwork of God to be all a mirror, polished and pure, wherein, as in a glass, shall be beheld the truths of the Divine being, and power, and glory, even as it was beheld in Christ.

And there shall be no guile found in the mouths of men; and there shall be no delusion nor deception found in the creatures which God has made; but all shall work together as the harmonious system of truth which Christ the Head upholds and guides, which the Spirit of truth from Him proceeding inspires with a unity of design and a harmony of operation.

Then, when all things feel themselves informed by, and sustained upon the holy humanity of Christ, and through the hypostatical union of this humanity with the Divine substance, connected and wedded in close fellowship with the Godhead, and inhabited by the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Godman; then shall it be made manifest that Jesus Christ is the faithful Witness, in whom every one who has believed has found everything to come to pass as had been promised, in whom every one that believes not has likewise found the

same.

So that through the spheres of creation, from the highest order of the redeemed Church, who sit in the throne, and round about the throne, down to the lowest depth of hell; every creature in its estate, in the conditions of its being, shall tell out the truth of that testimony and witness which by Christ has been declared of them all, from the day He went forth in the plenitude of His Father's power to bring the creatures existent out of nothing.

FIRST BEGOTTEN

Revelation 1

⁵ ...who is...the first begotten of the dead...

According to the testimony:

Acts 26

²² ...of Moses and the Prophets, that Christ should suffer, and that He should be the first that should rise from the dead.

The same title has He received from St. Paul:

Colossians 1

¹⁸ Who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead.

And in the first *Epistle to the Corinthians*, Christ is called,

1 Corinthians 15

²³ Christ the firstfruits [of the resurrection].

There must, no doubt, be much meaning in this title, "first begotten from the dead," which stands between these two, "the faithful Witness," and "the Prince of the kings of the earth."

What the mystery of this name is we shall now endeavor to unfold. Death is the seal of the fallen creature:

Genesis 2

¹⁷ In the day you eat thereof, you shall surely die.

And Christ's death did really and truly prove Him to be in the state of fallen man, a very man, after the similitude of the

fallen, and not of the unfallen Adam.

As He took this nature at first from the fallen virgin, by an act of His self-existent being as the second person of the Godhead, so I believe that His Divine nature being ever present with His human nature, in the same person, ever shows forth its unspeakable love, in condescending unto the human nature, so that the action of the Divine person should be the action of a very man.

The Divine nature is infinite in all its attributes, but the human nature is finite. Of the infinite, man has and can have no apprehension nor hold of any kind, and to bring the infinite substance of the Godhead within the scope of man's, of the creature's comprehension, was the very end of the mystery of the Incarnation.

Now, inasmuch as the Son of God did take part of flesh and blood with the children, and become a true form of man, it was necessary that He should be under the law, under which God's righteousness had placed the fallen man; a law of which the very object was to separate the clean from the unclean, by an artificial distinction, which by taking a part out of the whole, and calling it clean, did show the whole from which it was taken to be unclean.

It was this law:

- which made continual remembrance of sin from year to year;
- whose moral precepts forbid the temptations to which a fallen man, and only a fallen man, is incidental;
- whose moral precepts define and command the perfect righteousness which God beholds as proper to that state of the creatures, and requires him to possess.

For every creature of God is good, when it has been sanctified by the word of God and by prayer; and even this fallen creature were very good, yea, and very noble, if he were able to keep the commandments of God.

It is sin that defiles a man, and makes him hateful in the sight of God. Now, seeing Christ came under this law: ceremonial, political, and moral; which law is proper only to a creature fallen, it proves beyond all question, that it was the seed of Abraham which He laid hold upon, and not manhood, after the type of Adam's first estate.

The law of Adam's first estate was not a law ceremonial, nor a law moral, presupposing wickedness to be present in the subject of it; but it was a law positive, or arbitrary, signifying only lordship in Him who imposed it. And if Christ had come in Adam's primeval estate, the law of His being would have been such as was the law of Adam's being, and not such as the law of the creatures fallen.

Doubt, therefore, can there be none, even were it not written in express words, that He laid hold of the seed of Abraham; even were it not manifested in the very fact of His being conceived in the womb of a fallen woman; even were He not spoken of in all the Prophets, and the Psalms, as partaking a sinful substance, and continually grieving over the sinfulness of the same; yea, even were it not necessary that He might be the High Priest of fallen man, and the great evidence of what the Holy Spirit can do, in our fallen nature, and therefore our complete exemplar in everything.

Besides all these grave considerations, each one of which is a great head of the Incarnation, it is put beyond a doubt, by the very law of His being, by His coming under that law which is proper only to a being fallen, that He took upon Himself our sinful substance.

And herein lay the greatness of His love, that He despised not the virgin's womb, that He despised not consubstantial union with the substance of the virgin. This also was His crucifixion, to be bound unto such an unholy thing, He who was the Holy One of God, the image, and the brightness of His purity. Most unnatural alliance, most violent of all contradictions, most incomprehensible condescension of God, most in-

finite humiliation of the Divine substance.

And herein also lay the great work of the Holy Ghost, that in His conception, and from His conception, and during His life, and in His death, He should so possess, and so empower this Creator-creature, this God-man, this person of natures human and Divine, as that He should be holy, born a holy thing, and keep the law, and make it honorable, and present Himself on the cross,

1 Peter 1

¹⁹ ...as a lamb without blemish and without spot.

And herein also the Christ received the proof of His Father's satisfaction with the work which He was accomplishing by the possession of the Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Father. And herein, as I judge, consisted the agony in the garden, and the horror on the cross; that for the end of showing forth the torture, and the anguish, and the weakness, and the thick darkness which came upon the person of Christ from its union with the fallen humanity, for this and for other ends of God's purpose the Spirit was withdrawn, when the Spirit had completed the great type of the life of every believer.

And by the difference which thereupon ensued in the condition of Christ, it was shown what an important part the Spirit bore in the Incarnation, which could not have been shown but by exhibiting the man-God with the Spirit in a suspended state.

Into this matter I have thought it the more needful to enter somewhat at large; because I do find a great reluctance in the Church to receive, and a great inability to improve, this great head of doctrine, that "the body of Christ was, in its proper nature, mortal and corruptible"² without which doctrine I feel myself unable to proceed a step in this exposition, to show forth the depth of this name given to Christ, "the first begotten from the dead."

2 *Scotch Confession*, "Article on the Sacraments".

But now, having unfolded the nature of His human being, I feel my way clear before me. In every action of His life the Son of God became man; and, by the Holy Spirit given unto Him of the Father, He did in the manhood perform that action without sin or imperfection; and so, in a life of the utmost extremities of trial and suffering, He did keep the law proper to the fallen creature, and prove that the fallen creature also is good.

Adam was good, very good, before he fell; but until Christ came it was not known that the state into which Adam was put after his fall was likewise good; nor could that mystery be shown by any one but the Son of God, informed by the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father.

There existed, indeed, in the law, which is holy, and just, and good, the promise that the estate for which it was given was also good, and would yet be proved to be good: for why exhibit a law if that law was never to be honored? In Christ it was honored; in Him the goodness of the fallen creature, as a handiwork of God, was proved: and the good will of God did now shine forth upon the children of men, who had now at last one representative in the unsullied presence of God.

But, before this could be accomplished, it was needful that Christ should not only come under the law in the very state of one under the law; but that He should also come under death, because the sons of men had all passed under death. I say, come under death by an act of His own will, just as He took a body by an act of His own will; and in the body, by acts of His own will, did humble Himself out of the Divine nature into the human nature perpetually.

For it is, as I judge, a mistake to say, that because Christ had taken upon Him the substance of fallen man which was doomed to die that therefore His death was not a voluntary act. He died in virtue of that continued love with which He loved the manifestation of His Father's glory, and the salvation of His Church, and the redemption of the world; in virtue

of that love which first moved Him to take a human body:

Hebrews 10

⁷ Lo! I come...

⁵ ...a body have You prepared for Me.

That freewill act, of a self-existing being, whereby being God He became man, is a continued act, or the continuance of an act; which is present in all the actions of the Christ until He was received up into glory, and indeed still forms the work of the Divine nature in the Christ.

For the action itself is a true human action, so soon as it can be beheld of man: but before it comes into the region of human vision and human sympathy, there is a Divine part in it from which it derives all its merit, and that is the act of willingness on the part of the self-existent one to come into the limited conditions of a human action, of the action of a fallen creature.

And be it further most diligently observed, that it is this very act of self-humiliation, so pleasing in the Father's sight, which moves the Father's freewill to bestow the Spirit upon the humbled Son, that He may prove how well-pleasing unto the Father is this great act of love.

Christ apprehends the seed of Abraham, and unites the fallen nature of man to His own person. The Father supplies the Spirit for the sanctification of the human nature; and the Christ thus constituted upholds Himself, and sanctifies Himself, and preserves Himself holy, despite the unholiness of the substance: and thus is the covenant between the Father and the Son fulfilled: on His part it is a continued act of humiliation into the manhood; on the Father's, a continual act of supplying the Spirit, unto the faith of His Son thus condescending.

In the exercise, therefore, of that free-will of the self-existent Divine nature, which moved Christ to become man, and which actuated Him, in all His human life constituting the es-

sential and meritorious part of every action, though to us unseen and unfelt, did He go into death, and lay down His life which no man had power to take from Him. He laid it down of free-will, which free-will He possessed as God.

He voluntarily came also into that necessity and obligation of a fallen creature, that it must die; for the necessity of the human nature to die, as being created and fallen, and doomed in Adam, takes not away the freewill action of the Divine Person who informed it.

But in order to prove that temptation also of the children, and all that is behind the scenes, He gave Himself unto the death; as He had come under the law, though He had no ceremonial or moral sin to be atoned for, so He came under death, though as a Person He had done no offense against the Divine law which could have fastened death upon Him.

I say not but that it was consistent with and included in the first act of His taking a body, that all this should follow; that this act of humiliation made all the rest as it were, necessary; but necessary only, inasmuch as the act of the Divine Person, willing to be humbled, included all the rest, because there is in the Godhead “no variableness, neither any shadow of turning.”

And indeed I feel the great difficulty in speaking of Christ’s Godhead from this very circumstance, that time does not apply to the actings of the Divine nature, but to the actings of the human nature only.

But let the matter stand as it is set forth above; and let us now proceed to examine wherein consists the excellency of this title, “first-begotten from the dead.”

By His descending into the grave He received from the Father a more plentiful anointing of that Holy Spirit than He could receive by entering into life. In the virgin’s womb He could but receive that portion of the Holy Spirit which was proper to the body of His weakness, and enabled Him to over-

come all the enemies of flesh and blood, and to keep Himself holy, harmless, and undefiled, and to present Himself a pure offering on the cross for our sins.

But in the grave He was able to receive that might, and power, and glory,

Ephesians 1

¹⁹ ...according to the working of His mighty power,

²⁰ Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places,

²¹ Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

And why? Because:

- He had achieved a great and mighty purpose of God, to make His glory visible to the infirm and fallen nature;
- He had retrieved what seemed to be, but really was not, a disappointment and defeat of the Divine purpose;
- He had brought up the creature, clean and holy;
- He had shown the long-interrupted continuity of the Father's purpose.

And, no doubt, when His body lay in the tomb, His soul, still united to His divine nature, was achieving greater victories over the spiritual rulers of the apostasy, and accomplishing yet higher mysteries of the Divine purpose, than were exhibited in the flesh: for He passed into death that He might destroy him which had the power of death, that is the devil; and therefore,

Philippians 2

⁹ God highly exalted Him, and gave Him a name above every name;

¹⁰ That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth.

In these encounters of His soul, I believe He received the new power of the Spirit; and having done His Father's will in

that unknown sojourn, having destroyed the king of death, He came and opened the strong man's house, and took His body from the strong man's hold: and this I believe to be the preeminence of the title "first begotten from the dead."

- It proved, that in the fallen creature the enemy of the fallen creature was overcome; that God's first creation of man had stood its ground against God's enemies, and, though sorely weakened in the conflict, had overcome them.
- It proved that a fall in the creature was only a step towards the proper end and design of its creation.
- It unfolded the great secret of God, in permitting a devil, and apostate angels, and fallen man. Light broke in upon the darkness, and life moved strangely in the midst of death.
- The Father's great power was seen, the Father's great goodness and grace; the Son's great devotedness and dutifulness unto His Father, and love unto that form of creature in which the Father had chosen to manifest Himself; the Holy Spirit's great might, and most excellent glory, in constituting the creature in eternal and unchangeable blessedness.

All this comes out of the resurrection of Christ: and as in virtue of His holy life He became the possessor of holiness, with which to purify the flesh of as many as believe upon Him, whence He is said to have contended with sin in the flesh; so, by His being the first-begotten from the dead, has He obtained for Himself the power of the resurrection, by which to quicken whom He will.

And it is in consequence of this that He becomes the Head of the Church, which lives by the power of His resurrection, seeing baptism is an ordinance for receiving the grace of the resurrection. We are buried with Him in baptism, and also risen with Him from the dead.

In order, therefore, to constitute a person baptized in spirit

and truth, and in order to constitute a church of baptized persons, it is absolutely necessary that we should have imparted a power of Christ's resurrection, which proceeds from His being the first-begotten from the dead.

I consider this title, therefore, "the first begotten from the dead," to be a title of His priesthood, both inasmuch as it embodies in itself His death as a sacrifice for sin, and also His resurrection as our High Priest and Intercessor with God. And further into this title of Christ we cannot enter at present.

PRINCE

Revelation

⁵ ...the prince of the kings of the earth.

Before He ascended up on high Christ said to His disciples,

Matthew 28

¹⁸ All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth.

Now whosoever has the power, is sovereign or prince. So also in the 2nd Psalm, which by St. Paul is applied to the time of His resurrection, it is said,

Psalm 2

⁶ Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion.

⁸ Ask of me, and I shall give you the heathen for your inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for your possession.

And still more distinctly in the 110th *Psalm*:

Psalm 110

¹ The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit at my right hand till I make your enemies your footstool.

⁵ The Lord at your right hand shall strike through kings in the day of His wrath.

I observe that this office of power is contained in the very name, "the Lord", which is the highest title of sovereignty in heaven and in earth, seeing that Paul makes His exaltation to consist in this:

Philippians 2

¹¹ That every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Yea even is this dignity contained in the title, David's Lord; for David was the king of the kingly nation, and therefore a king of kings: seeing the Jewish nation have the promise of being made a nation of kings, or a nation giving laws and religion, and exercising offices of power and authority over the other nations of the earth. Therefore to be David's Lord is the highest title of power upon the earth. At His birth Christ was announced to king Herod, and all his court, by this title, "King of the Jews." The wise men came unto Herod, and said,

Matthew 2

² Where is He that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen His star in the East, and are come to worship Him.

In the presence of Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea, the representative of the fourth and last universal monarchy, when questioned He took the title King of the Jews:

Matthew 27

¹¹ And Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked Him, saying, Are you the King of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, You say.

And he announced Him to the heads of the Jewish nation:

Mark 15

⁹ Will you that I release unto you the King of the Jews?

And in three most notable languages in the world he wrote over His cross, "The King of the Jews":

John 19

¹⁹ And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS.

²⁰ This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was near to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin.

Mark 15

³² And the chief priests said, Let Christ, the King of Israel, de-

scend from the cross.

He was King, therefore, at His birth and in His humiliation, though He humbled himself to become as a malefactor, and even below a malefactor.

But though He concealed the majesty of heaven and earth in His person, as the Son of God, concentrating therein all holiness and all power, yet He was not a King manifested and declared, until He arose from the dead: as St Peter, in his discourse on the day of Pentecost, concludes:

Acts 2

³⁶ Therefore know assuredly, that this Jesus, whom you have crucified, has God made both Christ and Lord.

This is further manifest in what St. Paul writes:

Ephesians 1

²⁰ When He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places,

²¹ Far above all principalities, and powers, and dominions, and every name that is named, both in this world, and in that which is to come.

In like manner it is said by Paul:

Romans 1

⁴ [He was] declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.

And the same truth is, I think, declared in the text, by His being entitled “first-begotten from the dead”, immediately before He is entitled Prince of the kings of the earth.

We are, therefore, to understand, that though it was both according to the dignity of His person, and the truth of God’s purpose, that He should be proclaimed a King upon earth that He might fulfill the ancient promise concerning Messiah, the Prince, yet was He not then in kingly office, nor were the kings of the earth responsible to Him for their jurisdictions: even as, though He was a High Priest, He did not minister in

the temple, neither could minister, because the priesthood of Levi was not yet dissolved.

So that, when by death and the resurrection from the dead He entered into His priestly, He did also enter into His kingly office; which two in Him are not separate, but one; because He is a Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek: for it was not possible that He could be at once a subject and a King.

Furthermore, because God's prophetic word had given the earth, and especially the Jewish nation, into the hands of the fourth great kingdom, it was not proper that Christ immediately after His resurrection should take upon Him the kingdom of the earth, until the purpose of God concerning the fourth great kingdom, which had enthralled His people, should be accomplished.

The Romans, the beast with ten horns, and the little horn, had as much privilege to tyrannize over the Jews for their appointed time, as the Levites had to exercise the priesthood: and if Christ revealed not Himself as Priest until by the death of His body He had brought all sacrifice to an end; so neither can He reveal Himself as King until the times of the Father, with respect to the adversity of the Jewish people, shall have been accomplished.

For it is manifest that the Jewish people cannot both be in a state of subjection and in a state of power. In a state of subjection, however, they are appointed by the Word to continue till the times of the fourth monarchy be accomplished. And therefore in a state of power they cannot be until that same power shall have been dissolved.

And seeing Christ was proclaimed King of the Jews before He was proclaimed Prince of the kings of the earth: seeing, also, that when He sits as a King, it is to be upon Mount Zion and in the throne of David, which are given to the Gentiles to be trodden under foot until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled: it follows clearly, that there was a time during which He should be hidden from the sight and sovereignty of those

who were taught to look for Him as their King.

Since His resurrection, therefore, He is a Priest in office, but a King only announced; because the Levitical priesthood, which let or hindered his priesthood, is removed, but the ten-horned empire, which let His empire, is not removed out of the way: so that the division of His office into Prophet, Priest, and King, is not only correct in the idea, but is correct also in the succession of time. He was a Prophet, an actual Prophet, when He could not be an actual Priest; and He is an actual Priest now, when He cannot be an actual King.

And because it were not proper that He should be manifested as a Priest, until He is manifested as a King also; for He is to be shown as a Priest upon His throne, (*Zechariah* 6) a Priest after Melchizedek's order; therefore Paul represents Him (*Hebrews* 9) as having passed through the veil of the heavens, and presenting His sacrifice in the presence of God for us.

In confirmation of these ideas, we shall observe, that in the visions of this book Christ has no crown until after the crowns pass from the heads and horns of the beast, at the end of the period of time, times, and half a time, or forty and two months. Then, when there are no longer any crowns upon the beast, He is presented unto us (*Revelation* 14:14) as a harvest-man, with a crown upon His head; and, in like manner, as coming forth from heaven with many crowns (*Revelation* 19:11-13).

But anterior to this point of the vision, He is not so represented: but He is represented as a Priest, or sacrifice, as a Lamb that had been slain; yet distinct from Him that sits on the throne, (chapter 4); or, as we may say, from Himself in His royal priestly office, because there never shall be any other manifestation of the Father upon a throne than Christ in His royal priestly office.

In further confirmation of this I may refer to what He says to His apostles, who asked Him, saying:

Acts 1

⁶ Will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?

To which He answered,

⁷ It is not for you to know the times and the seasons, which the Father has put in His own power.

By this He signified thereby that their question involved a knowledge of the times and the seasons which had to run, before He could restore the kingdom unto Israel: that is, as I believe, the time, times, and half a time, during which the little horn was to make war against the saints, and during which they were to be given into his hand, and at the end of which the beast with ten horns, or the Roman empire, in its last form, is to be destroyed; till which destruction the Jews are under subjection, and, I may say, Christ also, who is of the seed of the Jews, or at least, if not under subjection, yet not competent to take the power.

I mean to say, in one word, that the word which Christ spoke by the mouth of David and all the Prophets, concerning the times of the Jewish subjection, under the Gentile monarchy, is the reason why Christ, being proclaimed Prince of the kings of the earth, has not yet taken upon Him the exercise of that dignity.

Yet the proclamation is not the less momentous and effectual on that account: for therein is asserted for Him by God the supremacy over all kings, and magistrates, and trustees of power whatsoever, and wherever the gospel is preached, this truth is preached also, that Christ is the Prince of the kings of the earth.

God is the fountain-head and origin of all power. He alone has power over the creatures whom He has made. This power He has delegated unto magistrates, either by appointment of His word, or by constitution of His providence; for the ordinance of governor and governed, of magistrates and subject, is, we may affirm, as constant an ordinance as that of father

and child.

This power, which God had delegated unto others, whom therefore He calls by His own name “gods” (*Psalm* 82:6, *John* 10:35), He does in that name of His Son, “Lord”, confer upon Jesus of Nazareth. And in this book of the *Revelation*, Jesus of Nazareth is shown exercising the functions of Supreme Head, both of church and of state.

His name Lord, or Prince of the kings of the earth, means nothing less than that the Father has given unto Him all power in heaven and on earth; and if so, then let all power be exercised in His name. Let kings reverently bow before Him; let judges and princes of the earth kiss the Son.

The name Jesus imports Him to be the only Saviour of sinners; the name Christ imports Him to be the only Giver of holiness; the name Lord imports Him to be the only Possessor of power. The first has respect to man as a sinner needing forgiveness; the second has respect to man as a subject of holiness; the third has respect to man, as the subject of obedience.

As a Prophet, Christ took up into himself the prophetic office, which had subsisted in other men, who did, as it were, keep it for Him until He came. And therefore, He is called by distinction above them all, “the Faithful Witness,” and truth is said to have come by Him.

As a Priest, He took up into Himself the substance of all priesthood, possessing the anointing, and having within Himself all the holy oil for anointing others.

As a King, He sums up in Himself all power whatsoever; and that power which acknowledges Him not is in rebellion against God; and that power which acknowledges Him is on the side of God. Upon the one, He shall rain fire and brimstone, and furious storms: on the other, He shall shine ever with the light of His countenance.

Psalm 2

¹⁰ Be wise, therefore, O you kings; be instructed, O you

judges of the earth.

¹¹ Serve God with fear, and rejoice with trembling.

¹² Kiss the Son, lest you perish from the way: when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that stay on Him.

SUMMARY

These names of Christ, which I have sought to explain, are, to every one who believes on Him, full of the great confidence and sweetest consolation.

Jesus

First, the name of “Jesus,” appropriated to Him because He saves His people from their sins, strikes upon the ear of the self-condemned soul like the reprieve of Heaven, and fills it with an abiding joy and gratitude, both unto God who sent His Son, and unto His Son who came to save us.

And this name Jesus is not of a temporary application to the moment of our conversion under a reprieve from the curse of the broken law, but accompanies the sinful and ever-sinning soul with its ever-present consolation under the godly sorrow of repentance, and the abiding sense of indwelling sin.

Christ

Next, the name of “Christ,” or the Anointed One, presents Him unto the soul of the believer as the great fountain of refreshing waters in the desert, and the food of strength on the wearisome way. It reminds us, also, of His own dark and lonely sojourn, when through the unction of the Holy Ghost He bore our sins, and carried our sorrows, and offered Himself a sacrifice without blemish and without spot.

This blessed name, the Christ, presents Him as the Anointed Man, the pillar and column of human Majesty, the Man-God; our Priest also and Intercessor before the Throne, who is able to succor all that are in like manner tempted. Think of these things, while you call Him Christ.

The Faithful Witness

“The Faithful Witness” presents Him to us as the Word that was with God, and that was God, in whom is seen, as in a glass, the revealed mystery of the Divine nature, intelligibly and sensitively brought into the regions of the creatures, that they might have the boundless Infinite, in which they lost themselves, brought within such form and dimensions that they could comprehend it. No longer, then, doubt, no longer disbelieve, His word, seeing it is the faithful witness of God.

Matthew 5 [also Matthew 24:35]

¹⁸ Heaven and earth shall pass away, but one jot or one tittle shall not pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

Therefore He is the object of all faith, and the invisible God-head which He would reveal is the end of all faith. When, therefore, you doubt, remember that He is the Faithful Witness, and doubt no more.

The First-begotten from the dead

Take this for your assurance in all the trials, diseases, and sufferings of the present life, in the valley of the shadow of death itself, that

1 Corinthians 15

²⁰ [He has] risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.

Upon this let your trust rest when soul and body part asunder, and the framework of the world is dissolved. When the foundations of the earth are all out of course, remember that He bears up the pillars of it (*Psalms* 75:3); and let it be unto you for the assurance, that all which is written concerning the saints that sleep in Jesus will be fulfilled.

Prince of the kings of the earth

Remember that He will be the plague of death, and the destruction of the grave; and that the saints shall rule with Him over death and over the grave, when He shall be manifested as “Prince of the kings of the earth”, and they shall reign with

Him in glory.

That you may be mindful of these truths, and, “naming the name of Jesus, depart from all iniquity” (*2 Timothy* 2:19); and naming the name of “Christ”, and calling Him “Faithful Witness”, may believe with all your hearts: and calling Him “First-begotten from the dead”, may rejoice in hope of the glory of God; and naming Him “Prince of the kings of the earth”, may ever worship Him as your king: and teachers, princes, and judges so to do by, reverencing them as His vicegerents, I do most fervently pray.

VI. DOXOLOGY

AFTER this sublime benediction, the apostle, without a connecting word, being filled and ravished with the glorious names and offices of Christ, bursts forth into a sublime strain of thanksgiving in these words:

Revelation 1

⁵ ...Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood,

⁶ And has made us kings and priests unto God and His Father, to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

This doxology which bursts from the ravished heart of the apostle, is in unison with those which the Church in heaven, the angels, and every creature, utter unto the Lamb, when He receives the seven-sealed book from the hand of Him that sat upon the throne (*Revelation* 4 and 5). And I believe that the apostle's mind was filled with the glory of that very vision when these words burst from his lips. For we have seen that the style of the Godhead which he had used in the benediction is derived thence.

What less, then, shall we make of this glorious utterance of the apostle, than that in his person, as the only surviving apostle, the seer, and the declarer of these things to the Church, the whole believing Church on earth joins her note to that of the celestial choir above, in ascribing glory and dominion to the Lamb that was slain? It consists, as all praise from the creature must consist, of thanksgivings unto the Lord Jesus Christ for His wonderful acts done unto the children of men. And first is acknowledged His love:

UNTO HIM THAT LOVED US

"Unto Him that loved us," because therein consists the preciousness of His work, that it was done out of love. Not for any advantage to Himself, nor merely as part of a Divine scheme for accomplishing Divine ends, but out of love; which

moved Him to undertake, and to accomplish what He undertook.

And whose love is this? The love of Him who for our sakes came into the world. And who was this? The Son of God, very God, of very God. We therefore conclude beyond a doubt, that in the Godhead there is an affection of love unto the creature, even under its sinful state; out of which affection originates all the work of our redemption, which is not unto the end of making God to love us, but from the source and origin of His love, unto the end of our loving Him; as it is written,

1 John 4

¹⁹ We love Him because He first loved us.

Love is that which moved Godhead in the person of the Son to do for man what He did. This is that in God which Christ revealed, and in the revelation of which God is glorified. No doubt the great end of God is to manifest and communicate what is in Himself; and that which is communicated by the work of Incarnation, is His love to fallen sinners, unto the end that fallen sinners, without any exception, might put their trust in Him.

And the Church whom the Holy Ghost has united unto Christ and renewed after the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness, so far from being, as it were, carried out of the sphere of God's love to the sinner, is only the more ensphered therein; and having the same mind that was in Christ, when He condescended so low, she becomes God's witness, testifying His love and grace unto the worthless.

And herein stands her election, that God has chosen her to be the companion of His love, and solicitude, and travail for the souls of the most abject of the children of men; and therefore, so far from forgetting what she once was, the elected Church ever remembers her former vileness, meanness, and wickedness. She keeps up in faithful memory her kindred to sinful flesh, and acknowledge the sinfulness, and commiserate the wretchedness thereof, and by how much she feels herself

exalted into a purer, and holier, and more glorious region, by so much the more she pities those who are yet in their sins; and ascribe all the difference to the glory of His grace, who has loved her and washed her from her sins in His own blood.

WASHED US FROM OUR SINS

The second expression of the thanksgiving of the Church on earth is:

Revelation 1

⁵ ...and washed us from our sins in His own blood.

This contains in it a vast measure of doctrine, expressed in brief compass, yet by such terms as must be intelligible to everyone who knows the Old Testament Scriptures. The figure is taken from that ordinance of the law of Moses, which required those who might minister as priests to wash themselves before they entered upon their holy office:

Exodus 29

⁴ And Aaron and his sons you shall bring unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall wash them with water.

This was the first act unto the preparing a priest for his ministry. And as if to keep it in constant remembrance, they washed their hands and feet every time they went into the tent of the congregation, and when they came near unto the altar (*Exodus* 40:30).

Now the apostle, in the passage before us, exalting God for having constituted us kings and priests, does not forget the necessity of a previous ablution, which he expresses in these words, “has washed us from our sins in His own blood.” What those sins are, how abhorrent to God and to nature itself, from which they had been washed, we find enumerated in the 6th chapter of the first epistle to the *Corinthians*, with this preface and with this conclusion:

1 Corinthians 6

⁹ Know you not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the

kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,

¹⁰ Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

And lest any one should suppose his sins to be of a yet deeper dye, we have it declared, that:

1 John 1

⁷ The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin.

The fact that there is a Church in the world is, therefore, to all men the assurance that there is a way of forgiveness opened to them in the Gospel,

Zechariah 13

¹ ...a fountain opened in the house of David for sin and for uncleanness.

And with this fact before their eyes, of a Church brought out of the grossest impurities and deepest depravities of human nature, the unbelieving world is convicted, not only by the word of God's Gospel preached, but by the word of God's Gospel effected in the midst of them.

But our text contains not only the fact of those who are God's kings and priests having been as to their original condition no less depraved than other men, and washed thoroughly from that depravity, but likewise contains the method and means by which this purgation is effected: "washed us from our sins in His own blood."

Now, for the explanation of this, the method of our sanctification, it is necessary again to have recourse to the fountain-head of Divine doctrine, which is the law of Moses. Therein there was appointed, for almost every transgression of the law, some sacrifice of blood; and in general when any one for ceremonial uncleanness was put apart from the congregation of the Lord, before they could be restored again they had to be sprinkled with what was called the water of purification.

Now this water of purification, whereof the ordinance is contained in the 19th chapter of the book of *Numbers*, was composed of pure water and the ashes of a heifer mingled therewith. The heifer was to be red, without a spot: she was slain without the camp; she was burned whole with all her appurtenances.

Cedar wood, hyssop, and scarlet, which are all red, to denote the blood of Christ, were cast into the burning flame; the ashes were gathered up and mingled in the water, and with that mixture every one must be sprinkled, who, for any ceremonial uncleanness, has been put away from the presence of the congregation of the Lord.

To this ordinance the apostle makes reference, in the 9th chapter of the *Hebrews*, where he expressly treats of the sacrifice of Christ, saying,

Hebrews 9

¹³ For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies to the purifying of the flesh,

¹⁴ How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

There is still another ordinance in the law of Moses, to which, I think, our text carries a yet more express and distinct reference. It is written in *Exodus*, and required that the priests and their garments should be sprinkled with blood and with the holy anointing oil mixed together:

Exodus 29

²¹ And you shall take of the blood that is upon the altar, and of the anointing oil, and sprinkle it upon Aaron, and upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon the garments of his sons with him: and he shall be hallowed, and his garments, and his sons, and his sons' garments with him.

And these two preliminaries to the consecration of a priest, washing himself with water, and sprinkling him with blood,

seem to me united in one in our text, in the expression:

Revelation 1

⁵ ...washed us from our sins in His own blood.

But the question still remains, what is the meaning both of the Old Testament ordinance and the New Testament expression? What proportion is there between the blood of a man, Christ Jesus, and the taking away the sins of many men, of the whole world, as it is written:

John 1

²⁹ Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world.

1 John 2

² And He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

The answer to this question, which has filled the world with disputations, is not of such difficulty if we bear in mind what has been said on the preceding topic, that love to sinners is an original principle and uncaused affection of the Divine Mind.

But if we adopt the contrary notion, that something must go before in the way of cause before God can love a sinner, that He must be bent to it, won over, supplicated and propitiated by something out of Himself, some price, ransom, or suffering, then a radical error is introduced into the reasoning, which will confuse and worse confound it.

But setting this to a side, and well believing that God is love, and that out of this love all His actings toward us proceed; well believing, also, that Christ is God, and out of God does and can do nothing, and that Christ's work is not something out of God done, but something by God and in God done, and therefore not a cause, but an effect, of God's disposition of love to sinners, we will undertake to lay out a sufficient answer to this great question, How does the blood of a man avail to the taking away of sin?

The blood of Christ signifies the life of Christ The blood of

Christ as an outward thing to Himself, in which another may be washed, signifies that life offered up in death; and Christ doing the act of washing us in His blood, signifies that, though dead, He lives still. Moreover, from the passage quoted above from the *Hebrews*, we learn that:

Hebrews 9

¹⁴ ...through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot...

In other words, that His life was a spotless, sinless life; His death, the death of a man who had never done iniquity. The question then is, when rendered into common language:

How should the death of a guiltless man, who rose from the dead and lives still, take away the guilt of sin from other men?

Now this question leads to another:

How was the guilt of sin brought upon men?

And the answer to this is, By the sin of one man. This, then, being the fact, and that an ultimate fact, without a cause or reason of any kind that we can see or enunciate, the correlative of that fact is, that by the righteousness of one man the sin should be taken away.

The removal of sin, *en masse*, waited only for a man who should yield perfect holiness. This man was the God-man, God in human nature, who resisted and overcame all sin and death, and in virtue of this performance put away all sin. This is the sum of the apostle's reasoning in the 5th chapter of the *Romans*, concluding with these words:

Romans 5

¹⁹ As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience many were made righteous.

If it be objected to this, that it makes our redemption to stand rather in the life than in the death of Christ, I answer, that the apostle does so in the 6th chapter of the *Romans*, that the Psalmist does so in the 40th *Psalm*, which the apostle

quotes in the 10th chapter of the *Hebrews* (vs. 5-10), and that our Lord Himself, before He expired on the cross, said, "It is finished." *John* 19:30.

The meritoriousness of Christ's passion stands not in His death alone, but in every feeling, sympathy, and acting of His life, ever straitening itself from infinitude into limits of flesh. Christ's meritoriousness with the Father is not because He receives so much suffering in consideration of which He forgives sin; for I have shown above that He has it in Him essentially to forgive sin; but the meritoriousness consists in the Godhead being thus proved superior to sin, and shown gracious to the sinful.

Now, because the death of Christ is the great act by which the Godhead proves Himself superior to sin, whose great work is death, therefore Christ's dying has a preeminence above every other action done by Him in the days of His flesh.

Death is, as it were, sin fixed and concreted in a state or condition of creation. It is like a cutting short of the Creator's work, a dismantling of its glory and beauty, a destroying of its very subsistency; a chasm which drinks up the stream of God's beneficence, and strangely perplexes the order of His goodness; which hiatus or chasm of being to destroy, or rather to make the multitudinous life which it has swallowed up, to appear again in a perdurable form, this great object to accomplish of destroying death, and bringing life and immortality to light, was the great object and constitutes the great meritoriousness of Christ's death, so as that His resurrection, bringing up flesh, the monarch of matter, in a new and eternal form of glory and of strength, demonstrates all these things:

- God's holiness first of all, in that even His Son joined to the fallen thing should not prevent it from dying;
- God's love to the fallen thing, clasping it in His embrace, and carrying it through the deepest abyss safe unto the right hand of the Majesty on high;
- God's separate being from the creature, which despite

the creature's destruction in the absence of all its power, and in the presence of death and corruption, gives it a power, not its own, proving that there is a power without and beyond the creature, through which the creature is raised from the grave of its own being and made to live eternally.

These, and many other, yea, I may say, all other essential attributes of God, and very being of God Himself, are all made to appear by the death and resurrection of Christ; and herein, not in the quantity of suffering, lies the meritoriousness of Christ's death.

Now, that this should extend itself to men, yea, that it should extend itself to all, inasmuch as it shows the grace of God to all, this is a truth, not demonstrable by a balance account of suffering against suffering, and merit against merit; nor demonstrable from any other method which logic can devise, but simply by seeing it to be the constitution of God that it should be so; which constitution we see in the coming of the sin through one man, and thereby are prepared for receiving in the coming of the righteousness likewise by one man.

It is God's pleasure to conclude the race guilty in Adam: it is His pleasure to conclude the race innocent and guiltless in one man. This I believe to be the root of the matter; and to attempt to get lower is, if I err not, to lose ourselves in questions of words and vain speculation.

KINGS AND PRIESTS TO GOD

But while this is the true account of the condition whereinto man fell, and out of which by the death and resurrection of Christ, he has been brought, and in which the world now stands, all independent of any volition of its own, it is not the whole of the matter contained in these words:

Revelation 1

⁵ ...and washed us from our sins in His blood,

⁶ And made us kings and priests unto God.

This implies not only the common benefit of His death to all, but the special benefit of His death unto the Church. Everything in Christ's incarnation, resurrection, exaltation, and glory, done by the Father, is done for all; but everything which from His ascension into glory, Christ does for the Father, by the Spirit, is done for those only whom the Father has given to Him.

Christ, from the time He entered into His reward, and was constituted the depository of the Holy Ghost, and thereby the Head of the Church, acts, I say, only unto those whom the Father has given unto Him. This is properly the work of the election, the work of Christ in the Spirit. The work of Christ in the flesh is not a work of election, but a work of common redemption of fallen manhood.

Now forasmuch as in the passage before us He is the agent in the washing of us, the work of election is here included. Our version might lead one to imagine that it was a past, and completely past act; but this is not the case in the original, where the time is neither past, present, nor to come, but general indefinitude, to express an action begun and going on, and to go on:

“Unto Him, *loving* us, and *washing* us from our sins in His blood.”

This work of purification by the blood of Christ, unto the end of royal priesthood, was, as I have said above, foreshown and foreshadowed in the Levitical ordinance, by sprinkling the person with the water of separation. Now to do this act, required both a priest and a water of purification; and also for the antitype of it we need a Priest, which is Christ ascended up on high; and a ground of purification, which is His own guiltiest death. His guiltless death gives the means of cleansing; and it is a means of cleansing co-extensive with the uncleanness.

But His acceptance on high and installation in the high-

priesthood of the heavens, gives us the Priest, without whom the purification could not be actually performed.

Now when the purification had been by the priest performed, then was the unclean person joined to the congregation of Israel, whom the Lord had promised to make into a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. *Exodus 19:6*. And thus the separated person, who dwelt apart, was joined to the kingdom of priests.

So we, in our natural estate, being aliens from God, and put apart from His honorable society, do, when washed by Christ with His own blood, receive admission into the society and fellowship of God, to be used by Him for His kings and priests.

This same truth was beautifully taught by the other ordinance to which we referred; and according to which, before a priest could minister in the holy place, and handle the holy things, he must be sprinkled not with blood alone, nor yet with oil alone, but with oil and blood mingled together; blood of the offered sacrifice, oil of the holy, consecrated, anointing oil, composed according to God's own receipt, and upon pain of death defended from other use.

The blood denoted the most precious blood of Christ, available for all ends of purgation; and the oil denoted the anointing of the Holy Spirit, which Christ received without measure, and with which we must be anointed before we can serve the office of kings and priests, before we can eat the shewbread which comes down from heaven, and walk in that holy light which the wicked, though it shines upon him, apprehends not.

Whoso, therefore, has received this anointing from the Holy One, does well to consider himself as righteous, wholly sanctified and redeemed. Yea, well does he to enter boldly into the holy place, by that new and living way which Christ has consecrated through the veil, that is, His flesh.

To hang back and hide ourselves because of the shame of this sinful nature still cleaving to us, is neither to know, nor yet to honor the Father and the Son. It is to be ignorant of the method of God, where ignorance is neither good nor safe. It is to doubt or to disbelieve the power of God to bring a holy and acceptable service out of an unholy nature.

And what is this but to deny the work of God in flesh, which in this, and in this alone, consisted: that out of an unholy nature He did, in the person of His Son, bring a most holy and acceptable offering, the only offering that is holy and acceptable!

But if, indeed, our theological babes (and they are hardly worthy so good a name) will deny that God wrought His work in a fallen, and in itself unholy nature, and thence educed a perfect manhood to be the germ of perfect manhood, it likewise redeemed; if these gainsayers of, or triflers with, most awful and most glorious truth, be permitted to seduce the Church into the belief that the nature in which He lived, and moved, and had His being on earth, was a nature better than, or different from, ours; then all light is quenched, all hope is sealed up, all consolation defeated, all boldness slain.

Revelation 1

⁶ And has made us kings and priests unto God and His Father.

Or, as it is, being literally rendered:

“And He made us kings and priests to that God and Father of His.”

Whereon I remark, first, the setting aside of grammatical rules, in joining the participle with the indicative mood of the verb, of which voluntary inaccuracies we shall find many instances in this book; whereof the matter is so vast, and the march so grand, and the allusions so manifold, as to force it, in a manner, out of the rules proper for ordinary discourse.

Wherefore this, in the present case, should have been

adopted, I know not; except it be as a verbal quotation from the book of *Exodus*, where God, having called Moses up into the Mount of Sinai, made through him this overture to the children of Israel:

Exodus 19

⁵ If you will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then you shall be a peculiar treasure unto me, above all people, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation.

To this promise reverting in his mind, and having seen the fulfillment thereof in these visions, having heard the Church in heaven sing,

Revelation 5

¹⁰ And has made us unto our God kings and priests;

and having seen the throne of these royal priests planted on the earth (*Revelation* 20:6), the apostle, in his preface to the book, triumphantly quotes that first overture of God towards a covenant, as now fulfilled upon the Church:

Revelation 1

⁶ [He] has made us kings and priests.

Or, as Griesbach prefers to read,

“has made us a kingdom, priests to God and His Father.”

To this same overture of the covenant, being the first words spoken by the mediator Moses, and like God’s first words containing the substance of all which follows, the apostle Peter makes reference in these words of his First Epistle:

1 Peter 2

⁹ But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people.

Christ, the only Mediator, having baptized us in the Red Sea of His blood, and washed us from our sins therein, ascended up unto God on high, and sent down from thence the Holy Spirit to anoint and set apart those for kings and priests whom the Father chose unto that dignity; and in this book of

the Apocalypse is given to the Church the history of her coming unto the kingdom, the events of her pilgrimage in the wilderness, between the time when, like David, she was anointed and the time when she comes to sit on David's throne.

To that dignity, therefore, unto which the tribes of Israel were sealed of God by covenant, and to which they shall yet come in the fullness of the times (*Isaiah* 61:6); being truly the royal priestly nation of the earth, at once set apart for heads of government and worship; to this dignity John addresses the Church, the election from all nations, and kindreds, and tongues, as being designed and set apart by the washing of the blood of Christ, which is the anointing of the Holy Ghost.

This dignity the Jews shall attain among the nations in the age to come, as is abundantly declared in all the Prophets, and especially in the prophet *Zechariah*, chapter 14:16.

But we Christians, who are Jews not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit, having been baptized out of flesh and blood into a spiritual body, which we shall realize in the resurrection; to us, I say, a higher regiment and a holier priesthood appertains, even the preeminent dignity of sitting upon Christ's throne (*Revelation* 3:21), and ruling the nations with that manner of rule and government with which He shall rule. *Revelation* 2:26.

This dignity of kings and priests unto God or, more literally, kings and priests for God is, I conceive, nothing less than, under God, to govern all the works which He has created and made, with all the creatures which, in the way of generation, shall people them all.

God has a created world, and He put the man Adam in the governance thereof. But Adam fell from his lordship into miserable bondage; whereupon God prepared to provide for Himself another King, who should be worthy to hold the reins of the created world. And this King He found in Christ; whom, after proving His faithfulness,—alone faithful against a world

in rebellion,—He promoted to be Lord of all.

But herewith ended not His scheme: for no sooner is Christ ascended into the heavens, than He receives power from God to bring many sons unto the glory of the same royal priesthood. And those whom the Father gives unto Him, Christ straightway washes from their defilements, and proceeds to furnish with gifts, and graces, and ornaments, and powers which may accomplish them for the high dignity to which they have been elected, of ruling the universe of God.

What, now, may mean these many kings and priests? Is not Christ Lord of all? Wherefore then lords many, and priests many? I answer, Yes. Christ is Lord of all, and only High Priest. Yet not the less be there lords many, and priests many; who being by Him furnished for their high employment, and having all their life long experienced their own innate bondage to the creature, and their lordship over it derived only from Christ, shall in the ages to come be the true representatives of His person, and the faithful upholders of His only lordship in the diverse regions of creation.

How it is to be arranged of God in the ages to come, I take not upon myself to declare at present; but though I were altogether ignorant of the mode and manner thereof, that is no reason for my flinching to declare fully the substance of the words before us.

God is preparing out of fallen manhood a royal family for Himself, whom, under Christ, He may invest with the scepters and the altars of the created universe; through whom, and through whom alone, every creature shall present the obedience, and the worship, which to Godhead it owes. And they shall present it unto Christ, with whom they are one, bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh, beauty of His beauty, and power of His power. And thus the streams of ascending influence shall, from every holy sphere, concentrate to that place where He in Manhood dwells; in that New Jerusalem where Emmanuel, God with us, abides; and there it passes into the in-

visible, and is received in the unsearchable bosom of God.

The man who calls this a speculation, speaks unadvisedly with his lips. It is an exposition; the exposition of the words, “king and priest for God.”

Of this double office, as yet realized in no one visible, but only in Christ invisible, and though usurped by that son of mischief the hierarchy of Rome, this is the glorious soul-satisfying import: that while the king rules all, in single majesty, the priest offers all in humble worship upon the altar of God. This double title signifies the towering height of all sovereignty, combined with the perfect holiness of all service and worship of the invisible God; who is approached, and approachable only, as the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now what is to be understood by the next expression?

Revelation 1

⁶ ...unto [or, *for*] the God and Father of Jesus Christ.

First, in what sense is the invisible Godhead the God of Jesus Christ and in what sense is He His Father? And, secondly, how does this connect Him with the sanctified kings and priests?

He is the God of Christ, in the same sense in which He is our God; because by Christ He is worshiped. By the word Christ, many do merely understand the eternal Son of God; wherein they err, not knowing the Scriptures. The Christ of God is not the Son in His Godhead, but the Godhead in the Son made flesh. It is a form of being different from the being of God.

The being of God is essentially separate from the creature; the being of Christ is essentially one with the creature. And because He is one with the creature, the Christ cannot worship Himself, otherwise He worshiped the creature in Him especially included; and He therefore worshiped the Being of God separate from the creature: which Being of God contains

Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in their incomprehensible, unsearchable, essential form of existence; which, as has been explained above, stands in the person of the Father.

It is one part of the Son's humiliation to bring Himself to be the Head of the worshipers, and not the end of worship. As the end of worship He has given, as the Spirit likewise has, the glory to the Father, being for their parts contented to become in the sight of the creatures the former, the head of the worshipers, the latter the mover and sustainer of the worship. And thus the Godhead stands disclosed, for the knowledge and for the salvation of the creatures.

But, beloved, be not deceived, as if we thereby divided the substance of the Christ, or the substance of the Spirit of Christ, from the substance of the Godhead; but being separate subsistencies from the Father, they have power to assume unto themselves those relations to the creature, and to one another, which may best represent and make known, and bring into action the eternal relation of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, subsisting in the eternal Godhead, before creation was, or was contemplated.

Most truly, therefore, Christ calls the Father His God and His Father; and most truly do the apostles follow the same style in the introduction to all their epistles. And in the same sense, also, He calls Him Father in the text, because, though doubtless there existed in the Godhead between God and the Word such a relation as that of Father and Son sets forth, such a love, such an identity of substance, such an image of person, as makes the eternal Sonship a great head of theology.

Yet this was not manifested unto creation otherwise than by symbols, until the Word became incarnate of the virgin. During the days of His flesh, He was not manifestly the Son of God, but only by express revelation of the Spirit known to be such; until His resurrection from the dead, which declared Him to be:

Romans 1

⁴ ...the Son of God with power.

As we shall likewise be declared by our resurrection from among the dead to be the sons of God:

Romans 8

¹⁹ For the earnest expectation of the creature waits for the manifestation of the sons of God.

At present, we enjoy this calling, but hereafter we shall possess this glory:

1 John 3

¹ Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knows us not, because it knew Him not.

² Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.

Finally, this dignity of kings and priests, this dignity of sons of God, this privilege of calling God our God and our Father, we have not out of Christ, but in Christ. And in order to have the assurance of it the Spirit must unite us to Christ by faith now; and in order to have the reality of it, we must be raised up hereafter in the likeness, in the glory, in the bodily subsistence of the one redeemed and glorified humanity of Jesus Christ.

In Adam, we are in the subsistence of the fallen flesh, one with him in form, and feature, and feeling, though separate from him in time and place. In Christ, we are one with Him in form, and feature, and feeling, though separate from Him in time and place.

As Adam has many members, and a dependent world of lower creatures, animate and inanimate, which he does, as it were, suspend from his own being, and make sharer in his fate without any will exercised on its part, even so the Christ of God includes many members of the like human substance redeemed and glorified, and suspends from His own being a

redeemed and glorified world, without any will exercised on its part.

And therefore it is, that we kings and priests, who have that standing only in Him, and out of Him were the miserable slaves and bondsmen of sin, do ascribe unto Him who has done such great things for us, the glory and the dominion, for ever and ever.

GLORY AND STRENGTH

We now come to the substance of the doxology,

Revelation 1

⁶ ...to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.

In the four doxologies of the 4th and 5th chapters, glory is a common ascription; but dominion or power expressed by the word before us, occurs only in the doxology pronounced by the creatures.

Glory, as it seems to me, expresses the effluence of Godhead; the impression made upon the creature by the Godhead coming forth from the invisible into sight. Before the creature has had time to resolve the visible manifestation into its several intentions as concerning Himself, that impression which it makes upon Him in the act and article of becoming visible, I understand by glory.

It is like the light proceeding from the brilliant sun, ere yet it has been reflected or refracted by any medium whatever; and, as the refracted ray, could it be gathered together into one, would show its refulgent glory again.

So, when any manifestation of Godhead has been studied in its bearings of grace, mercy, love, power, &c, if you gather it together in the focus of your concentrated thought or action, it takes the name of glory again. So, in giving forth thoughts or acts in accordance with God's revealed will, we are said to glorify Him.

Now this glory which is, as it were, the first complete efful-

gence of the Godhead, and is, likewise, its consummate and concentrated representation, stands wholly in Christ; of whom it was said at His birth:

Luke 2

¹⁴ Glory to God in the highest...

Of whom it was said long before His birth:

Isaiah 49

³ You are my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified.

And who said immediately before His passion:

John 13

³¹ Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him:

³² If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him.

And again:

John 17

⁴ I have glorified You on the earth: I have finished the work which You gave me to do.

⁵ And now, O Father, glorify me with Your own self, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

In Him stands all the glory of God, the glory of His grace, the glory of His mercy, the glory of His justice, the glory of His holiness, and, in one word, the glory of His being. As God in the Shechinah dwelt, and out of the Shechinah spoke, and from the Shechinah shot forth His arrows of judgment, so in Christ the true temple, the true glory of the temple, shall God forever dwell, and thence make known His being and His blessedness, and through Him execute all His behests for ever and ever. This I understand to be the meaning of ascribing glory unto Christ.

And by the ascription of strength or dominion, I have to observe, that it is not dominion or principedom merely, which is expressed by another word, nor is it physical power, might, and strength, which is expressed by another word, both of

them in the doxologies of the 4th and 5th chapters. But it is a word derived from an obsolete root, which signifies, *to prevail, to be powerful*. This is the proper meaning, therefore, of the words *potency, validity, victory*.

And finding it used uniquely in the doxology of the creatures, I am inclined to understand by it that power which binds everything to its proper sphere, and keeps it in the obedience of its proper law, that which sustains and supports the vigor of every creature, shortly expressed in these words:

Colossians 1

¹⁷ ...and by Him all things consist.

This represents Him as the basis of creation and its framework; as it is written:

Colossians 2

⁷ Rooted and built up in Him...

And again:

¹⁹ ...The head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered and knit together, increases with the increase of God.

And again:

Ephesians 2

²¹ In whom all the building, fitly framed together, grows unto a holy temple in the Lord.

This sustaining might, this power to bring all things out of the dust of death, and to reconstitute all things in an unchangeable and infallible condition, I consider to be the thing signified by the ascription of strength; which we, feeling, and knowing, and believing, that in Christ is our only strength and stability, do therefore unto Christ ascribe it, even as all creatures do the like on the occasion of that glorious installation which the Lamb receives from Him that sits upon the throne. And to denote the unchangeableness of the glorious constitution in Christ, it is added, "for ever and ever, for ages of ages, for eternity."

And to give unto the doxology the fixture of God, there is added the solemn, *Amen*. Let us, then, with one consent, we who know the Lord, lift up our voice and sing:

Revelation 1

⁵ ...Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood,

⁶ And has made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

My object in these lectures is strictly exposition, or the setting forth of the matters contained in the book of *Revelation*. It is not to discourse of doctrine, nor yet to apply doctrine, but simply to set forth the doctrine which is taught.

Nevertheless, I cannot take leave of so pregnant a passage as the doxology without taking a short review of it in its personal application, and showing how the truth contained should come home to our own minds.

There ought, then, to be ever present to the soul of every man the conviction that God loves him, and that the work of God in Christ, and the knowledge of God, communicated by Christ, is for the sake of teaching to sinful men how God loves them.

- Did God in Christ create the world, and me, a part of it? It was done in love.
- Did God humble Himself to be made flesh, and to tabernacle among us? It was done in love.
- Did God, in the Person of the Son, die to redeem me and all mankind? It was done in love.
- Does God, by the Spirit of Christ, sanctify me and the elect of God? It is done in love.

The holiness of God stands not in the way of His love, nor does His love stand in the way of His holiness. The Gospel, at one and the same time, represents His love and His holiness. For the Gospel is salvation from the consequences of sin, which consequences of sin are the manifest holiness of God.

Inasmuch, therefore, as there is a state to be saved from by the Gospel, God's holiness is shown forth; inasmuch as there is salvation from it, God's love is shown forth.

And, therefore, the words grace, mercy, salvation, redemption, &c, by which the good tidings are briefly expressed, do present holiness and love kissing and embracing each other, supporting and sustaining each other. For it is the holiness inflicting misery, which gives occasion to the love; and again, the love glorifies the holiness by producing a holy life in those who receive it; and in those who receive it not, it glorifies the holiness again, by giving occasion to the judgment, and the penalties of the judgment, which are the pains of hell for ever.

The holiness of God, therefore, is no impediment, nor resistance, but otherwise the occasion and precursor of His love; and therefore I say again to every sinner:

Your sin has brought you into your present abjectness, and this your abjectness has been the occasion to you of God's love; therefore be of good courage, and put your trust in Him.

Again, I would say to a sinner:

If your conscience be overwhelmed with the guilt of your sin, if it be defiled with the stains of many sins, then you can have no peace, nor cleanness in the sight of God, otherwise than through the washing of the blood of Christ; that is to say, the conscience whose property it is to apprehend truth, must apprehend the truth of God's being exhibited and demonstrated by the death of Christ, in order to have peace.

That act of God's providence, the death of Christ, is the act whereby He shows forth the light which brings hope and joy to the darkened conscience of a sinner. For conscience has to do with truth, as the eye has to do with light.

The soul is not a material substance to be washed with blood; and besides, blood washes nothing: this is figurative language derived from the Levitical economy, yet representing the great truth that the Messiah must die, and that His dy-

ing is the only inlet of hidden knowledge and truth, capable of yielding peace to the troubled soul.

And what is this knowledge of God, so comfortable and cheerful, so enlightening and enlivening, which is let in, through the avenue of Christ's death, upon the soul grieving over its trespasses and sins? It is this: that He whom God loved as Himself, was brought under the power of death. In which condition God loved Him not the less, and thence God raised Him through love unto the Headship of creation.

Is this all? Yea, I think this is all. And what an all! How all-sufficient for comfort! For what is the sum of that sin and wretchedness which divides me from God? It is death:

Romans 6

²³ The wages of sin is death.

Death is the sum and consummation of sin; the filling up of God's wrath on this side the judgment.

Now, what is it that prevents a sinner from consolation, but the miserable misgiving whether God can, or the erroneous conviction that He cannot, be loving him all the while that He is inflicting on him this direful curse. And there wanted an instance, there wanted an experiment to show that God's love might, yea, and did follow the condemned, exiled outcast, into the uttermost wanderings to which he is doomed.

To show this, God himself became the outcast and the wanderer, in the subsistence of the Son; and no one doubts that God loves God. It was proved, therefore, in the way most satisfactory, and put beyond a doubt forever, that God loves human nature in its miserable sentence of death, when He himself, in the person of the Son, coming into death, arose from death, and proved death to be no obstruction of God's love, to be no sealing up of God's goodness and glory, but only the strait and narrow gate by which we enter into the kingdom.

When a soul thus beholding God's love stronger than misery and death, sees God's love to the human nature of Christ

lying in the condition of death, it has a ground, and a sufficient ground, for believing that the curse which has passed upon us, is not a prevention of the love of God, and that into whatever state sin may bring a fallen man, he is still the same object of God's love as he was before, and, believing this, ought to be at peace from the miseries of an evil conscience. For if a guilty man knows that he who is offended against, forgives his guilt, and loves him, and pities him, and is laboring to deliver him from all guilt, and has succeeded, then surely is the sting which stung him taken out.

This, then, I believe, is the rendering of the Levitical language into the language of pure reason, or common feeling; that the soul, overwhelmed with a sense of its guilt, does in the death of Christ, the Son of God, and in His resurrection, get such a view of God's character as gives it ease.

But by translating it into the language of natural reason and natural feeling, do I thereby make void the Levitical language, or express dissatisfaction with it? Surely not; for the Levitical language embodies the whole system of truth, in a series of symbolical facts. The Levitical language is the safeguard of our theology; but it is the part of the minister of the Gospel to explain it to the conscience; because, until it come in contact with the conscience, it is but a carnal ordinance, and not a spiritual truth.

Let this, therefore, stand as the personal application of the second part of this glorious doxology, that Christ, as our High Priest above, communicating with us, by the Holy Ghost, preserves our conscience clean, and takes out the abiding stains of sin, by continually opening to our minds those great truths of God's being, and of His affections to sinful mankind, which, like scattered rays, appear everywhere in His actings, but in their strength, brightness, and beauty, are concentrated in the death and resurrection of Christ, and there only.

Now, with respect to the third part of the doxology, I have this much to say, in the way of practical application; that we

are made kings and priests from the time of our believing, though we are not manifested as such until the time of the first resurrection. The gift of faith is everlasting life:

John 6

⁴⁷ He that believes on me *has* everlasting life.

And everlasting life is the life of the priest and king. Beyond a question therefore, in this life also, we have the dignity of priests and kings: we are made so: He *has made* us so.

Now, wherein consists our present royal priesthood? In the noblest region of our being. In the power to command and govern ourselves according to God's mind, which none other but the regenerate possess. Enslaved are men to another, who is the devil, great enemy of God and man; but we are free. Emancipated into the glorious liberty of the sons of God, through Christ, by His Spirit empowering me, I live a life in the flesh, to the glory of God.

I, not by constraint, but in a heaven-derived liberty and strength, exercise the office of a king, in expelling Satan, the usurper, from manhood, my proper realm, in using every power of my proper kingdom as a weapon against him and his angels, and the world, and the flesh, and all confederate nature: yea, and:

- I take the prey from the strong;
- I take every member of my body, and use it against wickedness in high places,
- I defy him with my tongue,
- I untwist all his cords,
- I expose all his snares,
- I cut asunder all his toils, and make my escape like a mighty man from the hands of his enemies.

Herein, therefore, I put forth the high function of a king.

But, besides, in all this I put forth also the holy function of a priest; for not unto myself I live, but unto God; not unto myself I conquer, but unto God; not for myself I keep my con-

quests, not for myself I reign over my conquests, but for God; and so I fulfill the office of a priest while I fulfill the office of a king:

- all my disabused faculties of mind ascend in worship unto God;
- all my purified faculties of knowledge, reverently worship God in Christ;
- all my blessed faculties of feeling worship God in the Holy Ghost.

I am a priest, by how much I am a worshiper: I am a king, by how much I have wherewith to worship; and this is verily the work of the Spirit upon a man, to make him at once a priest and a king, to give him power, and to make him desire more power for the sake of the glory of God.

And though to our grief we see a world lying in the arms of the wicked one; though to our sore pain we see men and things lorded over by Satan; we apprehend by faith, and in hope hold fast that glorious redemption which awaits the creatures also, when they likewise shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. And as priests:

- we pray for that glorious consummation;
- we offer up the doleful lament of a groaning world;
- we sing in its ears the song of its coming joy;
- we prophesy to all the people of the time when Christ, with all His saints, shall come to rule the earth in righteousness, and judge the people in equity.

Thus do we fulfill the office of kings and priests unto the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

VII. SECOND ADVENT

AFTER this doxology, and joined to it, by I know not well what connection, for these be rather the ecstatic utterances of a rapt and ravished mind, than the parts of a regular discourse, we have the following exclamation:

Revelation 1

⁷ Behold He comes with the clouds; and every eye shall see [eye] Him, and they also which pierced Him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen.

After the seer had given to the persons of the blessed Trinity their appropriate names, according to the imagery of this book, and had ascribed to the incarnate and crucified Jesus that glory and dominion with which He had been invested in the heavens, He conceives before His sight the glorious image of His Lord, descending in power and great majesty to the earth. Very unlike the blinded prophets of this day, who can neither see nor bear to hear of the glorious coming of the Lord, our seer can see nothing else.

Everything which had been exhibited to Him of the adversities, persecutions, and apostasies of the Church, is swallowed up in the glory which follows them all. Oh it is a thing most instructive to all ministers and believers of the Gospel, and especially to all interpreters and readers of this book, to witness in these verses of preface, what were the great matters impressed upon the apostle's mind by all which he had seen and heard.

However variously he was moved, as scene followed scene, in the great exhibition of the divine purpose, behold in these few verses, what was the impression which remained fixed and permanent in his mind! That abiding impression was the present glory and the future coming of his Lord. Not the creature, but the Creator; not the history of man, but the history of Christ; not the thought of himself, but the thought of his glorified and coming Lord, was present to his soul. And while

he ascribed all glory and dominion to Him for ever and ever, the only event in the ages of ages which he cares to make mention of, is the coming of the Lord:

Revelation 1

⁷ Behold He comes with the clouds...

This expression, “coming with the clouds,” has its origin in the 7th chapter of the book of *Daniel*, where, after the fourfold succession of the Church’s and the world’s oppressors, which are the Babylonian, Persian, Greek, and Roman empires; whereof the latter still endures, though for the last thirty-seven years it has been under judgment, and is about to be consumed by the act of God’s righteous judgment; after this, I say, the prophet saw in the night visions:

Daniel 7

¹³ ...and behold one like the Son of man came in the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him.

¹⁴ And there was given Him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and kindreds, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

This is the event in the history of God’s dealings with the earth which catches the eye of the seer, and stands before Him as the glad and glorious consummation. Now the most momentary glance at Daniel’s prophecy will suffice to show that this event is not at the destruction of mankind, nor for their destruction with whatever judgments attended, but contrariwise for the deliverance of all nations from oppression of brutal, bestial force, into the blessed government of Him who comes with the clouds of heaven.

Which should be enough to teach any reasonable person, not only that the coming of the Son of Man is before the termination of mankind, but also that the great event of God’s providence toward the world, and of His grace by Christ, is

not the final judgment of mankind, but the bringing in of the Son of Man anew into this visible world.

If the great event of Christ's glory, and this world's weal, had been the termination of the human race, and their final judgment, why should not the seer have looked at this with transport, instead of looking at Christ's coming with the clouds?

To this same event, of His coming with the clouds, Christ Himself refers, in that discourse which He delivered to His disciples, for the express object of teaching what should be the sign of His coming, and of the end of the age.

Matthew 24

³ And as He sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto Him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the world?

Surely, when His disciples besought Him for information concerning His coming, and He, the Lord, did set Himself to give them the information which they sought; we may well believe that He would keep to the question, and explain to them the signs of that event which they understood by His coming.

And what then does He say thereof? He tells them that His coming should be to them observable as the lightning (*Matthew 24:27*), that they should find their way to where He was as surely as the eagles do unto the carcass (*verse 28*). In *verse 29*, He describes the shaking of the heavens and the earth, which should precede His coming; and in *verse 30* He thus describes the coming itself:

³⁰ And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven, and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn; and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory.

And the reason why the tribes of the earth mourn, or as it is in our text, "all nations wail because of Him," is given in the

following verses of the same discourse, descriptive of the wickedness, carelessness, and unbelief, under which He should surprise the world:

Matthew 24

³⁷ As the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

³⁸ For as in the days which were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

And then, to show us that there shall be the salvation of a part, as in the case of Noah, and Lot, and Jerusalem, and every other judgment of God, it is immediately added:

⁴⁰ Then shall two be in the field, the one shall be taken and the other left;

⁴¹ Two women shall be grinding at the mill, the one shall be taken and the other left.

And the divine moral of the whole is:

⁴² Watch, therefore, for you know not what hour your Lord does come.

To this coming in the clouds He makes reference again in His examination before the high priest; and again in the first chapter of the *Acts*, the angels make reference to it when in a cloud He was carried out of their sight. And again, the apostle makes reference to it to comfort the Thessalonians over their departed brethren (*1 Thessalonians* 4:17), in all which instances the same event is referred to; to wit, the second coming of Christ, with all His saints, to establish His kingdom over all the nations under the whole heaven.³

Besides the two particulars given in the discourse of

³ For the complete refutation of the notion which has originated within these few years concerning a spiritual coming, we may refer to our work, entitled *The Church and State responsible to Christ, and one another*, pp. 479-490. [Editor's note: these pages are included in the [Appendix](#)]

Matthew, that every eye should see Him, as every eye sees the lightning, and that all kindreds of the earth should wail because of the judgments which He would bring upon their wicked persecutions of His saints, and confederacies against God; there is a third, mentioned in our text, that they also which pierced Him should see Him with their eyes, for that is the proper meaning of the word.

This carries a direct reference to the 12th chapter of the prophet *Zechariah*, wherein is described the fearful confusion, confounding, and judgment of the nations assembled against Jerusalem, which is called a cup of trembling to all the people round about, and a burdensome stone for all people; being doubtless the same with the judgment of all nations in the valley of Jehoshaphat, described by the prophet Joel. In the midst of that universal wail of the nations, great grace is promised to the people of Israel in these words:

Zechariah 12

⁸ In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David, and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them.

⁹ And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

¹⁰ And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication: and they shall look on me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourns for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

After which comes the description of a most deep contrition and terrible agony, like the mourning at Hadadrimmon, where the good king Josiah and the host of Judah fell.

Now, as we have said above, with respect to the passage in *Daniel*, so say we in this, that the most cursory review of the passage teaches us, that it describes the godly sorrow which works repentance not to be repented of; that it is in truth the

conversion of the Jewish nation in their own land, their conversion by the sight of God's judgments upon the nations, gathered with open mouth to destroy them.

And when they discover that this God who has gathered them, and who has delivered them in the agony of their despair, is no other than that Jesus of Nazareth whom they pierced, whom for thousands of years they have spurned and blasphemed; when He stands before them upon Mount Olive which is before Jerusalem, and they see that this mighty Saviour of their nation is even He whom their nation hanged on a tree; what an agony of shame, of remorse, of fear, of gratitude, of faith, of love, will overwhelm that people. Then shall that come to pass which is spoken of in the prophets, that:

Isaiah 66

⁸ ...a nation shall be born in a day.

Now to this straightforward interpretation of the things contained in the verse before us—for I lay claim to no ingenuity, but believe that God has blessed me with ingenuousness to interpret His word—it may be objected thus:

“But if, as you say, this same Jesus Christ is to gather the Jews, and do such things for them, how should they not know until that moment that it is He who does them?”

To this objection I am nothing loath to give an answer, the rather because it will enable me to explain a point necessary to the understanding of this text, and indeed of all the prophecies. The coming with the clouds spoken of in the passage before us, and in the kindred passages, is uniformly described as being manifest to all:

Revelation 1

⁷ ...every eye shall see Him, and all nations shall wail at the sight...

And to this same end of declaring how manifest, as well as glorious it shall be, are the clouds given Him for attendance. What is in the clouds, all can behold. They are beyond the re-

gion of concealments.

Seeing, then, by these similitudes of clouds and lightning, as well as by express declarations, the manifestness of His appearance is declared, how should it be said in other places, that He comes as a thief in the night and how should it not be known by the Jewish people, from the instant of His first interference on their behalf, to deliver them from among the nations, and to gather them into their own land?

The answer, I think, lies in this: There is a sign of the Son of man, as well as a coming of the Son of man. The sign, which, according to His own language, appears in the heaven:

Matthew 24

³⁰ Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven.

This was a thing well-known among the Jews, who were ever asking Him for that sign, which was everywhere promised in the Prophets (*Isaiah* 11:10-12). And the disciples being Jews, and having exactly the common opinions of their nation, asked Him on that occasion what should be the sign of His coming.

Well, and what is that sign? I answer, It is something in the heaven, which appears before He Himself appears. It is not Himself apparent, but the sign that He is about to appear. What it shall be, I know not; but can well conceive that it may be something similar to the pillar of cloud and fire which appeared before the children of Israel, to guide them out of Egypt, and to defend them from Pharaoh and his host, and to guide them through the wilderness, and to bring them into the promised land.

Nay, I think there is more than conjecture for this; because it is distinctly prophesied (*Ezekiel* 43:2), that the very glory which abode with the Jews until the Jewish temple was destroyed, and departed then (*Ezekiel* 10:1), shall return again, and rest within the rebuilt temple of Jerusalem.⁴

⁴ See *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Book 1 "Name, Authority, Substance

But be this as it may, there is to be a sign. Now of this sign it is nowhere asserted that it shall be visible to all the nations, from the beginning of its appearance; or being visible, that it shall be known by them to be the Son of man, or yet the sign of the Son of man. By this sign now apparent unto the Jewish people, they shall be gathered and redeemed by a strong hand out of all nations, and brought up into their own land, when it is the pleasure of the Lord so to do. And under this banner of the glory of God everything needful to the gathering, the sorting, and settling of the tribes, according to the last chapters of *Ezekiel*, will, I believe, take place.

And if the nations will oppose themselves to the emancipation of the people, I believe, that as heretofore, out of this sign shall come their discomfiture. It shall be a wall of fire around the host, and a glory in the midst of them. Nor do I doubt that the nations according as they congregate against Israel, shall come within the vision and the experience of its direful power.

Yet all the while I do believe that the children of Israel shall not know that Jesus of Nazareth is the person who out of that glory spreads the curtain of His sanctuary round about them. Nor shall the nations know that it is He; but the wise shall understand. Those that believe shall understand.

And thus, under the ensign or sign of the Son of man, shall these great and momentous acts of war and of destruction come about, as heretofore they did at the Red Sea, and in the Wilderness: and still the person of Jesus of Nazareth shall not be known, nor His power, to be present therein.

And I believe, moreover, that against the Ten Tribes defended by this supernatural power, Antichrist, that is, the beast and the false prophet, shall be bold enough to conceive and carry on war; and that this is the meaning of His ten kings making war with the Lamb and those with Him (*Revela-*

and Sanctions of the Book”, Chapter: “The Substance and Method of the Book”, Section: “Christ Gathering His Church”, p. 97-100.

tion 17:15), but He shall be broken upon the holy Mount of God (*Daniel* 11:45), and the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin being delivered from this last king of Babylon, the whole nation of the Jews shall quietly settle themselves according to the order of *Ezekiel*, chapter 48.

And against them thus settled, and thus defended, and thus secured, shall Gog and Magog come up (*Ezekiel* 38), that is, the head of the Greek Church, with the remains of the first three of Daniel's kingdoms, and a portion of all peoples; and around Jerusalem shall be fearful slaughter (*Zechariah* 12, 13, 14), in which the Jews shall mightily prevail; but yet not without sore experiences of the Lord's anger against them for their continued unbelief, and their blasphemy against His holy Name, in Jesus, and in Him alone honored, whereby shall come that purgation of them at the last, mentioned in all the Prophets. *Isaiah* 66:17; *Zechariah* 13:8-9; *Psalms* 100:11.

But in the article of their utmost need, when the power of the enemy shall swell up, even to the brim; when the sorrows of death shall compass her about, and the floods of ungodly men shall make her afraid; then shall He bow the heavens and come down, and He shall send down His arrows and scatter them; He shall shoot out His lightnings, and discomfit them. *Psalms* 18.

Then indeed shall He be manifested in the clouds of heaven; then indeed shall all nations wail because of Him; for He comes to the earth, as it is written:

Zechariah 14

⁴ And His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west,...

⁵ ...the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with You.

Now if all the saints come with Him, then it is necessary that they should already have been all removed, from among the living, and from among the dead, that with Him they may

come.

And this leads me to explain the only thing which remains towards a complete elucidation of this difficulty. It is my opinion, and I almost give it as my belief, that when the sign of the Son of man appears, and these great calamities of war and catastrophes of nations begin their disastrous course, under that banner of the man of war, Christ, being there present and therein acting, though as yet not apparent, His saints will be there along with Him; for He is now ruling the earth with the rod of iron, and breaking the nations in pieces as a potter's sherd. *Psalms 2*.

In which act of judgment upon the apostate kings and judges of the earth, He expressly and in the same terms promises, that every one who overcomes shall have a part:

Revelation 2

²⁶ He that overcomes, and keeps my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:

²⁷ And He shall rule them with a rod of iron: as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers; even as I received of my Father.

²⁸ And I will give him the morning star.

And in the 19th chapter, where this same breaking of the confederate kings is set forth, He comes attended with the armies which were in heaven. And the same truth, that the saints shall judge the earth, is taught in the Psalms, and in the Prophets, and by the Apostles.

Now, if these things be so, it follows of necessity that His saints, who are in their graves, and who are on the earth, must revive; the former by the first resurrection, and the latter by the change from corruptible to incorruptible flesh, which answers to the first resurrection (*1 Corinthians 15:51; 1 Thessalonians 4:15*). That is to say, the first resurrection, and the change of the living saints take place before the in-falling of the judgments upon the nations, and before the time when the sign of the Son of man appears in the heavens.

And seeing that this will take place before any of the stupendous events which are, as it were, done in the presence of Christ and His Church, manifesting their power out of the cloudy pillar, or whatever His sign may be, it will come without premonition or warning of any kind, and therefore may be well likened to a thief coming in the night; as it is, *Revelation* 16:15, before the outpouring of the seventh vial, which is the vial of the judgments.

And so those who are looking for Christ shall be taken to Himself from the judgments to come. They shall meet Him in the clouds, where He is in His sign, and there shall they be with Him in the clouds, ruling the nations with a rod of iron, and breaking them to pieces like a potter's vessel.

And so the shutting up of Noah in the ark by God's hand, and the taking of Lot out of Sodom by the angel's hand before He could bring any judgment, and the deliverance of the Church out of Jerusalem, shall all have their proper antitype in the deliverance of those who sigh and who cry against the abominations of the earth, and their removal unto the Lord, who shall confer with them as He did with Abraham of old before bringing the judgment, and by their means shall execute the judgment as it is written:

Psalm 149

⁵ Let the saints be joyful in glory; let them sing upon their beds.

⁶ Let the praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hands,

⁷ To execute vengeance upon the heathen and punishment upon the people.

⁸ To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron:

⁹ To execute the judgment written. This honor have all His saints. Praise you the Lord.

Now if this removal from the midst of the judgments be the thing which we have to look for; if the first resurrection, and the changing of the living saints be thus to take place before

the great stream of visible judgment comes rolling on; then how watchful we should be night and day, morning watch, noon, and eventide, to keep our garments, lest we walk naked, and they see our shame; lest we who have been preaching the advent of Christ be left behind among the foolish virgins, when our more faithful sisters are admitted to the marriage supper.

O my soul, be watchful! O my brethren, be watchful! O my flock, be watchful! O my mother Church, be watchful! O all you Churches, be watchful!

Luke 21

³⁶ Watch you therefore, and pray always, that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

It is remarkable, and well worthy of notice, that both these utterances of the glory and the advent express their own fullness and completeness, their own certainty and sufficiency, by a solemn Amen; and this last declaration concerning His advent, by a reiterated confirmation, “Even so, Amen,” a form of confirmation not often found in holy Scripture, and indeed only one other time that we know of, and that in this book, and, which is still more remarkable, when speaking of the same subject of the advent:

Revelation 22

²⁰ Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

This clearly indicates a certainty, a soul-satisfiedness and delight, to have been in the apostle’s mind whenever he touched the theme of the second advent.

To me it is a very sublime thing to see the “Amen” and the “Even so, Amen”, following each its burst of ravished feeling, as if each time the apostle had emptied out his soul in utterance, and satisfied his soul in devotion; and, having nothing to add, sealed up the sum with the solemn “Amen”, and “Even so, Amen”.

Oh, to these believers a doxology was a going forth of the whole soul in praise, and an aspiration for the advent was a going out of the whole soul in hope, and the exhausted and satisfied spirit breathed over it the final Amen.

VIII. NAMES OF CHRIST

WITH respect to the next verse, which, according to the common arrangement, I have taken in as part of John's preface or superscription to the visions which follow, I have felt at a loss to determine whether it should so stand or be considered as a part of the first vision, the commencement of it spoken by the Lord, who appeared as the Son of man, walking in the midst of the golden candlesticks.

Upon the whole, I am rather inclined to prefer the latter connection. It seems to me that the seer, having brought his preface to a close with that solemn invocation of the Lord to come, and being thereby lifted up into a very sublime mood of spirit, does, without remembering the circumstances of time and place, recall the kindred mood of sublimity to which the trumpet voice did exalt him when he heard it utter these words sublime:

Revelation 1

⁸ I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

Then, recovering himself, as it were, from the transports of his mind, or being recalled thence by the necessary demand that came upon him to describe the voice and person which he heard, he remembers that he ought first to describe his own place and condition and circumstances at the time of the revelation.

Attracted always to his Lord, and withdrawn from the thoughts of himself; ever seeing the divine before the human, the supernatural before the natural, he is caught away to the remembrance of his Lord's description of Himself; and, having delivered himself of this, he falls back to the less noble yet necessary mention of his own conditions.

According to this notion, the 8th verse will stand at the

head of the first vision as its sublime commencement, the glorious prelude, as it were, of the grand, various, and comprehensive piece which is to follow.

This view is the more confirmed, if we adopt the text of Griesbach, who makes no hesitation in rejecting these words of the 11th verse, "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, and—;" for, upon the supposition that his judgment is correct, there would, in a manner, be a necessity for considering the 8th verse as the opening of the vision, for otherwise there would be no description or explanation of the person seen in the vision. If the first clause of verse 11 is to go out of the text, then verse 8 must be regarded as the opening of the vision, and verses 9 and 10 as a note of explanation introduced by the way.

Nevertheless, though I incline to this arrangement of the context, I have included the 8th verse in the subject of my present lecture, because it consists entirely of names of Christ, which is the proper subject of this lecture, which I shall conclude with a full explanation of the mystery of Christ contained in these words:

Revelation 1

⁸ I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

ALPHA AND OMEGA

What is rendered in our version Alpha and Omega is, in the original, no more than the first and the last letters of the Greek alphabet. These letters were used for counting as well as for writing, and, on this account, Christ's calling of himself the Alpha and the Omega has been by most interpreters supposed to signify merely the beginning and the ending, or the first and the last. And by such interpreters, the second appellation, beginning and ending, is considered as the explanation of the first. To this interpretation I have no objection, so far as

it goes; but I rather incline to believe that more is contained in the two appellations than that the one should be a mere explanation of the other.

A (Alpha) is the first letter of the alphabet, and Ω (Omega) is the last, which contain between them all the signs whereby speech of God or man is recorded. When Christ, therefore says, "I am the Alpha and the Omega," He seems to me to claim to Himself to be the whole recorded Word of God—to be that which is written of—to be the whole truth, which has been and is capable of being uttered by human speech, or expressed by letters, the symbols of speech.

While I give this enlargement to the usual interpretation of this symbol, I do not deny the other, which, I am well aware, was become a kind of proverbial expression with the rabbis, who, when expressing from the beginning to the ending, were wont to say, from *Aleph* to *Tau*.

But still, as letters can only, by a secondary application, be the symbols of number, being in their primary application the symbols of speech, I think it the more worthy interpretation to suppose that Christ here means that He was the substance of all intelligence, which all speech communicates.

Letters are the symbols of speech, and speech is the form of the intelligent mind, wherefore Christ here appropriates to Himself the bounds of all reason, claiming to be the Lord of the invisible creation, its sustenance, and its life; just as, in the next title, "The Beginning and the Ending," He claims to be Lord and life of the visible, material creation.

Word is to reason what form and succession is to matter. The pure reason subsists not under the condition of space and time. It has its form, and its only form, in speech, which, again, is an intelligible form only to the reason of another reasonable creature. Therefore it is that Christ is called the Logos, or the Word of God, because Word is the only full expression of a spiritual being, and the only way of communicating with other spiritual beings.

Oh what a dignity there is in the faculty of speech! It is the indubitable stamp of God, that the creature who has it, is formed in His own image. And what a Godlike power it is, to communicate our thoughts by speech! It is the continual evidence, both of the necessity and the manner of revelation.

The beings who communicate with one another by speech or word, must themselves be communicated with, likewise by speech or word from God their Creator. Their noble faculty of understanding speech or word were otherwise unoccupied by God.

If He has made a world for sight of infinite forms and hues; if He has made a world for the ear of various sounds and melodies, capable of sweet harmony; and if He has made a world for taste, and smell, and feeling; should He not make a world of words for that nobler faculty of man which distinguishes him from the other animals, the faculty of understanding speech?

Yea, verily: and therefore it is that perhaps the highest and noblest title of the second person in the Godhead, is the Word; that is, the communication between the Father of Spirits, and the spirits which He has made,—the Word not for the sense, but for the reason, in which God may be beheld.

Such is the dignity, as I conceive, of the title or name of Christ now before us: and whoever reflects upon it thus, will see in it a glorious dignity, and a large comprehensiveness, which is not in that which follows. Word is wider than the world. Word is not the record of the events in their order, not of things in their various appearances.

Our Scottish skeptic, Hume, had a poor, beggarly idea of books—as indeed he had of everything else—when he said, that, saving those which treated of histories and recorded facts of nature, a wise man would do well to burn the rest. Poor matter-of-fact materialist that you were! Books are for the record not of outward things, but of man's inward thoughts both upon what is visible and what is invisible. Even

your histories of facts are not stamps of the material thing, but judgments of the reason concerning it.

All science, truly so called, is the chaos of facts ordered and informed with relations by the *lumen siccum*, the *pure light of reason*; and of poetry, and of law, and of religion; and, in one word, of reason itself, what store of books most precious have been written, and are ever writing, by the generous pens of worthy men! With what a numerous progeny has reason replenished the world, which have their subsistence only in the words of written books!

In so far forth as truth is expressed therein, Christ is the author, Christ is the substance of them all. Wherefore He is called *the Truth*, in one place; and in another place, *the Word*; and in the place before us, the *Alpha* and the *Omega*.

BEGINNING AND ENDING

The second title which the Lord takes to Himself, is expressed in these sublime words:

Revelation 1

⁸ I am...the Beginning and the Ending.

This title contemplates things visible and material; creation, as distinguished from reason, which is not a creature of God's hand, but the inspiration of His mouth. God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life, and he became a living soul. Of the things created by God in the space of six days, Christ said, "I am the Beginning and the Ending." This doctrine, that Christ is the beginning and the ending of creation, implies much more in it than that He created all things, and that they were created for Him; as it is written:

Colossians 1

¹⁶ All things were created by Him, and for Him, and He is before all things.

The doctrine taught by this passage in *Colossians* is a very important doctrine, though little understood in these barren times; bearing that Christ—not as eternal Son, or bare Word,

and yet at the same time not in the human nature, which had no existence until it was generated of the virgin, but still as Christ—created all things.

Now what does this mean? It means, that creation was an act done by the Godhead, in the foreview or purpose of bringing into the world the Word in a creature form. The Word subsisting in hypostatical union with the creature, is the Christ: and when it is said that all things were made by the Christ, it must either be meant that anterior to creation the Word was hypostatically united to human nature; which opinion many heretics, and many who have the reputation of orthodox (for example, Watts) maintained; or it must mean that Godhead, in creation, did constitute all things with a view to the Christ, who in the fullness of time was to become the head, the supporter, and the eternal life of all things.

Or, in other words, that Godhead in the person of the Son assumed I to itself a form; not a created form, but a form of purpose in the fullness of time to be created; out of which form, as the conforming womb, the creatures took their mold and consistency.

Creation was not a work constructed for appearances, but for realities, and all realities lie bosomed in God. In that primordial form, in the unity of that First-begotten of the creatures, in the *pleroma* or fullness of that Wisdom which was His delight before He set His compass on the face of the deep, God beheld the certainty, the variety, the diversity, and the final stability of all the creatures which He was about to make.

In the idea of the Christ which the Godhead purposed within Himself before the world was, all things were seen and are seen by God, and shall be at length accomplished, and forever set up, when the kingdom shall be given up to the Father, who thenceforward shall behold the glorious and divine idea realized by the laborious work of the Son effecting all the Father's will through the operation of the Holy Ghost.

This, now, is the idea taught in the 1st chapter of the *Colossians* concerning the creation in Christ, and in the 1st chapter of the *Ephesians* concerning the election in Christ; and it is the only true doctrine concerning Christ; and it is the only doctrine which represents a purpose or design in God: which design nothing has marred, neither fall, nor wicked spirits, nor wicked men; and which design nothing shall ever mar; but against the dispensation of the fullness of the time all things shall be headed up in Christ,

Ephesians 1

¹⁰ ...things in heaven, and things on earth.

But the doctrine taught in the title of Christ now under consideration, “I am the Beginning and the Ending,” is, it seems to me, something different from the doctrine exhibited above, of His being the first born of every creature, and answers more nearly to that contained in these words of the same chapter of the *Colossians*:

Colossians 1

¹⁷ ...and by Him all things consist.

This signifies not merely that He is the beginning of creation, as the architect and archetype thereof, and that He is the end or object for which all was created, and in which all shall be realized infallible and unchangeable; but signifying, moreover, that all included between these two, the archetypal idea, and the perfect accomplishment, to wit, the continual subsistence, the various laws, the revolutions of ages, and the changes and vicissitudes of daily occurrence; everything which lives and moves, and has its being, from the grain of sand through all the forms of animate and inanimate substance, up to the masterpiece of God’s handiwork, the body of man; all things without exception have their form of being and their mode of operating, not from accident, and still less from any playfulness of creation, but from a fixed and well-ordered intention of showing forth the knowledge of the mystery of Christ.

Psalm 19

¹ The heavens declare His glory, and the firmament shows His handiwork,

² Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night teaches knowledge [concerning Him].

Concerning whom? Concerning Christ. Our popular theology says, concerning God; but I say, God is not otherwise known than in Christ.

Christ is that deep device of Godhead's wisdom, wherein Godhead shall make itself intelligible to creation, shall show itself reconciled to creation, shall bring holiness out of creation, shall uphold creation; and yet shall not be mingled with creation, shall be, by chasm impassable, separated from creation, and so be ever worshiped by creation, as without, besides, and beyond itself.

The theology which represents an intelligible God elsewhere than in Christ, is not a Christian theology, and will invariably produce the one or the other of these effects: unitarianism in faith, or destruction of worship.

But this is a point of such vast importance, and so little understood by ministers of the gospel, and by the members of the Church, that I feel well pleased in an opportunity of opening it yet more fully, which presents itself in the very next title which our Lord appropriates unto Himself.

Revelation 1

⁸ ...says the Lord, which is and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

I find this general character, and, I think, failing to prevail among orthodox commentators and divines, that they are more desirous to make good the point of Christ's divinity out of these titles, than to expound the matter which these titles reveal to the knowledge and consolation of the Church. This indicates, as it seems to me, a timorous sensitiveness upon that first principle of the faith which it is neither good to encourage in one's self, nor in the Church.

To me, it is as essential that Christ be God, as that God be God, both one substance, equal in power and glory: the one Godhead existing in union with and for the benefit of the creature; the other Godhead existing in and for itself, far beyond and above the faculties of any creature. If Christ be not God, God is to me as dark as “Erebus⁵ and old night.” If Christ be not God, I, a Christian, am as ignorant of, as far from God, as the South Sea savage, or the North American Indian.

To me, therefore, thus at rest and embosomed in the divinity of Christ, it is the continual desire in meditating the Scriptures and unfolding them to others, not to catch here and there a text in proof of His divinity; but here and there and everywhere to see the divinity, the one Godhead, of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, coming into intelligence, into feeling, into action of mine; in one word, coming into sphere of human being.

My desire and prayer is, that I, a being of flesh, should understand God, who was manifest in flesh; for it is my eternal life to know God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent. *John* 17:3.

A feverish disputatious man has earned the eye of suspicion towards me, as if underneath subtle and deep discourse, I savored of Socinian predilection. The man is either crazed or malicious, or of that class whom Paul designates unlearned and unstable. I am pursuing the only course to overthrow Socinianism, Deism, and Atheism, by exhibiting in Christ Jesus the infinite and absolute perfections of Godhead, embracing with the arms of love, and sustaining with the right arm of strength, and perfecting with glorious beauty, not only reason, the palace of creation, but likewise all creation’s meaner chambers. Words these, purposes these, all unintelligible to you, you defamer of honest men, and to those who follow after you in your defamatory courses.

5 In classical mythology, *Erebus* is the darkness under the earth, imagined either as the abode of sinners after death or of all the dead.

But, to return from this defense of our method to the fulfillment of it. It is a thing worthy of remark, that the Lord should take to Himself this title, which contains the most absolute style of expressing the absolute Godhead. And seeing this title occurs nowhere but in *Revelation*, and that, of those two verses included in the subject of our lecture, the one before us is spoken by the Lord Himself, and the other by the apostle; and seeing, moreover, that the apostle's language in his introduction is entirely derived, as we have seen, from the style of his visions, we naturally infer that the disciple learned from his master, and that he used the style "which is, and which was, and which is to come," and applied it to the Father, because Christ had used it of, and applied it to, Himself.

- John took the style of the seven Spirits from the *Apocalypse*, (*Revelation* 4:5);
- He took the style of the faithful Witness from the *Apocalypse*, (*Revelation* 3:14);
- He took the style of First-begotten from the dead from the *Apocalypse*, (*Revelation* 1:18, and 2:8); and
- He took the style, the Prince of the kings of the earth from the *Apocalypse*, (*Revelation* 11:15, 17:14);
- and doubtless the only other part of the style of Godhead which he used ("which is, and which was, and which is to come") he took also from the *Apocalypse*, (*Revelation* 4:8,) and from the passage before us, where, and where alone, it is found written in all the Scriptures.

This is an important remark, showing us that hereby is Christ known to be very God; not because the names of very God are taken and applied to Him, but, which is far stronger, that the names applied to Him are the names taken and given to God.

That the name of a greater should be taken and used of a lesser, is the use and wont of language, because the greater includes the lesser; but that the names and attributes of a lesser should be taken for the definition of a greater, is a contradic-

tion in terms, and has no place in the forms of logic.

Moreover, this practice, of which we have an instance before us, of transferring the name of Christ to the Father, is and must be the universal rule: A name which man can comprehend, must be the name of a comprehensible being; but God, in the person of the Father, is essentially incomprehensible, and therefore no such name can, in the first instance, be applicable to Him, but must be applicable to the Godhead in its manifestation, that is to Christ.

The Old Testament names of Jehovah, Elohim, Adonai, &c. are names of Him who was to come, of Him who was to be manifested in the flesh; which names being likewise appropriated to Him who is the object of all worship, the invisible and incomprehensible God, whom Christ worships as God; it comes to pass, that we clearly discern that Christ, though a creature as to one part of His subsistence, is very God as to another part of His subsistence; nay more, is the intelligible form of God, without whom God is unknown, inscrutable, without comfort, without application, without advantage to the creature.

O my soul, rejoice to know that there is a God, by knowing that Jesus Christ is God. Rejoice, O my soul, to know, what God is for you, for all that is dear to you, by knowing how Jesus Christ carried Himself to you, to all that is dear to you.

WHICH IS, WHICH WAS, WHICH IS TO COME

This name of Christ, “which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty,” we have already explained as it applies to the absolute and incomprehensible Godhead of the Father; but as it applies to the Son, subsisting in the Christ, it admits of a still further and more distinct explanation. Nearly the same form of expression occurs in:

Hebrews 13

⁸ Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and for ever.

And in *Psalms* 102, concluding with these words:

Psalm 102

²⁵ Of old you have laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of your hands.

²⁶ They shall perish, but you shall endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shall you change them, and they shall be changed:

²⁷ But you are the same, and your years shall have no end.

These expressions are commonly applied to the person of the Son, as a co-eternal, co-essential Person of the Godhead: but this is nothing more than to assert His absolute Divinity, whereas, these, and other texts, are given not for this purpose alone, but for opening and unfolding the intelligible form of the Godhead which subsists in the Christ.

If, as I have argued above, Godhead is unintelligible, save as it is seen and understood in the subsistence of Christ, the great object which an interpreter should have in view is not to find the absolute and unintelligible in Christ, but to explain the limited and intelligible subsistence which He has taken.

This fond propensity to identify Christ with the absolute Godhead, instead of showing the absolute Godhead revealed in Christ has brought over the Church an impatience of all exposition concerning the mysteries of Godhead revealed in Christ, so that upon whatever point of Christ's person you discourse, you are continually stopped with the alarm of meddling with things too high for human comprehension, and there is raised a loud murmur against entering into the only questions which can inform us with the knowledge or the love of God.

Oft as I have said it in this lecture, I say it again, that if the subsistence of Christ is not studied, God is not known, and not being known, can neither be loved, nor yet obeyed. My chief—I had almost said exclusive—object, therefore, in this exposition is to study Christ that I may know God; and what I know, believe and love; and what I know not, worship and adore.

Now, in applying this title to the Father, I showed that it was the best fitted to express that absolute being who calls Himself Jehovah, “I am that I am”; and whom the Apostle James designates:

James 1

¹⁷ ...the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness nor shadow of turning.

In applying it to the person of the Son, considered not merely as God, but as subsisting in the Christ, I see many things contained in it: “Which is,” or literally, “The Existing One”. This is the same form of expression which is used *John* 1:18, which, literally rendered, is as follows:

God no one any how (or at any time) has seen. The only begotten Son, He existing within (or inside) the bosom of the Father, that one has (led Him out) educated Him.

I think it is also the same attribute of being which is expressed in these words:

John 8

⁵⁸ Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.

These expressions I consider to be used of Him as the Christ, and to be parallel with those other expressions, “First-born of every creature”, “Beginning of the creation of God”; telling out to us this vast and mighty truth, that before the worlds the Godhead had a purpose filling His bosom, so to speak, that is to say, including all actions, creations, and generations whatsoever whichever out of God shall come, and that this all-continent purpose is itself contained in the Christ, or really is the Christ, of whom are all things, and in whom are all things, before they are produced into being.

He is the unity of things existent, which are but the pieces that compose the Mosaic of His one subsistence. In the bosom of the Father He subsisted as the Christ, long before He was produced as such. Creation brought into being the rude sub-

stances of His visible person; the word of God, in the mouth of the prophets, brought the rude and imperfect forms of His invisible person.

All word and work of God anterior to His birth of the virgin, and His better birth from the dead, were but the germinations and buddings of that perfect Christ, who shall yet head up into Himself all things which be in the heavens and on the earth.

The utterance various of God's mouth, the creation diversified of God's hand, do tell nothing of God directly, but first they tell of Christ, who is the basis of their being; and He it is who tells of God. He has from the beginning a predestinated form in the purpose of God. He is always the same, He is always the *pleroma*, the fullness of the Godhead in the body.

The name, therefore, or rather the first letter of the name before us—to wit, *which Is*, or the Existing One,—seems to me to deny that there is any thing or being existent in itself, or of itself, but all existent in Him, and for Him. And that the devil and his angels, and wicked men, however they go about to deny and to oppose it, have still their being from Him, and the support of their being in Him.

In grand demonstration of which, He will raise the bodies of the wicked from their graves, and by an act of His judgment and power, fix for ever the condition of wicked angels and wicked men in the unchangeable state of the second death. And unto all creatures whatsoever He will give their deathless standing; and so doing, will establish the great truth of our text, that He, and He only, is; that all other beings have from Him their being, and by Him in being are preserved.

And herein lies the importance of death, as an ordinance of God; in that the being of every creature is thereby arrested, negatived, held in suspension, proved impotent, its subsistence broken: its future subsistence made to rest only in a word of Christ's, that when He comes He will restore, reconstitute, and forever confirm, in what manner it pleases Him,

the being of every creature.

God says of Christ, "He only is;" the creature says of itself, "I also am;" death arises on the instant of the utterance of this lie, and says "You are not;" and thus by death every creature is proved a liar, and by resurrection Christ only is proved true.

Next, by the expression "Which Was," or literally "The Was," this seems to me to be revealed concerning Christ; that not only is He the present being, but likewise the past being of every creature. If the former letter or syllable of His name, the Existing One, be understood of the instant now present, then the next syllable, "the Was," is to be understood of all time past; and "the Coming One," of all time to come, through the endless ages of eternity. And then it will be exactly parallel with the expression:

Hebrews 13

⁸ Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and for ever.

If, again, the expression, "the existing One", be understood, as I rather incline to take it, of all time since existence out of God began, that is, since creation, then the expression "the Was" must refer to an existence anterior to creation, which existence He had within the bosom of the Father, as containing the whole purpose of the Godhead. And the Coming One will refer to that complete and perfect manifestation of Himself when He shall come again.

I care not which of these interpretations be adopted, so that the one truth contained in the word be admitted: which truth is this, that Christ is not only the container of Godhead, but likewise the container of all creation. Yet so containing both as not to mingle or confuse them with one another; and this through the distinctness of the two natures, human and divine, in the one person of the Son.

This idea, which has been so often brought before us in this lecture, is the very key of all the mysteries of God; and it is, moreover, the highest consolation of every creature, exhibit-

ing God so very tender and careful, so very loving and kind, as to have cast away no creature, as it were, into the void and empty waste, but to have formed everything according to a plan and purpose, yea, and to have knit and bound all creatures with one another; yea, moreover, to have given them a place in the unity of the constitution of His own Son; yea, to have united them in one person, with the substance of His own Godhead.

This, I say, exhibits the Creator as He is, most merciful and gracious to the meanest of His creatures. It shows Him all love, all tenderness, all preservation; and, moreover, it teaches us that creation and providence and redemption are one thing, one work of God in Jesus Christ. This inclusion, I say, in the constitution of Christ is the high birthright and prerogative of every creature, and to be cast out of it is the eternal misery of the damned. This is the outness so often spoken of in the Scriptures, the outer darkness, where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth:

Revelation 22

¹⁵ Without [the city] are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loves and makes a lie.

And when sin has lost unto the creature this its highest birthright, then it is the work of the Holy Spirit to restore us again thereto, to graft us into Christ, and to unite us with Him for ever and ever. Indeed, the being of the reprobate shall still continue, upheld by Christ, to show forth a part of that fullness which is in Him namely, the endless contrariety which there is between God and sin, and the great and fierce anger which He has against sin.

But this their condition would not be seen as a vindication of holiness, and a punishment of wickedness, unless it could be seen in the way of loss sustained and misery inflicted.

Now what is the loss sustained? It is the loss of that birthright of every creature, which it has from the bounty of

God, of constituting a part of the fullness which is in Christ.

And what is the misery entailed? It is the receiving that standing of eternal death, which is considered as the outness, the casting out from the house of Christ.

But as the righteous severity of a father would not be seen in the casting of a wicked son out of his house, unless that son had been known to possess originally an equal standing therein; so would not the righteous wrath and indignation of God against the reprobate of his creatures be shown, unless they likewise had possessed an equal standing with every other creature in Christ Jesus in their original creation.

And as the ejected son does not cease to have his being from his father because he is ejected; so neither do the outcasts of hell cease to have their being from Christ because they are ejected. That they should have such a being of misery from such an Author of goodness, is indeed the demonstration of that Good One's hatred of and enmity against sin: and therefore He is the being of all present things, of all past things, and of all things to come; the being whose name is:

“Which is, and which was, and which is to come.”

THE ALMIGHTY

Upon the next name, “the Almighty,” we have little to say beyond what we have already expressed under the title Lord, and the word “Dominion,” contained in the doxology.⁶

It signifies All-ruler, and the word “Ruler” is rule of the same kind which is expressed by the word “Dominion;” and it expresses very nearly the same with our word Omnipotence: being nearly the same which is expressed by the Hebrew *Elohim*, and referring to God as Creator, and Sustainer, and Director, and Governor of creation.

When Elijah brought before the children of Israel the question between God and Baal, it is thus:

⁶ See [Page 65](#).

1 Kings 18

²¹ How long halt you between two opinions? if Jehovah be Almighty, then follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him.

And when it had been put to the test of answering by fire, the people answered:

³⁹ Jehovah, He is the Almighty; Jehovah, He is the Almighty.

This same attribute of Godhead I take to be the thing contained in Christ's title "the Almighty," showing that God had committed into His hand the sovereign guidance and direction of all things.

IX. CONCLUSIONS

NOW, inasmuch as the manifestation of God in Christ must stretch as far and wide, and completely cover all that is known of God, it is a most erroneous mode of speech, and subversive of the whole doctrine of Christ's divinity, to speak of a God out of Christ.

Inasmuch, indeed, as Christ is one with the creature in His human nature, God is wholly out of Him; but Christ's human nature is not Christ. Christ consists of two distinct natures, in one person united for ever; and therefore to speak of God out of Christ, is to separate the substance of His divine nature from the substance of God, and to bring in, either the doctrine that He is a mere creature, or the doctrine that there be more gods than one.

Yet these sensitive declaimers, and most inadequate debaters about the divinity of Christ, will talk most roundly about a God out of Christ. Forasmuch, then, as God's being is dark and inscrutable, otherwise than as it is seen in Christ, let us exercise ourselves a little to read and to know what in Him is given for our knowledge and perusal. In Christ, then, what do we see of Godhead? Three things chiefly concerning us to know:

THE LOVE OF GOD

The first, that Godhead dwells there in harmony perfect and unbroken, with manhood such as mine. Manhood such as mine, soul reasonable, body mortal and corruptible, He took and so possessed by method of incarnation, as that, though its passions and temptations were one and the same with the passions and temptations of all mankind, it never ceased to be dearly beloved—beloved so dearly as not to be despised in the virgin's womb, nor in the stable of Bethlehem, nor in the sinful world, nor in the corruptible grave. Beloved, I say, above all these, the shameful accidents of our being, it was not de-

spised nor abhorred, but owned, sustained, inhabited, sanctified, glorified, and magnified to the throne of God.

After which magnificent demonstration of Godhead's affections towards manhood, shall any man say that there is a portion of Adam's substance which is not well beloved of God? The very angels of heaven will reverence and admire manhood as the object of God's special delight; and it seems to me, that they would almost be tempted to adore it did they not see a portion of it cast into outer darkness, where is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.

And notwithstanding this stupendous expression of the Divine favor for mankind, many of those, considering themselves farthest advanced in the truth, dare hardly preach unto the people, that God loves them. This comes of their monstrous figment, their execrable lie, that He took the nature of man unfallen, and avoided the nature of man fallen; that He took some pure and holy portion of our nature, but took not part of the same with the brethren. Out upon such abominable doctrine! anathema maranatha unto an angel from heaven if he dared to preach it. Schoolboys should know better; but it is written of a time of the Church when babes shall rule over them:

Isaiah 3

⁴ I will give children to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them.

Let us beware that that time is not now. I for one believe that it is now.

THE HOLINESS OF GOD

The second thing taught us by this manifestation of God in Christ, is a lesson concerning the Holiness, as the former was a lesson concerning the Love of God. Of the holiness of God, as of His other attributes, we know nothing otherwise than as it is revealed in Christ. All the rest is an abstraction, and not a being; a form of fallen reason, and not a form of God shining

himself through the perfect reason in Jesus Christ.

And what do we see of Godhead's holiness displayed in Jesus Christ? We see Godhead bringing its holiness out of the fallen substance of manhood. God's holy activity is no otherwise seen than in the members of the Man Christ Jesus: in whom, do I see a holiness avoiding the fallen creature? Nay, but I see a holiness drawing near to the fallen creature, working in it, and brought out of it.

Christ is the Holy One of God. Holiness is summed up in Him. Holiness stands only in Him. Everything seen, everything known else is unholy; for He charges even His angels with folly, and what holiness there is in them is only through sustentation of Christ.

The angels that fell not, fell not through sustentation of Him. He was the strength of their holiness. They are holy in Him, as we are holy in Him. And out of what was this well-head of holiness stricken? It was stricken out of earthly fallen manhood. The holiness of God came out of the human nature of Christ, just as the spring wells, pure as the dew of heaven, pour from the bosom of the earth.

Is holiness then an attribute which avoids the fallen, which says, "Stand off until you are reformed"? No, verily. How then would the holy God have consorted with fallen flesh, and wedded it to His person, and applied Himself to it to redeem and save it, yea, and glorified it to the right hand of the majesty on high?

Holiness in God, being known only as it is manifested in the person of our blessed Saviour, I do therefore perceive to be that disposition in Him which condemns not the sinner until it has first besought him and endeavored to redeem and sanctify him.

Adam had no sooner fallen, and become obnoxious to the judgment of God's holiness, than God himself applied to him with the voice of grace and forgiveness.

- He had mercy upon him, though He took vengeance upon his deeds.
- He gave him the promise of a Redeemer before He expelled him from paradise.
- He showed him grace before He inflicted on him judgment.
- He gave him a word of prophecy to rest upon before He took from him the fullness of his creation state, and debarred his approach to the paradise of Eden.

And thus has God ever dealt with sinful men; His holiness ever inducing Him to grace and mercy before the coming on of judgment and wrath. He is a King whose nature it ever is to present a pardon and reprieve before the execution of sentence: He ever has done so, and so He ever will do.

It is an error, therefore, to say that God inclines to punish, and needs something to come between and stem His wrath in its direful purpose of revenge. This is the vulgar error of all nations, that Gods holiness is vindictive, and not merciful in the first instance; and it arises from the ungrateful and churlish disposition of man's heart to be more observant of the evil than of the good which is continually present and occurrent in the providence of God.

Paul, in his discourses with the heathen, continually reminds them of the rain and fruitful seasons by which God kept up the memorial of His goodness to them, and the holy Scripture everywhere teaches us the goodness of God to the evil as well as to the righteous, to the just as well as to the unjust. His name is:

Exodus 34

⁶ ...The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious...

⁷ ...forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin.

And it is added, "which will not clear the guilty." There is a guilt, indeed, which He will not clear; that is the guilt of living in the bosom of this the remedial world of grace, and living all unthankful and ungodly.

Not only are all things created in Christ, but in Him the ages or dispensations are constituted. Everything in creation, everything in providence, preaches the same gospel-giving God whom Christ preaches.

The prophetic office of Christ and of His Church does not alter God, but only declare God, and cast light upon His dispensations. So that the nations which have not the gospel, as those which have it, are living under the love and grace of the same God whom Christ makes known, whom Christ does not make or change in the preaching of Him, but whom He only makes known as He is eternally and unchangeably.

This gracious, good, and holy God, is to us seen living and acting in a person. To those who know not that person, or believe not on Him, He is seen and felt in every feature of creation, in every act of Providence; yea, and in a person He is known to every one, and that person is every one's-self. We are created in the image of God, and for that image of Himself written in our conscience God will hold us all responsible.

Oh! what infinite errors do I see in the practical and theoretical theology of men, arising all from this one cause of not exalting Christ into the dignity of being the only representative and revealer of God! How much more of practical Socinianism there is, than men dream of! It is the essence of Socinianism to say that there is a God known or knowable out of Christ, beyond the person and the actings of Christ, whether in creation or providence, or in flesh; for it is one subsistence of God in manhood which wrought all things, though His manhood was only predestinative, and not really subsistent until He was generated of the virgin.

Into this subject we shall have an opportunity of entering more at large when we come to treat of another of His names, "The Beginning of the creation of God."⁷ Meanwhile we con-

⁷ See *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Book 10 "Epistle to the Church in Laodicea", Chapter: "The Chief Shepherd's Last and Fullest Style", Section: "The Beginning of the Creation of God", p. 39-43.

clude this lecture with observing the third great lesson which comes out of that knowledge of Christ we have brought forward at this time.

THE MYSTERY OF GOD

The third great doctrine concerning God's being and attributes which we are taught by Christ, is this, that though creation was originally in Christ as a part of the divine purpose with respect to Him, yet through sin it fell into misery, and confusion, and darkness, and death; and therein continued, and continues, notwithstanding the Christian providence of God thereto, until Christ himself did join the creature to His own person in hypostatical union, and the Holy Ghost gathers into union with His creature part the creatures fallen into sin. Then, indeed, when a creature has been united to Christ's body by the Holy Ghost, it stands in a blessed and everlasting life.

John 3

³ Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

⁵ Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

And creatures who are not thus united, though they have their being and constitution in Christ, are yet not blessed in Him to the enjoyment of God; but, contrariwise, accursed to the misery of those who would not believe on the Son of God.

This lesson divides itself into several parts, which I have time barely to enumerate. The first of these is, the difference between creation and incarnation. Creation, though a work in Christ, is not such a work as to control the natural nothingness, worthlessness, and sinfulness of the creature; but incarnation is. Incarnation controls the creature's nothingness and worthlessness—first in the person of the incarnate God, and then in the person of all His members. Incarnation, therefore, is a higher, nobler, and better thing than creation.

And wherein now does Incarnation differ from creation? In this, that it is generation out of that which already exists, and not mere bringing into existence. We infer, therefore, that in generation out of creatures already existent the great mystery of God is contained; which, indeed, is signified to us in the 2nd *Psalms*, where, when all kings, and magistrates, and judges, and chief creatures of God, are represented as in rebellion against Him, the Son it is, the only begotten of God, who bears up the pillars of creation (*Psalms* 75:3), and redeems it from its wreck and ruin:

Psalms 2

⁷ I will declare the decree: the Lord has said unto me, You are my Son; this day have I begotten you.

I believe, therefore, that regeneration by the Holy Ghost is that for which creation is but as it were the prepared womb: and that hereby shall Christ be known and exhibited as the Father of the eternal age. *Isaiah* 9:6.

This mystery of incarnation, as the end of creation, is, I believe, intended to show forth the great truth in Godhead, which is wont to be expressed by the eternal generation of the Son, and will prove that He is not a creature created, but a Son generated.

But of this great head of doctrine we shall come to discourse when we treat of the name “Son of God,” which He takes in writing to the Church in Thyatira⁸.

The second part of this lesson is derived from Christ’s dying, for which I can see no reason but the faithfulness of God. His person was divine; His becoming man was glorious in the Father’s sight; His life in flesh was the very exemplar of God’s own holiness; He kept the law; He did more—He made it honorable and glorious, and wherefore then should He die, but because God in Adam had said to every creature of Adam’s

⁸ See *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Book 7 “Epistle to the Church in Thyatira”, Chapter: “The Style of the Chief Shepherd”, Section: “The Son of God”, p. 3-21.

substance, “You shall die.”

This was the first word of God, and upon it rests the demonstration of the word’s infallibility. Wherefore, to prove that God in Christ manifested is only for the demonstration of God’s infallibility and unchangeableness in His eternal and incomprehensible being, Christ, when He became manifested, submits to death; at once the most dishonorable and calamitous condition of a creature; which condition for the Creator to endure is, indeed, the most awfully complete demonstration of the subservience of all creation to the invisible God.

When Christ himself, in His person the Son of God, in His subsistence very God and very creature, comprehending, indeed, all the creatures—when Christ, I say, thus containing the fullness of Godhead in a body, Creator of all things, preserver of all things, embodier of all things, lays down His life, and passes into the common gulf of being, death, for the honor of God’s faithfulness, as He himself said, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled, that the word of God might not be broken; how, oh how, after seeing and knowing this, shall not every creature be content to suffer and to die for the honor of God’s most faithful word, and for ever feel that its life as a creature is and ought forever to be held in simplest dependence upon God, and for His only glory!

But wherefore did that word of God proceed, which bowed the Christ himself unto the death? What was the occasion of so terrible a word? Sin, which is the disobedience of God’s commandment, the dishonor of God’s word.

And therefore, while we have in the death of Christ the demonstration of God’s unchangeable word, we have therein also the demonstration of sin’s most fearful, hideous guilt. Not that Christ’s death was an infliction for guilt of His own, but for the guilt of that sin with which He had connected Himself, not as a party, but as a Redeemer.

That one transgression of Adam made not only all men to die, but made the Son of God to die when He came in Adam’s

nature. Not only could not the goodly fabric of creation bear up against one sin, but the Son of God himself, when He became a creature, when He was manifested in flesh, must also die.

Take now these two things together—the hideousness of sin, and the unchangeableness of every word of God—and who will any more doubt concerning the threatened judgment of hell? No: heaven and earth shall pass away, but one tittle shall not pass from the word of God, till all be fulfilled. *Matthew* 5:18; 24:35.

There is something in the death of Christ passing wonderful, and revealing great depths of God. It shows that man's life as a creature is nothing but a breath, and that everlasting life is from our generation of Christ.

Creation is nullified to show forth the superior glory of generation. For in Adam's creation all men descending from Adam by ordinary generation are created; and in him they fell, and their creation-life was cut short. Death had us all when it had Adam in its hold. As creatures, we were all in him set up in life, and in him fell down into death.

Therefore I say, creation of man was nullified, in order to make way for the higher work of Godhead, which is generation by the Holy Ghost out of the nullified creation; a mystery which first began in Christ, and is now continuing in His members. And Christ himself, though generated of the Holy Ghost out of creation materials, by dying signifies more completely than all, how null and void mere creation is rendered by sin until the material substance of it be changed by the Holy Ghost in the grave.

Man is the shadow of Christ, who in manhood was predestined to come: and no doubt Adam had the peculiarities of fatherhood and royal priesthood, because Christ was to be acknowledged Father and Royal Priest of all creation—the Prince of life! If man thus created had stood his ground and occupied his place, we know not well what would have been, and are

not called upon to speculate.

But having fallen from his estate, God's purpose in him was not thwarted, changed, or turned aside, but rather served, advanced, and fulfilled. The worthlessness of the materials out of which the eternal building of glory was to be fabricated was thereby demonstrated. The materials crumbled down into corruption and dust, that the great Architect might show what out of their worthlessness he can construct.

Death says:

"Come what may out of this world, I will show you that the outcome is not from any indwelling powers of its own."

Death is, therefore, the great eulogist of God, by being the great defamer of the creatures. I cannot tell how, but it has occurred to me hundreds of times, when reflecting in this my present mood, as if death were to prove the first verse in the Bible, that all things were created out of nothing.

Death is like the tongue with which the creature says, "I am nothing." And when silent death has preached this sermon, and summed up the long discourse with the death of the Son of God himself, so far as He was a creature, then the Architect of creation raises up the dead Christ, and places Him for the foundation-stone of a regenerate creation, which shall never be made null and void.

And of this second temple, whereof the glory surpasses the former, Christ is not only foundation and cornerstone, but He is the growth, the cement, the substance of it all; and He is the fashioner of its frame, and He is the polisher of its beauty; and the glory of its strength stands in Him alone. And thus is the second great truth of creation made firm, that all things were created in the Christ and by the Christ.

The first truth is, "You were created out of nothing, and you are nothing." This they denied; and death came in, and proved them liars, for down to nothing they crumbled again. Not, indeed, into absolute nothing, for God will not be frustrate by

the creature's lie, but into powerless, shapeless dust, into vile unsightly corruption.

The second truth was, "You are all made by Christ, and in Christ." This also did they deny; and to prove it true, when Christ comes He passes into death, and out of death brings the immortal and eternal life of creatures. This is the great signification, as I take it, of the death and resurrection of Christ. This is the law by which God has been pleased to bring about His purpose; and it has oft occurred to me reverently and humbly to inquire into the great end served by this method of God's appointment. And oft-times it has presented itself to me in this point of view.

A RACE OF KINGS AND PRIESTS

The race of man was from the beginning destined to hold dominion. Adam was created king of the round world. Moreover, he was created head and father of all who should inhabit that world; prophet, priest, and king; Christ's vicar on the earth; only pope, that is, only father and vicar of Christ.

This kingdom, priesthood, and fatherhood of a world's people is the peculiarity of man's estate as distinguished from that of the invisible spirits, which is the only other form of intelligence that we know of. Now let us keep steadily before us these two properties distinctive of man; and I think they will guide us completely through the purpose of God, and show it to be very simple.

By coming into being in this sinful flesh of mine, commercing with this sinful world, which I am destined hereafter to rule as a king and priest, what do I, a regenerated man, learn hereby? I learn this, that instead of ruling the flesh and the outward world, I was not able to keep my ground against them, but was subjected to their bondage, taken captive on every hand, bound down and disgraced by a thousand ignominious desires of the flesh, and of the world, and of the devil; so that I might no more doubt that if I attained to a freeman's

place, it was not by any power of mine own, seeing the law of the flesh held me in hopeless thralldom.

This is a good lesson for a future viceroy to learn. If he is not to govern for himself but for another, it is expedient that he should know that the very capacity for government he holds from that other. This we, the future kings and priests under Christ, do learn, by knowing that in ourselves we cannot rule a member of our body, nor any outward thing, according to the law of God. Good lesson of our own insignificance is this, and sufficient to take away all boasting, all confidence, all glory in myself.

But this is not all. I a regenerate person, do by regeneration of the Holy Ghost learn furthermore that there is One who can redeem my liberty, and hold up my goings according to the law of God, who can put within me a strength to resist and overcome the flesh, the world, and the devil, and to reduce these antagonists of God into unwilling service.

And from whom have I such liberty, from whom have I such holiness, from whom have I such honor? From Christ: He manumitted me, He made me His freed-man, He changed my filthy vesture of flesh to be a comely apparel for ministering unto God. He has made me what I am; and the life which I now live, I live by the power of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me. *Galatians 2:20*.

This now, methinks, is good training for one who is to serve Him as a viceroy. But this is not all. I, a regenerate man, shall yet be renewed in His very likeness; one with Him, as He is one with the Father: son of His substance, as He is Son of the Father's substance; image of His person, as He is image of the Father's; to Him devoted, as He is devoted unto God: my own nothingness no longer to deny, as Adam did; my own origination from Christ no longer to deny, as Adam did; my own second and subsidiary place no longer to deny, as Adam did.

And being so, that I am now in my very being a vicegerent of Christ, I may well be so in my office also. And so I believe

that regenerate men shall be constituted very kings and very priests unto God, shadowing forth in their own persons that fullness of Christ's office, which in Him shadows forth the fullness of Godhead. He, the only intervener between God and the creation; we, the interveners between Him and creation's several spheres.

And then, when the race of kings and priests has been completed, I believe they shall be the Adams of their several spheres; containers of a race; peoples each of a world, whereof they are prophet, priest, and king, for Christ, and through Him for God, who keeps His royal court here, where He made His lowly bed. Here, where He fought the fiery conflict; here, where He won the eternal conquest; here shall He erect the trophy, here rear His palace, here set up His throne, and hence give laws to the multitudinous worlds, which, as they are bound together by one law of matter, shall also be bound together by one law of morals, which is the eternal, immutable truth of God.

And thus, I think, shall the two great mysteries be laid open by human nature, which are the chief mysteries of God—to wit, the origin of the Son from the Father by eternal generation, and the completeness of the Godhead as creation can contain it, all included in the Christ.

N.B.—It has rejoiced my heart greatly, feeling as I do the liveliest interest in the well-being of the Church of England, to find, since the publication of Lecture I, that there are three or four of her Lessons taken from the *Apocalypse*. And I do, therefore, hasten to correct the erroneous impression which may have been made upon any of my readers, by what is written in the previous Lecture.⁹

⁹ See *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Book 1 “Name, Authority, Substance, and Sanctions of the Book”, Chapter: “The Sanctions of the Book”, Section: “The Sanction of Blessing”, p. 115.

In the writing of these Lectures I have felt my soul at times so stirred with the sublimity of the subject, as to long for other forms of expression than those which are proper to exact and rigid exposition: and though I find it to have been customary with the best of our divines to intersperse their prose with poetical utterances, I rather prefer to keep those emotions of my soul, and present them apart, lest I should lose at any time that perfect control of the mind which is proper to an interpreter of prophecy.

I am no poet, and have never studied the laws of poetry; but I do desire devoutly to express those harmonious moods of my spirit, with which God visits me, in harmonious numbers.

SONNET I

The Benediction or Salutation (Revelation 1:4-5)

From Him, which is, and was, and is to come,
God Absolute, whose throne is fixed in heaven;
And from the Holy Ghost, the Spirits seven,
Who of all power and knowledge fills the sum;
From Jesus Christ, great Head of martyrdom,
The faithful Witness, who with death has striven
And from the prince of death his scepter riven;
Who of our flesh did purge away the scum,
And rise immortal; crowned Lord of all,
And Head of kingdoms: From those sacred Three
Be grace and peace unto all saints who call
Upon God's name, and love His mercy free.
You members of Christ's Church, rise from your fall,
And in Him dwell; in Him God's fullness see.

SONNET II

The Doxology (Revelation 1:5-6)

To Him, who, being in the form of God,
Nor robbery thought with Godhead to compare,
Yet stooped low in love our flesh to wear.
And for our sins poured out His precious blood

Soul-cleansing fountain, in whose living flood
He, great High Priest, does wash us, and prepare
Us for Himself, a spotless bride, to share
His throne and power, God's love and fatherhood:
Unto our Brother, Son of God, we give
The glory and dominion of our state:
To Him be praise, in whose prerogative
We reign as kings and priests, who were of late
Satan's bare thralls. But now free men we live,
In faith and hope; and for His coming wait.

APPENDIX

These pages are taken from Irving's book, *The Church and State Responsible to Christ, and to One Another. A Series of Discourses on Daniel's Vision of the Four Beasts*. The chapter is *Discourse X: The Kingdom of the Son of Man*, p. 479-490. These pages are referred to in the chapter "Second Advent" and deal with proofs that the second coming of Christ is not a "spiritual" coming but a literal one.

DISCOURSE X: THE KINGDOM OF THE SON OF MAN

HAVING thus opened the four kingdoms, into whose hands the saints in succession were given, and especially that fourth, whose tedious and cruel oppression of them makes that of all the rest to sink into insignificance; and having likewise opened the scene of judgment which is done upon them by the Ancient of Days, preparatory to the coming of the Son of Man in His kingdom, we now proceed to the third great scene of this dramatic vision, which is the kingdom itself, thus introduced to us in the text:

Daniel 7

¹³ I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of Man came in the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him:

¹⁴ And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

Whereof the interpretation is given in these words:

²⁷ And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of [480] the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him.

Such is the text of my discourse, in the opening of which we earnestly entreat the help of the Holy Ghost.

First of all, then, we observe from the vision itself, that though the three preceding kingdoms are emblematically described by beasts, they are real substantial things which are thereby represented,—forms of government having a brutal character, and working together the ends of violence and of oppression. Moreover, that, though the judgment be likewise emblematically described, it is a real substantial state of things, wherein dissolution and consumption and all manner of destruction are brought by the hand of God upon the relics of these four kingdoms.

And, therefore, seeing that every former part of the vision happens upon the earth, and has been realized in a state of human government, we ought never to doubt, upon all principles of sound interpretation, that this fifth kingdom shall likewise be realized on the earth, in a state of society diverse from those which preceded it, even as the Son of Man is diverse from a lion, a bear, a leopard, and that fourth anomalous and monstrous beast.

Of this there can be no doubt: any man who would transfer this fifth kingdom out of the earth into the heavens; any one who would spiritualize it away into a church, having neither power nor government; must be left to his folly, and blamed for his daring perversion of the oracles of God.

That it is a state of the world, in which all power acknowledges the headship of [481] the Son of Man, and in which, under Him, the saints of the Most High (heretofore oppressed) possess the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, I will not spend an instant of precious time to establish.

But, whether the Son of Man be personally present upon the earth during this everlasting kingdom, or be only exercising an invisible control over all its administration, is a point which may admit of more question, and ought to be treated with great respect. I know, indeed, that a Jew, who is accustomed to interpret the Scriptures literally, as they ought to be

interpreted, would have no difficulty in this matter: he would say at once:

“The coming of Messiah is the great end of all the prophecies; and it is not possible that we should have here a prophecy containing God’s dealings with His church upon earth for ever, and not have in it, somewhere, particular mention of Him who is the head and ruler, the end and object of the church. And seeing He is here mentioned as ‘coming in the clouds of heaven,’ and receiving investiture in the earth—receiving the ‘heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession’—we may not doubt, it were worse than folly to doubt, that this is His very coming in His kingdom which we have been long taught to expect; for if this be not His coming, it is not here at all. And why would you doubt that it is His coming, when it is so distinctly declared to be so?”

But a Christian, accustomed to look upon prophecy with a more spiritual eye, would make answer to the [482] Jew in this manner:

“This Ancient of Days, who plants His throne upon the earth at the judgment of the fourth beast, is not a visible person, but a symbolical way of representing the judgment of the Father upon those four kingdoms which oppressed His saints: may not, then, this ‘coming of the Son of Man’ be in like manner only an emblematical representation of a new state of the world, wherein all things are righteously administered? For if you say that the Son of Man is a real corporeal person, what were the meaning of bringing such a one into the presence of the Ancient of Days, who is not a visible corporeal person?”

To this difficulty, or rather to this mode of reasoning, it were difficult to give a satisfactory answer from the vision itself; and therefore, rather than indulge any ingenuity of our own, I turn to the New Testament, where the vision is oft referred to, in order to discover whether this coming of the Son of Man in the clouds be really that personal coming which we look for, or only a manifestation of His providence and an

out-pouring of His Spirit.

The first passage which we refer to, is in *Matthew 24* where, speaking to them of His coming, He said:

Matthew 24

²⁶ If they shall say unto you, Behold, He is in the desert, go not forth; behold, He is in the secret chambers, believe it not:

²⁷ For as the lightning comes out of the east and shines even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be.

Now I ask any intelligent plain man, whether this be not language applicable unto a person personally present and visibly seen? Can [483] a Spirit reside in the desert? does a providence dwell in the secret chambers? is a state of the church seen like “lightning coming out of the east and shining even unto the west”?

If any one reply to these questions in the negative, and say, surely a person is here spoken of, then observe what immediately follows:

²⁸ For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

This has been, as I think, foolishly applied to the Roman standards gathering themselves against Jerusalem; whereas it is a figure taken from ordinary speech, a proverb, used to express the haste and certainty with which His people shall convene themselves to Him in the day of His coming.

That as in the Eastern countries, when any carcass falls in the desert or the mountains, the eagles and vultures and other beasts of prey, by some instinct of sight and smell, concerning which we have hardly an idea, will appear at a far distance, like a speck in the distant horizon, and, directing their way straight up against the wind, will shew themselves a cloud of ravenous creatures, drawn, nobody knows from how far, to the very spot where the carcass lies; even so will the elect of God, in the day of Christ’s coming, be endowed of God with a perfect faculty of finding out where He is, and coming di-

rectly and at once into His presence: so that they need not be anxious upon the subject of place, nor expose themselves to the deceptions of false Christs, saying, He is here, or, He is there.

Then follow these words:

Matthew 24

²⁹ Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be dark-[484]ened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.

Which language I care not whether you interpret politically, of the kingdoms, and the stability and glory of them removed; or literally, of the changes of the heavens and the earth; or both, to which I rather incline: but observe the words which follow:

³⁰ And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn; and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory.

This language is, in itself, as much the language of real scene and real appearance, as it possibly could be made. I defy any person to choose words for expressing visible and personal appearance more unequivocally.

There is, first, a sign of the Son of Man; it appears in the heaven; and the effect of its appearance is, that all the tribes of the earth mourn; and then they see the Son of Man coming in the clouds. Now, if the coming of the Son of Man be, as they say, but an enlargement of the church by preaching and otherwise, what, I ask, is the meaning of this sign of it, that appears in the heavens? and why should all nations mourn, when they behold the sign of the enlargement of the church?

But, being taken in connection with the preceding verses, guarding them against false Christs, who should appear in the deserts and hide themselves in the secret chambers, it is such a mockery of all interpretation, such pure unmitigated folly,

that we cannot for a moment away with it. And if [485] so distinctly the coming of the Son of Man in the clouds be here by the Lord personally applied, it is so also in *Daniel*, where alone this His coming in the clouds is mentioned.

The next passage in which our Lord takes into His lips and applies this same prophecy, is in the 26th chapter of *Matthew*, where He said unto the high priest, who had adjured Him by the living God to tell them whether He was the Christ the Son of God:

Matthew 26

⁶⁴ You have said [that is, “Yea, verily”]: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall you see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

Here a questioner, such as there be many in these times, might cavil at the word “you,” and say that it seemed to make as if the coming of Christ in the clouds was either to that generation before they died, or not till after their resurrection; but this is fond criticism, and easily answered by reference to our Lord’s constant manner of discourse; wherein He speaks of the Jewish nation in the persons as it were of that generation: for example:

Matthew 23

³⁸ Henceforth *your* house is left unto you desolate.

And:

³⁹ *You* shall not see me from henceforth, until *you* shall say, Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord.

As in that place He refers to a generation which has not yet arisen, so here also does He refer to that generation of the Jewish people which shall be upon the earth at the time of His second appearance; saying to the high priest, and those that sat in council with him:

“I am indeed the Christ the Son of God, all mean as I appear, [486] and scorned and scoffed and mocked and buffeted and spit on: nevertheless, Me, even Me, shall you, your na-

tion, your children, yet behold in that very majesty of which you are so full, and with which you are now deluding yourselves; even in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory.”

Now, why talk to them thus, if Daniel’s coming in the clouds be not a real and personal appearance? Why this *nevertheless*; why this contrast between His present and His future appearance; if so be that future appearance is no appearance at all?

A personal appearance, therefore, He here refers to, if there be any meaning in language. And with respect to the question, whether it be before the Millennium or after the Millennium, that comes to be ascertained from Daniel’s vision, to which the word “coming in the clouds” always carries us back.

Now, in Daniel’s vision He comes in the clouds unto the earth when the Ancient of Days had planted His judgment-seat and done judgment upon the fourth beast. The Son of Man comes not to judge the dead, in Daniel’s vision; where there is no mention whatever of the dead, or the resurrection from the dead: He comes to receive a kingdom over the living, over all under the whole heaven:

Daniel 7

¹⁴ There was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him...

And over this kingdom He rules with His saints. There is nothing here of judgment, except as government; there is nothing here of casting the wicked into hell, and taking the righteous away to heaven: it is simply a [487] universal kingdom that is given to Him over all people, nations, and languages—that is all.

And for judgment—that is, consuming, destroying judgment—He is too late to have any share therein, for it is all concluded before He arrives, by the Ancient of Days; who takes Christ’s enemies out of the way, puts them under His foot,

and then brings His only-begotten the second time into the world, that all the gods may worship Him, that all the nations may serve Him.

But, to return: the next time that the coming in the clouds is referred to, is in the first of *Acts*, where it is said,

Acts 1

⁹ And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight;

¹⁰ And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel,

¹¹ Which also said, You men of Galilee, why stand you gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into heaven.

In what manner was that? As a spirit? No; as a living man. As an event of providence? No; as a person, the person of the God-man; And with what attendance? With the attendance of the cloud of heavenly glory;—fit throne for Him who comes in His bright majesty out of the region of the invisible, to rule the earth in righteousness and truth.

The only other time in which the coming with clouds is mentioned, is in the first chapter of the *Apocalypse*:

Revelation 1

⁷ Behold, He comes with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him; and all kindreds of [488] the earth shall wail because of Him.

This is not symbolical language, any more than that in the *Acts*. It might be said of the clouds in *Daniel*, that it was a symbolical way of representing dark and gloomy dispensations of Divine Providence, stormy and troublous commotions, in which He was to come: and to this I would have little objection, if it were only allowed me that He was to come at all: but, after permitting them their own will in the interpretation of the clouds, if I find there is to be nothing but these

clouds, and no Son of Man coming with them, then have they lost the substance in the circumstance, the person in the drapery; and it ought to have been written, not “I saw the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven,” but, “I saw the clouds of heaven coming.”

But, setting these fancies to a side, there is no room in the first of the *Acts*, when a cloud had actually intercepted the view of Christ, and received Him within the foldings of its glory, to call the serene majesty thereof a gloomy dispensation of Divine Providence: it was a cloud in appearance, and to the sight of the men who looked: and if so, then in a cloud in appearance, and to the sight of men who look, shall He come again.

So, also, in this passage from the *Apocalypse* is there no room left for cavil; “Behold, He comes.” Now, the Christian church was then looking for His coming, and so are we. This was written after the destruction of Jerusalem, and therefore that subterfuge is avoided. There is only one coming spoken of in the *Apocalypse*, which thus concludes:

Revelation 22

²⁰ He which testifies these things says, [489] Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

Well this coming, which certainly is not the destruction of Jerusalem that was past, and can be no other than that coming which all Christians till these days have expected, is declared to be with clouds—that is Daniel’s very appearing of the Son of Man.

“And every eye shall see Him”—this is our Lord’s very description of His own coming even like “the lightning, which comes out of the east and shines even unto the west.”

“And they also which pierced Him”—that is, according to the Lord’s own declaration made to the high priest, “Nevertheless you shall see the Son of Man coming with the clouds, in great glory:” being also the language of:

Zechariah 12

¹⁰ And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon me, whom they have pierced; and they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for his only son; and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

Furthermore, it is said in the passage from the *Apocalypse*, “All kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him,” to signify, that, when He comes with the clouds, after the judgment upon the fourth beast, there still remains some act of fearful indignation which shall attend upon His very appearance; and is, as I take it, that baptism with fire, which shall come upon the earth and upon the nations thereof, to make way for the kingdom of everlasting peace.

And thus have we sought, not by speculation, but by interpretation of the New Testament, to ascertain whether this coming of the Son of [490] Man with the “clouds of heaven” be a personal coming or not; these four passages, the only ones in which reference is made to it, concurring and consenting together to a personal appearance, and consenting to no other.

