

# THE HIEROPHANT:

OR

MONTHLY EXPOSITOR

OF

SACRED SYMBOLS AND PROPHECY.

CONDUCTED BY

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**No. IV. SEPTEMBER, 1842.**  
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NEW-YORK:

DAYTON AND NEWMAN, 199 BROADWAY.

1842.

John F. Trow, Printer,

No. 33 Ann-street.

THE HIEROPHANT is designed as a monthly publication, devoted mainly to the subject of Scripture Prophecy, but embracing in its plan other topics of Biblical exposition. The Editor's engagements are such that he cannot at present promise a very regular issue of the numbers at the stated intervals. His subscribers, however, may depend on receiving the twelve during the year. They will be published with more rapidity by and by.

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No. IV.—SEPTEMBER, 1842.

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DOUBLE SENSE OF PROPHECY.

TO PROFESSOR STUART.—LETTER I.

REV. AND DEAR SIR :

The exemplary zeal and assiduity with which, for a long course of years, you have cultivated the field of sacred literature, and more especially the department of biblical interpretation, are I believe, very justly, and therefore very highly, appreciated by the Christian community not only in our own but in foreign lands. The impulse which your own example and counsels have given to the study of the original languages of the Scriptures, and the signal facilities you have afforded for the purpose, prefer a claim to the gratitude of the clergy of the present generation, which I am sure they will not be backward to acknowledge. A new era in the exposition of the inspired writings in our country undoubtedly dates from the commencement of your labors in the sphere of sacred philology ; and although their more direct and immediate effect is to be seen in the altered tastes, studies, and style of ministration among the occupants of the sacred desk, and in theological discussion, yet the fruits of them are being continually reaped by thousands of others who are perhaps but little aware of the source to which, under God, they are indebted. Indeed I see no reason to doubt that if on many points of exegesis your canons or conclusions are questioned by theologians of the present day, it is frequently no more than the result of the very philological training through which your labors have previously led them ; so that the weapons with which they have combated

your positions have been drawn from the armory that you have yourself set open to them. How far the consideration of this fact may go to engender an indulgent feeling towards one who stands before you in the attitude of an opponent, I know not. Perhaps it would be expecting too much from human nature to suppose that the edge could be taken off in this way from the displacency with which one naturally looks upon the impugner of his opinions. But for myself I am happy in the assurance, that your personal character and the general tenor of your published writings afford a sufficient guaranty, that you will cherish no undue polemical asperity against an honest and candid dissentient from the principles or results of your critical judgment.

Viewed as you justly are as a venerable pioneer and patriarch in the field of hermeneutical science, it is a matter of course that any work from your pen, embodying the results of a careful inquiry upon any point of biblical interpretation, should be received, in the first instance, with a feeling of profound deference by the Christian public. This is known to be a department to which you have been long devoted, with which you have become extremely familiar, and in which it is conceded to you, if to any man, to speak as one having authority—the moral authority, that is, which is naturally accorded to deep knowledge, to valued services, to conceded distinction in any sphere of intellectual research. These are all circumstances which in your case conspire to give an acknowledged weight to your uttered opinions on the whole class of subjects embraced in the field of sacred letters, and render one of less eminence slow to cherish doubts of the soundness of reasonings to which at the same time he may find himself unable fully to assent. So, at any rate, it is with myself. I have read, and re-read, and read again, your recent work entitled “Hints on the Interpretation of Prophecy,” and though every perusal has only tended to confirm my first impressions of the erroneousness of each of your main positions, yet my sentiments of general respect and deference have incessantly thrown a bar in the way of a positive rejection of your conclusions, and remanded me again to a fresh reading of the volume.

In the final issue, fealty to truth, or to apprehended truth, has triumphed over all counter-considerations, and I have felt constrained, through the present medium, and in the spirit of fraternal kindness, to enter my humble protest against each of the three leading propositions which you have assumed to maintain in the volume before me. But a protest without proof will of course have no weight with you, nor will it be entitled to any. I propose to give the reasons, at some length, for my respectful but decided dissent, and for the freedom with which I may canvass your views and state my own, I shall confidently count upon your liberal construction. As I avail myself of my own pages as the vehicle of my remarks, I cheer-

fully proffer to you the use of the same medium through which to communicate any reply which it may seem good to you to make.

The aim of your work is to administer a wholesome antidote to the extravagances of prophetic interpretation which are unhappily so rife at the present day. In pursuance of your object you select the three following propositions for discussion, in regard to each of which, you strenuously maintain that it is untenable and false :—

1. The double sense of prophecy.
2. That prophecy is not intelligible prior to its fulfillment.
3. That a day stands for a year in the designation of prophetic time.

Before coming to the discussion of these points, you throw out a few prefatory remarks in regard to the general principles of interpretation, upon which it may be well to bestow a passing notice. “The origin and basis,” you observe, “of all true hermeneutical science are the reason and common sense of men, at all times and in all ages, applied to the interpretation of language either spoken or written.” The rules and canons of interpretation are the spontaneous promptings of our rational nature; science does not originate them any more than grammar originates language, of which, in fact, it merely makes out a digest of the actual usages. Consequently there is no room for the assertion of arbitrary principles of interpretation, as the true rules are instinctively prescribed by the very constitution of our nature, and principles inconsistent with the general laws which nature prescribes are not to be trusted.

To all this I have little to say, except so far as it carries the implication that those who hold to the doctrine of the double sense of prophecy and the other two positions to which you object, do in fact in some way disregard or contravene the fundamental principle which you here lay down. This is a point which I utterly refuse to grant. I do not hesitate to affirm that the theory of a double sense of prophecy is as *rational* as the reverse, and this you will yourself readily concede, provided it can be shown to be *true*. Whether it be true is the question which I shall endeavor to solve in the sequel.

Your remarks on this head, would, I think, have been more complete, to say the least, had you adverted to the fact, that inasmuch as there are different styles and species of composition among men, so there are different principles of interpretation applicable to each. It is the office of reason and common sense to recognise this diversity, and to interpret the language accordingly. Buffon’s *Natural History* and *Æsop’s Fables* have both of them much to say of beasts and birds, but who does not see that the principles involved in the interpretation respectively of these two works are *toto cælo* different? The dictates of common sense must of course be adhered to in our construction of each, but nothing is plainer than that we interpret the two on totally dissimilar principles. In like manner, we apply totally different canons of interpretation to Eu-

clid's Elements and to Homer's Iliad, to Shakspeare's Plays and to Ferguson's Astronomy; yet in no case do we feel at liberty to depart from the laws of an enlightened reason in imposing the true sense upon the words of the writer. In the one case we allow for tropic and allegorical modes of speech; in the other, we construe the language according to the most rigid exactitude of meaning. *The principles of interpretation depend upon the nature of the document to be interpreted.*

Apply this now to the writings which compose the sacred volume. I need not intimate to you that the widest diversity of scope and character obtains throughout the compass of the inspired books. You have yourself distinctly adverted to it when you say, "The poetry of the Scriptures is poetry with all its characteristics; the prose is prose; the genealogies are what they purport to be; the historic narrations are histories; the psalms are songs of praise; the proverbs are maxims or apothegms; the plans of the tabernacle and temple, with all their apparatus, are plans for building sanctuaries and furnishing them; prophecy is prediction; preaching is homiletic; allegory is allegory; and parable is parable." Can any thing be more obvious than that these different styles of composition bring into requisition different principles of exegesis? Does it necessarily follow that because we are constrained to inhere in the most rigid literality of a historical narrative, that therefore we must do the same in interpreting a symbolical prophecy or an extatic psalm? Were not this to disregard the most palpable demands of that reason and common sense upon which you so strenuously insist as the proper presiding genius of all hermeneutic exercise?

But I am brought at this point to the direct consideration of your first grand objection to the doctrine of a double sense of prophecy, which I give in your own words.

"The first and great difficulty with this scheme of interpretation is, that *it forsakes and sets aside the common laws of language.* The Bible excepted, in no book, treatise, epistle, discourse, or conversation, ever written, published, or addressed by any one man to his fellow beings, (unless in the way of sport, or with an intention to deceive,) can a *double* sense be found. There are, indeed, *charades*, enigmas, phrases with a double *entendre*, and the like, perhaps, in all languages; there have been abundance of heathen oracles which were susceptible of *two* interpretations; but among even all these, there never has been, and there never was, a design that there should be but *one* sense or meaning in reality. Ambiguity of language may be, and has been, designedly resorted to in order to mislead the reader or hearer, or in order to conceal the ignorance of soothsayers, or provide for their credit amid future exigencies; but this is quite foreign to the matter of a serious and *bona fide* double meaning of words. It bears no comparison with the alleged *ἰπὸ νόμου* in question. Nor can we, for a moment, without violating the dignity and sacredness of the Scriptures, suppose that the inspired writers are to be compared to the authors of riddles, conundrums, enigmas, and ambiguous heathen oracles.

"How then can we make a rule for interpretation, and apply this rule to

the Scriptures, when we are constrained to acknowledge, that no other book on earth, addressed by intelligent and serious men to the reason and understanding of their fellow beings, can bear an interpretation by such a rule?"—p. 14.

You have given in this passage a very explicit enunciation of one main ground of your objection to a double sense, viz. that it forsakes and sets aside the common laws of language. Before attempting to subject your argument on this head to the ordeal of a rigid scrutiny, I will for a moment advert to the definition which you give of the double sense of Scripture.

"If we ascribe to any passage of Scripture a literal, obvious, historical sense, and interpret it as conveying the meaning which its words naturally and obviously seem to convey, and yet at the same time ascribe to these same words another meaning which is occult or obscure, but still is designed to be conveyed by those same words, we then make out a *double sense*."—p. 11.

Upon this definition allow me to remark, that it covers a larger ground than the subject under debate strictly demands. That subject, you are aware, is *prophecy*. The very title which you have given to this department of your work is, 'The Double Sense of *Prophecy*' and we were certainly authorized to expect that the general subject should be treated in your pages under this special limitation. I do not say that you have adopted a mode of discussion which *excludes* the prophetic aspects of the theme, but I do say that the terms of your definition are so framed as to give a latitude to the inquiry not called for by your professed object, and such as unfairly to embarrass the opponent of your views. The real question at issue is not the *general doctrine* of double senses, and least of all as pressed to the extravagant lengths of many of the earlier expositors whether Jewish or Christian. I object therefore to your stating the question in such a form as shall seem to impose upon me the necessity either of receiving this doctrine *in toto* or of rejecting it *in toto*. As a defender of the doctrine to which you object, I am conscious to myself of being placed by this means in a false position, and that in fact a false issue is made on the whole subject. I avow myself a believer in the double sense of prophecy, but I peremptorily refuse to be held responsible for the extent to which the principle may have been carried in our own or in former days by its fanciful and visionary advocates. Every system is capable of abuse, and nothing is more obviously at war with the principles of right reasoning, or with the rules of Christian polemics, than so to conduct a controversy, as to give an adversary no advantage of such discriminations as he may feel compelled to make. Suppose I were to take the ground of opposition to the German school of sacred philology, and should denounce their criticism and hermeneutics *en masse* as replete with the most pernicious neology, tending to unsettle all the

principles of a fixed faith in revelation, and to beget a universal skepticism and atheism; and should qualify this language with no exceptions, distinctions, or abatements; should you hesitate to regard me as a very unfair, unreasonable, incompetent assailant of the school in question? Would you not say that one who *could* not or *would* not hold an even balance and distinguish between the precious and the vile—the sound and the sophistical—was not so much a reasoner as a reviler? Now I do not affirm that the cases are in all respects similar, but certainly you cannot but be aware that there are shades and grades of belief in regard to the doctrine of a double sense, and that it is one thing to hold in unqualified terms the *double sense of Scripture*, and another to hold and defend the *double sense of Prophecy*. Allow me to say then that in all your eloquent *showing-up* of the abuses of this principle you have achieved a victory without a foe, so far as the real *jit* of the present controversy is concerned. I cannot of course deem you capable of a design by any wily arts of logic or rhetoric to throw dust in your reader's eyes, to prevent his perceiving the true merits of the question; but it is certain nevertheless that your definition, and the reasonings built upon it, have the air of making the belief in the double sense of prophecy responsible for all the extravagances which may grow out of the broadest assertion of that principle, and which have been actually evinced in the thousand and one mystic dreams and 'hariolations,' as you term them, of the Jewish and Christian allegorizers.

But to return to the objection. The theory of a double sense forsakes and sets aside the common laws of language. "The Bible excepted," you say, "in no book, treatise, epistle, discourse, or conversation, ever written, published, or addressed by any one to his fellow beings, (unless in sport, or with an intention to deceive,) can a double sense be found." The question here becomes one of a matter of fact. Put it then upon this issue. I would appeal at once to Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* as a work strikingly in point. Does not that wondrous allegorical fiction contain a plain primary historical sense conveyed by the letter of the narrative?—a sense with which your children were delighted at an age when they could not possibly grasp the engrafted spiritual purport which it conveys to the mind of the mature Christian? Do not the varied incidents of the Slough of Despond—the Wicket-Gate—the Interpreter's House—the Hill of Difficulty—the Chained Lions—the Contest with Apollyon—the Imprisonment in Doubting Castle—the Crossing the River—all convey a *sense*? Does the writer use words which are not the vehicles of ideas? And if his words impart *ideas*, do not those ideas form a *sense* in the reader's mind? No one will affirm, of course, that the literal sense is *all* the sense which the writer intended; but the question is, whether it is not properly a *sense*. If it be, then it would seem that your sweep-

ing assertion to the contrary stands somewhat urgently in need of qualification.

If I were disposed to multiply examples of this kind of composition even in our own language, I could easily cite such works as Æsop's Fables, Swift's Tale of a Tub, Gulliver's Travels, More's Utopia, Harrington's Oceana, and a multitude of others, in regard to which no one would ever think of questioning that a double sense is involved in them. But passing by these I will enter at once into the domain of Revelation, and see if we are not confronted by the evidence of a double sense equally indubitable there also. What shall we say to the following *conversation* addressed by Nathan to David, 2 Sam. 12: 1-6 :

And the LORD sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city ; the one rich, and the other poor. The rich *man* had exceeding many flocks and herds : but the poor *man* had nothing save one little ewe-lamb, which he had brought and nourished up : and it grew up together with him, and with his children ; it did eat of his own meat, and drink of his own cup, and lay in his own bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him ; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him. And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man ; and he said to Nathan, As the LORD liveth, the man that hath done this *thing* shall surely die. And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did the thing, and because he had no pity.

Is there no double sense here ? And if there is, was it employed "in sport," or "with an intention to deceive ?" The natural impression certainly would be, that if Nathan was ever serious in his life, it was on this occasion.

Take, again, the words of Christ, John, 2: 19, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." Is it a violence done to all established usages of speech among men to recognise a sense beyond the letter in this language ?—or, in other words, a *double sense* ?

But you will probably reply, that in both these instances there is indeed but *one* sense ; that that which may be termed the secondary or ultimate sense is in truth the *only* sense which the speaker intended to convey, and consequently that these examples furnish no proof of the principle in question.

We are reduced, then, to a debate concerning the genuine import of the phrase "double sense." I contend that in the passages adduced there is, in the strictest propriety of speech, a twofold sense, a primary and a secondary. You reclaim and maintain there is but one. How shall the matter be determined ? For myself, I am willing it should be brought to the test of your own definition—a definition stated in the most unqualified terms : "If we ascribe to *any* passage of Scripture a literal, obvious, historical sense, and in-

interpret it as conveying the meaning which its words naturally and obviously seem to convey, and yet at the same time ascribe to these same words another meaning which is occult and obscure, but which is still designed to be conveyed by those same words, we make out a *double sense*." I would ask then, does not the parable of Nathan answer perfectly to these conditions? Do not his words convey a "literal, obvious, historical sense," as much as if he were relating a plain matter of fact, to which no ulterior import pertained? Does not the term 'lamb' convey the idea of a *lamb* as truly as it conveys the idea of the *wife* of whom David had robbed Uriah? Is there not then in this address a primary as well as a secondary sense? So in our Saviour's words, does not the term 'temple' convey, in the first instance, the idea of a structure of stone, the very idea which the Jews took from his language, as is evident from their reply, and is not this idea a *sense*? Yet we are immediately informed that he spake of the temple of his body. Is there not a double sense here?

I admit at once that the *leading scope* of the speakers in this and all similar instances is conveyed by what I have denominated the secondary or ulterior sense; but I contend nevertheless that the literal and primary sense *is a sense*, and that it is so by the very terms of your definition. Whether it be a sense that can fairly be said to enter into the speaker's or writer's design, is a very trivial question, since it is obvious that by the nature of language he could not employ the words which he does, without conveying the sense which he does. Again, then, I would submit whether this principle of interpretation "forsakes and sets aside the common laws of language." Do I commit an outrage on reason and common sense in recognising a *double* import in these and a multitude of similar passages in the Old and New Testament Scriptures? How can I be going counter to the laws which govern the process of interpretation in regard to all other books, when it appears that there are in fact multitudes of books which imperiously require to be interpreted on this very principle, and on this alone? And yet you say, "We are constrained to acknowledge that no other book on earth, addressed by intelligent and serious men to the reason and understanding of their fellow beings, ever had an interpretation by such a rule!" You will have inferred that I, at least, feel none of the 'constraint' which prompts to such an acknowledgment.

In reply to the argument which you have thus urged against the doctrine of a double sense, you hypothecate the following answer for your opponent: "The Bible is a *divine* book, and since God is the real author of it, we must not expect to place it on the basis of common books." And you significantly inquire 'how we can be satisfied with such an answer?'—a question that is very appropriately put. But I would inquire who it is that *gives* such an answer. The true answer to your objection is, to deny the truth of

the assumption on which it rests. Nothing, I conceive, can be farther from the fact, than that the admission of a double sense in the sacred writings isolates them from all community of character with human productions. Especially shall we be convinced of this when we advert to the oriental origin of the inspired books. Written, many of them, in the earlier ages of the world, and by and for a people whose very genius was mystical, who have always been renowned for their love of allegory and parable, whose poetry, theology, philosophy, and higher forms of composition were all pregnant with double senses, what more natural than that the inspired oracles should partake, more or less, of the same character, and require to be interpreted by the same laws? The wisdom and theology of the Egyptians was couched for the most part in hieroglyphical representation; and the transition from pictured hieroglyphics to verbal symbols and emblems, metaphors, allegories, and dark sayings, all instinct with an inward meaning, was in the progress of refinement both natural and inevitable. Under these circumstances, therefore, the true ground of wonder would be *not* to find the Scriptures distinguished, particularly in the poetic and prophetic parts, by this symbolic style, and replete with a latent sense.

But such a paradox does not exist to baffle and disappoint all our preconceptions; the actual attributes of Revelation in this respect perfectly accord with our *a priori* anticipations, and if there is any thing now to excite our astonishment, it is that such a peculiarity of the Scriptures should be denied, and the denial attempted to be sustained by the argument, that to admit it would be to forsake and set aside the common laws of language, and in fact to make the Bible an unintelligible book! Such is clearly the drift of your reasonings, and on no point is your pen more emphatic than in the endeavor to convince your reader, that if the Bible contains double senses it is unintelligible, and therefore no revelation. "How can the Bible be what it is, viz. a revelation from God, provided its diction and the principles of interpreting it are to be regarded as entirely different from those of all other books?" "Why should we suppose, because the Bible is a divine book, that its manner, style, or diction differs essentially from those of all other books?" "A revelation (so called) to man, which is clothed in words not employed agreeably to the *usus loquendi*, and not to be interpreted by the usual principles of exegesis, is of course no revelation at all. It is in vain, therefore, that we seek for any rules by which such a book can be explained." "A divine book must, like all other books, be *intelligible* in order to be useful; and if intelligible, then it must conform to the *usus loquendi*, both in respect to the choice of words and the meaning of them. How then can the Scriptures present us everywhere with examples of the *ἰνóνοια* or double sense, when we find, and expect to find, such a sense in no other grave book on the face of all the earth?"

Be assured, my dear sir, if I were to spread a whole line of exclamation-points across my page, it would be a very inadequate expression of the surprise which I cannot but feel in view of the citations now given, and of a multitude of others of similar import with which your volume abounds. You in the first place make your imaginary opponent admit the truth of the charge which is manifestly false, viz. that the double sense necessarily implies the setting aside the ordinary laws of language, and then you turn upon him with a plea which is manifestly fallacious, viz. that the admission of such a sense necessarily renders a revelation from God unintelligible. If I knew from what quarter to cite a more glaring instance of logical *non sequitur*, I should certainly adduce it, in order, by the effect of juxtaposition, to exhibit yours in its true light. "Either God has spoken *more humano* by men to men, or he has not spoken what they can with any good assurance pretend to understand without miraculous aid." Pray, how does this follow? What should necessarily render a parable unintelligible? The design of the author is to impart some kind of instruction. May not this be conveyed in the form of a parable, type, symbol, or allegory, as well as in any other? Is the Pilgrim's Progress unintelligible because it has a double sense? Is the same kind of composition unintelligible when adopted into the Bible? Suppose that the work of Bunyan was written by an inspired apostle and made to form a part of the sacred canon; would it necessarily be unintelligible? Would it be a violation of the laws and usages of language, and would it be vain to think of subjecting it to the usual rules of exegesis? Yet I do not see but this inevitably follows from the principle of your essay.

I do not suppose you will admit this as a legitimate deduction from your theory, but I have looked in vain for any qualifying remark which should arrest such an inference, and forbid its being carried to this result. You affirm, without reservation, that inasmuch as God speaks to men *with the intention of being understood*, therefore we must discard double senses, as the admission of them implies a mode of speech never employed by men in their communications with each other; and consequently a revelation embracing it must be so far unintelligible. If you do not mean to affirm thus much, why not limit your statements, and inform us precisely to what extent you would have them apply? For myself, I am utterly unable to discover those obvious guards, distinctions, and qualifications, which a sound course of reasoning would have planted around positions so important as those assumed in your work; nor can I see that your professed design of merely giving 'hints' instead of writing a formal treatise on the subject, can excuse an omission which leaves your premises and your conclusions so open to assault.

I have thus far considered the burden of your first objection to the doctrine of a double sense, viz. that it forsakes and sets aside

the common laws of language and makes revelation unintelligible. I have endeavored to show that neither of these positions is tenable. The fact that a passage of Scripture contains a meaning ulterior to the literal is no infraction of the usages of language, because the words signify in the first instance precisely what they would do were no ulterior sense conveyed. The office of the biblical exegete is to determine by the aid of the Lexicon and the *usus loquendi* the native literal import of the various terms and phrases employed. This is to be done, in the first place, entirely independent of any secondary or occult meaning which may be affirmed to be embraced within the scope of the writer. The fact of the existence of a secondary sense does not destroy the primary, and the usages of language have to do with the primary sense. Because the word 'temple' in a particular application carries with it an involved reference to the Savior's body, it does not on that account lose its original meaning of a religious edifice. How then do you charge it upon this mode of interpretation that it does violence to the laws of language? The laws of language are not concerned in the matter at all. It is simply a question of *fact*, to be determined by its appropriate evidence, whether a superinduced meaning is to be recognised in certain passages or not. The *literal* meaning of the terms employed forms no part of this evidence, for no one can doubt for a moment that any word, or any number of words, can be so used as to convey a sense which shall properly be said to be *grafted* upon the literal. Such is most palpably the case with the parables of Scripture, and I should like well to see the reason assigned why God may not utter a parabolic prophecy as well as a parabolic precept. The same remark will apply to symbols. If I should affirm that the locusts of the fifth trumpet of the Apocalypse couched under them a latent sense, and symbolized *men*, do I thereby deny that the term 'locusts' means locusts, and lay myself open to the charge of waging war with the established laws of language, and turning the oracles of God into confusion? Do I hereby put myself in such an attitude as an interpreter as to authorize any man to say to me in the language of your essay:—"The very name, *ὑπόνοια* or *occult sense*, shows that the meaning in question is not deducible from or by the laws of language; for it is against the usage of all times and nations to employ language in such a way." Surely this sweeping declaration imperatively requires to be qualified, not to say retracted, after the evidence which I have adduced of its unsoundness.

Conceiving, as I am forced to do, that these statements have been *inadvertently* left thus unguarded, I am unwilling to press any *advantage* that is in this way thrown into my hands. It is obvious that a mature revision of your views would give another aspect to this part of your essay, and that you would not, in taking ground against the double sense of Scripture, lay the axe at the root of

all forms of symbolic and mystical speech. But I cannot, in this connexion, forbear to advert to another sentence which affords perhaps one of the most striking specimens to be found in the book of that loose kind of expression over which an unsparing opponent would naturally exult as one that had "found great spoil." In p. 16, you say ;—"A revelation must be *intelligible* or it is no revelation. It must be made in language that men have been accustomed to use, or they have no key to it. And if it be made in such a language, then it must be interpreted by the common rules and usages of language, or else there is no key again to the meaning. A revelation in the peculiar language of angels, (if they can be supposed to use a language,) would have no meaning and be of no use to men. Who possesses the appropriate dictionary or commentary? Who has studied the grammar and idiom?"

Here, my dear sir, I must be allowed to say, that so far as the force and pungency of an argument depends upon the logical precision of the terms employed, yours in this instance must be regarded as failing sadly in its execution. Your reader is greatly confounded by your use of the word 'language.' This word you know, as applied to the medium of discourse between men, is often synonymous with 'tongue,' and is used to designate the Latin, the Greek, the Hebrew, or any other language we may have occasion to mention. In another sense it points out a particular *style* or *species* of discourse, as when we speak of the *language* of poetry, the *language* of passion, the *language* of rhetoric, the *language* of symbol, the *language* of science. Now in saying that a revelation in order to be intelligible must be couched in a language which men are accustomed to use, the query naturally arises what you mean by it? It can scarcely be possible that you use the term in the latter sense, or that of a peculiar style of composition, for a single glance of thought is sufficient to convince any one that the *language* of parable, which has in its own nature a double sense, is just as intelligible as the language of the plainest didactic discourse. If the former is your meaning, and you would intimate, that a divine revelation must necessarily address itself to men in a *human* in contradistinction from *angelic* language, I am at a loss to conceive against what form of erroneous opinion you could deem it necessary to launch such a self-evident truism as this. Has any such view ever been broached of the theory of double sense, as could justly subject its abettors to the charge of virtually introducing any other language than such as men are accustomed to use? If not, "what do your arguings prove?" Is there any ground for the alternative to which you reduce the position of your opponents? Does the principle for which they contend involve in any sense a consequence equivalent to the necessity of embodying revelation in a new and unknown tongue? If so, how? What violence is done to the Greek or Hebrew language—what departure implied from

the laws or usages of either—if in reading Mal. 4: 5, “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord,” I adopt the Saviour’s interpretation and understand it of John the Baptist? Here by the terms of your own definition is a direct, palpable, undeniable instance of double sense, and double sense of *prophecy* too; and yet you affirm that the *principle* which maintains this is a principle that will not admit of a revelation being communicated to man in a human language! Can any thing be more unfounded? Is it possible to refrain from applying to your own language the character with which you so groundlessly charge the principle maintained by your opponents,—“It is no more than sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal; for it neither gives any distinct, articulate, intelligible sounds, nor does it represent them to the eye.”

Your reply to this I presume will be, that as your general drift has relation to the *double sense of prophecy*, it is no more than fair that your language should be interpreted in view of that fact. To this consideration I am willing to give all due weight; yet as you begin by laying down the *principles* on which you reject this species of double sense, and as these principles do inevitably draw after them the consequences which I have alleged, I cannot be deemed guilty of any unfairness in expressing the legitimate results of your reasoning. In my next I shall be happy to meet you on the bearing of your positions in their stricter reference to the subject of *prophecy*.

With sentiments of high respect and esteem,

Your friend and brother,

GEO. BUSH.

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FOR THE HIEROPHANT.

#### THE PRE-MILLENNIAL ADVENT OF CHRIST.

DEAR SIR:

“The theory of the second personal and visible advent of the Saviour at the opening of the grand sabbatical period of the world, whether this be termed the Millennium or the New Jerusalem, is in my opinion one of the most baseless of all the extravaganzas of prophetic hallucination.”

Such is your opinion, as expressed in the last number of the Hierophant, of a theory, which, nevertheless, has been embraced by a very large portion of the real *students* of prophecy in every age of the church. I willingly avail myself of your generous permission to put in a plea against the justice of a sentence, as summary as it is contemptuous.

The decision itself, indeed, I regret much more than the ponderous severity of the terms, in which it is rendered; although, should the reasons, when they are forthcoming, be found to sustain it, there is not one of your readers, I trust, but will be able to rejoice in the overthrow of an error, which may now seem to him to be sanctified, not only by the venerableness of its antiquity, Christian as well as Jewish, by the

authority of many mighty names, and the faith and prayers of many devoted hearts, but by the distinct and harmonious utterance of "the oracle of God." Such an one, however, has nothing for it, in the mean time, but to walk still in the light of "the blessed hope" of the speedy and "glorious appearing" of his Lord. He may even be so far deluded as to believe, that the much esteemed Hierophant himself might be driven, by clear logical inference from certain cardinal points in his own creed, to return to the service of the altar, at which he once ministered, but which he now pelts with stones sharp and heavy, like that which it is my purpose, if possible, to fling back. Let one argument for the present suffice, and that one suggested by the very page, which is—I cannot, of course, say adorned by the above truculent note.

There, while commenting on 2 Pet. 3: 13, "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness," you refer to Isaiah 65: 17, as the only place in the Bible where such a promise is met with. Hence you conclude, that it is one and the same glory which "awoke to ecstasy" the harp of the Hebrew seer, and drew forth the aspirations, not less fervent, of the apostle of Christ. This method of proof I regard as irrefragable, and I was not in the least surprised, that your antagonist flinched from it. But let us try, my dear sir, whether your artillery cannot be turned with equally destructive effect upon this note of yours.

In that same third chapter of his second Epistle, Peter is warning the church of the scoffers of the last days, who should "come walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming?"—and seeking to quiet and strengthen themselves in their infidelity by a philosophical—falsely so called, as it is really nothing more than a very vulgar—reliance on the asserted regularity of nature. In opposition to these men the apostle sternly vindicates his Master's fidelity; "the Lord is not slack concerning his promise."

Now the question between us is, What kind of coming is here meant; personal, or not? And this will be determined by the test you applied so successfully in the other instance;—*What promise of Christ is here referred to? Where in the gospel do we meet with it?* The answer must be, in John 14: 3, and the other kindred passage—"I will come again." But is that not a personal coming, when he comes to "receive us unto himself, that where he is, there we may be also?" If it is not, then there is no such thing promised in the Bible, and no such thing is to be looked for by the church, and the sooner she comes to know it, the better. On the other hand, if the promise recorded by the Evangelist relates to a future glorious and visible return of Emmanuel, then so does the believing anticipation of the apostle; and it is conceded, that the coming mentioned by the latter precedes the creation of the new heavens and new earth, both of Peter and Isaiah. Therefore, the coming, which precedes that golden age for which the creature groans, is personal also.—I confess, I am tempted to put down here a—Q. E. D.

J. L.

New-York, April 6th, 1843.

#### REMARKS.

We are well aware of the imposing array of venerable names by which the prophetic theory advocated by our correspondent is surrounded, as if it were the bed of Solomon guarded by "threescore valiant men of Israel, all holding swords and expert in war." Still we can yield to authority only so far as it is yielding to evi-

dence. No evidence yet adduced by the Millenarian school has availed to satisfy us of the truth of their grand position, that a *personal, visible* manifestation of Christ in the clouds of heaven is to be expected by the church anterior to what is usually termed her 'latter-day glory.' Nor does the brief but pithy and ingenious argument which he has woven from the web of our own loom suffice to conquer our dissent. We remark in reply,

1. That it strikes us as by no means certain that the 'promise' spoken of by Peter is the same with that given by the Saviour to his disciples. The discourse of which it forms a part was addressed to his immediate disciples with a view to relieve and comfort their despondency in the prospect of his speedy departure from them. He tells them that he is going to prepare a place for them, and if he does this, he will come again and receive them to himself, that where he is there they may be also. What does he intimate by this, but that he is going to heaven, which he was to make accessible to them by his atoning death, and that in due time they also should be received thither, to enjoy in his presence that felicity which his meritorious sufferings should procure for them? But when was this to be? Does he refer them to a future coming so distant as the period of the new heavens and new earth of which Peter speaks? Is it accordant with the prevailing language of the New Testament, to represent the happiness of saints as delayed to the time of the final consummation? Is it not rather a happiness which is entered upon by each individual believer as soon as he is dismissed from the flesh? Does our blessed Lord teach any other doctrine in these words? Does he indeed pass over the long interval between death and the resurrection as of no account, and poise the weight of their glorious expectancy on the promise solely of his second appearing at the end of the present dispensation? Surely we do not so interpret the tenor of the inspired teachings, nor do we conceive it in the slightest degree probable that such a sense was gathered from the words by the disciples themselves. It assuredly does not tally with the general scope of the apostolic writings. Paul cannot well be understood as expressing any other idea than that his being absent from the body was his being present with the Lord. And as to Peter himself, we imagine he could hardly have spoken with so much composure of putting off his earthly tabernacle if he were not inspired with the faith of immediately assuming an heavenly one. If therefore he did not understand the promise of the Saviour's coming again to his disciples as the same with the promise of his coming at the period of the great catastrophe of which he speaks, we of course are not at liberty to identify them. And certainly there is very little reason to suppose that our Lord meant one thing and that Peter understood another. We are shut up therefore, so far as we can see, to the conclusion, that the Saviour's promise of coming again to his

disciples was his coming to them *at their death*. If we adopt not this construction, then as an alternative we must, it would seem, have recourse to another, not very improbable, which would make our Lord's promise to have been fulfilled to his disciples in their lifetime subsequent to his death and resurrection, in a *spiritual coming* and *cohabitation* with them—a view which is perhaps favored by the purport of what follows. He there assures them that he will not leave them comfortless, or orphans, but that he *will come to them*, i. e. by his Spirit. "Yet a little while," says he, "and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me," i. e. ye shall see me with the eye of faith. Again, "He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." Consequently he would *come* to him in order thus to *manifest* himself. So a little below, "If a man love me he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we *will come unto him and make our abode* (*μονη mansion*) *with him*." All this we think may be fairly interpreted of that very *coming* which constituted the promise to his mourning followers. The probability of this being the true sense grows upon us by reference to a subsequent verse: "Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away and come again unto you;" that is, 'you now, after the explanation I have given you, understand what I meant by saying that I would go away and come again unto you; and if you comprehended the true import of the promise you would rejoice rather than grieve in the prospect of my departure. You would see that so far from its being a loss to you, it would be a decided and precious gain.' He would come to them in the rich communications of his spiritual presence, and by bestowing upon them all the real blessings of his society, 'receive them unto himself.' It is clear then that J. L. hazards not a little in saying, that if this promise relates not to a 'future, glorious and visible return of Emmanuel, then there is no such thing *promised* in the Bible!' We doubt if, upon mature reflection, he would be willing to attach his own personal cherished anticipations to a view of Scripture which speaks so ambiguously in his favor; nor do we believe he would consent to peril the general reception of his views by insisting upon the alternative which he has mentioned.—But,

2. It is certain that Peter *does* allude to a promise of Christ's coming, though a very different one, we contend, from that of which the Saviour himself speaks to his disciples. That promise we are ready to agree with our correspondent is to be fulfilled *prior* to that period which is usually termed *Millennial*, but we believe it to be a coming in the power of his Spirit, in the illumination of his truth, in the mighty acts of his providence. But the evidence of this will be involved in future expositions of the prophetic oracles, to which we will beg leave to refer our respected correspondent.

Ed.

THE JUDGMENT OF THE LITTLE ONE, SUCCEEDED BY  
THE EVERLASTING KINGDOM OF THE SAINTS.

EXPOSITION OF DANIEL VII. 9—28.

THE VISION.

I BEHELD till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment *was* white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne *was like* the fiery flame, and his wheels *as* burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment *was* set, and the books were opened. I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld *even* till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame. As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time. I saw in the night visions, and behold, *one* like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. 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.

THE GENERAL EXPOSITION.

I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of *my* body, and the visions of my head troubled me. I came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of this. So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things. These great beasts, which are four, *are* four kings which shall arise out of the earth. But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even for ever and ever.

THE PARTICULAR EXPOSITION.

Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth *were* of iron, and his nails of brass; which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet; and of the ten horns that *were* in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look *was* more stout than his fellows. I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them: until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. And the ten horns out of this kingdom *are* ten kings that shall arise; and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak *great* words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws; and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion to consume and to destroy it unto the end. 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 the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him. Hitherto is the end of the matter. As for me Daniel, my cogitations much troubled me, and my countenance changed in me; but I kept the matter in my heart.

The preceding chapters of the book of Daniel are partly prophetic and partly historical. From the commencement of the seventh chapter to the close of the book the matter is purely prophetic. The scope of the Spirit, under whose prompting it was indited, is to shadow forth the character, career, and catastrophe of that grand persecuting antichristian power represented by the fourth Beast, which we shall here assume, with the great mass of commentators, to stand as an adumbration of the Roman empire in that ecclesiastico-political state in which it is set before us in the parallel vision of John, Rev. xiii. and xvii. In addition to this, another object of the Holy Ghost is to announce the ushering in, upon the destruction of the Roman power, of the spiritual and everlasting kingdom of Christ and his saints, who are to "take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever."

Upon a somewhat extended, minute, and critical exposition of this vision we now propose to enter, and with a view to expending our research upon that which is most important, we shall waive all consideration of the three former Beasts, and all attempts to establish the soundness of the conclusion which makes them representatives of the three great monarchies of antiquity which preceded the Roman, viz. the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, and the Grecian. In a formal and elaborate commentary on the entire book of Daniel this point could not properly be taken for granted, but would form an indispensable part of the labors of the expositor. For our purpose it does not. For the same reason we shall not attempt the proof of the position, that Daniel's vision of the four Beasts is of identical scope with Nebuchadnezzar's vision of the great Metallic Image, the fourfold materials of the one answering to the four Beasts of the other; and the stone cut out of the mountain without hands corresponding with the kingdom of the saints which eventually abolished its worldly predecessor. Our aim is of another nature. We propose if possible to ascertain the true character of the Judgment here depicted, and by a careful collation of other scriptures to determine its relations to the series of events connected with the Second Coming of Christ and its grand cognate futurities. The theme must be admitted to be full of interest, and the results to which we may come cannot fail to have an important bearing upon some of the prevalent prophetic theories which are causing at the present moment such a feverish ferment in the public mind.

As no discussion of the subject-matter before us can afford satisfaction to reflecting minds which does not deal with the original language of the prediction, we shall offer no apology for the most free and frequent appeals to the inspired Hebrew and Chaldee of the prophetic text, nor for giving our whole disquisition the air of a critical exegesis, such as a scholar would furnish to scholars, though we shall entirely fail of our purpose, if we do not at the same time render it easily intelligible to any one who shall tax himself with the trouble of a perusal. We are aware that it is hardly possible to avoid a degree of tedium in following out the minutiae of verbal criticism; but words are the essential elements of all language, and no royal road to an author's meaning can save us the labor of an exact pondering the import and use of the terms which he employs. This is peculiarly the case in the condensed and mystic style of prophecy. Words, which are always the symbols of thought, are there more pregnantly symbolical than in any other species of writing, and as they often can be understood only by obtaining the peculiar key which will decipher their import, a laborious investigation into the *usus loquendi* of terms and phrases is absolutely enforced upon him who would completely lay open the sense of the prophetic oracles. No principle of sacred hermeneutics is a more obvious dictate of common sense, or more generally admitted as such, than that in order to compass the genuine scope of the inspired penmen we must, as far as possible, put ourselves back into the times and circumstances in which they wrote, surround ourselves with their associations, and familiarize ourselves with their modes of thought. This will of course impose upon us the necessity of a most exact scrutiny of the import of words, and a nice discrimination of the various shades of meaning attached to the same word in different relations. This can only be accomplished by a large display of verbal parallelisms, and especially by tracing the same predictions through other parts of the Scriptures. In prosecuting our inquiries, therefore, as to the meaning of Daniel, we shall necessarily be led into an extended notice of several kindred prophecies in the Apocalypse and other portions of the New Testament, which are evidently founded upon those of the Old Testament: an unsealing, as it were, of the book which he was commanded for the present to seal up. In thus developing the close inter-relation of these two classes of prophecies, we shall hope to throw some important light upon both.

## Ver. 9.

CHAL.

חָזָה הַנִּיחַ עַד דַּי כְּרִסְנָן רְמִיז  
 וְעִתִּיק יוֹמִין יָתֵב לְבוּשָׁה כְּחֹלֵג  
 הַזֶּר וְשַׁעַר רֵאשִׁיהּ כְּעֵמֶר נָקֵא  
 כְּרִסְיָהּ שְׁבִיבִין דִּי-טִגִּיר וְלִנְלוֹדֵי גַּרְדִּי  
 דְּלֵק :

ENG. VERS.

I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool; his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire.

GE. OF THEOD.

Ἐθεώρων ἕως ὅτε θρόνοι ἐτίθη-  
σαν, καὶ παλαιὸς ἡμερῶν ἐκαθήτο,  
καὶ τὸ ἔνδυμα αὐτοῦ, ὡσεὶ χιτῶν λευ-  
κός, καὶ ἡ θριξὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς αὐτοῦ,  
ὡσεὶ ἕριον καθαρὸν, ὁ θρόνος αὐτοῦ  
φλοῆ πυρός, οἱ τροχοὶ αὐτοῦ πύφλε-  
ρον.

LAT. VULG.

Aspiciebam, donec throni positi  
sunt, et antiquus dierum sedit; ves-  
timentum ejus candidum quasi nix,  
et capilli capitis ejus quasi lana  
munda; thronus ejus flammæ igr-  
nis; rotæ ejus ignis accensus.

*I beheld.* Chal. וַיִּבְרַח וַיִּבְרַח *I was beholding*, implying a pro-  
longed, intent, and absorbing contemplation of the visionary  
scenery presented to his mental eye. As this phrase occurs re-  
peatedly in the present vision, it is well to have its exact shade of  
meaning distinctly fixed in the reader's mind. It is composed of  
the present participle *seeing, beholding*, and the verb *to be* or *to*  
*become*. It carries with it an implication, first, of an influence  
upon his spirit *ab extra*, by which he was brought into the state of  
prophetic vision. (Comp. *ἐγενόμην ἐν πνεύματι*, Rev. 1: 10.) And se-  
condly, the somewhat protracted continuance of that mental atti-  
tude; a peculiar fixedness of gaze upon the scenery before him,  
as if he were steadily watching it, as it passed through successive  
variations of aspect. 'Being *made to be* in a state of preternatural  
perception, or in a prophetic ecstasy, I continued beholding the  
sublime spectacle spread before me, silently noting its shifting  
phases, till at length a more wondrous change came over the scene,  
than any I had yet witnessed, by which a celestial judicatory was  
arrayed in my sight.' The bearing of this remark will be seen in  
the sequel, when we come to speak of the accident of *time* in con-  
nection with the visioned objects here described.

*Till the thrones were cast down.* Chal. עָדָה בְּרִסְתָּן בְּרִמְיָן, rendered  
by most versions *were set, placed, or planted*. The usage that ob-  
tains in regard to the original leaves its true sense in this con-  
nection somewhat doubtful, but the very uniform rendering of the  
following versions will show how large a mass of evidence is ac-  
cumulated in favor of the construction which we have suggested.  
Pagnin. and Arius Montan. "Throni elati sunt;" Jerome, "Throni  
positi sunt;" Syr. "Subsellia posita esse;" Arab. "Ecce sedes po-  
sitæ sunt;" Tindal, Eng. "The seats were prepared;" Genev.  
Eng. "The thrones were set up;" Luther, Germ. "Stuhle gesetzt  
werden;" Diod. Fr. "Les trones fuerent posés;" Bruc. Italian,  
"Throni furono essaltati;" Dutch, "Stoehlen gesettet werden."  
Judging from the obvious import of the word in the *usus loquendi* of  
the Chaldee Targums, it certainly carries with it the idea rather of *vi-  
olent dejection* than of *quiet collocation*. The large array of instances  
cited by Buxtorf puts this beyond question. At the same time, the  
authority of the ancient versions mentioned above for the latter ren-  
dering, together with the obvious congruities of the passage, plead  
strongly for the latter sense. Simonis (Lex. see רָמַת) gives it this

sense, and remarks, that verbs signifying to *cast*, as the Heb. יָרַח for instance, have often the signification of *laying* or *placing*. This is confirmed by the import of the Chaldee term itself in some few cases, where it is used in the sense of *imposing tribute*, as Ezra 7: 24; 2 Kings 18: 14 (Targ.). Indeed, this very term occurs in the Chal. Paraphrase of Jer. 1: 15, as equivalent to the Heb. word for 'set' (נָתַן), 'And they shall come and *set* (יָרַחוּ) Gr. ἑθροῦσιν) every one his throne at the entering of the gates of Jerusalem.' If, however, the former be the true sense, then the import of the prophet's language is, that he beheld till the thrones, i. e. the kingdoms represented by the Beasts, were *cast down*, or, in other words, *abolished* and *destroyed*; an idea undoubtedly in keeping with the drift of the vision. Still, in view of the close connection between the arranging of the thrones and the sitting of the Ancient of days, we prefer the sense of *placing*, *fixing*, *planting*, and the parallel phrase, Rev. 4: 2, θρόνος ἔκειτο, *a throne was set*, comes plainly in aid of this construction. The prophet is about to describe a scene of visionary judgment, and nothing could be more appropriate than to speak of the preparatory *fixing* or *placing down* of a suitable tribunal. He beheld, therefore, till the requisite apparatus of 'thrones of judgment' was prepared, and every thing was ready for the solemn assize to begin.

Yet even in this view of the prophet's scope, we know not that the dominant sense of *casting*, *throwing*, *throwing down*, is altogether inappropriate; for we may easily conceive that the action designed to be portrayed was somewhat of a hurried and violent fixing of the thrones, to indicate that God would *suddenly* awake and arise to the judgment which he had ordained. The enormities of the fourth Beast of the vision, his blasphemies, persecutions and outrages, had become so grievous and heaven-daring, that a speedy divine interposition was called for, and accordingly the whole symbolic scenery indicates an order of proceeding violent and expedite, corresponding with the emergency of the occasion. Otherwise it would certainly be difficult to account for the use of יָרַח in this connection, instead of the natural term שָׁמַר *placed, set, arranged*.

The imagery, which is to be regarded as purely symbolical, is taken from the judicial usages common among men, and more especially from those of the Jewish Sanhedrim, whose chief judge sat with his assessors on either hand upon seats or thrones of judgment round about in a semicircular form. It is true, indeed, that although a plurality of thrones is mentioned, yet nothing is said of a plurality of occupants. Mention is made of the Ancient of days only, who would of course occupy but a single seat, but there can be no doubt, from the sequel, and from other kindred allusions in the Scriptures, that the saints, who are subsequently said to have possessed the kingdom, formed the celestial conclave, and sat upon

the encircling thrones. But of this we shall have more to say in what follows. We come now to the description of the majestic Personage who occupies the principal place in the scene.

*The Ancient of days did sit.* Chal. פְּתִיחַ יוֹשֵׁב עַל הַכִּסֵּא. Gr. παλαιὸς ἡμερῶν ἐκάθητο. Vulg. Antiquus dierum sedit. The epithet so significantly applied to the Divine incumbent of the throne comes from the root פָּתַח to which H. J. Michaelis assigns the primary sense of *enduring, permanent, abiding*, and of which one of the prevalent meanings is to *grow old, to become antiquated*. Thus Job 31 : 7, 'Wherefore do the wicked live, *become old* (פָּתַח), yea are mighty in power?' Is. 23 : 18, 'To eat sufficiently, and for *durable clothing* (פָּתַח).' Guided by the general usage of the term, and fortified by the authority of Cocceius and other lexicographers, we deem *Permanent of days*, or *Enduring of days*, a better rendering than *Ancient of days*, inasmuch as the design is to intimate not so much the *past* as the *future* eternity of the Divine existence, for we see no room to doubt that it is the Godhead in the person of the Father, who was here exhibited to the entranced eye of the prophet. This we seem authorized to conclude from the fact, that the Godhead in the person of the Son is in v. 13 represented as being brought to the Incumbent of the throne and receiving from him the kingdom with which he is invested. The designation *Enduring of days* undoubtedly carries with it a latent contrast to the many vicissitudes and the transient nature of the thrones and kingdoms here shadowed forth as the antagonist dominions to that of God everlasting. Of them it might be expected that they should be brought into fearful collision with each other, and that one should vanish before the other, till finally they were all obliterated; but the kingdom which was to succeed them was to be immutable and immovable, because ruled over by him whose sovereignty is as lasting as his being, and to whom it is said with a propriety which none can challenge, "of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt ENDURE; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end."

We are not of course to suppose that the scene here disclosed is any other than symbolical. No one at all acquainted with the genius of the prophetic writings will understand this as describing the *actual verities of things*. Our Saviour assured the Jews that as to his Father, they had "neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape," and Paul utters an equivalent declaration when he says of God, "whom no man hath seen nor can see." The remark of Calvin on this head is singularly appropriate and striking: "God certainly neither occupies any throne, nor is transported by wheels; but as I have said, we are not to imagine God

as he appeared to his prophets and other holy fathers. He merely assumes various aspects in accommodation to the conceptions of men, to whom he would exhibit some sign of his presence."—*Prælect. in Dan.* 7: 9. The sudden erection therefore of this visionary throne and its occupancy by the Divine Majesty, surrounded by the heavenly conclave, is intended merely to convey to the mind, under the most impressive imagery, the idea of a grand order of providential events, the main character of which should be judicial and penal, and the issue of which should be to consume and waste away the formidable power against which they are arrayed. Although it be true that God never ceases to rule and to judge in the midst of the earth, though his great administration never slumbers, yet its visible effects are not always equally manifest; and hence when in a scene like this he is represented as ascending a tribunal and commencing a process of judgment, it implies that he had previously remained in a state of comparative quietude, and suffered his enemies to rage and prevail, but that now he begins to put forth the signal demonstrations of his power in providential acts, the source and the object of which cannot be mistaken. Thus after having permitted the tower-building hordes on the plains of Shinar to advance near to the consummation of their nefarious aims, as if he had hitherto taken no notice of their proceedings, he suddenly rises from his seeming inaction and says, "Go to, let us go down and confound their language that they may not understand one another's speech. So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth; and they left off to build the city." This going down and visiting the tower with the design of dispersing its builders is all couched in the anthropomorphic style, which is so frequently employed in the sacred writings in accommodation to our imperfect modes of thought. The same kind of diction reigns throughout the vision before us. The actual realities of the divine providence, which were to be witnessed on earth, are here pictorially shadowed forth under the image of a judgment scene transpiring in the spiritual world. The protracted forbearance of heaven, which had been so long abused by the despotic lordships of the earth, is here represented as coming suddenly to an end, and the mighty Avenger of his cause and his people enters upon the work of judgment and retribution. In the execution of this work, as he is presented to us under a human semblance, so we find a striking congruity of attributes in the remaining particulars of the description, which are now to be considered.

*Whose garment was white as snow, and his hair like the pure wool.* Chal. לְבִישָׁהּ כְּחֹלֶת הַחֵן, lit. according to the accents, *his garment was as the white snow*, where the word 'garment' is to be understood collectively as equivalent to *vesture*, implying the *whole* of the attire with which he was clothed. The whiteness, more-

over, is to be conceived of as something glistening, and effulgent beyond all that the powers of language are competent to express. The emblems are evidently those which in all languages are employed to denote a pre-eminent purity and sanctity, and in the Scriptures are constantly used as such, as Is. 1: 18: "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as *white as snow*; and though they be red like crimson, they shall be as *wool*." By the same emblems is the person of Christ described, Rev. 1: 14: "His head and his hairs were white *like wool*, as *white as snow*;" and the preternatural whiteness of the raiment is to be conceived of as answering to that which distinguished the Saviour on the Mount of Transfiguration, Luke 9: 28: "And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and *his raiment was white and glistening*." The resplendent white of his spotless garments indicated the exquisite equity, justice, and impartiality of his judgments, while the locks of his hair, purer than the washed wool of the fairest fleeces, indicate nothing of the imbecility of extreme old age, but the considerate gravity, the ripened reflection, the mature wisdom, the enlightened experience, the venerable authority, and the calm decision, which are naturally associated with the hoary head. The ascription of these qualities to the Occupant of the throne would convey the utmost assurance that no passionate impulse, such as might spring from the unchastened ardor of youth, would sway the sentence that he might pronounce. The spotless robe and the silver locks would involve every needed guaranty of calm consideration and unimpeachable rectitude in the momentous verdict. "With the ancient is wisdom, and in length of days understanding. With him is wisdom and strength, he hath counsel and understanding."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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THE press of matter purely prophetic, and of a highly interesting character, which is constantly accumulating on our hands, has induced us to waive the continuation, in this No., of the COMMENTARY ON THE PSALMS, which we had proposed, at the outset, to make a prominent feature of the work. Whether we shall resume it hereafter will depend upon contingencies. We are satisfied that both the material and the demand exist for a publication of far more extended dimensions than the present, devoted to the same object; and we shall hope, before the close of the present volume, to be able to announce the programme of such a work as is evidently called for by the spirit of the age.

## BUSH'S NOTES ON THE OLD TESTAMENT.

DAYTON and NEWMAN, 196 Broadway, continue the publication of Prof. Bush's Critical and Practical Notes on Genesis, Exodus, and Joshua and Judges, five volumes in all, to which another volume on Leviticus has just been published. This series of works, answering for the Old Testament the same purposes as Mr. Barnes' for the New, meets with the most decided approval from all quarters. The fifth edition of Genesis has recently been issued from the press, and the third edition of Exodus is just about to be printed.

The publishers hear of frequent instances where Sunday school and Bible class teachers are relinquishing all other commentaries for these, finding in them all they need for the purpose of explanation.

They learn also from the letters of missionaries engaged in translating the Scriptures into the languages of the East, that no biblical work affords them such important aid in that department of their labor as Prof. B.'s Commentaries. This is no more than the natural result of the author's careful study of the most scrupulous fidelity in eliciting the exact meaning of the original, and his peculiar tact in explaining it.

In all the volumes above-mentioned will be found discussions on the more important points of biblical science, swelling far beyond the ordinary dimensions of expository notes, and amounting, in fact, to elaborate discussions of great value. Among the subjects thus extensively treated are : in Genesis, the Temptation and the Fall, the Dispersion at Babel, the Prophecies of Noah, the character of Melchizedek, the Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the History of Joseph, the Prophetical Benedictions of Jacob ;—in Exodus, the Hardening of Pharaoh's Heart, the Miracles of the Magicians, the Pillar of Cloud as the seat of the Shekinah, the Decalogue, the Hebrew Theocracy, the Tabernacle, the Cherubim, the Candlestick, the Shew Bread, the Altar, &c.,—in the recent volume of Leviticus will be found a clear and minute specification of the different Sacrifices, the Distinction of meats, the Scape Goat, the Law of Incest, including the case of Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister, very largely considered, and a full account of the Jewish Festivals.

## NOTICE.

To SUBSCRIBERS.—Circumstances of a peculiar and urgent nature have enforced upon the Editor an absence of much longer continuance than he anticipated, and the consequent interruption of our regular issue during the interval. For this necessity and the consequent disappointment of his readers, he bespeaks their kind indulgence. He will perhaps be compelled in consequence to fail of accomplishing what he proposed in the outset, viz. to furnish the twelve Nos. in the course of the year. But as he is aware of nothing which will prevent the uninterrupted prosecution of the work, the issue of the remaining portions may be expected as rapidly as the press can bring them out.

There is doubtless an awkward air in dating our successive Nos. so many months behind. But as the contents of each are entirely independent of the *time* of publication, we have demed it better to incur for the present an appearance of anachronism, than to allow of a break in the regular monthly order of succession. As soon as the volume is completed, the interruption will have been lost sight of.

The reception with which our enterprise meets, though on the whole decidedly encouraging, yet is not such as to free us from the necessity of requesting the aid of our present patrons in extending the circulation. From the character of the discussions to which our pages are devoted, it is perhaps scarcely reasonable to expect that the work will ever become to a great degree *popular*, in the book-publishing sense of that term. We must probably count upon speaking to a somewhat select public, to a circle of readers who can appreciate a critical, severe, and thoroughgoing vein of investigation. For this reason, as we can scarcely anticipate any thing *more* than a pecuniary return sufficient to defray expenses, we certainly cannot prosecute the enterprise with any *less*. We must therefore solicit the most prompt payment from those who, for any reasons, have hitherto received the work without paying in advance. The principle on which we are constrained to go is the *cash* principle, and though our bill of arrearages is small, yet we cannot dispense with the least amount that is now due.